

An Exploratory Examination of Role Engulfment and NCAA Teacher-Coaches

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***Abstract:** The primary focus of this study was to explore the teacher-coach model in which many Division III coaches often serve in a dual role as teacher and coach. By using social identity theory and role engulfment as frameworks, the underlying research question of “What is lost and what is gained in the teacher-coach model” was addressed. In this case study approach, seven teacher-coaches from one Division III institution participated in semi-structured*

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interviews. Results are discussed based on theme and also in relation to social identity theory and role engulfment. Implications for athletics departments, academic institutions, and the NCAA are presented.

Key words: role engulfment, teacher-coaches, social identity, NCAA Division III

Introduction

The NCAA asserts, “academics are the primary focus for Division III student-athletes” (NCAA, 2019, para. 10). Based on the structure of Division III athletics, this mantra also applies to the job responsibilities of many Division III coaches as they often hold multiple titles within athletics departments and frequently serve as instructors or professors in addition to their traditional coaching responsibilities (Farneti, Christy, & Turner, 2009; Kelley & Gill, 1993). Anecdotal evidence points to this notion as well. A cursory search using the HigherEdJobs, “the leading source for jobs and career information in academia;” “About HigherEdJobs,” 2019) search engine revealed several job postings for a dual position as both a head coach for a NCAA Division III team and an Assistant Professor for the university. Williams College, a prominent Division III institution located in Williamstown, Massachusetts, was searching for an “Assistant Professor of Physical Education and Head Coach of Men’s Soccer” (“Head Coach Men,” 2014). The job posting at Hamilton College, a Division III institution in Clinton, New York, read, “Head Coach of Crew and Instructor/Assistant Professor of Physical Education” (“Head Coach Of,” 2014).

Additionally, staff directories of numerous Division III athletics departments indicate a further existence of dual roles of coaches and teachers. For example, in the Health and Human Performance Department at George Fox University, five of the professors are also coaches in the athletics department (“Health & Human,” 2014). At Hope College, Steven Smith serves as the head men’s soccer coach and as a professor of kinesiology (“Hope athletics,” 2014). Charlie Sullivan has been the head coach of the men’s volleyball team at Springfield College that has won three national championships. He is also a sport psychology professor for the university (“Men’s volleyball,” 2014).

These anecdotal examples provide further evidence for the notion that many Division III coaches also have teaching responsibilities.

In this project, the authors examined the potential for these dual roles leading to differing patterns of role identity and role engulfment in teacher-coaches. Using social identity theory and role engulfment as theoretical frameworks, an overarching exploratory research question of, “What is lost and what is gained in the teacher-coach model?” was used to guide the inquiry. Specifically, the authors sought to address what is gained and lost for the teacher-coaches under this model and how does that, in turn, impact the athletics department, student-athletes, and the long-term viability of the teacher-coach model in a changing athletics landscape. Using a case study approach, one consistently successful institution that has a coaching staff almost exclusively composed of teacher-coaches was examined. According to Andrew, Pederson, and McEvoy (2011), “Case studies typically explore, describe, illustrate, or explain a selected phenomenon in sport management” (p. 132). In this particular case study, the selected phenomenon is the teacher-coach model in NCAA intercollegiate athletics. Data points included contractual responsibilities of teacher-coaches, an institutional profile, and interviews with seven teacher-coaches.

Literature Review

Before detailing the conceptual frameworks utilized in this study, it is first relevant to briefly review previous examinations of the teacher-coach model. While the current study utilized a case study approach in the college setting, other studies have examined the teacher-coach model at various levels (college, high school, and elementary) with varying methodologies (i.e., surveys, case studies, and literature review analyses). Kelley and Gill (1993) studied variables that impacted burnout in NCAA Division III and NAIA college teacher-coaches. Two hundred fourteen (n=214) respondents completed surveys and the authors found that perceived levels of stress, including teacher-coach role conflict, were related to burnout based on their multivariate analysis. Although not specifically related to the teacher-coach setting, Dunn and Dunn (1997) studied the various role conflicts experienced by 198 Division I graduate assistants. Study participants completed a survey containing closed-ended and open-ended questions. Results indicated

that, like many coaches, graduate assistants experience role conflict and role strain.

Two specific studies have explored teacher-coach role conflict at the elementary and secondary education levels in the United States (Konukman et al., 2010; Richards & Templin, 2012). Both studies utilized a literature review analysis in order to provide suggestions for school-level teacher-coaches to perform roles (i.e., teaching and coaching) that may be in conflict with one another. Finally, Templin, Sparkes, Grant, and Schempp (1994) used a case study approach with the life history of a physical education teacher who also coached at the secondary education level. The study showed that the teaching aspect of the teacher-coach model was often marginalized in this specific case study.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory is “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his [*sic*] knowledge of his [*sic*] membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). Heere and James (2007) further explained that fundamentally, social identity occurs when individuals recognize their inclusion with a social group and consequently affirm such an inclusion by placing an emotional significance on group membership. Social identity theory has been posited as a one-dimensional construct (Dimmock, Grove, & Eklund, 2005). Conversely, the theory has been previously construed as multidimensional (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999). Ellemers et al. (1999) proposed three components: cognitive (understanding), evaluative (value), and affective (emotional). These components specifically relate to the individual’s membership to the group. Thus, the comprehension, meaningfulness, and nostalgia of membership pave the way for identification.

