Coaching Styles of National Junior College Athletic Association Cross Country and Track Coaches Related to Pre-Millennial and Millennial Student Athletes

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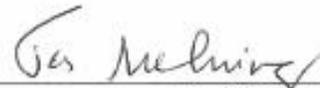
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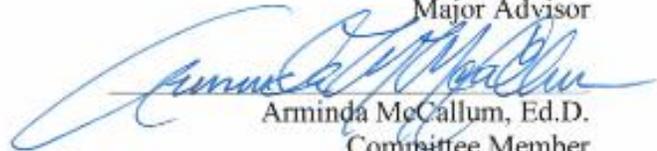
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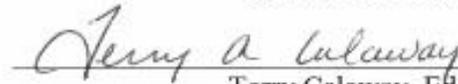
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Abstract

Community colleges enroll between 11 and 12 million students annually, of which over 50,000 participate in intercollegiate athletics (National Junior College Athletic Association [NJCAA], 2018). For athletic teams this is a significant number of student-athletes who will receive instruction, mentoring, and direction from coaches. This qualitative study examined changes in leadership style when coaching pre-millennial versus millennial students, recruitment practices, the influence of technology, goal setting with pre-millennial and millennial student athletes, and communication with parents. The results of this study indicated there was no predominant leadership style among the 10 NJCAA cross country and track coaches interviewed. Coaches' identification of their primary leadership style was mixed. Three indicated their leadership style was holistic, two described their style as democratic, three indicated they used a combination of holistic and democratic leadership, and two stated they used an autocratic style. Coaches stated that recruiting has changed significantly in the last decade due to advances in technology and parental influence. Eight out the 10 interviewed coaches stated they have adapted their coaching styles due to generational change. Technology has influenced all aspects of their jobs including recruiting, coaching practices, and communication with athletes and parents. Goal setting has become more focused on the individual. Parents play a key role in the recruiting process for millennial student athletes. This study demonstrated that NJCAA cross country and track coaches have had to adjust their leadership and coaching styles to successfully coach millennials.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated foremost to my wife, Katherine Bloemker, who has given me constant encouragement throughout this process and never let me give up. To my son, Griffin who has constantly asked "How is your dissertation going?" I have tried to show the importance of education to him to achieve his goals in life. To my parents, Jerry and Jan, who encouraged me to never give up, inspiring me to be the first in our family to hold a bachelors, masters, and doctorate degree. To Tom Dowling, who taught me about the importance of continuously learning and the value of education.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1

Introduction

For the past decade millennials have been entering colleges and universities. This generation has created a dramatic shift in how personnel in these settings work with these young adults (Ayers, 2017). The millennial generation is comprised of a complex group of individuals whose characteristics and values differ from previous generations. Strauss and Howe's (2000) research demonstrated a clear difference between those born before 1981 and those born between 1981 and 1996 – the millennial generation.

In the book *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, Strauss and Howe (2000) detailed seven characteristics of millennials. They described millennials as social, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured, and conventional. Millennials have been criticized by other generations for being lazy, self-centered, entitled, and immersed in technology and social media (Atkinson, 2004). According to Strauss and Howe (2003), millennials communicate differently from previous generations. They are the first generation born in the digital age and have grown up with the internet and social media platforms at their fingertips.

Parenting has been cited as a contributing factor to the characteristics of millennials. Millennials are carefully watched over by their parents and feel pressured to succeed (Lebowitz, 2017). This can create problems when millennials leave home for college and have new expectations thrust upon them (Lebowitz, 2017). Strauss and Howe (2003) found that because of sheltering from parents, many millennials are crushed when they receive less than an 'A' for a grade, get cut from teams, and receive negative feedback.

In addition to higher education personnel, professional and collegiate athletic teams and coaches have found themselves needing to adapt to generational characteristics. Hoffman et al. (2009) conducted a study on collegiate athletes from the millennial generation, and suggested coaches may need to adjust coaching styles to their athletes. Hoffman et al. (2009) found that millennial generation athletes desire a coach who will sustain multiple roles in their lives, communicate clearly, maximize production, have compassion, and be mindful of the entire team's interest. The results of the Hoffman et al. study suggested that autocratic coaching was not effective with the millennial generation.

Background

The first step in the process of getting millennial student athletes on a college campus is successfully recruiting them. This has become an exhaustive process for coaches. The demands of parents and potential athletes have never been greater. Coaches find themselves recruiting not only the athlete but also the parent. Millennial experts Strauss and Howe (2000), Raines (2002), Twenge (2018), and Elmore (2019) agreed getting parent buy-in and using them to assist in the recruitment process is helpful. Janssen (2008) found by reaching out to parents and instructing them on what is appropriate and what isn't, coaches have a better chance to turn parents into allies rather than adversaries.

Three different types of leadership styles are prevalent among coaches: autocratic (Paddock, 2018), democratic (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978), and holistic (Blevins, 2015). An autocratic style consists of the coach being the only individual who makes the decisions (Paddock, 2018). The autocratic coach has the ultimate say regarding how the

team acts and plays. Autocratic coaching has some benefits. Autocratic leadership is positive in situations when decisions need to be made quickly and decisively. The feedback received from this type of leader focuses on telling a follower when they've made a mistake. This leadership style is helpful for sports consisting of inexperienced and new players (Paddock, 2018). The players simply follow the instructions and learn how to play, trusting the coach's ability. Autocratic coaching styles are typically used by coaches of individuals with generation membership older than millennials (Bogart, 2015).

Coaches who use the democratic style encourage players to voice their opinions and thoughts in order to make the best decisions (Ayres, 2017). This leadership style is effective with experienced teams and athletes (Ayres, 2017). Encouragement of free thinking lends itself to the athletes being invested in the team's direction and decisions (Beard, 2017).

Bogart (2015) noted holistic coaching adds aspects of life coaching to the responsibilities of a sports coach. Bogart (2015) also stated holistic coaching is a coaching style that includes aspects beyond the athlete's physical and mental states such as their emotional and spiritual states. The holistic coach creates a relationship with every individual athlete based on interpersonal communication and genuine care for everyone on the team. Lyle (2002) noted when everyone is connected beyond their athletic goals, the transparency and trust that is created will result in benefits to the team (Lyle, 2002).

Millennials have demonstrated push back against the autocratic coaching style (Bogart, 2015). Coaches who have adapted to newer coaching styles, democratic or holistic, are seeing success in comparison to peers who have stayed with more traditional

approaches such as the autocratic style of coaching (Bogart, 2015). Millennials are looking for buy-in from their leader. They feel it's a 'we are all in this together attitude' (Elmore, 2019). Coaches who use newer coaching styles tell team members exactly what they want done. Strauss and Howe (2003) stated that because millennials like to feel special, they benefit from a holistic form of coaching. They are accustomed to attention from their parents, grandparents, teachers, and coaches. Janssen (2008) stated coaches must "make your practices engaging, challenge them to improve, build their confidence, support them when they struggle, and you too will have a great time coaching athlete of all ages and watching them improve" (p. 2). Millennials are also team oriented which aligns with the democratic style of leadership. Strauss and Howe (2003) concluded millennials

> are the most interconnected generation yet. Between emailing, texting, and staying connected through Facebook, peer networks are a huge part of their daily experience. They have strong team instincts and like to stay connected with their social group on a regular basis. (p. 15)

Hall (2014) made the following recommendations to successfully work with millennials: "Build your program to leverage millennials strengths, take advantage of their technological savviness. Give them goals that will stretch their abilities and intellect. Encourage them to collaborate with others" (p. 22).

Statement of the Problem

Coaching and mentoring millennials over the last decade has presented significant changes in the leadership styles and coaching techniques that are the motivation for this generation to succeed. A great leader guides a team but doesn't rule a team. A great

leader sets a course, provides direction, and develops the social and psychological environment for the team (Becker, 2009).

Millennials seek constant feedback from their coaches (Janssen, 2008). Since millennials seek constant positive feedback on their performances in the classroom and athletic field it adds additional strain to the coach athlete relationship. Millennials are a unique generation whose characteristics are significantly different from previous generations (Strauss & Howe, 2003). When supervising or coaching millennials it is necessary to realize that they seek rewards and recognition for their efforts. From their upbringing, millennials are performance driven and want to succeed (Ray, 2017). The key is how to get the best efforts out of them. Research has demonstrated that millennials want to be successful, sometimes to the point of creating a great deal of pressure on themselves (Willyerd, 2017). Strauss and Howe (2003) found millennials are highly focused on achievement and "are on track to becoming the smartest, best-educated adults in U.S. history" (p. 41). Strauss and Howe (2003) also found, "Because of the increased competitiveness for grades, school admissions, and jobs, today's millennials are feeling much more pressure to succeed than generations before them" (p. 42).

Numerous authors (Elmore, 2019; Janssen, 2008; Paddock, 2018; Raines, 2002; Twenge, 2018) have studied athletes from varied generational groups and described the motivational strategies that work best with each generation. Beard (2017) found generations prior to the millennial generation responded well to both autocratic and democratic styles of leadership. Leaders of Baby Boomers and Generation X mostly followed an autocratic style of leadership (Paddock, 2018). Generation X leaders started using a more democratic style of leadership allowing people to contribute their views and

feelings (Paddock, 2018). Holistic coaching is being utilized more and more by leaders because millennials want to know their leader cares about them as individuals (Janssen, 2008).

Interactions with millennials in classrooms, business, and athletics have required significant changes in leadership styles of those who work with them. Leaders have had to adapt to the millennial generation to stay successful (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010). Teachers, coaches, managers, and executives have begun adapting to a more holistic style of leadership that fits with the millennial generation. While research has documented the unique characteristics of millennials, no research has focused on the leadership and coaching styles of NJCAA cross country track coaches who are coaching millennials.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined NJCAA coaches' perceptions about leadership and coaching strategies they employ to successfully engage millennial athletes. The first purpose of the current study was to examine NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about their predominant leadership style. The second purpose of the study was to determine NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions of changes in recruitment of pre-millennial and millennial student athletes. A third purpose was to ascertain NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in their leadership and coaching styles when coaching pre-millennials and millennials. The fourth purpose of the study focused on community college cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in leadership style related to defining goals when working with pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. The fifth purpose of the study was to evaluate NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions of how use of

technology (computers and cell phones) has impacted leadership and coaching styles when working with pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. The final purpose of this research was to evaluate NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in leadership and coaching styles when communicating with parents of pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes

Significance of the Study

The results of the study may be of interest to NJCAA community college administrators, athletic directors, community college coaches, community college track and field coaches, and student athletes. Each of these groups work with a growing number of millennials. Perceptions of NCJAA cross country and track coaches regarding efforts to successfully coach millennials may provide strategies for working effectively with millennials. This research has contributed to the body of knowledge related to coaching pre-millennial and millennial student athletes in a community college setting.

Delimitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated, "Delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study" (p. 134). Cross country and track coaches who had extensive years of coaching experience (12 to 53 years) in a community college setting were interviewed. All coaches included in the study were head coaches of cross country and or track. Coaches included in the study coached men, women, or both sex student athletes. All coaches included in the study had demonstrated coaching success evidenced by honors achieved by student athletes that included All Americans, National Champions, or teams that finished in the top three National Cross-

Country Meet, Indoor Track National Championship, or Outdoor Track National

Championship. Coaching success was defined as consistently placing in the top three in

the respective region and top 10 at NJCAA National Championship events (cross

country, half marathon, indoor and outdoor track). The study was restricted to public

two-year community college cross country and track coaches whose individual athletes

and teams participate in cross country and track and field in the NJCAA. The study was

limited to coaches from community colleges that are part of the NJCAA. Coaches from

community colleges in the states of California, Oregon, and Washington were not

selected for participation since these states are not part of the NJCAA. This study

included 10 community college head cross country and track coaches.

Assumptions

"Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as

operational for purposes of the research" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 135). This study

was conducted with the following assumptions:

- Participants in the study understood the interview questions and answered
  to the best of their ability.

- Participants were able to effectively verbalize their thoughts and
  experiences.

Research Questions

RQ1: What do community college cross country and track coaches perceive is

their predominant leadership style?

RQ2: What do community college cross country and track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style as it relates to recruiting pre-millennial and millennial cross country/track student athletes?

