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The Facilitation of Social Cohesion

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THE FACILITATION OF SOCIAL COHESION

BY

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To the Dean of the School of Human Performance and Leisure Sciences:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Stedwin Rafael Coleman entitled "The Facilitation of Social Cohesion". I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology.

Dr. Lauren Tashman, Thesis Committee Chair

We, members of the thesis committee,
have examined this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted:

Chair, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine sport psychology practitioners' experiences with facilitating social cohesion. Ten sport psychology practitioners (*M*= 37.80; *SD*= 6.23) were interviewed about their experiences with and approaches to working with teams to enhance social cohesion. A total of 395 meaning units were used to create fifteen sub-themes and two over-arching main themes: *Understanding Social Cohesion* and *Facilitating Social Cohesion*. The results are discussed in relation to previous research, future directions for further exploration, and practical implications for sport psychology practitioners.

Keywords: team cohesion, team culture, applied sport psychology, social cohesion

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The necessity of developing team harmony amongst members has become an important priority for practitioners in the team sport setting (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Team harmony occurs, when teams display high levels of cohesiveness. Many sport practitioners believe that group cohesiveness is always a positive determinant of success (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). By increasing group cohesiveness, sport teams reduces the importance of "I" and develops the sense of "we" and thereby, increasing team effectiveness (Williams, 2006).

However, before group cohesion can be fostered, it first, has to be defined. Festinger, Schacter, and Black (1950) viewed cohesiveness as the sum of the forces that cause members to remain in the group. Gross and Martin (1951) considered cohesion to be the resistance of the group to disruptive forces. After the years have passed, a more recent definition for cohesion was proposed. Today, cohesion is defined as "a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs" (Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998, p.213).

Furthermore, research on group cohesion has categorized cohesion into two types: task cohesion (i.e., activities in which the group engages in) or social cohesion (i.e., degree of attractiveness of members of the group) (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). The distinction between task and social cohesion has been supported across various sports teams and levels showcasing the complexity of cohesion. For example Weinberg and

Gould (1995) use the Major League Baseball (MLB) franchise teams: the New York Yankees and the Oakland Athletics to highlight the challenges in understanding the impacts of social and task cohesion on team performance. Both teams during the 1970's and 1980's displayed low social cohesion because players would fight, form cliques, and exchange angry words towards each other. Yet, these two teams displayed high task cohesion by winning the World Series championship. As an additional example, Feinstein (1987) chronicled the Indiana University men's basketball team throughout a season. Feinstein (1987) highlights how a group's cohesion level can change throughout a season based on the interpersonal relationships during the growth and development of groups.

Several models (i.e., linear, cyclical, and pendular) have been proposed to facilitate an understanding of cohesion and how it develops. The linear model assumes that groups move progressively through different stages (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). More so, critical issues arise in each stage, and when the issues are successfully dealt with, the group moves on. Tuckman (1965) advanced the most popular example of a linear model, which proposes that all groups go through four stages as they develop and prepare to carry out the group's task: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

The cyclical model assumes that groups develop in a manner similar to the life cycle of individuals, which is experiencing birth, growth, and death (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). The cyclical model assumes that as a group develops, it psychologically prepares for its own breakup (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Exercise classes and recreational teams are examples of the cyclical model at work (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

The pendular model takes the assumption that a group does not move progressively through stages in a linear fashion from the instant it forms (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Gersick (1988), who first proposed the pendular theory, suggested that group development is formed through the interaction and individual behaviors of the team members. More so, group development depends on how the team members approach goal objectives and tasks (Gersick, 1988).

As the models for cohesion developed, so have the methods to measure cohesion developed, such as the use of questionnaires. Brawley et. al. (1987) examined the validity of the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ). The GEQ is an instrument that was developed to measure perceived team cohesion (Widmeyer, Brawley, & Carron, 1985). Additionally, the GEQ distinguishes between the individual and the group and distinguishes between task and social concerns. The Brawley et. al. (1987) study determined that the GEQ is a valid instrument for measuring the perceived cohesion level of teams. However, the instrument does not measure which specific factors can contribute to a team's cohesion level.

Many factors can effect a group's cohesion. For example, perception of social support, proximity, distinctiveness, group norms, competitive state anxiety, similarity, coaches, the type of roles each member of the team assumes, and other factors can effect a team's dynamics (Weinberg & Gould, 1995; Williams, 2006). More so, team size has also shown to effect the cohesiveness of sport teams (Widmeyer, Brawley, & Carron, 1990). Widmeyer et. al. (1990) found that there is an inverted-U relationship between social cohesion and team size whereby modrate-sized groups showed the greatest cohesiveness, and larger and smaller groups exhibited the lowest levels of cohesion.