Coaches with teaching responsibilities are likely to experience some level of role conflict. Employees are often thrust into multiple diverse roles within an organization (Chelladurai, Kuga, & O’Byrant, 1999). Further, employees are potentially subjected to multiple identities within an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). These multiple roles may result in inter-role conflict or it may be the individual’s preference for a certain role over another that creates an overemphasis for one role

(Chelladurai et al., 1999). Moreover, a wide range of research postulates that teaching and coaching are considerably different professions (Coté, Salmela, Trudel, & Baria, 1995; Figone, 1994; Konukman et al., 2010; Locke & Massengale, 1978; Rose, 1986; Rupert & Buschner, 1989; Sage, 1989; Staffo, 1992). For example, coaching and teaching roles have differences in learning objectives as well as task and group characteristics (Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996; Konukman et al., 2010).

Richards and Templin (2012) offer various categorizations of the differences between coaches and teachers based on previous research: goals and objectives, characteristics of the clientele, accountability, and rewards. Specifically, individuals assigned to both teaching and coaching responsibilities may experience role stress and role strain due to the divergent pressures of both roles (Sage, 1987). This conflict may be induced at the organizational level. For example, many institutions are reliant upon external funding to operate their athletics programs, and many who are both teachers and coaches perceive their primary duty to be one of revenue generator via fielding winning teams (Cady, 1978; Coakley, 2014). Further, Figone (1994) explained how teacher-role conflict might harm student-athletes and general students when those with both roles reject their academic role.

Various factors dictate how individuals gravitate towards or are encouraged to pursue the coaching role, thus accepting two diverse roles. Some research has suggested that teachers perceive pressure to accept a coaching role from administrators and professional peers as an expectation for professional commitment (Konukman et al., 2010). Consequently, the prioritization of coaching over teaching can have adverse effects on teacher effectiveness (Aicinena, Steffen, & Smith, 1992). Past research has also suggested that those who teach and coach will choose to focus on coaching if given the opportunity to choose between the two (Dodds et al., 1991; Figone, 1994; Sage, 1989).

There are various possible explanations for such a preference. Figone (1994) explained how coaches are cognizant of mandates to produce winning teams. Millsagle and Morley (2004) found that while some teacher-coaches claimed they focused on both roles equally, those that did not felt that coaching offered the opportunity for the greatest rewards, thus they put more effort into coaching. Additionally, others view the preference for coaching as a result of peers supporting athletics

endeavors but failing to recognize teaching exploits (Templin et al., 1994). This essentially signifies an individual's desire to satisfy personal needs and their belief that coaching offers a better opportunity to satisfy such needs (Chelladurai et al., 1999). Further, Chelladurai and Kuga (1996) posited that the differences in the characteristics of each profession may explain the preference for coaching. The authors predicted that factors such as person-task fit, linkage between preferred and enacted roles, and the congruence between the preferred and enacted roles would predict employees' performance, satisfaction, and stress. Later Chelladurai et al. (1999) found that men preferred to coach, women favored teaching, and that perceptions of task attributes and perceived job variety affected preferences for coaching or teaching.

Role of Engulfment

Historically, examinations of role engulfment have been done within the realms of sociology, psychology, and their various subdisciplines. McCall and Simmons (1978) identified what they called "role-identities" as the self-conceptions individuals develop as a result of holding specific positions or statuses within a variety of groups. These role identities then act as guides for the individual as he or she navigates his or her way through social interactions in an attempt to realize an ideal self.

Merton (1957) examined the idea of occupying multiple statuses or roles. Deviating from previous notions put forth by other sociological theorists, Merton took the premise that each individual's social status involves an array of roles, rather than a single one, forming a role-set. In other words, Merton proposed that, because they occupy a particular social status, individuals are involved in an array of accompanying relationships.

In their work on individual-level and collective-level identities, Thoits and Virshup (1997) sought to clarify the two states while challenging presumptions in the existing social-identity literature. Individual-level identities, or "Me's," are self-identifications as a socially recognized type of person, providing the individual with meaningful self-conceptions which, in turn, helps to maintain social order, while collective-level identities, or "We's," identify the self with *other* socially recognized types of people, fostering intergroup competition and, potentially, social change at the macro level, according to Thoits and Virshup (1997).

Thoits and Virshup (1997) put forth the idea that role identities are derived from independent sources and involve distinct psychological states and, therefore, cannot be treated as “derivative aspects of collective identification” (p. 125). Adler and Adler (1991) examined the ways in which knowledge of the self is developed through various social conditions by analyzing the experiences of collegiate athletes. They found that as the studied athletes merged their internal self-identity with their powerful and alluring athletic identity, role engulfment began to emerge. Rather than attempt to manage two competing identities, however, the athletes actively sought to develop the new, more desirable one. The former role and identity was thus neglected, as were its associations with family, friends, and other company.

Adler and Adler (1991) noted that an engulfed self reflects a single, dominating role in which no other identities may exist. College athletes experiencing role engulfment will exhibit a narrowness focused only on their glorified self and the skills necessary to maintain this new role. Relatedly, Schur (1971) found that deviant activities would become increasingly centered on a new self-concept, leading to a withdrawal of the former self-identity. The new self-concept would then demand involvement in evermore-deviant activities, leading to role engulfment. However, Adler and Adler differ in that where Schur placed a focus on external forces leading to engulfment, they considered the effects internal, psychological pressures have on an individual, or, in their case, athletes.