RQ3: What do community college cross country and track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style when coaching pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes?

RQ4: What do community college cross country and track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style as it relates to defining goals for individual or team cross pre-millennial and millennial country/track students' athletes?

RQ5: What do community college cross country and track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style coaching pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes as a result of technology?

RQ6: What do community college cross country and track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style as it relates to communication with parents of pre-millennial and millennial cross country/track student athletes?

Definition of Terms

Baby Boom generation. According to Strauss and Howe (1993), Baby Boom is the term applied to individuals born between 1946-1964.

Coach. Merriam-Webster (2019) defined a coach as an individual who instructs players in the fundamentals of a sport and directs team strategy.

Community college. A 2-year government-supported college that offers an associate degree is defined by Merriam-Webster (2019) as a community college.

Cross country. Merriam-Webster (2019) defined racing (running) or skiing over the countryside instead of over a track or run using the term cross country.

Generation. The word generation refers to a body of living beings constituting a single step in the line of descent from an ancestor (Merriam-Webster 2019). Jenkins (2007) delineated the following generations: G.I. Generation, Silent and greatest generation, Baby Boomers, generation X, millennials or Generation Y, and New Generation Z.

Generation X. Born between 1965 and 1979 this generation followed the Baby Boomer generation and preceded the millennial generation (Strauss & Howe, 1993). Generation X is credited with the growth of technology, including the creation of the internet and personal computing (Strauss & Howe, 1993).

Generation Z. Born between 1997 and 2014 this generation followed the millennials (Dimrock & Dimrock, 2019). Elmore (2019) described Generation Z individuals as cynical, entrepreneurial, and technologically reliant.

Head coach. The lead-coach and main decision-maker who directs a sports program is referred to as the head coach (Merriam-Webster, 2019). In addition to teaching athletic fundamentals in practice sessions and competitions specific to his or her sport, a head coach also guides intra-competition strategy. The head coach also oversees recruiting and has the final authority regarding which team participants receive playing time and levels of scholarships (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

Millennial generation. According to Howe and Strauss (1993), individuals referred to as millennials were born between 1981 and 1996. Generation Y is another name for the millennial generation (Strauss & Howe, 1993).

National Football League (NFL). The major professional football league in the U.S., the NFL, consists of the National and American football conferences and includes 31 teams (Oxford Dictionary, 2019).

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Founded in 1938, the NJCAA is an association of community college and junior college athletic departments throughout the United States. It is divided into divisions and regions. California, Oregon and Washington do not participate in the NJCAA (NJCAA, 2019).

Pre-millennial. In the current study the term pre-millennial refers to individuals born prior to 1981. Strauss and Howe (1993) labeled these generations using the terms Silent and Greatest Generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X.

Recruiting. Recruiting happens when a college employee or representative invites a high school student-athlete to play sports for a college. Recruiting can occur in many ways, such as face-to-face contact, phone calls or text messaging, mailed or emailed material, or through social media (National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2019).

Silent and Greatest generation. Strauss and Howe (1993) labelled individuals born between 1925-1945 as the Silent or Greatest generation. These individuals were children during the Great Depression and World War II. The 'silent' label refers to the image of these individuals as conformist and civic-minded (Pew Research Center, 2015b).

Track and field. Merriam-Webster (2019) defined track and field as any of various competitive athletic events (such as running, jumping, and weight throwing) performed on a running track and on the adjacent field.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 provided an introduction, background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and definitions of terms used in the study. Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature as it pertains to generational cohorts, millennial characteristics, coaching styles, needs of student athletes, millennials and coaching styles, successful athletic recruitment of millennials, and successful coaching of millennials. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the qualitative research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, the researcher's role, and limitations. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The final chapter presents an interpretation and recommendations that include a study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions that include implications for action and recommendations for future research and concluding remarks.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This study examined perceptions of NJCAA track and field coaches about their predominant leadership styles. Coaches' perceptions about how leadership styles, recruitment practices, coaching styles, defining goals for individuals or teams, and communication with parents has changed when coaching pre-millennials versus millennials were additional foci of this study. The literature review for this research study includes a description of generational cohorts, millennial characteristics, coaching styles, needs of millennial athletes, millennials and coaching styles, successful recruitment of millennials, and successful coaching of millennials.

Generational Cohorts

The following section describes generational cohorts and the characteristics ascribed to each generation. Generations provide the opportunity to look at Americans both by their place in the life cycle - whether a young adult, a middle-aged parent, or a retiree - and by their membership in a cohort of individuals who were born at a similar time (Dimrock & Dimrock, 2019). Generations are inherently diverse and complex groups, not simple caricatures. Strauss and Howe (1991) created the generational theory which described a recurring cycle of age cohorts called generations. Strauss and Howe (1991) developed the theory over a number of publications, beginning with *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*. Generational theory proponents contend there is a recurring generational cycle in American history. Every new generation begins a new era based on the political, social, and economic climate at the time.

A generation typically refers to a group of people born within a 15 to 20-year span (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Researchers use age as a defining criterion to determine where a person or group of people is within a generation. There can be overlap of generations, from the end of one cycle to another. Strauss and Howe (1991) categorized the various generations throughout United States history in cycles in order to delineate patterns. The next section describes four generational cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X, millennials, and Generation Z.

Baby Boomers. Individuals in this generation were born between 1946-1964. The U.S. Census Bureau (2015) reported 75.4 million Baby Boomers. Characteristics of this generation include independence, responsibility and maturity. They are equipped to make up their own minds and determine what is most valuable or significant. Baby Boomers are confident. They have responsibilities and abide by societal rules. Boomers appreciate being listened to and are willing to share their opinions and interests. For Baby Boomers, technology was introduced at a slow pace during the 70's, 80's and 90's. That was the period when Baby Boomers were in school, establishing careers, and raising families (Golden, 2017). Baby Boomers use technology as a productivity tool as opposed to as a means to connect with others.

Generation X. Strauss and Howe (1991) defined Generation X as people born between 1965 and 1979. Generation X is much smaller than the Baby Boomer generation. This overlooked generation is often missing from stories about demographic, social, and political change. "They are smack in the middle innings of life, which tend to be short on drama and scant of theme" (Pew Research Center, 2015a, p. 3). Members of Generation X come from families where both parents worked and saw high divorce rates.

Considered the "latch key kids" (Wallace, 2016, p. 3), they came home after school to little or no parental supervision (Ryback, 2016). As a result, Taylor and Gao, (2014) described Generation X as independent, resourceful, and self-sufficient. They value freedom and responsibility in the workplace. Many in this generation display a casual disdain for authority and structured work hours (Kane, 2018). Members of this generation are described as ambitious and wanting to succeed while maintaining life balance (Monaco & Martin, 2007). Scholars agree, members of Generation X have difficulty finding their own identity (Pew Research Center, 2015a). According to the Pew Research Center (2015a), one reason members of Generation X have "trouble defining their own generational persona could be that they've rarely been doted on by the media" (p. 5). Hurov (2018) described Generation X simply as the "sandwich generation" (p. 1) stuck between the Baby Boomers and millennials. Characteristics Generation X leaders share with Baby Boomers include employer loyalty, a focus on executing tasks, skill in identifying talent, and willingness to lead. Ryback (2016) stated Generation X members are savvy with technology, willing to lead, driven by purpose, and connected.

Millennials. The term 'millennial' was first used by Strauss and Howe (1991) in their research on social generations. The millennial generation, also known as Generation Y, describes people born between 1981 and 1996. Millennials now number 83.1 million and represent more than one quarter of the nation's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). This is the first generation to come of age in the new millennium (Taylor & Keeter, 2010).

Twenge (2018), a psychology professor at San Diego State University, stated millennials are "tolerant, confident, open-minded, and ambitious, but also disengaged, narcissistic, distrustful, and anxious" (p. 10). Twenge also contended that "depression, loneliness, and panic attacks are all significantly more characteristic of today's millennials and Generation Z, more so than preceding generations at the same age. This could be due to the extreme pressure to be successful" (p. 11). Twenge found that millennials, contrary to Baby Boomers, strive for flexibility of working from home rather than the office. They are all about working smarter, not harder, and use technology to their advantage. Generational scholar Raines (2002) described millennials as focused on family, scheduled, structured, multicultural, technological, patriotic, fear terrorism, and believe in the American hero. Millennials are also more supportive of their parents and identify with them more than previous generations (Raines & Arnsparger, 2010).

The millennial generation is like no other in history and will change everything from education to the structure of the workforce (Solomon, 2016). They will change the way the world interconnects through technology. Millennials embrace inclusion and diversity and will shape the global population now and in the future. Despite some of the negative attributes, researchers agree millennials are motivated and want to succeed (Monaco & Martin, 2007).

Monaco and Martin (2007) described several notable characteristics of the millennial generation. They have a lack of professional boundaries influenced by socialization, need to have immediate feedback, possess a sense of entitlement, lack critical thinking skills, have unrealistic expectations, experience a high level of parental involvement, and expect a 'how to' guide to succeed in and out of the classroom.

Monaco and Martin (2007) also observed that millennial students enter college with a different expectation than past generations. They have become accustomed to being handheld through the educational process and anticipate a similar environment in college. As a result of this nurturing environment, millennials need assistance in developing independent thinking and decision-making skills.

Raines (2002) and Twenge (2018) found a dramatic shift from previous generations in millennials attitudes and specific behavior. Raines (2002) found that millennials need to be provided frequent feedback and need their self-assuredness reinforced. Previous generations were told what to do and typically only given negative feedback.

Generation Z. Generation Z follows the millennial generation. Individuals in this cohort were born between 1997 and 2014 (Dimrock & Dimrock, 2019). There are currently 65 million people in this generation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015). Elmore (2019) described Generation Z individuals as cynical, private, multi-tasking, entrepreneurial, hyperaware, and technologically reliant. Members of Generation Z have some characteristics similar to millennials. According to Bogart (2015) and Elmore (2019), both generations rely on technology and are multi-taskers. The Pew Research Center (2015b) reported Generation Z and the millennial generation believe increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. is a good thing for society while older generations are less convinced. However, Generation Z is considered more inclusive and embracive of diversity than millennials (Parker et al., 2019).

Millennial Characteristics

This group of 80 million people called millennials has been classified as lazy, entitled, self-obsessed, generous, and community-spirited (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They have been guided step by step by their parents throughout life. Social media and technology have impacted their socialization and learning behaviors. According to Strauss and Howe (2003) today's millennial generation is significantly different than previous generations in four primary ways. First, they feel special. Millennials see themselves as a vital contributor to their families, and they have received unprecedented amounts of attention from their parents. Second, millennials have been sheltered throughout their lives. Sheltering has prevented them from experiencing, learning from, adapting to, and overcoming the important and inevitable hard issues of life. Sheltering a millennial from negative feedback hampers their maturity process. Third, millennials tend to be confident. Many feel they can achieve anything. Millennials tend to forget hard work will produce positive results but lose focus when goals do not come quickly. Fourth, millennials are team oriented. Because of social media and technology, they constantly stay connected with friends. Technology has played a crucial role in their lives and changed the way they look at everything including education, athletics, and work. Millennials have grown up in an era of remarkable connectedness. They're used to receiving instantaneous feedback from parents, teachers, and coaches. They've grown accustomed to having the immediate ability to ask questions, share opinions, and provide commentary. Millennials feel the use of technology is desirable and a necessary part of life (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Researchers at the Pew Research Center (2010) theorized the imprinting of events and circumstances that occur while millennials are in

their 20's will have the greatest effect on their characteristics. With regard to their being conventional, Strauss and Howe (2003) indicated millennials describe closer ties with their parents than other teens in the history of postwar polling. Many millennials maintain similar likes, dislikes, and maintain values from their parents. The Pew Research Center (2015a) found that millennials see parents, teachers, mentors, and family members as great influences in their lives. Wilson (2014) found millennials tend to be high achieving, focused on success, but have issues in sports when it can take years of work to learn complex skills. They value education and will likely become the most educated generation in history. Wilson also noted millennials value education like no other generation and seek creativity along with innovation. Strauss and Howe (1991) found millennials feel pressured to succeed with competitiveness in the classroom, in sports, and ultimately the workforce. They see any misstep as a huge set-back. They have been overscheduled with homework and extracurricular activities. They also feel a great deal of pressure from their parents. Atkinson (2004) noted that as the first generation in over 50 years expected to meet higher educational standards than their parents, the millennial generation was raised with extreme pressure to do well in school. While some of these characteristics may be viewed as positive, such as being confident and optimistic, other characteristics pose greater challenges for teachers and coaches, such as being special and sheltered. One of the most challenging characteristics of millennials is this generation's sense of entitlement (Ewing, 2014).