Additionally, task cohesiveness was found to decrease with increasing group size. Widmeyer et. al. (1990). Carron, Eys, and Burke (2007) have stated the magnitude of cohesion can also depend on level of competition, type of sport, and individual team members' sacrifice behavior (i.e., willingness to put aside their own time for the team).

According to Carron et. al. (2007), maximizing team cohesiveness requires the implementation of team-building strategies. Team-building can target several purposes, such as: setting team goals; ensuring that athletes' roles are understood and accepted; ensuring that team meetings and practices are efficient, facilitating coherent, effective, and acceptable leadership; examining and optimizing the way in which the team functions and the relationships among team members; and diagnosing potential weaknesses to minimize their effects on the team (Carron et. al., 2007). For facilitating task cohesion, goal-setting is a primary method (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Goals have been demonstrated to be powerful motivators because they provide standards from which to evaluate continuous performances (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Developing interpersonal relations is the primary method for facilitating social cohesion, which seeks to minimize internal conflicts amongst group members (Lidor & Henschen, 2003).

Despite their methods being successful, many criticism have questioned the role and efficiency of consultants (Kakabadse, Louchart, & Kakabadse, 2006). For example, little research has been written on business consultancy from the consultant's viewpoint (Kakabadse et. al., 2006). More so, Kakabadse et. al. (2006) has stated that previous research thought consultants as deontological and omnipotence with their practice. However, Kakabadse et. al. (2006) found that consultants appear to be very humble in

their approach to their relationship with clients, and believe that moving clients forward is their ultimate goal. However, research on the consultant's perspective is still scarce.

Statement of the Problem

There is a compelling motive to re-examine cohesion using qualitative analysis strategies (McLeod & von Treuer, 2013). Additionally, cohesion is rarely assessed at multiple points during the lifespan of a team (Salas, Grossman, Hughes, & Coultes, 2015). Building team cohesion involves understanding the experience of individual athletes on the team and uncovering the ways in which they can become personally invested in the team, feel satisfied with the contributions that they are making, and feel responsibility for the team's cohesiveness and success (Schmidt, McGuire, Humphrey, Williams, & Grawer, 2005). However, most methods to increase team cohesion focuses on the task aspect and only a finite number of methods aid in facilitating the social aspect. Additionally, more research needs to be conducted on the consultant/practitioner's perspective of facilitating cohesion.

Weinberg and Gould (1995) stated how individual satisfaction is an important factor in group cohesion development. If an athlete is not satisfied with his or her fellow teammates then he or she will display low levels of cohesion which can lead to poor team performance. Every sport team is unique and so are the individual athletes. Utilizing a quantitative approach does not allow researchers in the field to understand what specific reasons cause internal conflict to arise which can lead individual members to "break away" from the team. Qualitative approach allows researchers to gather a full, in-depth understanding at points during a team's season, where social cohesion must be enhanced

and how individual sport psychology consultants go about with their own methods of facilitating social cohesion.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of social cohesion in sport teams. The cohesion-performance relationship is the strongest in sport teams (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002). Furthermore, less empirical study has been directed toward identifying the factors and responsible for developing and maintaining team cohesion (Westre & Weiss, 1991). Sport psychology practitioners who have experience working with sport teams were interviewed to investigate their approaches to and experiences with social cohesion. Kakabadse et. al. (2006) stressed the importance as to why research needs to be conducted on the viewpoint of consultants/practitioners.

Operational Definitions

Co-acting team- defined as players independently perform the same skills and team success is determined by the sum of individual performances. Furthermore, team member may have training together, but training may focus on individual skill. (Williams & Widmeyer, 1991).

Cohesion- defined as a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives. (Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998, p.213).

Collective Efficacy- defined as a sense of collective competence shared among individuals when allocating, coordinating, and integrating their resources in a successful concerted response to specific situational demands. (Kozub & McDonnell, 2000).

Free Riding- refers to social loafing that occurs when an individual is able to obtain some benefit from the group without contributing a "fair share" of the costs associated with the production of that benefit. (Bennet & Naumann, 2005).

Information Elaboration- defined as the mechanism through which diverse group members share unique knowledge and perspectives to form better and more creative responses to tasks. (Harvey, 2015).