Role overload is likely to occur for those who have the dual responsibilities of coaches and teachers. Hindin explained that this is due to the likelihood that both roles may result in limitations in time, energy, or resources for one role over another, thus becoming too difficult to manage both (as cited in Richards & Templin, 2012). When explaining role theory, Turner (2001) posited that individuals may behave or have different experiences while in different roles. Conflicting experiences can create role conflict, which has been defined as “the concurrent appearance of two or more incompatible expectations for the behavior of a person” (Biddle, 1986, p. 82). For example, role conflict may occur when the responsibilities of a role eclipses the abilities of individuals to perform the other role (Turner, 2001). Further, role conflict is thought to occur when an individual is subjected to contradictory role expectations, which results in the individual engaging

in a coping mechanism that will unsettle the organization and individual (Biddle, 1986). Furthermore, inter-role conflict has been described as the circumstances in which an individual has multiple roles that are not congruent. For instance, Hindin noted, if one has dual roles, one requiring kindness and the other aggression, inter-role conflict is likely to occur (as cited in Richards & Templin, 2012). As is likely the case with coaching and teaching roles, role conflict is apt to be most distinct when the differences between the roles are ambiguous, and thus are essentially impossible to fulfill without compromising one or all roles (Parsons, 1966). This lack of congruency and increase in role conflict creates difficulty in performing the roles of coaching and teaching concurrently (Richards & Templin, 2012).

Methods

In this study, a case study approach was utilized. According to Edwards and Skinner (2009),

The case study approach can be characterized as the presentation and analysis of detailed information about single or multiple subjects, in relation to an event, culture, or individual life.

Through this analysis, the sport management researcher is able to obtain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of cases in order to generate new insights. (p. 202)

The researchers relied upon several of the core tenets typically utilized in case study approach: exploratory nature of the research question (Yin, 1994) and the use of interviews in the data collection process (Andrew et al., 2011). Further, in sport management research with case studies, “the methodology often involves a single-case study design focused on a specific organization” (Andrew et al., 2011, p. 137). Thus, the case study approach undertaken in this study focused on collecting data via the semi-structured interview approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the teacher-coach model in a specific athletics department in order to generate new insights about the overall functionality and viability of the teacher-coach model in intercollegiate athletics.

One institution (described below) was chosen to provide a holistic view of the circumstances under which one interviewed group of teacher-coaches operated. To counteract the argument that only non-successful

programs may use teacher-coaches, the authors chose a traditionally high-ranking institution in both athletics and academics. The data in this study was generated from both institutional documents and interviews at the university.

The five verification strategies proposed by Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) were used to ensure reliability and validity: methodological coherence, appropriate sample, collecting and analyzing concurrently, thinking theoretically, and development of theory. The first strategy of methodological coherence necessitates that “the question match the method, which matches the data and the analytic procedures” (Morse et al., 2002, p. 18). The research question in this study aligns with the use of the case study approach in that such methods support exploratory examinations (Yin, 1994) and a focus on a specific, actual phenomenon in a specific sport setting (Andrew et al., 2011; Edwards & Skinner, 2009). In utilizing an appropriate sample as part of the second verification strategy, “the sample must be appropriate, consisting of participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic” (Morse et al., 2002, p.18). Due to the nature of the research question (exploring the teacher-coach environment), conducting interviews with teacher-coaches aligns with the idea of having participants who have knowledge of the research topic. The third verification strategy of collecting and analyzing data concurrently was adhered to in both data collection and data analysis. Semi-structured interviews were utilized, which enabled the researchers to probe with subsidiary questions during the interviews (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). This iterative process of data collection and data analysis “forms a mutual interaction between what is known and what one needs to know” (Morse et al., 2002, p. 18). In the fourth strategy (thinking theoretically), “ideas emerging from data are reconfirmed in this new data; this gives rise to new ideas that, in turn, must be verified in data already collected” (Morse et al., 2002, p. 18). The researchers adhered to this strategy throughout the data coding process with the use of open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), deductive coding (Elo & Kyngas, 2008), and inductive analysis (MacDougall, Nguyen, & Karg, 2014). According to Morse et al., (2002) for the fifth verification strategy, “the aspect of theory development is to move with deliberation between a micro perspective of the data and a macro conceptual/theoretical understanding” (p. 18). For this particular case study approach, a micro perspective of the data with a case study approach was aligned with a more macro application of social identity

theory and role engulfment. In all, the five reliability and verification strategies, when taken altogether, help to create rigor for the methodological approaches undertaken in this study.

Institutional Profile

The university under examination in this case study was a mid-sized, public institution in the Midwest with an enrollment of around 10,000 students. In recent years, the university has positioned itself as one of the best public universities in the area. The university's athletics program competes at the NCAA Division III level and is a member of a long-standing and successful athletics conference. The athletics program supports a total of 19 sports, eight men's and nine women's programs with over 600 student-athletes competing each year. The athletics program has a rich history of athletics success, compiling over 50 national championships in its men's and women's sports. Further, it has a consistent presence in the top 25 of the Learfield Sports Division III Directors' Cup. Finally, the athletics program prides itself upon not only athletics success but also academic success among its student-athletes. For the last decade, student-athletes at this university have had the highest cumulative GPA of any athletics program within their respective conference.

At the time of data collection, there were 12 coaches who had split appointments as faculty members with an academic unit on campus. In such instances of "split positions," a certain percentage of their duties are tied to their coaching responsibilities while the other percentage is typically tied to another role within the university, most commonly as an instructor within an academic unit on campus. Recently, most of teacher-coaches have seen a significant shift in the percentages of their duties in that the lion's share of their responsibilities are now coaching with a much smaller percentage being dedicated to course instruction. For decades, most teacher-coaches at this institution have had up to 75% of their position dedicated to instruction within an academic unit. Historically, most of the teacher-coaches have been employed as instructors in a health and fitness-related capacity because of a logical fit between their background and the course offerings within the health and fitness realm.