Raines and Arnsparger (2010) developed a model for understanding the generations and their differences regarding such critical business issues as work ethic, communication, and leadership. These authors found millennials are connected 24 hours

a day to friends, parents, information, and entertainment. Millennials are accustomed to being the center of attention, and they have high expectations and clear goals. They are willing and value hard work. Raines (2002) also found millennials expect and want to have the support they need to achieve. Millennial's parents are older and were brought up in smaller families. Millennial's parents are typically well educated with 25% of parents having a college education. Millennials are the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in history (Raines & Arnsparger, 2010).

According to Twenge (2006), millennials are reshaping schools, colleges, and businesses all over the country. Twenge (2006) stated millennials are tolerant, confident, open-minded, and have demonstrated dramatic differences in sexual behavior and religious practice from previous generations. Twenge (2006) contended that millennials will dramatically reshape workplaces.

Coaching Styles

A coach can be a mentor, teacher, or a guide (Gould, 2009). A coach is someone who takes a person from a current condition and helps an athlete or team achieve a specific goal (Hill, 2001). Whitmore (2017) commented, "Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them" (p. 15). Coaching is a process of giving and taking. Coaches provide skill and knowledge, and great coaches listen to their athletes (Hall, 2014). Elmore (2019) noted that each generation, due to their different experiences, may require a different style of learning. Traditionally there are three types of coaching styles: autocratic, democratic, and holistic.

Autocratic coaching style. The autocratic style is one of the most recognized forms of directive leadership. The style seems to contradict the teamwork, group input, and shared decision-making emphasis that exists in many modern work environments (Travis, 2018). A drawback of this type of leadership style is that autocratic leaders are usually described as thinking there is only one way of doing things. Autocratic leaders tell their followers exactly what they want done. Autocratic leaders typically only provide feedback when constituents have made a mistake (Paddock, 2018). Autocratic leadership is positive in certain situations, when decisions need to be made quickly and decisively. The feedback received from this type of leader focuses on telling a follower when they've made a mistake.

A coach who exemplified the autocratic coaching style is the hall of fame NFL Coach Vince Lombardi (Jenkins, 2005). He had a military background and believed that winning took a great deal of discipline, education, and commitment to be perfect. He believed that his techniques and systems were the only way to be successful.

The autocratic coaching style can be useful with young inexperienced athletes or workers (Jenkins, 2005). This coaching style is best suited for athletes or workers who need strong structure and guidance to become the best version of themselves. Athletes and employees who thrive under this style of coaching consistently want to know exactly what is expected of them and exactly what the coach or manager is looking for in terms of how to do things and when they need to be done (Travis, 2018). This type of coaching style was the most typical in generations previous to the millennial generation (Janssen, 2008).

Democratic coaching style. Coaches who use the democratic style encourage players to voice their opinions and thoughts in order to make the best decisions (Chapman, 2015). This engagement usually results in a stronger relationship with the team as well as a closer inter-team bond. According to Chapman (2015), democratic coaching offers a wider variety of ideas for the coach to choose based on the team's input. This involves shared decision-making. A democratic coach guides performer toward selecting and achieving their goals. Implicit in this style is that the coach provides leadership in the form of positive guidance. The team's input works doubly, not only assisting the coach but also making individual athletes feel important to the team (Beard, 2017). The democratic leadership style fosters a creative environment by encouraging innovation and input among team members (Ayres, 2017). When athletes are invested in the team's direction and decisions, they tend to work harder to achieve mutually agreed upon goals (Janssen, 2008).

Sokolove (2006) indicated Mike Krzyzewki, five-time national collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national Basketball Champion, used a democratic approach in his coaching and allowed his players to have input. Krzyzewki ultimately made the final decision but he gave his players a voice to share whether they believed that what they were doing was working or not. According to Beard (2017), Krzyzewki believed that it takes a team to work together in order to win and that through democracy his teams were better for it. Ayers (2017) commented drawbacks to democratic coaching can cause leaders to become apologetic, and sometimes become indecisive in certain situations, especially during a crisis. Ayers (2017) also stated decision making can become bogged down and take time.

Holistic coaching style. Holistic mentoring and coaching promote the personal growth of the mentee and coach (Trotter, 2014). The holistic mentor or coach's primary goal is to facilitate the positive development of the mentee and coaches' leadership strengths, emotional intelligence, communication skills, and team engagement (Hollywood, Blaess, Santin, & Bloom, 2016). Using a holistic style of coaching, the coach creates a relationship with every individual athlete based on interpersonal communication and genuine care (Becker, 2009). The holistic approach looks at all aspects of the individual - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Trust is a key component in the holistic style of coaching (Blevins, 2015). According to Blevins, building trust through getting to know your athletes is critical. Van Hooser (2013) stated in *Leaders Ought to Know* that leaders need to get to know the people they are leading. VanHooser stressed the importance of learning something about constituents and taking the time to listen to them. Hall (2014) advised leaders to show appreciation and to promote an organization with employees who care. This relates to millennials since they seek leaders who are aiming for the same goals together.

Needs of Millennial Athletes

Staff members were struggling with coaching the New York Giants of the NFL in 2015. They requested assistance from renowned clinical psychologist Dr. Chris Bogart, the executive director of The Southfield Center for Development, to understand the differences between the coaches and the millennial athletes they were coaching. The Giants' head coach, Tom Coughlin, was described by Jenkins (2005) as "a Patton-like, megalomaniac throwback" (p. 2). The autocratic coach was not relating to his players. Bogart (2015) reported millennials are different than previous generations. They want

leaders to listen to them and have opinions of their own. Millennials are up for challenges and embrace them. This generation is more technologically savvy and good at multitasking unlike any previous generation. Millennials have an affinity for networking and see the world globally. Bogart (2105) recommended the Giants' coaches should "capitalize on millennials intuitive sense of understanding technology, listen to what they have to say, let them communicate digitally since they are comfortable doing so, and allow them space to be the best they can be" (p. 5). This type of coaching flew in the faces of the Giants' head coach and staff, but they made the recommended changes.

Coaching was designed originally as physical training of individuals or a team (Becker, 2009). McKeachie (2002) reported discussion is the prototype for active learning. The democratic style of coaching embraces student participation and allows the instructor to embrace learning. According to Kasworm (2005), discussion provides millennials with the opportunity to draw on their life experiences which they value. Coaches have found that questioning proves to be a valuable strategy for learning. Millennial athletes ask for greater individualization and more access outside of practice to their coaches. Lyle (2002) theorized maintaining a complex intrapersonal relationship with athletes is a critical skill that coaches need to master. Most coaches are not trained in how to manage intrapersonal relationships with their athletes. As millennials demand more time from their coach on a day to day basis than previous generations, they require more individualized attention. Millennials present a challenge in the community college setting (Mitchell, 2015). They exhibit characteristics different from undergraduates in the past and have traits that impact coaching and teaching (Pannoni, 2015). Their distinctive needs and high expectations create conflicting issues when looking at

traditional instructional techniques. As Mitchell (2015) argued, "Given how structured

their lives have been, they may struggle in the transition to college as they face more

ambiguity and a greater call for self-responsibility" (p. 65).

Elmore (2019) suggested coaching has moved from command and correct to give

and guide. He contended millennials do not respond to coaches that simply yell, expect

respect without earning it, and encourage athletes to fear them. According to Elmore,

coaches who are successful follow the give and guide approach when working with

athletes. Athletes are looking for coaches to be mentors and not simply an autocratic

leader telling them what to do without a reason. Janssen (2008) found millennials want

to be educated versus simply being told what to do. Elmore (2019) believed players

should do their own thinking based on the 'why' their coach has explained to them

between games. Elmore also believed as players learn to own the responsibility, and

make mistakes from time to time, this invites coaches to guide them in tweaking

conclusions about their athletic performance. Ownership is shared between the athlete

and coach.

Millennials and Coaching Styles

Millennials have shown they want to be educated versus lectured, and they also

want to be entertained in the process because of short attention spans (Janssen, 2008).

Millennials have demonstrated they need to be treated differently than previous

generations. Leaders have had to adapt or see their teams or organizations fail if they do

not adapt to changes in generational characteristics (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010). An

example of adapting an organization to meet the characteristics of millennials is Pete

Carroll, head coach of the Seattle Seahawks. He used the power of positive coaching and

focused on individuality (Bennett, 2016). Carroll has become known for what Sports

Illustrated writer Trotter (2014) described as an approach "heavy on fun and competition

and taking advantage of the uniqueness of each individual" (p. 2). Former San Francisco

49er head football coach Jim Tomsula took a similar approach to coaching his team.

Clark (2015) described Tomsula,

> The coach saw himself as a missionary, who needed to understand the culture of
>
> team members before expecting them to understand the coach's culture. You
>
> must speak their language in order to gain their trust. You need to steer away
>
> from long lectures and invite interaction. (p. 3)

Raines (2002) found millennials need to be provided structure, reports need to

have due dates, and meetings must have agendas and minutes. Goals need to clearly be

stated and progress assessed. Millennials want to achieve and do so when assignments

and success factors are clearly defined. Consistent constructive feedback is welcomed

more than with previous generations. Letting millennials know when they have done

well is also important. Lastly, recognition programs, no matter how small or trivial, are

necessary for continued excellent performance (Martin, 2005)

Successfully Recruiting Millennials

Twenty years ago, student athletes were mailed recruiting questionnaires through

traditional mail. Coaches contacted their respective recruits and called or made house

visits. Twenty years later, the recruitment process has changed with advancements in

technology and differences in generations (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Social media

changed recruiting considerably. Among adults over the age of 18, 19% have used

Twitter, 71% have used Facebook, 17 % have used Instagram, and 22% have

used LinkedIn (Wendover, 2010). According to the Pew Research Center (2015b), 73%

of Americans were using social networking sites as of September 2013. Researching

potential college athletes by way of social media has become a norm across the nation

impacting community colleges to Division I athletic programs.

A decade ago, staff who still relied on older forms of communication such as mail

or phone may have found it harder to stay in touch with the millennial student

(Rethlefsen, 2009). Santovec (2006) stated that many potential students do not have

landline phones. Instead, cell phones have become the communication tool of choice.

E-mail is not a reliable source in reaching students because most rarely check e-mail.

More effective forms of communicating are podcasts and Facebook, with Facebook being

the most effective method of communication (Santovec, 2006). Wendover (2010) found

that millennial students prefer digital messaging over human contact. College coaches

agree that potential student athletes prefer text messaging and social media contact over

phone calls or email (Blevins, 2015). Social networking is transforming from a network

that is merely social to a more collaborative network bringing together students, teachers,

family, friends, and coworkers in an education, personal, and business environment,

sometimes all at the same time (Rethlefsen, 2009). Millennial generation students and

parents have placed coaches in a conundrum by demanding access 24 hours a day

(Jackson, 2009). These places a great deal of pressure on coaches to maintain dialogue

while staying within established NCAA, National Association of Intercollegiate

Athletics, and NJCAA rules. One negative drawback with so much use of social media

in the recruiting process is potential negative comments by recruits about an institution.

Potential student athletes are knowledgeable about the consequences of posting inappropriate photos, videos, or comments and use good judgment (Nealy, 2009).

Parents are more involved than ever in the recruiting process (Marano, 2014). Coaches find themselves recruiting the parents as much as the student athlete (Janssen, 2008). Strauss and Howe (2003) found that millennials are closer to their parents than previous generations and have kept the same likes and values as parents.