Interacting Team- defined as success depending upon appropriately combining each player's diverse skills in an interdependent pattern of teamwork. Additionally, the teams have regular training and gathering together which include each team member. (Williams & Widmeyer, 1991).

Intragroup Processes- defined as the interactions that take place among team members and includes: communication patterns, personal disclosure and conflict, and efforts toward leadership and other forms of influence. (Barrick et. al., 1998).

Perceived Efficacy by the Coach of the Team- defined as a coach's confidence in his

or her players' abilities to perform given tasks. (Marcos et. al., 2010).

Preference for Group Work- defined as the degree to which individuals prefer group work and compare if favorably with autonomous work. (Stark, Shaw, & Duffy, 2007).

Psychological Benefits- the degree to which athletes perceived that their teammates would not criticize their poor play, would share responsibilities for a loss, would come to their rescue, and would provide support in tough times. (Prapavessis & Carron, 1996).

Psychological Costs- the degree to which athletes perceived pressure not to let teammates down, worried about living up to teammates' expectations, considered teammates' expectations for performance to be reasonable, and felt a demand to play well. (Prapavessis & Carron, 1996).

Role Ambiguity- defined as the lack of clear, consistent information regarding an individual's role. (Kahn et. al., 1964).

Self-Efficacy- defined as an individual's belief in that ability to organize and execute a specific task. (Marcos et. al., 2010).

Shirking- defined as an increase in the tendency to supply less effort in the presence of some incentive to do so. (Stark, Shaw, & Duffy, 2007).

Social Cohesion- defined as the resultant of all forces acting on members to remain in

the group. (Barrick et. al., 1998, p.377).

Social Integration- the degree to which group members are psychologically linked or attracted toward interacting with one another in pursuit of a common objective. (Harrison, Prize, & Bell, 1998).

Social Loafing- defiend as the tendency for individuals expend less effort when working collectively than when working individually. (Karau & Williams, 1993).

Task Cohesion- defined as the feelings of agreement and bonding between team members on the group's tasks, goals, and objectives. (Westre & Weiss, 1991, p.42).

Task Interdependence- defined as the degree of task-driven interaction among work group members. (Liden et. al., 2004).

Assumptions

It was assumed that all the participants' responses to the interview questions were honest and that they reflect an objective, insightful view into how social cohesion is bolstered among individuals in a sport team. Additionally, it was assumed that the participants were able to communicate, effectively and efficiently, their experiences to the researcher.

Research Question

The research question that was explored was: "How do sport psychology consultants facilitate social cohesion?"

Limitations

There is a plethora of challenges that accompany the scientific examination of phenomenological data. For example, this study did not include the viewpoint of athletes, coaches, or other members of the team's staff, who might have differing views of what social cohesion is and how it is important or how it is facilitated. The perception for each participant is multidimensional and unique for each person. The terminology, wording, and overall dialogue can vary between each person causing another threat to construct validity.

Delimitations

For this study, the population was delimited to sport psychology consultants who have a minimum of three years working for a team. Furthermore, the participants have to have a minimum of three years facilitating social cohesion in sport teams. Both male and female consultants will be chosen to prevent gender bias.

Significance

Chang and Bordic (2001) stated that researchers who are interested in the cohesion-performance relationship should tailor their measurements carefully to the specific dimensions of the two constructs, social and task cohesion, under investigation. Suggesting that researchers should study the cohesion-performance relationship by investigating social cohesion and task cohesion separately and not together. In addition, qualitative studies can help determine the qualities of a construct for cohesion (McLeod & von Treuer, 2013).

Therefore, a qualitative approach was utilized to examine the lived experiences of practitioners who have aimed to facilitate social cohesion among teams, with the explored phenomenon being the concept of social cohesion. The results from this study can add to the research that examines the various methods implemented to enhance team cohesion. More specifically, one of the major hindrances of building team cohesion is when individual team members form social cliques. Social cliques only benefit a few athletes, at the expense of alienating most team members (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, cliques are most often formed when individual players' needs are not being met. Undertaking a qualitative approach can aid in understanding what specific factors can lead athletes to forming social cliques and how the formation of social cliques can be inhibited, which have shown to be disruptive to a team (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Groups are dynamic, not static (Williams, 2006). Groups have the ability to change at any given point throughout its lifespan. Groups can lose individuals due to numerous reasons; however, groups can gain individuals because of various factors. Groups can display harmony or they can display discord. A group's commitment towards a certain goal can fluctuate as well. Williams (2006) stated that all these variations represent different behavioral manifestations of an underlying, fundamental group property that is referred to as "cohesiveness".