For this particular sample, the respondents' teaching duties varied depending upon their background. Typically, teacher-coaches were assigned a specific number of "contact hours" of instruction based upon the percentage of their contract that was dedicated to instruction. For the activity courses and lecture courses taught, the teacher-coaches were responsible for lesson preparation, evaluation, and other duties that go along with being the primary instructor of an academic course. Three of the teacher-coaches taught activity courses that aligned with their background and experience. The activity courses are one credit each, meet twice a week for a one hour and 45 minutes, and include sports such as golf, volleyball, swimming, and soccer. Two of the teacher-coaches taught an introductory level lecture course that exposes students to the variety of majors that were available in the academic department in which they were housed. The lecture course would typically meet twice a week for 55 minutes per session and was a two-credit hour course. Similarly, three of the teacher-coaches taught an introductory level health and fitness course that was a requirement for every student on campus. This was a one-credit course that meets twice a week for 55 minutes per session. One teacher-coach taught an upper-level, sport management lecture course that met once a week for three hours. This particular teacher-coach also taught a one-credit hour, first aid course as well. Finally, three teacher-coaches also were assigned advising duties with a specific major within the department that matches their experience and expertise. Typically, these teacher-coaches were assigned approximately 20 students and they were responsible for helping the students select courses each semester, prepare to apply for the major, and help with career preparation. Understanding the time commitment of their dual roles is an important consideration given the results of the interviews that were conducted.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were performed with seven teacher-coaches at one NCAA Division III institution (all were head coaches of his or her team). In a semi-structured interview approach, the researcher adheres to a specific set of interview questions developed as part of the interview guide, but there is inherent flexibility in that the interviewer is able to ask follow-up questions based on interviewee responses (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Author Two conducted all the interviews using a semi-structured approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) to allow for the "alter(ing of)

the sequence of questions or probe for more information with subsidiary questions” (p. 141). The interviews with the teacher-coaches were concluded once data saturation was achieved. Data saturation is defined as “the stage in fieldwork where any further data collection will not provide any different information from what you have, that is you are not learning anything new” (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p. 153). Interviews occurred face-to-face in the coaches’ individual offices and typically lasted 60 to 75 minutes. Questions included, “Describe your typical week in terms of coaching duties and teaching duties” and, “When you internally think about your job, how do you view yourself on the coach-teacher spectrum?”

Analysis

Author One transcribed digital recordings of the interviews. Open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) was chosen to code the responses into the themes described below. Open coding permits, “investigators to break through subjectivity and bias. Fracturing the data forces examination of preconceived notions and ideas by judging these against the data themselves” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 423). First, deductive coding was independently performed by Authors One and Two using previous theory as an initial guide to fracture the data. A second round of inductive coding was performed to identify any emergent themes that came from the responses. This approach allowed the authors to “test an earlier theory in a different situation” (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 113) using deductive coding and take “direction achieved from the data” (MacDougall, Nguyen, & Karg, 2014, p. 82) through inductive analysis. When disagreements in coding existed, they were discussed until consensus was reached. In all, four overarching themes were identified.

Results

The results of the open coding process generally fell into one of four categories: the job search focused on the coaching role, evaluation of their teaching is minimal, their contractual percentage role breakdown underestimates time spent on coaching, and the changing landscape in Division III athletics arguably makes the teacher-coach system more untenable. Results are organized according to theme. Representative quotes are presented in verbatim form.

Job Search Focused on The Coaching Role

Each teacher-coach said they focused primarily on the coaching role when they were looking for and applying for jobs. There was some variance as far as how much each coach cared about teaching going into the job (e.g., some coaches looked for a specific kinesiology department so they could use their college degree, knowing their coaching background would make them a good fit for teaching physical education classes). For varying reasons, teacher-coaches wanted to coach in the Division III setting. Some coaches wanted to be closer to their hometowns, some wanted to coach at the Division III level because they had been Division III student-athletes, others thought they would have a better work-life balance or they really liked that there is more of a direct focus on academics in the Division III setting. Because of these desires, the teacher-coaches indicated they knew that teaching responsibilities would likely be part of the job.

Teacher-coaches said when searching job postings, they would initially seek out coaching positions and then read the job descriptions to see what the teaching responsibilities would entail. They did not look for teaching positions and then check to see if there were coaching responsibilities. Importantly, the teacher-coaches thought the actual job descriptions often included very little description of the teaching positions. They felt the teaching component often came across as an afterthought in the job descriptions. To illustrate this point, one of the teacher-coaches said the following:

The listings on the teaching side, they never write very much. Not never, but usually listings for coaching and teaching positions focus on the coaching position. And then they said ‘Oh you’ll be doing some teaching.’ Or lots of times they’ll just say like ‘Secondary duties assigned as we see fit’.

Lastly, although coaches themselves did not necessarily prioritize teaching, they did indicate that having some sort of background in either teaching and/or a degree in the specific subject the academic department was looking for helped them stand out during the interview process. Ultimately, the teacher-coaches indicated that, on paper, they were good fits for the teaching responsibilities but the teacher-coaches themselves searched for jobs based primarily on the premise that they wanted to

coach. Relatedly, the job postings conveyed a similar intent by describing the coaching part of the job in great detail but minimally described the specifics of the teaching responsibilities.