Successfully Coaching Millennials

Strauss and Howe (2003) outlined eight ways to successfully educate and coach millennials:

(1) Help millennials understand adversity, and how they can grow from it. Millennials are sheltered from the world by their parents and have a difficult time dealing with adversity. (2) Teach them how to improve at academics and instill the reality athletics is a long-term investment. Short term gratification is not going to occur. (3) Be patient with millennials. Coaches, educators, and managers need to remember millennials have a multitude of issues at any one time. (4). Millennials are looking for leaders to educate them. Millennials do not want to be lectured. (5) Make athletics fun. Coaches from the elementary school level to professional level are learning that if leaders can make the athletic field or classroom fun, millennials will see progress. (6) Turn parents into allies. Parents are influencing their children, and attempt to impact, more than any other generation, teachers, coaches and administrators. It's vital for leaders of young adults to reach out to parents. (7) Help millennials fight their own battles. They

are used to their parents fighting their battles in life for them. (8) Remember

millennials are people too and have problems and look to leaders to help them.

(p. 33)

Raines and Arnsparger (2010) had similar thoughts on educating and working

with millennials. First, coaches should consider them confident. Millennials have been

raised by their parents believing they can do anything. Millennials have little 'buy in' for

the old school of thought regarding paying your dues. They believe they can contribute

immediately. "Millennials expect a workplace, classroom or athletic field to be

challenging, collaborative, creative, fun, and rewarding" (p. 10).

According to Raines and Arnsparger (2010) millennials are inclusive and embrace

diversity. Millennials tend to be civic minded and think of the greater good for their

teams or communities. Raines and Arnsparger (2010) concurred with other scholars that

millennials are goal oriented, expect to succeed, and will take the necessary steps in the

right environment to do so.

Dorsey (2018) found millennials can be loyal, hard-working, and problem-solving

individuals. It comes down to recruiting the right individuals, developing, and

communicating with them. Dorsey (2018) also stated not all millennials are entitled or

want a participation trophy. They are hardworking and want to achieve (Dorsey, 2018).

Bogart (2015) provided several suggestions for individuals coaching millennial

athletes. The first suggestion was to provide a work life balance. The millennial

generation has shown they want balance in their lives. Coaches need to be aware of this.

The second suggestion was to provide the athletes a fun, athlete-oriented environment.

Being clear during lecture sessions and emphasizing what is important information and

what is not as essential was the third suggestion. A fourth suggestion was to bring notes for millennials so athletes can focus on what is being said. A fifth suggestion was to be intentional with time and outline the subject or subjects that will be discussed. Having the athletes practice self-reflection on what has been discussed was a final suggestion (Bogart, 2015).

Monaco and Martin (2007) suggested the instructor should act as a facilitator of learning when educating millennials. In addition, these authors indicated it is important to provide direction for course assignments, state expectations for student behavior, and outline rules and regulations with ramifications that will occur if not followed. Monaco and Martin also found millennials want suggestions for improvements. Suggestions should be given in a positive constructive voice and in a timely manner. This goes against the autocratic style of coaching. The Monaco and Martin (2007) recommendations concurred with previous studies by Strauss and Howe (2003) that found millennials want direction, but they are seeking to be educated and not simply told what to do.

Neal (2018) made the following recommendations to successfully work with millennials, "Build your program to leverage millennials strengths, take advantage of their technological savviness. Give them goals that will stretch their abilities and intellect. Encourage them to collaborate with others" (p. 3).

Summary

Zemke, Raines, and Filipzak (2014) noted millennials have given leaders in education and the workplace unique behavioral and social challenges. Leaders have seen significant changes from previous generations in the characteristics of millennials and

how they respond to leaders. The wants and needs of millennials are challenging. Leaders must adapt to these changes to continue the success of their organizations, classrooms, or teams (Gordon, 2015). Chapter 2 provided an overview of generational cohorts, characteristics of millennials, coaching styles, needs of millennial student athletes, coaching styles and millennials, and actions associated with successful recruitment and coaching of millennials. Chapter 3 describes the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of NJCAA cross country and track coaches about their leadership styles and leadership styles used in coaching pre-millennial and millennial student athletes. Perceptions about successful practices for recruiting, coaching, and defining goals for individual and team pre-millennial and millennial student athletes were also studied. Communication with parents of pre-millennial and millennial student athletes was also investigated. Chapter 3 includes a description of the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations of the study.

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in the current study. Qualitative research is appropriate when the research questions are exploratory (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research provides an understanding of different individuals' beliefs and the realities as perceived by everyone (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Qualitative research is used to study, explore, or understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The phenomenon in the current study focused on coaches' experiences coaching pre-millennial and millennial student athletes and adjustments made to successfully mentor student athletes who are members of the millennial generation. Phenomenological research allowed the researcher to investigate the lived experiences of interviewed respondents. Interview questions aligned with six research questions were developed to solicit answers that were rich in description that could give the most information about

the respondent's experiences. All qualitative investigations describe the richness of content in human complexities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Lichtman, 2006). The main focus of the phenomenological interview is the description of the meanings of phenomena (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative researcher must rely on participants' opinions, use broad statements, and gather primarily textual information. The job of the researcher is to analyze the text to identify themes, noting that qualitative analysis is subjective and potentially contains bias. Phenomenological analysis requires describing and analyzing the text to interpret the context. The description, analysis and interpretation of the information obtained through interviews comprise the three main steps suggested by Wolcott (2010) for the general analysis of qualitative research.

Setting

Community colleges throughout the U.S. that have NJCAA cross country track and field athletic programs served as the setting for the current study. Participants were male and female NJCAA cross country and track and field coaches located throughout the United States. The community college was selected as the setting for this study because coaches in this setting have seen significant turnover in student athletes over the last 10 years (Mitchell, 2015). Coaches in community college settings have interacted with athletes and seen more changes in their coaching styles due to generational transition than coaches from four year college or university settings (Smith & Galbraith, 2012).

Sampling Procedures

The population for the current study included head NJCAA cross country track and field coaches throughout the United States. A sample of 10 experienced NJCAA Division I college cross country and track and field coaches with 12 to 53 years of experience were selected to be interviewed. Coaches were selected based on their number of years of experience and success achieved during their careers. Coaching success was defined as consistently placing in the top three in the respective region and top 10 at NJCAA National Championship events (cross country, half marathon, indoor and outdoor track). The researcher purposely selected participants based on their experience and expertise coaching community college cross country and track. The sample group included only those coaches who are members of the NJCAA. Each participant had worked at a community college where they were employed a minimum of 10 years.

Coaches of both male and female individual and team sports were represented in the participant sample. NJCAA Division I community college cross country and track and field coaches were selected for interview since these are typically the largest athletic programs in an athletic department at the community college level. Each participant was from a community college that supported a minimum of 30 male and 30 female athletes who represented a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds as well as different generations.

Instruments

The researcher was the primary instrument used to collect data for this study. An interview protocol included three background questions followed by structured interview

questions aligned with the six research questions. The background questions included the following:

1. How many years have you been coaching?

2. Do you coach men, women, or both?

3. How many athletes do you have on your team?

Six research questions were developed to provide a description of the phenomenon being studied. The research questions (RQ) and structured interview questions (IQ) included the following:

RQ1. What do community college cross country and track coaches perceive is their predominant leadership style?

IQ1a. The coaching literature describes 3 predominant leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and holistic. Autocratic leaders are generally straight forward and set expectations. Democratic leaders are generally open- minded and allow input from their athletes, and holistic leaders generally care more individually about the athlete as person. Which of those styles do think is most representative of your current leadership style?

1Q1b. Give an example of how you apply this leadership style in your coaching of cross country/track and field student athletes.

IQ1c. Describe challenges associated with adopting new ways of leading and coaching student athletes.

RQ2. What do community college cross country/track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style when coaching pre- millennial and millennial cross country/track student athletes?

IQ2a. How have you changed your leadership style to adapt to coaching pre-millennials and millennials?

IQ2b. Describe the impact these changes have had on the millennial student athletes you have coached.

IQ2c. What changes do you anticipate you will make in your leadership and coaching style in the future?

RQ3. What do community college cross country/track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style as it relates to recruiting pre-millennial and millennial cross country/track student athletes?

IQ3a. When you first started recruiting student athletes what methods did you use to interact with and contact potential recruits?

IQ3b. What methods do you currently use to interact with and contact potential student athlete recruits?

RQ4. What do community college cross country/track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style coaching pre-millennial and millennial cross country/track student athletes as a result of technology?

IQ4a. What role did technology play when you first started coaching?

IQ4b. What role does technology currently play in relation to coaching?

IQ4c. How has your coaching style changed because of the influence of technology?

RQ5. What do community college cross country/track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style as it relates to defining goals for individual or team athletes who are pre-millennial and millennial cross country/track student athletes?

IQ5a. Describe how you set individual and team goals when you began coaching.

IQ5b. Describe how you currently set individual and team goals.

RQ6. What do community college cross country/track coaches perceive has changed in their leadership style as it relates to communication with parents of pre-millennial and millennial cross country/track student athletes?

IQ6a. Describe your relationship with parents when you first started coaching.

IQ6b. Describe your relationship with parents who currently have athletes on the team.

IQ6c. What changes have occurred in your interactions with parents in the last 10 years?

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to conducting interviews, a request to conduct the research was submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on July 24, 2019. IRB approval was granted to the researcher on July 19, 2019 (Appendix A). After receiving IRB approval, 15 potential participants were contacted via email with an invitation to participate in the study (Appendix B). The invitation to participate in the study provided an overview of the study, an explanation of how anonymity would be guaranteed, the right to not respond to any question or withdraw from the study at any time during the interview, and the opportunity to review the transcription of the interview for accuracy. It was also explained that no incentives would be provided for participation and that the interview would be audio recorded. Interview questions were also included with the invitation to participate in the study. Immediately upon receiving a response indicating willingness to participate in an interview, the researcher contacted the respondent via

email to schedule a date and time for the interview. Prior to each interview, each participant was asked to sign a consent form and return it via email (Appendix C). The consent form included the same elements of the study outlined in the invitation to participate including affirmation that the interview would be audio recorded. The measures taken to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participant were also stated in the consent form.

The researcher provided a copy of the interview questions to each participant prior to the interview session. At the beginning of each interview, respondents were reminded that participation in the research study was voluntary, and that they could refuse to answer any of the interview questions or could withdraw from the study at any point in the interview. Participants were informed they could ask questions at any time, no incentives would be provided for participating in the study, and that all interviews would be audio recorded and transcribed.

The researcher took notes during the interview sessions to ensure all verbal and non-verbal responses like sighing or body language were considered. The interview sessions were scheduled for 45 minutes. Participants were interviewed during normal work hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or in the evening when they could provide enough time to participate in in-depth interviews. The method of communication was via telephone or in person.

The qualitative approach uses the researcher as the primary instrument in obtaining information through interviews, discussions, and/or observations. The researcher relied extensively on in-depth interviewing of the participants. Questions were specific in nature to the topic of the study. After the conclusion of each interview, the

researcher added notes regarding observations about the participant and non-verbal behaviors exhibited during the interview. This allowed the researcher to easily analyze data from each interview during the data analysis and synthesis process (Creswell, 2014).

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Côté (1993) suggested that there is no one correct way to analyze qualitative data. Therefore, it is essential that researchers performing a qualitative analysis provide a detailed description of the procedures, decision criteria, and data manipulation that lead them to the results of a study. Patton (2002) noted that when working with qualitative inquiry it is essential to gain an in-depth, rich description of the experience. Patton (2002) and Czech, Fisher, Hayes, Thompson, and Wrisberg (2004) developed a four step methodological approach for a qualitative analysis that was adopted for this study. The four steps included: (1) approaching the interviews through transcribing each interview and obtaining a grasp of the interview; (2) focusing the data through bracketing; (3) phenomenological reduction; and (4) releasing meanings through forming categories, identifying themes, and describing themes. Each of these steps is described below

Approaching the interviews. Transcribing the interview was accomplished through the researcher digitally recording and transcribing each interview verbatim to generate a document for thematic analysis. Patton (2002) noted it is important to obtain a verbatim transcript in order to eliminate data distortion and assure accuracy of the data. All recordings were secured for a period up to five years on a secure drive kept in a locked file.

The researcher obtained a grasp of the interview through performing a continuous process of listening to and reading the interviews. This process allowed the researcher to

gain a full understanding of the experiences the coaches had with their athletes.

Listening to and reading the transcriptions also allowed the researcher to check for errors.

Focusing the data. Bracketing the data involved the researcher consciously

avoiding all presuppositions in order to examine the data in its pure form (Patton, 2002).