Cohesiveness in groups has been studied intensively since the 1950s (Beeber & Schmitt, 1986). More so, cohesiveness is viewed as a central property of all groups and a "curative factor" in therapy groups; such that, literature on group work in nursing incorporates discussion of group cohesiveness (Beeber & Schmitt, 1986). According to Lidor and Henschen (2003), groups become more effective when they maximize the importance of the collective and minimize the importance of each individual.

Furthermore, the relative importance of the collective and the individual within the collective can be developed and reinforced by a strong sense of group cohesion (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). John Wooden, one of the most winningest coaches in United States college basketball history, stated a quote that highlighted the importance of group cohesion: "I always taught players that the main ingredient of stardom is the rest of the

team. It's amazing how much can be accomplished when no one gets the credit" (Cypert, 1991, p.180).

The necessity of developing team harmony amongst team members has become an important priority for practitioners in the team sport setting (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Lidor and Henschen (2003) further explained how coaches of sport teams seek ways to build an effective team yet, many coaches struggle to find a systematic program to develop a strong sense of cohesion within their team.

The following review examined the concept of cohesion. The sections that follow will discuss cohesion and how it relates within groups, including both: working groups and sports teams. In this chapter, cohesion will be investigated by first, discussing how cohesion is defined in literature, and discussing the theories and models that surround it. Next, the chapter will discuss the various factors that affect cohesion. Factors that include: gender, diversity, personality, efficacy, social loafing, and leadership. Following the factors that affect cohesion, this chapter will discuss cohesion in sport, in terms of role ambiguity, coaches' competency, and cohesion's effect on co-acting teams versus interacting teams. Subsequently, the consequences and outcomes of team cohesion will be discussed in terms of performance, team dynamics, and possible individual effects as well as potential negative aspects cohesion. The discussion of cohesion will be completed with a presentation of literature focusing on the facilitation of cohesion.

Finally, the chapter will conclude with an overview of qualitative inquiry and a summary of all the information that was provided throughout the chapter. The summary will focus specifically on the nature of social cohesion to set the stage for the proposed study. Additionally, the purpose of the present study will be stated.

Cohesion

Cohesion has been viewed as the sum of the forces that cause members to remain in the group (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950). Cohesion has also been defined as "group members inclination to forge social bonds, resulting in members sticking together and remaining united (Carron, 1982, p.124). However, a more recent definition for cohesion was created. Carron, Brawley, and Widmeyer (1998) defined cohesion as a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs. More so, other recent literature has defined cohesion as the "stick-togetherness" of the group (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Salisbury, Parent, & Chin, 2008)

Moreover, cohesion has be defined as how individual members of team relate to each other and work together as a unit (Aoyagi, Cox, & McGuire, 2008); the shared commitment to the group task and a shared attraction and mutual liking for one another (Hausknecht, Trevor, & Howard, 2009); the bond with the group as a whole (May, Duivenvoorden, Korstjens, van Weert, Hoekstra-Weebers, van den Borne, 2008); and the degree to which the group members share the group goals and unite to meet these goals (Shiue, Chiu, & Chang, 2010).

Lidor and Henschen (2003) also described and defined group cohesion in terms of its dynamic and multidimensional nature. Both definitions illustrate how cohesion varies between groups. The factors that contribute to the cohesiveness of one group may not be apparent in another group that demonstrates cohesiveness at the same level. The

definitions also “shines a light” on the nature of group cohesion and how it is neither static nor transitory.

Brawley, Carron, and Widmeyer (1987) proposed that the multidimensional perceptions of group cohesion is organized and integrated by individual members into two general categories: group integration and individual attractions to the group. Group integration refers to individual’s perception of the group as a whole. While individual attractions to the group refer to a member’s personal attraction to the group. Each category can be further broken down into two principal’ ways: in relation to the task objectives (i.e., win games) and in terms of the social factors (i.e., friendships formed) (Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1987). *See figure below*.