Evaluation of Their Teaching Is Minimal

When asked about the annual evaluation process for their teaching responsibilities and for their coaching responsibilities, the teacher-coaches conveyed that there were some stark differences in the two evaluation processes. The teacher-coaches said the annual evaluations for their teaching role consisted of a brief meeting with the department head and several other faculty members in their academic department. The teacher-coaches would be asked whether or not they thought their teaching was going well. Coaches indicated it was almost a formalized process to just check a box that there was some sort of annual teaching evaluation. One coach described the process by saying:

It's a much shorter process (than the coaching evaluation process). It's scheduled for 15 minutes, but I think it usually takes about 8 or something. And it's several people sitting in Room 26 and I walk in and they ask me to talk a little bit about what I've done in the past year. Maybe one person asks a question. And that's about it.

Teacher-coaches indicated the evaluation process from the coaching side of their job was significantly more in-depth. They would have one-on-one meetings with the athletics director; they would also have several other meetings with the athletics director and one of the other athletics administrators. Additionally, the athletics director would solicit feedback from the student-athletes and would meet with the graduating senior student-athletes on each coach's team.

Teacher-coaches also indicated that they thought the varying evaluative processes were a reflection of what part of their job mattered most for the very important purpose of job security. Teacher-coaches knew that their job security relied mostly on their performance in their coaching role. Thus, although many of the interviewed teacher-coaches had some sort of relevant background in their specific teaching subject area and at least had some interest in being a good teacher, they knew that when having a finite amount of time to dedicate to their jobs, they nearly always choose

to focus on the part of the job that most directly correlates with their job security. For the teacher-coaches, that meant they focused on their coaching responsibilities most. In discussing how the annual evaluation process and the related significance for job security, one coach said:

It's just getting ridiculous. So, they want you to do these dual roles and I don't think it's good for anyone. You can take someone like me – I'm very passionate about both (coaching and teaching) but I have to choose what I'm gonna do... I'm gonna get fired if I don't win. I'm probably not going to get fired if I don't teach (well).

In summation, the evaluation of a teacher-coach's teacher responsibilities is quite minimal in comparison to evaluations of a teacher-coach's coaching performance. Coaches indicated that had an effect on what they prioritized most in their jobs, especially because they felt their coaching successes and failures were most closely tied to their job security.

Their Contractual Role Breakdown Underestimates Time Spent on Coaching

Each coach was asked about their contractual breakdown as far as specific parameters for splitting up teaching and coaching responsibilities. The teacher-coach said these parameters were formally designated by giving percentages for how much of their work time should be designated to coaching responsibilities and how much of their work time should be designated to teaching responsibilities. The teacher-coaches indicated that there was a rule in their athletic conference that mandated that each head coach have at least a 65% designation for time spent on their coaching responsibilities. All teacher-coaches interviewed said their contractual percentage breakdown was for 65% coaching and 35% teaching.

Each coach also said that these percentages were highly inaccurate as far as correctly reflecting time spent on their varying responsibilities. One coach said,

If I put it in a percentage thing, it would probably be more like 80/20 even though I'm 65/30, it's probably more 80/20. Shoot,

it might be 90/10, I don't know. It's certainly, I identify as a coach. I mean I just do. It seems like pretty much everything revolves around the coaching.

Relatedly, in response to the same question asking about whether or not the 65%-35% designations were accurate, another coach said,

No (laughs). To be honest with you, as you're saying that question, I'm thinking to myself going 'okay from 6am to 11 tonight, I will maybe spend 45 minutes on teaching. I've got to check a (class) assignment and the other 14 hours of the day are going to be (coaching).' So that percentage is 95/5.

Lastly, teacher-coaches conveyed that they were confused about how many hours the 65% and 35% were supposed to correlate with as far as actual work time. Teacher-coaches said that if the percentages were based on 40 hours a week, then the designations were highly inaccurate because they spent far more than 40 hours a week on their jobs. They then said that if the percentages were based on how many hours they actually worked, then they spent far more than 65% of their working hours on coaching and far less than 35% of those same hours on teaching.

Some coaches laughed at the idea that these percentage designations were accurate. Others were downright incensed that these percentages were in their contract and were expected to be accurate. One coach said, "That [the percentage breakdown] is something when I read [in my contract], I was like 'this is a joke'. They have no clue what I do. They have no clue what this position does. So, my athletics is 65% and my teaching is 35% ... it's like you know, if you look at how much I'm doing, you're putting me at 100 hours a week." The teacher-coaches often detailed how the inaccurate percentage breakdowns served as one of the primary disadvantages of their job. Another coach representatively said, "I think that's [the inaccuracy of the contractual percentage breakdown] the big disadvantage is anybody who's ever coached at the college level knows that coaching is a 100% position. I mean it just is. You know, you are in coaching mode all the time." The issues with the contractual parameters set for their job responsibilities indicated in yet another way how these teacher-coaches are spending the vast majority of their time engulfing themselves in their coaching responsibilities

Changing Landscape in Division III Athletics

When the teacher-coaches were asked if there was anything about the Division III landscape that affected their time commitments to either their coaching and/or teaching responsibilities, nearly every coach had lengthy, opinionated responses about the changing landscape of NCAA Division III athletics. In their responses, teacher-coaches primarily focused on the increased pressure to recruit in order to keep up with the recruiting endeavors of other Division III institutions. Many coaches said they do not like the direction Division III is taking as far as increased time needed to be spent on recruiting in order to be competitive on game days. Coaches said they knew they had to increase their recruiting efforts because so much of their job security as a teacher-coach rested on whether or not they won games as a coach. One long-tenured Division III coach said, “When I was hired 30 years ago, I really didn’t have a responsibility – it wasn’t on my job description – to recruit.” Another coach lamented how recruiting has taken over her life by saying,

This time of year, every other weekend I’m gone all weekend recruiting and usually when I get home at night... I work because I want to reply to emails from recruits... It also takes time away that I could be putting toward teaching.