By doing so, the researcher's examination of the data ensured that each participant was

not led in any way. This allowed for a more in-depth examination of the data. According

to Patton (2002), after the completion of the bracketing process, the data and its elements

can be examined with equal value. The researcher initiated the interpretation process of

the data, focusing on understanding all aspects of the findings.

Phenomenological reduction. This step required eliminating irrelevant,

repetitive, or overlapping data. Patton (2002) stated that during the interviews,

conversations may contain irrelevant information that is not useful in understanding the

studied phenomenon. According to Patton, all audio recordings should be transcribed

verbatim, regardless of how intelligible the transcript may be when it is read back. In the

current study, lines of text were numbered.

Once the transcription was complete, the researcher read it while listening to the

recording and corrected any spelling or other errors and anonymized the transcript so that

the participant could not be identified from anything said. After the interviews were

transcribed, participants were emailed their transcription and verified accuracy. The

purpose of this process was to guarantee that the experience of the participant was

transcribed accurately.

Releasing meanings. The first step in releasing meanings is forming categories.

To begin the analysis process, the researcher examined one interview transcript at a time

to gain an understanding of the overall experience of the participants. Then the response to each question was examined to determine how it related to the general context of the interview. Coding was then used to identify key ideas that emerged in each transcription (Patton, 2002). Coding refers to the identification of topics, issues, similarities, and differences that are revealed through the participants' narratives and interpreted by the researcher (Patton, 2002).

The second step in releasing meanings involved identifying themes. Interview transcriptions were compared to one another to identify similarities and differences. The coding process allowed the researcher to identify common similarities and differences that occurred across several transcripts. Patton (2002) referred to these common observations as themes.

The final step in releasing meanings is to describe the themes. Patton (2002) suggested that in order to present the results of qualitative data effectively, theme descriptions should include focusing, balancing, description, and interpretation. Patton (2002) also noted that when working with qualitative inquiry it is essential to gain a thick, rich description of the experience. Therefore, the data analysis results included participant quotes to illustrate common themes in a clear and descriptive manner that clarified respondent experiences.

Reliability and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is open, subjective, and flexible. The standardized methods of quantitative research do not apply in a qualitative study. Qualitative research can only be valid if the participants involved in the study answer the researcher's questions truthfully and completely throughout the interview session. The researcher encouraged

study participants to reply to all questions truthfully and accurately. The researcher

effectively asked questions that did not lead the participant. To consider a study as

reliable, the participants must be considered trustworthy (Patton, 2002).

The validity of a measurement, as stated by Czech et al. (2004), is based on a

reader's ability to experience the descriptions as truthful. To address bias, this researcher

exercised extensive reflection on his personal experiences throughout the interview, data

collection, and data analysis processes (Maxwell, 2013).

To establish reliability the researcher relied on member checking, which

according to Shenton (2004) is a qualitative technique used to establish credibility of the

transcribed interviews. Credibility involves establishing the truth of the research study's

findings; it means showing that the findings are accurate and honest. Traditionally,

member checking is defined as sharing either a brief summary of the findings or sharing

the whole findings with the research participants (Shenton, 2004).

Researcher's Role

The researcher's role in the current study was to produce unbiased, qualitative

research on coaching styles and specific aspects related to coaching pre-millennials and

millennials who have participated in cross country and track and field in the NJCAA. In

qualitative research the researcher is considered an instrument of data collection (Denzin

& Lincoln, 2013). This means that data are mediated through a human instrument, rather

than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines. Creswell (2014) stated the two

key elements for the researcher to maintain in all phases of a qualitative study are

objectivity and truthfulness. It is impossible with a qualitative study to have complete

objectivity (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Since qualitative methods are subject to researcher

bias, it is difficult to interpret without some degree of subjectivity (Bradley, 1993). The researcher was aware that bias could take place based on previous experience as a head cross country and track coach at a community college. To avoid bias, the researcher exercised careful observation, meticulous notetaking, and reflection on answers given throughout the data collection processes.

Limitations

"Limitations are factors out of the control of the researcher" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 133). A limitation for the current study was a low sample size. Generalizability of the results from the current study to all cross country and track and field coaches is limited.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine NJCAA cross country and track and field coaches' perceptions about coaching styles, recruiting, and coaching millennials, the impact of technology on coaching millennials, and changes in coaching styles during the past decade. Ten experienced NJCAA cross country and track and field coaches were interviewed using a qualitative research methodology. Chapter 4 presents the results of the analysis of the interview transcripts.

Chapter 4

Results

This qualitative study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of NJCAA cross country and track coaches related to pre-millennial and millennial student athletes. The first purpose of the current study was to examine NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about their predominant leadership style. The second purpose of the study was to determine NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions of changes in recruitment of pre-millennial and millennial student athletes. A third purpose was to ascertain NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in their leadership and coaching styles when coaching pre-millennials and millennials. The fourth purpose of the study focused on community college cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in leadership style related to defining goals when working with pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. The fifth purpose of the study was to evaluate NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions of how use of technology (e.g. computers and cell phones) has impacted leadership and coaching styles when working with pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. The final purpose of this research was to evaluate NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in leadership and coaching styles when communicating with parents of pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. This chapter includes the results of the analysis of interviews with 10 NJCAA cross country and track coaches.

Description of Participants

Participant ages ranged from 30 to 65 and the sample included nine male participants and one female participant. Interview respondents reported between 12 and 53 years of coaching experience. Participants coached at community colleges throughout the United States. Appendix D describes participant demographics including the gender, state, leadership style, and number of years of coaching of each participant. All participants in the study had demonstrated success in coaching cross country and track at NJCAA regional competitions and NJCAA national championships. The following section describes participants' perceptions of their predominant leadership style, leadership style changes in their coaching of pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes, changes associated with recruiting pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes, coach and student athlete use of technology, changes in communicating with parents of pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes, objectives for pre-millennial and millennial student athletes, and communication with parents of pre-millennial and millennial student athletes.

Predominant Leadership Style

Coaches' identification of their primary leadership style was mixed. Appendix D lists the leadership style of each participant. Three participants indicated their leadership style was holistic, two described their style as democratic, three indicated they used a combination of holistic and democratic leadership, and two stated they used an autocratic style. Respondents who perceived they use a holistic style indicated they work with athletes as a whole person in all aspects of their lives and build relationships with each athlete. Participant 4, with 15 years of coaching experience, stated he uses a holistic

coaching style. He said, "I believe that by fostering trust and accountability with your athletes, positive results are inevitable. I develop strong relationships with my athletes and that trust seems to translate into hard work and positive performance." Participant 2, with 38 years of coaching experience also described himself as a holistic leader. As an example of how he applies holistic leadership he stated,

> I try to encourage and lead individuals to become the best they can be in all areas of their lives (body, mind, and spirit). Body, I do a thorough fitness evaluation at the beginning of the year, and then I set individual training workouts for each athlete, taking into consideration their abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. I require student athletes to set an educational plan.

Participant 1, with 14 years of coaching experience, stated his leadership style is holistic, but indicated he would be moving back to a more autocratic approach. Participant 1 also stated, "I feel like the athletes are taking advantage of my leadership style. We only have a short amount of time (two years) with the athletes."

A coach with 12 years of experience, Participant 3, described his leadership style as democratic. When asked to give an example of how he applies this leadership style in his coaching of cross country and track athletes, Participant 3 responded,

> I would often ask my athletes for feedback on how they felt during a workout and adjust their training accordingly. I would also tweak planned workouts on the fly if I felt like the athlete was not in a position to complete the target task for the day based on their physical or psychological state.

Participant 6, with 53 years of coaching experience stated his leadership style is democratic. He stated he visits with athletes daily and asks for input how they are

feeling. He is not afraid to make changes in practice based on how they are feeling. Participant 8, with 15 years of coaching experience, described himself as a democratic and holistic leader. As an example of how he applies this leadership style, Participant 8 stated he is willing to adjust workouts and meets based on input from the athletes.

A coach with 19 years of coaching experience, Participant 7 described herself as a democratic and holistic leader. She stated, "I allow the athletes freedom to discuss their training and racing strategy openly with me. I let them have a lot of input and make changes accordingly." An experienced coach with 30 years coaching experience, Participant 9 responded his leadership style is, "Democratic with a holistic leaning. I believe when I started out, I was definitely autocratic and thought I needed to be on top of everything. As I gained experience, I changed to a more democratic style."

Participant 5, with 35 years of coaching experience, stated he views his leadership style as autocratic. When asked how he applies this method with athletes, Participant 5 stated, "We set up the year by having a team meeting at the first of the year and I tell them all you either buy in and do as you're told or you go away." Participant 5 stated "It's been a struggle, coaching millennials." He said he was not willing to change his leadership style. Participant 10, who has 50 years of head coaching experience, described himself as an autocratic leader. He responded, "I've had to make some adjustment to this millennial generation of student athlete." When asked if adjusting has been difficult, Participant 10's answer was "Yes and no, yes in the fact that I'm an autocratic leader for the last 50 years, but change is inevitable, and if I want remain successful I have to adapt."

When asked to describe challenges associated with adopting newer ways of leading and coaching student athletes, Participant 8 shared, "It's always challenging to try new coaching strategies. I think it is most difficult to adapt to coaching staff changes and how that changes the dynamic of the program as a whole." Participant 9 shared a different view when asked about challenges related to adopting new approaches to leading and coaching,

> I'm always walking a tightrope to keep everyone happy. I limit the number of athletes on our team, so everyone has a role. I try to make sure that everyone is important to the team. No one is just there. Instead of just coaching, I believe you need to take a genuine interest in each athlete.

Participant 7 voiced agreement with Participant 9, "One of the biggest challenges was making sure everyone had a role on the team." Participant 7 noted that millennials want a role on the team, and it can be challenging keeping them bought in. She stated athletes check out and stop trying hard. Participant 7 provided an example of raising the number of cross country runners on the roster from 10 to 15 and the tragic consequences that resulted from this action. Half of the team gave up and stopped trying because they felt they did not have a role on the team. Keeping the roster at 10, all of the athletes felt they had a role to play on the team all the way through championship season. Once some the athletes did not feel they were contributing they became distractions.

Leadership Style Changes

When asked what changes in leadership and coaching style have been made when coaching pre-millennial and millennial student athletes, Participant 5 said he does not anticipate any change to his leadership style. He indicated athletes adapt to his leadership

style or "they leave the program". Participant 5 is entrenched in the autocratic leadership

style. It is how he has coached for 35 years.   In contrast, Participant 8 stated, "I've

softened my approach quite a bit as well as learned to reach out via social media.

Millennials do not work well in one-on-one, face to face situations." Participant 8 stated

he finds himself talking to his athletes about issues outside athletics such as academics,

work, and social issues. He works with each student athletes as a whole person not just

an athlete. Participant 4 shared a similar view stating, "I've become more flexible in my

thinking and scheduling, allowing for more autonomy among my athletes." Participant 4

also shared that athletes generally respond well to good communication. He felt that was

a key component working with millennials. Participant 4 found that by scheduling

smaller group coaching sessions he was able to connect more with the athletes and grasp

what issues were going on with them on a day to day basis. Participant 4 knows the

millennial generation of student athlete desires more one on one coaching and

communication between coach and athletes. Participant 6 stated, "Athletes are more

distracted with cell phones and music devices. It makes communication difficult, getting

athletes to simply listen is difficult." Participant 6 had implemented shorter meetings and

always tries to keep sessions moving due to shorter attention spans.

Participant 3 stated communication is one of the most difficult aspects when

working with millennials. He responded, "Working with athletes in large groups is

difficult because today's generation of student athlete expects you to communicate with

them individually. Doing this is a challenge and an art." Participant 3 stated he would

prefer to be more of an autocratic leader, but he knows that would not work with the

millennial generation, so he has adopted a holistic leadership style.

I have to acknowledge the dependence on technology, and their need for attention. Past generations of student athletes were told to do something, and they followed directions without a lot of explanation. Today athletes want everything explained and have their hands held in the process. It can get very frustrating. I've to acknowledge their need for one on one interaction, and communication outside of practice time. I've also had to adjust to their social networking and live outside of athletics and the classroom.

When asked how he has changed his leadership style to adapt to coaching pre-millennials and millennials, Participant 9 stated,

I am more invested in the future of today's student/athletes. My role as just a coach has morphed into being the academic advisor and an advocate for their academic progress. I am seen as someone that is for them, someone that will be there to make sure they succeed. Life seems to get in the way a lot more for today's athletes, their lives, at least to them, seem more complicated. Coaching has turned into a lot more guidance.

Answering the same question, Participant 7 responded,

I've had to change from being autocratic, to democratic, and ultimately holistic. I've gone through all three. It was a difficult transition going from autocratic to democratic. Working with large groups it's much easier to be autocratic, but if you want the athletes to buy into your program, they need to know you care about them.

When asked about challenges associated with adopting new ways of leading and coaching student athletes, Participant 7 stated, "Millennials require much more flexibility, they have other demands outside of school and athletics. Technology plays a key role communicating with them." Participant 3 shared a similar view,

Millennials are inundated with information and therefore often question everything. Providing the why behind your method is important for establishing trust. They also live in a world where it is very easy to be distracted by what everyone else is doing and often compare their progress to everyone else. For this reason, I have found it very impactful to train them to focus individually on small incremental improvements over time. They often find this to be very rewarding".

Participant 1 commented,

I truly believe the impact was positive and immediate. I have started to see a decline in different areas as I begin to coach this new era. The holistic method works well with the millennial generation. Participant 1 stated that he saw change come quickly with the millennial generation. What I noticed was the desire for more one on one attention and millennials wanted to be educated versus lectured to.

When asked how he has changed his leadership style to adapt to coaching pre-millennials and millennials, Participant 2 responded,

Being attentive to the needs of individuals is key to coaching new generations of athletes. The most constant part of my leadership style is growth. Every year presents new challenges and remaining present with each athlete helps me to change my style based on their generation's needs. Across all generations these

character traits should remain the same: strong relationships, personal ownership

of education and athletics, and prioritizing focus and hard work. Millennials

require more attention than any other generation. Generation X would follow

instructions and not require so much individualized attention. Pre-millennials and

millennials, whether in a group or individualized setting, want the one on one

interaction with the coach. Pre-millennials and millennials also want attention

outside of practice which puts greater demands on coaches.

Participant 2 also commented he had some difficulties early on coaching millennials. He

was not ready for the demands of millennials versus Generation X, but he adapted his

leadership style.

Changes in Recruiting

All respondents stated that in the early 2000's coaches contacted athletes by

phone, in person at events, through coaches, and U.S. mail. That has changed drastically

due to the influence of technology. Participant 2 replied, "When I first started coaching

the internet did not exist. We simply went to meets and met athletes face to face and

followed up with phone calls." A common response from all participants was how much

technology has changed recruiting. Now coaches must rely on text, email, and social

media to recruit athletes. Participant 8, who has been coaching for 15 years, stated that

he does not know an era without technology influencing recruiting. This participant has

always used technology in recruiting.

In response to how his coaching style has changed because of the influence of

technology, Participant 7 shared,

You must acknowledge millennials are constantly using social media, email, and texting. In all honesty anything you do at practice, trips, or meets can be instantly captured, and broadcast all over the internet in a flash. If anything, you must be aware of your own actions. I've known coaches that have gotten in significant trouble with their athletic directors when athletes or parents make them aware of a coach's behavior or actions.

Participant 10 commented,

Ten years ago, you went to a meet, visited with the athlete, followed up with a phone call or calls, set up the visit with the recruit and their parents. Today you have to text them or contact them on social media, then set up a visit. Parents play a huge role in the recruiting process. You have to sell them. Parents utilize technology to their advantage. It makes it easier and more comfortable contacting you.

Participant 1 described his recruiting 10 years ago,

I would use a lot of mailings and contacting of the coaches. Social media hadn't exploded yet, so the mass mailings were the best way of doing things to be honest. Also, constantly being seen at meets by coaches and athletes helped as well. The more you saw something from my college the more I stayed in your sights.

Participant 9 shared a similar method, "It was awful! I once sent out 700 letters to potential student athletes and did not get one response. They all went in the trash can." Participant 3 used cold calling recruits and contacting coaches when he started coaching. He expressed how he currently recruits,

I was not really ever a fan of using social media, or text to contact athletes

because I believe in the importance of personal interaction. I finally had to come

to the realization that kids don't hardly answer the phone anymore but will

respond immediately to text and also social media is an incredibly powerful tool

for interacting with them.

Participant 4 shared a view similar to participant 3, adding that social media, email, and

texting are crucial communication instruments.

All respondents expressed that technology has helped more than hindered the

recruiting process. Technology has given coaches more access to communicate with

potential recruits. Participant 1 expressed that technology can also work against a college

if current athletes or potential recruits use social media to discourage other athletes from

coming to the college or leaving a program.

Coach and Student Athlete Use of Technology

When asked what role technology currently plays in relation to coaching,

participant 8 stated, "Technology has always played a role with regards to video analysis.

However, the adaptations of messaging services to meet new demands has allowed a

constant line of communication that is available between athlete and coach." Participant

8 stated he believes technology plays a vital role in communication and growing the

relationship with the athlete. Participant 2 stated he believes technology has had a

positive impact, stating,

Technology now has a much larger role in my coaching than in it did in the past.

Worldwide recruiting is much easier now because students can find information

about our program online, and I can reach out to international coaches. I will use

my cell phone to text athletes. I can film any athlete and show it to them

immediately from my phone. I can also show athletes tutorials and videos from the internet during practice.

In response to the same question, participant 7 stated,

When I first started coaching, I did not have a cell phone, a beeper, and land line for recruiting and communicating with athletes. Now technology contributes to everything, from communicating with athletes, (they demand lots of attention), recruiting, team meetings.

Participant 10 stated,

I saw technology slowly creep into use with athletes. I recruit in very rural areas of the state. Advancements in technology did not reach the athletes as quick. The changes did come, and it seemed overnight, that I suddenly was communicating with athletes via text messaging and social media.

When asked how coaching style changed because of the influence of technology Participant 5 had a similar view of technology. He did not see technology affecting his coaching style but found that it did play a significant role in coaching. Participant 9 responded,

It allows you to do a lot in a limited amount of time. I can call one of my coaches at a meet and give them specific instructions as to who to see since I have up to the minute results. It aids in organization, having lists of potential student/athletes, meet locations, and times. Technology has not impacted my coaching so much, but it has impacted my organization and recruiting.

In contrast, Participant 1 said he believes technology has hurt his coaching style,

I honestly think it has gotten worse for me because it has caused me to overthink more than ever due in part to all of this data and feedback I'm able to receive. Sometimes keeping it simple works a lot better.

Responding to the question about the role technology currently plays in his coaching, Participant 3 stated,

A pretty big role in recruiting, coaching and communication with parents. I definitely utilize the cell phone to reach out and communicate with athletes more and utilize cell phone apps to take film and provide technical feedback to athletes. Additionally, directing athletes to resources like YouTube is huge for educating them on the technical aspects of their events.

Participant 4 shared a similar view and indicated, "It tends to play a much larger role, particularly in recruiting and administrative tasks. I still rely primarily on my own eye and intuition as well as feedback from the athletes for actual instruction."

Goal Setting with Pre-millennial and Millennial Student Athletes

When asked to describe how individual and team goals are delineated, Participant 2 shared his view of goal setting,

When the team arrives on campus, I hold team-wide meetings to talk about goals. I also bring in athletes individually. We write our goals out on paper and talk about them often. I believe in-person meetings are the key for goal setting. However, if an athlete or recruit is not available, I can send a message to catch them up on what is expected. This is helpful to communicate with athletes outside of practice time**.**

Participant 4 stated, "Team goals are discussed with the staff and tend to reflect the culture of the team. Individual goals are very personalized and include significant input from the athlete themselves." Participant 8 also mentioned culture in his response. He said, "Goals are based on realistic expectations, individual abilities and team culture." Participant 8 shared the need for athletes to have realistic goals. He indicated that all too often athletes come to college with unrealistic goals. This is not good for the athlete. Participant 8 expressed he wants student athletes to work from where their current abilities are athletically and academically. Participant 10 responded,

> We focus on goals of the team. Traditionally I did not focus on the individual. The last five years or so, athletes have been more concerned about their own personal goals than team goals. This can work in cross country and track, but I've found that some athletes are concerned with both, team and individual goals. They seem to perform the best.

Participant 9 responded,

> Each year I look at my team as individuals and try to see their strengths and weaknesses as athletes. I try to come up with an event that may be their best event. Our team goal each year is within our own capability - do well at our regional final. The other goal which is more important as a team is our team academic standing.

Participant 3 shared a similar response. He said, "I have a goal setting process that I take each individual athlete through whereby they set short, intermediate, and long term goals. We write it on paper and revisit throughout the year." In relation to goal setting, Participant 1 responded,

I basically take what we did last year and see where we can improve. I just

looked to see which programs were at the top of the mountain and then saw how

they were winning and what my resources might have been.

Participant 5 described his goal setting is based on high school personal records and what

they need to build a team. Participant 5 works with the student athletes he recruits based

on their strengths. Individual and team goals are also intertwined. Participant 6, when

asked to describe how he currently sets individual and team goals, answered, "I give out a

lot of paperwork, handouts with team expectations, and I share success stories from

previous teams. This is done in a general team meeting." Regarding goal setting,

participant 7 shared,

I set team goals for the cross country and track teams as a whole. Individually I

set the goals for the cross country runners and distance runners in track. I have

the event coaches set individual goals for their athletes. Ultimately the success of

the team as whole comes from individuals performing at their highest abilities.

Communicating with Parents

When asked about his relationship with parents when he first started coaching,

Participant 2 stated,

When I began coaching, my relationship with parents was less consistent. I

would visit with parents when recruiting an athlete, and after that there was little

to no communication. Now, parents are able to keep up with the team through the

internet and our sports information director. I will also text or email parents who

have questions about their athletes. Because of this, my communication with

parents has increased slightly, but I still maintain boundaries. I believe the

student/athlete should retain autonomy, and therefore I do not go out of my way

to share information with parents.

Participant 7 shared a similar view,

When I first began coaching, I had little to no interaction with the parents except

during the recruiting process. Over the last ten years parents are more likely to

call or email. Typically, it is not about athletics, but academic or roommate

problems. Most of the time the parents know they should let their son or daughter

deal with the situation themselves but cannot control the urge to intervene.

Participant 8 stated,

They were much less involved 10 years ago. Parents want more say how their

son or daughter will be treated and handled on the team. Parents have become

more and more protective of their children but have a much better grasp of the

recruiting process than ever before.

Participant 5, an autocratic leader, responded, "When I first started coaching there was

very little contact with parents, and they did not get involved with issues. Parents are

more involved now, and more likely to contact a coach if they have issues." Participant 5

also commented his autocratic leadership style and preference for little or no interaction

with parents has made his job more difficult. Participant 10 stated,

I've coached for 50 years and 20 years ago you recruited the athlete, parents had

little to do with the process. Parents also had little to do with their son or

daughter once they arrived on campus. Now you recruit the athlete and the

parents. Expect parents to contact to you to ask how their child is doing once they

arrive on campus. I return a response quickly or they will contact the athletic

director. It's never ending. Much different than when I first started coaching.

When asked what changes have occurred in interactions with parents in the last 10 years,

Participant 4 responded,

Parents were mostly hands-off and allowed the athletes to grow independently.

This allowed athletes to develop into more autonomous individuals when I first

started coaching. Over the last 10 years parents are much more aggressive in their

attempts to be involved in their child's life on the team. It's a disturbing and

distracting trend that often leads to conflict.

When asked about his current relationships with parents, Participant 4's response was,

Currently, parents often attempt to become much more involved in all aspects of

the team. I generally tolerate a certain level of involvement; however, I generally

draw a hard line with regard to certain aspects. I want parents to be interested, but

not involved.

Participant 9 described his interaction with parents the last 10 years,

I have tried to be a better listener and let the parents get it all out before speaking.

I don't hesitate to call a parent if there is anything I believe we need to discuss. I

always try to end on a positive note. I want there to be an understanding, not

negative feelings. If there is an issue, I want a plan of action that hopefully both

myself and the parent can agree this is what needs to be done.

Participant 9 also shared that sometimes it's better to engage the parent if there is an issue

than to wait for the parent to initiate the contact.