Ultimately, coaches indicated that increased pressures to keep up competitively with other Division III institutions meant teacher-coaches have to spend even more time overall on their coaching responsibilities – nearly always to the detriment of their teaching responsibilities.

Discussion

Interviewee responses did help to answer the overarching research question of “What is lost and what is gained for all parties involved in a teacher-coach contractual arrangement in the NCAA Division III setting?” Furthermore, results pointed to using aspects of social identity theory and role engulfment to explain this complex relationship that teacher-coaches have in their jobs. Structuring a discussion of the results through several themes importantly shows that this increasingly entangled relationship between teacher-coaches and their contractual obligations can have ramifications for not only the teacher-coaches but

also for athletics administrators, academic departments, and the institution at large. The four themes are: the job search focused on the coaching role, evaluation of their teaching is minimal, their contractual percentage role breakdown underestimates time spent on coaching, and the changing landscape in Division III athletics arguably makes the teacher-coach system more untenable.

The Job Search Focused on the Coaching Role

The idea that teacher-coaches indicated their job search focused mostly on the coaching role was not surprising when considering both the contractual percentage breakdown of their jobs and also when considering the actual job announcement descriptions. All coaches had at least 65% of their job responsibilities dedicated to coaching, according to their contracts. Additionally, coaches said that the job descriptions themselves indicated that the teaching responsibilities were more of an afterthought. Coaches indicated that if they wanted to experience some of the more alluring aspects of Division III (e.g., more of a focus on academics, athletics being more integrated into the university setting, 9-month contracts, the idea of having a better work-life balance), they understood that teaching would likely be a part of their job at the Division III level. Ironically, however, what was seemingly valued and emphasized in the job application process was coaching instead of teaching. While coaches indicated that they either had job experience in teaching or educational degrees related to their areas of teaching, they saw that more as a reason that would make them stand out over other candidates in order to simply get hired rather than something they would prioritize once they actually started their jobs. Although social identity occurs when individuals affirm affiliation with a group by placing emotional significance to group membership (Heere & James, 2007), these teacher-coaches seemed to align their own social identity and the resulting emotional significance more strongly with the coaching aspect of their teacher-coach position. This prioritization on coaching was evident even in the early stages of their job search process. As such, the participants experienced role conflict (Biddle, 1986; Turner, 2001) between coaching and teaching responsibilities, with the coaching role often prioritized.

In regard to the overarching research question of “What is lost and what is gained in the teacher-coach relationship?”, the hiring process itself

seemingly points to split priorities even before the individual begins his or her new job. As detailed in the Results section, there was variance in regard to the degree by which the participants valued teaching when searching for, interviewing, and ultimately accepting the teacher-coach position. As far as what could be gained and lost in the teacher-coach model as it relates to the job search process, it is relevant to address the research question in that a dichotomy was observed between those who valued teaching as part of the search process and those who thought of the teaching aspect of their job simply as something they would have to “deal with.” For those that specifically were attracted to the position because of the teaching aspect of the position, the teacher-coach model serves as a viable career opportunity for those that do value the teaching aspect of the teacher-coach model. However, for those that were interested in the teacher-coach position for other variables (e.g., coaching aspect, proximity to hometown, working in Division III athletics), the long-term impact of being required to teach could simply be an aspect of the job that the teacher-coaches have to endure. This could have negative consequences if there is a poor congruence between coach and college sport organization, as such a poor alignment in values (i.e., coaching or teaching priorities) could lead to negative outcomes such as employee turnover (Oja, Schaepferkoetter, & Clopton, 2015). Rationally, a prospective teacher-coach with a background in both teaching and coaching should be a sound fit for a Division III teacher-coach setting. However, as will be discussed at a more in-depth level later, for the sake of job security, coaches often feel they must focus almost entirely on their coaching duties. A prioritization on coaching for the sake of job security aligns with Figone’s (1994) study illustrating that coaches are aware of the pressure to have winning teams in order to have long-term job security. These results about the different values that come forth in the hiring process perhaps provide guidance about what both the athletics department and the academic department should emphasize when interviewing prospective teacher-coaches.

Evaluation of Their Teaching is Minimal

Interviewee responses did not necessarily indicate that they did not care about teaching. Many of the teacher-coaches said they do have a background in teaching and see some crossover between teaching in a classroom setting and teaching a sport as a coach (i.e., explaining a new topic in a class versus explaining a new strategy in coaching).

Importantly, however, coaches said they quickly learned that they felt their on-court success was valued much more than their endeavors in the classroom. Specifically, when they spoke of the evaluation process for both their coaching role and their teaching role, the teacher-coaches said the teaching annual evaluations were very topical in nature and involved a short 15-minute meeting with representatives from their academic department. Contrarily, the evaluation process for their coaching involved the athletics director meeting with the coaches' student-athletes, several hours-long meetings with the athletics director and top athletics administrators, and exit interviews with outgoing senior student-athletes. The dramatically different emphasis given to annual evaluations for the teaching component versus the coaching component again sends a message about what is valued more in regard to job security and career longevity. Further, the notion that a successful coach in the teacher-coach model will be recognized and rewarded more than a successful teacher in the teacher-coach model could arguably explain the prioritization of the coaching role over the teaching role. Such a prioritization echoes many of the findings from Millslagle and Morey (2004).