Participant 1 stated he had not seen a lot of change in interactions with parents in the last 10 years, and stated,

> I can't really see too much. A lot of the athletes I get their parents are either out of the picture or speak for them and hold their hand. Once in a while I will get a parent that lets their child do most of the stuff, and only steps in when asked.

Participant 6, commented on the changes that have occurred in interactions with parents in the last 10 years,

> As I said before, in the beginning I had almost completely positive interaction with parents who were very supportive of my coaching. More recently I still have had mostly positive interaction but have noticed a few more problems with parents interacting in what I would describe as a negative way. For example, providing their opinions about coaching or going above me to defend their child when they were reprimanded for violating team rules.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided a summary of the results of participant responses to questions related to the research questions. No single leadership style (autocratic, democratic, or holistic) was used by the majority of coaches. All but one coach described leadership style changes that have occurred as they transitioned from coaching pre-millennial to millennial student athletes. All coaches described how technology has impacted recruiting in the last decade. Coaches also described how technology has impacted coaching of student athletes and their communication with athletes and parents. All but one coach indicated that parents of millennial student athletes are engaged in communicating more frequently with them than was true with parents of pre-millennials.

Chapter 5 provides an interpretation and recommendations for the study including a study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

This chapter begins with a summary of the study. The major findings from the current study related to the literature are summarized. The chapter concludes with implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

This section provides a summary of the study including an overview of the problem. The purpose statement and research questions utilized in the study are identified. This section concludes with a review of the methodology and the major findings.

Overview of the problem. Numerous researchers have studied athletes from varied generational groups (Elmore, 2019; Janssen, 2008; Paddock, 2018; Twenge, 2018). According to Ayers (2017) millennials have created a dramatic shift in how personnel in colleges and universities work with these young adults. The millennial generation is comprised of a complex group of individuals whose characteristics and values differ from previous generations (Ayers, 2017). Strauss and Howe (2000) indicated millennials are social, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured, and communicate differently from previous generations. Higher education personnel, including coaches, have found they need to adapt to the generational characteristics of millennials. Bogart (2015) found that an autocratic leadership style that was effective with pre-millennial generations was less effective with millennial generation athletes. Coaches who adopted newer leadership and coaching styles, democratic or holistic, have experienced more success with millennial athletes (Bogart, 2015). While researchers

have documented the unique characteristics of millennials, no research has focused on the leadership and coaching styles of NJCAA cross country track and field coaches who are coaching millennials.

  Purpose statement and research questions. This study examined NJCAA track and field coach perceptions about how their leadership styles and coaching practices may have changed during the past decade (2009-2019) when working with pre-millennial and millennial student athletes. The first purpose of the current study was to examine NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about their predominant leadership style. The second purpose of the study was to determine NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions of changes in recruitment of pre-millennial and millennial student athletes. A third purpose was to ascertain NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in their leadership and coaching styles when coaching pre-millennials and millennials. The fourth purpose of the study focused on community college cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in leadership style related to defining goals when working with pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. The fifth purpose of the study was to evaluate NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions of how use of technology (computers, cell phones) has impacted leadership and coaching styles when working with pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. The final purpose of this research was to evaluate NJCAA cross country and track coaches' perceptions about changes in leadership and coaching styles when communicating with parents of pre-millennial and millennial cross country and track student athletes. Six research questions were formulated to address the purposes of this study.

Review of the methodology. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in the current study. Six research questions were developed to investigate leadership styles of NJCAA cross country and track coaches and the adaptations they have made to work effectively with millennial generation student athletes.   Participants included 10 current head coaches who had between 12 and 53 years of coaching experience. A four step data analysis approach designed by Patton (2002) and Czech et al. (2004) was used to analyze participant responses to 19 interview questions. Member checking was used to assure accuracy of interview transcriptions.

Major findings. No single predominant leadership style emerged among the coaches who participated in interviews. Two described themselves as having an autocratic leadership style. Coaches who described themselves as using an autocratic style reported being more direct with student athletes. They expected athletes to follow rules without question. The two autocratic coaches described frustration coaching their athletes. The two coaches who reported using a democratic style and the three who described their style as democratic and holistic indicated they seek input from student athletes and make changes in training routines based on input. The two coaches who identified themselves as democratic coaches reported having good relationships and positive interactions with their athletes. Three coaches perceived themselves as having a predominantly holistic style. The coaches who identified their leadership style as holistic indicated they have positive relationships with their athletes and parents.

Coaches described changes they have made coaching pre-millennial versus millennial student athletes by giving examples of the need to have flexibility in their thinking, scheduling shorter meetings, and communicating more frequently with

millennials. Eight of ten coaches commented when they first started coaching, they simply told athletes what to do and when to do it. The millennial generation changed that. According to the study respondents, millennials require greater attention and more individualization. Coaches who participated in the study also indicated that today their role is broader than just coaching. With millennial students, they are expected to provide academic advising, and more one on one guidance.

All 10 coaches indicated that technology has significantly impacted recruiting in the last 10 years. Respondents indicated that 10 years ago, coaches used mass mailing, one on one personal contact at meets, and phone calls to potential recruits. The millennial generation and technology changed what recruitment looks like today. Now, coaches use social media, email, and texting to reach potential recruits.

All of the coaches perceive that technology has had a positive effect on recruitment and coaching. Technology has changed the way coaches communicate with their athletes. It provides coaches with the opportunity to communicate on a one on one basis. Some coaches commented technology has significantly helped build relationships with their athletes. Technology helps inform parents about what is going on with their student athlete. It also helps with coaching mechanics of the sport. Technology assists in helping athletes improve their running, jumping and throwing technique. Coaches also commented technology kept them more organized and efficient at their jobs. Autocratic coaches reported having the most difficulty with adapting to advances in technology.

Coaches varied in their perceptions about goal setting. Four out of 10 coaches set goals for the team as a whole, some set goals for individuals that benefit the team as a whole, while six out of 10 coaches set goals based on the potential of the individual. One

common theme reported by all coaches was the need to set realistic goals. Realistic goal setting keeps athletes positive and making progress.

Respondents indicated that interactions with parents have changed dramatically in the last 10 years. Advancements in technology have impacted how coaches interact with pre-millennial and millennial students and parents. Three out of 10 coaches commented they had little or no interaction with parents during the recruiting process with pre-millennial student athletes. This changed significantly with the millennial generation. Nine out of 10 coaches commented that parents of millennials are more involved and more likely to contact them if their student athlete has issues whether they are related to athletics or academics or even roommate difficulties. Five out of 10 coaches also indicated that many parents of millennials want a say in how their son or daughter will be treated on the team through the recruiting process. One coach commented "You recruit the parent as much as the athlete now." All but one coach stated they have had to adapt their leadership style because of the millennial generation of parenting.

Findings Related to the Literature

Three predominant coaching styles have been described in the literature: autocratic (Paddock, 2018), democratic (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978) and holistic (Blevins, 2015). Coaches in the current study identified with one or more of these leadership styles. The autocratic coaches expressed a frustration coaching and recruiting pre-millennial and millennial student athletes.

Hoffman et al. (2009) suggested coaches may need to adjust coaching styles to their athletes. In the current study, Participant's 7 and 8 affirmed Hoffman's recommendation to treat athletes individually. Participant 7 indicated she had gone from

an autocratic to democratic and holistic leadership style after she saw a shift in how her athletes wanted to be treated. She gave them more say in training and racing strategy. Participant 7 stated, "The athletes started to respond better when you listen to them, they started working harder." Coaches in the current study who shifted to a democratic style encourage players to voice their opinions and thoughts in order to make the best decisions. Coaches in the current study who described a democratic leadership style employed coaching actions similar to those Sokolove (2006) mentioned when describing Mike Krzyzewski, five-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) National Basketball Champion, who allowed his players to have input in how they played the game. Participant 8, a democratic/holistic leader stated, "He always asks for input from his athletes, and he makes day to day decisions based on that input."

Elmore (2019) suggested coaching has moved from command and correct to give and guide. He contended millennials do not respond to coaches that simply yell, expect respect without earning it, and encourage athletes to fear them. These behaviors are consistent with how Paddock (2018) described autocratic leadership. Participant 5, with 35 years of coaching experience, viewed his leadership style as autocratic. When asked how he applies this method with athletes, Participant 5 stated, "We set up the year by having a team meeting at the first of the year and I tell them all you either buy in and do as you're told or you go away." Participant 5 stated, "It's been a struggle, coaching millennials", said he was not willing to change his leadership style. Participant 10, who has 50 years of head coaching experience, also described himself as an autocratic leader. He responded, "I've had to make some adjustment to this millennial generation of student

athlete." When asked if adjusting has been difficult, Participant 10's answer was "Yes and no."

Bogart (2015) reported needs of millennial's are much different than previous generations. They want leaders to listen to them and have opinions of their own. According to Bogart, millennials are up for challenges and embrace them. This generation is more technologically savvy and good at multitasking unlike any previous generation. All respondents in the current study agreed with Bogart that millennials are different than previous generations.

Becker (2009) stated the most successful way to work with a millennial is to adopt a holistic approach. Using a holistic style of coaching, the coach creates a relationship with every individual athlete based on interpersonal communication and genuine care (Becker, 2009). Participant 2, who described his leadership style as holistic, gave a similar answer when describing how he encourages student athletes to be the best in all areas of their lives. He recognized his athletes want equal 'buy in' during the coaching process. Participant 4, who changed to a holistic leadership style, expressed that he has "become more flexible in my thinking and scheduling allowing for more autonomy among my athletes." Participant 1 stated he listens to his athletes when creating individualized work plans.

Lyle (2002) theorized maintaining a complex interpersonal relationship with athletes is a critical skill that coaches need to master. In the current study, participant 7 stated, "I let them have a lot of input and make changes accordingly." Participant 7 also noted that millennials want a role on the team, and it can be challenging keeping them bought in. Participant 3 stated communication is one of the most difficult aspects when

working with millennials. He responded, "Working with athletes in large groups is difficult because today's generation of student athlete expects you to communicate with them individually. Doing this is a challenge and an art."

According to Janssen (2008), millennials have shown they want to be educated versus lectured, and they also want to be entertained in the process because of short attention spans. In the current study, Participant 6 stated that he had shortened meets and does not overload the athletes with too much talking. Participant 6 also engages his athletes with success stories from previous athletes. Bogart (2015) stated, "Being clear during lecture sessions and emphasizing what is important information and what is not as essential was the third suggestion."   In the current study, Participant 3 stated a similar response, "Explaining the why behind the process you are asking them to do and teach them to focus on the process in small incremental parts rather than the big picture."

Bennett (2016) described how Pete Carroll, head coach of the Seattle Seahawks, used the power of positive coaching and focused on individuality. In the current study Participant 1 noted that he always attempts to stay positive with his athletes. He stated, "Being negative never works and ultimately blows up in my face." Participant 4 stated a similar response, "Taking a negative approach with the athletes does not work. Staying positive does."

Raines (2002) found millennials want consistent, constructive feedback more than previous generations. Horn (2002) found that coaches who continually provided positive and instructional feedback after performance success and performance errors had a significantly positive impact on the athlete's intrinsic motivation and overall sport experience. According to Raines (2002), letting millennials know when they have done

well is also important. The holistic and democratic coaches in this study agreed with the importance of letting millennial student athletes know when they have done well. Participant 2 responded, "Being attentive to the needs of individuals is key to coaching new generations of athletes." Similarly, Participant 3 responded, "I would often ask my athletes for feedback on how they felt during a workout and adjust their training accordingly."

Twenty years ago, student athletes were mailed recruiting questionnaires through traditional mail. Coaches contacted their respective recruits and called or made house visits (Marano, 2014). Twenty years later, the recruitment process has changed with advancements in technology (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Coaches in the current study reflected these transitions and the influence technology plays in recruiting student athletes in 2019. Participant 9 stated, "Ten years ago I sent out 700 letters to potential recruits and did not get a single response." Participant 3 expressed he was reluctant to use social media, email, and texting in recruiting. It is now how he contacts recruits. Millennials feel the use of technology is desirable and a necessary part of life (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Participant 2 noted that when he started coaching 38 years ago technology had no role in recruiting. He stated that he now uses email, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, texting - all different forms of communicating to reach athletes.

Monaco and Martin (2007) indicated millennials "need immediate feedback, possess a sense of entitlement, lack critical thinking skills, have unrealistic expectations, experience a high level of parental involvement, and expect a 'how to' guide to succeed in and out of the classroom."   Participant 8 maintained, "Goals are based on realistic expectations, individual abilities and team culture". Participant 8 shared the need for

athletes to have realistic goals. He indicated, "All too often they come to college with unrealistic goals. This is not good for the athlete." When asked about goal setting, Participant 8 confirmed, "There needs to be a realistic expectation of what may occur." Participant 5 specified in regard to goal setting, "I go by their high school personal records, but sometimes athletes come in with unrealistic expectations and that can be a struggle."

Strauss and Howe (2003) indicated millennials have been sheltered by their parents throughout their lives. Sheltering has prevented them from experiencing, learning from, adapting to, and overcoming the important and inevitable hard issues of life. Sheltering a millennial from negative feedback hampers their maturity process (Atkinson, 2004). Strauss and Howe (2003) found that millennials are closer to their parents than previous generations and have kept the same likes and values as their parents. Participant 3 illustrated parent involvement of millennial students when he stated, "There has been more parental involvement the last 10 years, and sometimes it can be very negative. Parents are much more involved in the recruiting process every year." Participant 7 expressed, "Athletes and parents can have unrealistic goals entering college and that can be a determent." Participant 7 also noted, "Parents are involved in all aspects of the recruiting process, and what is going on with their child once they are on campus." Participant 9 also shared that sometimes it's better to engage the parent if there is an issue than to wait for the parent to initiate the contact. Participant 5, an autocratic leader, stated, "When I first started coaching there was very little contact with parents, and they did not get involved with issues. Parents are more involved now, and more likely to contact a coach if they have issues."

Conclusions

Millennials possess characteristics that are significantly different from those of previous generations (Strauss & Howe, 2003). Leaders have had to adapt their leadership styles to this new generation (Elmore, 2019)**.** Coaches have had to make adaptations to remain successful (Janssen, 2008). As Mitchell (2015) argued, "Given how structured their lives have been, they may struggle in the transition to college as they face more ambiguity and a greater call for self-responsibility" (p. 65). The coaches in this study agreed that millennial student athletes must set realistic goals if they want to see success both athletically and academically. Worth noting, none of coaches in this study commented their students had any of the attributes that Atkinson (2004) described as being lazy, self-centered, or entitled. Atkinson (2004) stated millennials are immersed in technology and social media, and all coaches in this study agreed with that statement. Despite some of the negative attributes, researchers agree millennials are motivated and want to succeed (Monaco & Martin, 2007). The coaches in the current study never commented their student athletes were not motivated to succeed. All of the coaches expect for Participant 5 (who is continuing to use an autocratic leadership style), were adapting or had adapted to a democratic, holistic, or combined democratic/holistic leadership styles.

This study demonstrated that eight out of 10 NJCAA coaches who participated in the study reported they have had to adapt the leadership and coaching styles they used with pre-millennials when working with millennial student athletes. Those who reported using a democratic or holistic coaching style reported more success in working with millennials than coaches who were still using an autocratic approach. All 10 coaches in

the current study have adapted to the impact technology has had on recruiting and interactions with parents. Participants in the current study indicated parents of millennial students are engaged in more frequent communication with coaches about student athletes than parents of pre-millennial students.

      Implications for action. The results of the current study support the following three actions. First, all coaches should be encouraged to identify their primary leadership style. Several researchers (Blevins, 2015; Chelladura & Saleh, 1978; Elmore, 2019; Paddock, 2018) and participants in the current study identified the importance of specific leadership styles and their impact on pre-millennial and millennial individuals. Leaders in education and the workplace must recognize generational characteristic changes and be willing to adapt personal leadership and communication styles to work successfully with each successive generation. Over the past decade, college and university coaches have been impacted by the unique characteristics and needs of millennial student athletes. Knowing their leadership style may assist coaches to identify practices and actions consistent with the style that promotes student athlete involvement and success. Stewart and Taylor (2000) found coaching issues as one of the top three reasons that athletes chose to quit a sport. Furthermore, they reported that their favorite coaches were "fun, nice, listened to, and understood players, fair, encouraging to individuals, knowledgeable, and pushed the team to do their best" (p. 10). Their least favorite coaches were described as, "mean-rude, unfair, not encouraging, having yelled at players, having poor coaching skills, not nice, negative, and too strict" (p. 11).

      A second action merited by the results of various research studies and the results of the current study is that coaches in all sports may benefit from professional

development that focuses on characteristics and effective coaching practices for

millennial student athletes. Becker (2009) and Bogart (2015) described how millennials

are different from previous generations and described successful ways to work with this

generation. The coaches in the current study who reported a democratic and/or holistic

leadership style found that behaviors associated with these leadership styles produced

better results when coaching millennial student athletes than a more autocratic 'do it my

way' style. It is important that coaches recognize that each athlete is different and that

they need to adapt their coaching styles to the needs of their players.

A third action is coaches may benefit from professional development in emerging

technologies that may enhance recruiting and communication with student athletes and

parents. Morano (2014), the Pew Research Center (2015a), and participants in the

current study described the influence technology has played in recruiting and coaching

student athletes at the college level over the past decade. Technology will continue to

evolve. Leaders in education, including coaches, must recognize generational

characteristic changes and be willing to adapt personal leadership and communication

styles, including how they use technology, to work successfully with each successive

generation.

Recommendations for future research. The findings from the current study

suggest additional opportunities for future research. Only 10 participants were included

in the current study. A future study could expand the number of participants. All but one

of the current study participants was male. Future studies could include additional female

participants and examine gender differences in responses to questions similar to those

posed in the current study. Interview respondents in the current study represented a wide

span in terms of years of experience as a coach. Two of the coaches who had extensive years of coaching experience described their primary leadership style as autocratic. Future research could investigate differences in leadership styles associated with the number of years of experience in coaching. The current study involved the use of a qualitative research design. A quantitative research design using a survey focusing on elements of the current survey (e.g. recruiting, parent communication, or other individual variables) could be used to obtain more in-depth information about each variable. Participants in the current study were NJCAA track and field coaches. A future study could investigate differences between community college and 4 year institution track and field coaches. A quantitative or qualitative study of four year or community college millennials and their preferred coaching style could also add to the body of research that focuses on coaching millennials.

Concluding remarks. This study examined the perceptions of 10 NJCAA coaches about their leadership style, changes in leadership styles when coaching pre-millennial and millennial student athletes, recruiting, the impact of technology on coaching, goal setting, and parent communication. Hoffman et al. (2009) found that millennial generation athletes desire a coach who will sustain multiple roles in their lives, communicate clearly, maximize production, have compassion, and be mindful of the entire team's interest. Coaches from the youth level through the professional ranks need to understand every generation is unique. Millennials present a particular challenge in coaching and recruitment. They exhibit characteristics different from undergraduates in the past and have particular expectations for how coaches should work with them. Coaching leadership styles and strategies that may have been effective with previous

generations are not as successful in meeting the distinctive needs of millennials. As Wilson (2014) argued, "Given how structured their lives have been, they may struggle in the transition to college as they face more ambiguity and a greater call for self-responsibility" (p. 65). Millennials can thrive with clear instructions and articulated expectations. Coaches who have adapted to use technology in coaching have experienced greater success working with millennial student athletes. Those coaches who remained steadfast in autocratic leadership styles reported struggling with millennial community college student athletes. Coaches in the current study who adapted to generational change reported success in coaching millennial community college student athletes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Baker University IRB Approval

Baker University Institutional Review Board

July 24th, 2019

Dear Mike Bloemker and Tes Mehring,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,
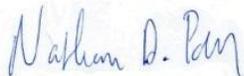
Nathan Poell, MA
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Scott Crenshaw
Jamin Perry, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD
Joe Watson

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate

Participant Invitation

My name is Michael Bloemker. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Baker University. I am contacting you to invite you to participate in my dissertation research study. I am conducting a qualitative research study to understand how National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) cross country and track and field coaches describe their leadership style. In addition, my research focuses on how coaching pre-millennials may differ from coaching millennials during the past 10 years (2009 – 2019). Specifically, my research focuses on coach's leadership styles, student athlete recruitment, influence of technology, defining goals for individual and team athletes, and communication with parents when coaching pre-millennial and millennial student athletes. Your participation will involve one interview that will take place at a mutually agreed upon time via phone and should last about 45 minutes. Your interview will be audiotaped and the transcript of your responses to interview questions will be coded with an anonymous number to preserve your anonymity. The results will be in my dissertation and will be presented at my dissertation defense and professional meetings. Your identity will not be revealed. It is my hope that the results of the study can be useful to you and other cross country and track coaches.

Participation in the study is voluntary. No incentives will be provided for participation. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me using the contact information provided below. Interview questions are provided on the second page of this invitation to participate in the research study. If you are willing to participate, please contact me at the number or email listed below and I will contact you to set up our interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Bloemker
 (816) 304-3969
 or michaeldbloemker@gmail.com

Interview Questions

1. How many years have you been coaching?

2. Do you coach men, women, or both?

3. How many athletes do you have on your team?

4. The coaching literature describes 3 predominant leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and holistic. Autocratic leaders are generally straight forward and set expectations. Democratic leaders are generally open- minded and allow input from their athletes, and holistic leaders generally care more individually about the athlete as person. Which of those styles do think is most representative of your current leadership style?

5. Give an example of how you apply this leadership style in your coaching of cross country/track and field student athletes.

6. Describe challenges associated with adopting new ways of leading and coaching student athletes.

7. How have you changed your leadership style to adapt to coaching pre-millennials and millennials?

8. Describe the impact these changes have had on the millennial student athletes you have coached.

9. What changes do you anticipate you will make in your leadership and coaching style in the future?

10. When you first started recruiting student athletes what methods did you use to interact with and contact potential recruits?

11. What methods do you currently use to interact with and contact potential student

    athlete recruits?

12. What role did technology play when you first started coaching?

13. What role does technology currently play in relation to coaching?

14. How has your coaching style changed because of the influence of technology?

15. Describe how you set individual and team goals when you began coaching.

16. Describe how you currently set individual and team goals.

17. Describe your relationship with parents when you first started coaching.

18. Describe your relationship with parents who currently have athletes on the team.

19. What changes have occurred in your interactions with parents in the last 10 years?

Appendix C: Consent Form

Please consider this information carefully before deciding whether to participate in this research.

Purpose of the research:
This qualitative study is being conducted to understand how NJCAA cross country and track and field coaches classify their primary leadership style. In addition, the research focuses on how coaching pre-millennials may differ from coaching millennials during the past 10 years. Specifically, the research focuses on coaching leadership styles, student athlete recruitment, influence of technology, defining goals for individual and team athletes, and communication with parents when coaching pre-millennial and millennial student athletes

What you will do in this research: You will be asked to participate in one interview that includes several questions.

Time required: The interview will take approximately 45 minutes or less.

Permission to Audio Record: The interview will be audio recorded to facilitate accuracy in creating a transcription of the interview. Your consent to participate in the interview also indicates consent to audio record the interview.

Risks: No risks are anticipated. If you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions, we may skip them.

Benefits: You will not receive any compensation or benefits through participating in this research.

Confidentiality: Your responses to interview questions will be kept confidential. A non-identifiable code will be assigned to your audio tape and interview transcript to protect your anonymity.

At no time will your actual identity be revealed. The recording will be erased upon completion of the transcription.

Participation and withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. You may withdraw by informing the experimenter that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked).

To contact the researcher: Mike Bloemker, (816-304-3969), or michaeldbloemker@gmail.com

Agreement:
The nature and purpose of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty. My signature below indicates agreement to participate in the study and to audio recording of the interview session.

Signature: _____Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Appendix D: Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Location	Leadership Style	Number of Years Coaching
1	Male	Kansas	Holistic	14
2	Male	Kansas	Holistic	38
3	Male	Arizona	Democratic	12
4	Male	Kansas	Holistic	15
5	Male	Kansas	Autocratic	35
6	Male	Kansas	Democratic	53
7	Female	Kansas	Democratic/Holistic	19
8	Male	Kansas	Democratic/Holistic	15
9	Male	Ohio	Democratic/Holistic	30
10	Male	Kansas	Autocratic	50