On the surface, these different priorities may make sense because contractually these teacher-coaches were to dedicate 65% of their time to coaching and 35% of their time to teaching. Thus, it does stand to reason that teacher-coaches should be more heavily scrutinized for their coaching than for their teaching. However, we argue that the starkly different evaluation processes provide yet another example of how and why teacher-coaches may become fully engulfed in their role as a coach and place little importance on their teaching responsibilities. It is important to note that we are not arguing that teacher-coaches simply do not care about teaching. It is more so that with a finite amount of time, teacher-coaches will focus more heavily on coaching because they feel like their coaching successes or failures are what determine whether or not they keep their jobs. As such, it makes sense that teacher-coaches are emotionally attached to the successes of their team and are not necessarily emotionally attached to their successes in the classroom.

Their Contractual Percentage Role Breakdown Underestimates Time Spent On Coaching

Each of the interviewed teacher-coaches said their contractual breakdown was 65% coaching and 35% teaching. However, each coach indicated that even in the slowest times of the year from a coaching standpoint, they were spending more than 65% of their time on coaching. Many coaches even said the percentage breakdown was laughable. What is even more important for practical purposes for athletics directors and academic department heads is how these percentage breakdowns are expected to be carried out. Teacher-coaches indicated confusion as to whether or not the 65%-35% breakdown was based on a 40-hour workweek. Interviewees indicated that no matter the math – the percentages based on a 40-hour workweek or based on how many hours they actually worked – they spent far more than 65% of their time on coaching. Seeing that all interviewees felt the percentage breakdown is not accurate, it is important to discuss the potential ramifications of such inaccurate percentages. As indicated by the interviewees, the time demands of both coaching and teaching made it such that they often felt overloaded by their incongruent roles as teacher and coach. Limitations in time, energy, and resources as it relates to balancing workloads in the teacher-coach model can make it such that the employee had difficulties managing both roles effectively (Richards & Templin, 2012). In such cases, the teacher-coaches in this study demonstrated they would focus their time and energy more so on the coaching aspects of their teacher-coach job.

Teacher-coaches indicated that some athletics conferences – theirs included – had minimum percentage requirements for coaches (i.e., all coaches must have a minimum coaching percentage of 65%). Thus, in a time of seemingly across-the-board higher education budgetary concerns, teacher-coaches may have to take on teaching and coaching responsibilities that are not reflective of their compensation. Therefore, academic departments feel the pressure to “get the most bang for their buck” by overloading teacher-coaches with teaching responsibilities whereas at the same time, teacher-coaches feel their need to be successful in their coaching endeavors in order to maintain their jobs. Ultimately then, teacher-coaches may become fully engulfed in their role as coach in part because they like that part of their job more but mostly because they are somewhat forced into engulfing themselves for the sake

of job security. The purpose of detailing these possible issues is not necessarily to neglect or devalue the NCAA Division III philosophy or the ethical goals of higher education. Rather, pointing out that seemingly much of the impetus for decision-making surrounding the outcomes of teacher coaches are largely based on financial underpinnings that, in a sense, force role engulfment.

The Changing Landscape In Division III Athletics Arguably Makes The Teacher-Coach System More Untenable

The idea that teacher-coaches are often forced into fully engulfing themselves in their role as a coach (because of priorities conveyed during both the hiring process, job evaluation process, and job security) brings to light the question of whether the teacher-coach arrangement is viable for the long-term (Richards & Templin, 2012). Additionally, it is increasingly vital to illuminate how the changing landscape in Division III athletics could make the teacher-coach system even more untenable than it seemingly already is. When coaches indicated that there were increased pressures to fundraise more money and to spend more time recruiting across the Division III level, they also added two more tangible ways they are evaluated by athletics directors. Therefore, the Division III landscape continues to change in such a way that coaches have to do more and more (spend more and more time) on their coaching responsibilities in order to remain competitive in their athletic competitions.

As we have delineated throughout this discussion, the job security of teacher-coaches seemingly mostly hinges on whether or not they win consistently. However, added pressures to recruit, fundraise, and win make it so that coaches, for better or for worse, were arguably forced into nearly full role engulfment in their coaching responsibilities (cf. Richards & Templin, 2012). In a time when the Division III landscape is changing in these manners, it begs the question of whether or not the current teacher-coach model (e.g., 65% coaching, 35% teaching) is viable in the long-term. This uncertainty is without question of immense importance to teacher-coaches, athletics administrators, and academic departments. For several different reasons, athletics departments need the academics departments as much as the academic departments need the athletic departments in any sort of institution in which the teacher-coach contractual arrangement exists. Athletics departments need their coaches

to be teachers so that they are not fully responsible for the salaries (and related expenses) of their coaches. Academic departments need their teachers to be coaches so that they can save money by piecing together lecturers for their department instead of hiring expensive tenure-track professors that are paid solely by the academic department.

Consequently, we argue the teacher-coach system has existed largely because it has been financially beneficial to both the athletics department and also to the academic unit on campus. However, as we have detailed throughout this discussion, rising pressures on coaches to win, recruit, and fundraise (Kelley & Gill, 1993) have made it such that teacher-coaches spend far more time on their coaching responsibilities than their contracts detail. Most coaches were candid about not putting the appropriate amount of time and effort into their teaching responsibilities. They acknowledged their teaching often suffered. While some felt guilty about this, they again pointed to the idea that their job security largely relied on their coaching success. Thus, teacher-coaches engulfed themselves in their coaching responsibilities. As such, the academic department could suffer from having uncommitted instructors. Importantly, many teacher-coaches themselves were unhappy with the teacher-coach model as it currently exists and these rising concerns from the teacher-coaches themselves could realistically put pressure on the institutions to reassess the viability of the teacher-coach model in Division III athletics.

Social Identity Theory and Role Engulfment as They Relate to NCAA Division III Teacher-Coaches

The four themes that were evident from the teacher-coach interviews (the job search focused on the coaching role, evaluation of their teaching is minimal, the inaccuracy of their contractual percentage breakdowns, and the changing landscape of Division III) can be even more fully understood by using Social Identity Theory and Role Engulfment as explanatory tools. As detailed earlier, social identity theory is “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). Teacher-coaches in this study had added emotional significance attached to their membership of being a coach because how much their coaching successes or failures are tied to their job security. Clearly, these teacher-

coaches experienced role conflict between devoting enough time to both coaching and teaching. As employees of both their respective athletics and academics departments, the experiences of these teacher-coaches pointed to the idea that employees are often forced into having multiple, varying roles in an organization (Chelladurai et al., 1999). These teacher-coaches, like many employees in similar split-positions, split-responsibility work environments have experienced inter-role conflict and there is almost always inevitably a prioritization of one role over the other (Chelladurai et al., 1999). Teacher-coaches in this study indicated a prioritization of coaching over teaching in part because they identify more as a coach but largely because their job security ultimately is based more on their coaching success than on their teaching success. Because of the inherent differences in teaching and coaching (Coté et al., 1995; Figone, 1994; Konukman et al., 2010; Locke & Massengale, 1978; Rose, 1986; Rupert & Buschner, 1989; Sage, 1989; Staffo, 1992) and because of the aforementioned reasons the interviewed teacher-coaches prioritized coaching, there is even more evidence to substantiate Aicinea et al.'s (1992) claims that such prioritization of coaching over teaching has negative consequences on the teaching environment.

Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

In short, these teacher-coaches became fully engulfed in their coaching responsibilities. This important development is in line with Adler and Adler's (1991) research on the role engulfment of collegiate athletes who fully engulfed in their athletic identity over all other identities (e.g., family member, friend, student). In a similar fashion, the interviewed teacher-coaches seemingly fully engulfed in their roles as coaches and for better or worse reduced their value in the academic setting. While many of the teacher-coaches did indeed express guilt about this devaluing of the academic environment, they emphatically said that the responsibilities of the teacher-coach role resulted in simply not having enough time to do it all effectively. This selection of time and resources for one role over another (coaching over teaching) falls in line with Hindin's research (as cited in Richard & Templin, 2012). Teacher-coaches, although they may have the best intentions of valuing academics in the same way the NCAA Division III philosophy asserts and although they may have the backgrounds to excel in an teaching setting, the time and effort needed to excel as a coach (and to relatedly

have job security) arguably forces these NCAA Division III teacher-coaches to fully engulf themselves in their coaching responsibilities.

While such a model could have positive consequences for athletics department success, student-athlete recruitment, and student-athlete retention, such positive implications can result in potentially negative outcomes for those more directly impacted by the teacher-coach's deprioritization of teaching. In the same ways athletics department constituency groups (e.g., athletics administrators, coaches, student-athletes) are positively impacted by teacher-coaches being engulfed in their coaching duties, constituency groups impacted by teachers (e.g., the general student body, campus administrators, non-coaching faculty) could be negatively impacted by the teacher-coach model.

Relatedly, these findings have practical implications not only for teacher-coaches, but also for the various aforementioned constituency groups impacted by the teacher-coach model. For teacher-coaches who find the teacher-coach model to be untenable, they could be more likely to experience burnout and, as a result, have decreased job performance in teaching and coaching. Those coaches could also experience turnover intentions in which they could search for employment in a position exclusively focused on coaching or they could look to leave the coaching professional entirely. If the themes discussed in this study are shared by other teacher-coaches, the teacher-coach model may be untenable in the small college athletics environment altogether. Should that be the case, coaches who have nearly fully engulfed themselves in their coaching responsibilities could have higher levels of job satisfaction which could have a positive impact on the student-athletes' own experiences and on the athletics department employees own levels of social identities as coaches.

In the current teacher-coach model, while the teacher-coaches do serve as teachers for various classes, we posit that teachers engulfed by their coaching duties may be detrimental to the health of the respective on-campus academic department. There are also research implications for this study. Specifically, this study focuses on the teacher-coach model at the underexplored level of college athletics. While examining the teacher-coach model at the high school level is certainly merited, distinct college-level coaching responsibilities (e.g., enhanced time commitment, responsibilities with recruiting, extended travel for competitions) alter

the levels of role engulfment potentially experienced by teacher-coaches at the college level. Gaining a better understanding of such an environment in the modern landscape of college athletics helps to address a gap in the literature as well.

This study was not without its limitations. Inherent in the nature of the case study approach, only one specific teacher-coach setting was studied. Further, while this study focused on the experiences of teacher-coaches, interviewing athletics department personnel as well as faculty in the respective teacher-coaches' academic units could have provided valuable information about the teacher-coach model from a different perspective. Future research could work to address the aforementioned limitations by examining the teacher-coach model at other institutions using a similar case study approach, conducting survey research of a wider array of teacher-coaches, and interviewing other constituency groups impacted by the teacher-coach model (e.g., athletics administrators, non-coaching faculty in the teacher-coaches academic departments).

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