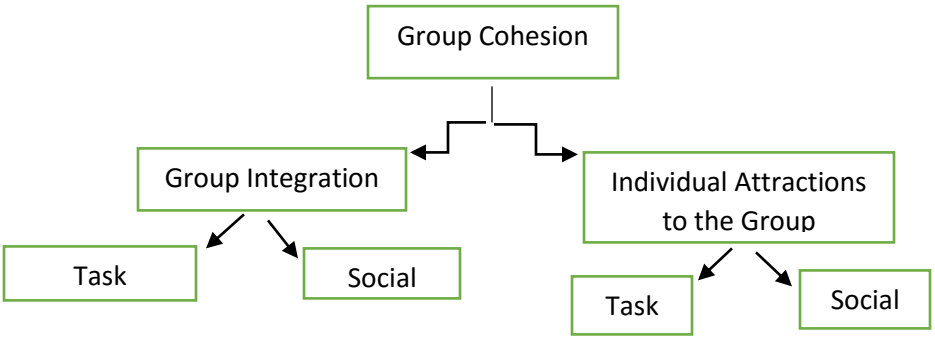

Figure 1. Adapted from Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer (1987).

Task versus Social Cohesion. Cohesion is generally split into two constructs: social and task (Chang & Bordic, 2001; Salas et.al., 2015;Williams, 2006). A team may be united around task objectives, social objectives, or both (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). The definition for both social and task cohesion has taken multiple forms. But despite the various ways both constructs have been defined, the underlying definition for each has been the same.

Social cohesion can be defined as the degree to which members of a group or team like each other and are willing to stay with the group (Barrick et.al., 1998; Carron, Bray, & Eys, 2002; Pescosolido & Saavedra, 2012; Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Whereas task cohesion can be defined as the degree to which individuals in a group or team work together to achieve a certain goal (i.e. to win games, championships, etc.) (Barrick et. al., 1998; Carron, Bray, & Eys, 2002; Pescosolido & Saavedra, 2012; Weinberg & Gould, 1995; Westre & Weiss, 1991).

Bruhn (2009) reviewed key studies regarding social cohesion from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The studies seemed to cluster around three methodological approaches: empirical, experimental, and social network analysis. Empirical studies of social cohesion began with Gustave Le Bon in 1896, a French social psychologist (Bruhn, 2009). Furthermore, Le Bon observed that crowds exerted a hypnotic influence over their members. Crowds could assume a life of their own, stirring up emotions and driving people to irrational acts. With his observations, Le Bon proposed a contagion theory, which possibly could have been the earliest precursor of the concept of social cohesion (Bruhn, 2009).

Around the same time as Le Bon was making his observations, a French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, studied the relationship between social cohesion and suicide in 1897 (Bruhn, 2009). Durkheim collected data that revealed patterns showing that certain categories of people were more likely to commit suicide. Furthermore, he found that different rates of suicide were the consequence of variations in social structure. In 1909, Charles Horton Cooley formulated the idea of primary groups (Bruhn, 2009). Primary groups were characterized by intimate, face-to-face communication, exhibited

cooperation and conflict, and had members who spent a great deal of time together and knew each other well.

The early to mid-20th century was the period during which experimental studies of social cohesion flourished (Bruhn, 2009). Morton Deutsch discovered that a group may be defined as a set of members who mutually perceive themselves to be cooperative interdependent in varying respects and degrees (Bruhn, 2009). More so, Deutsch believed that the study of conditions affecting social cohesiveness and of the effects the variations in social cohesiveness have on group functioning was at the basis for understanding group life. He found that group members who were rewarded for being more cooperative were more cohesive than members rewarded for being more competitive.

Deutsch proposed that members of a cohesive group were more ready to accept the actions of other group members as suitable for intended actions of their own, more ready to be influenced by other group members, and more likely to positively respond to the actions of other group members (Bruhn, 2009). Deutsch also found that the motivation of members to continue working with the group, feeling an obligation to the group, and the evaluation of the group's performance were affected more by the group's dynamics than by its goal attainment.

Social network analysis was prevalent during the late 20th century to the early 21st century (Bruhn, 2009). Bollen and Hoyle proposed a theoretical definition of cohesion that they believed captured the extent to which individual group members feel "stuck to", or a part of, particular social groups. Bollen and Hoyle introduced the concept of *perceived cohesion*. Bollen and Hoyle believed it was possible to combine group members' perceptions to characterize the cohesion of the group as a whole (Bruhn,

2009). Meaning, each individual group members' perceived level of group cohesion can be combined together to represent the entire group cohesion level.

Weinberg and Gould (1995) suggested that the distinction between task and social cohesion helps explain how teams can overcome conflict to succeed. One example used was the Los Angeles Lakers of the National Basketball Association (NBA) during the early 2000's. The two top players, Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant, would constantly be feuding. They would not hang out together off the court, and were critical with each other during press conferences. Yet, despite the animosity between the two basketball stars, they were able to boost the Lakers into the NBA's history of dynasties by winning three consecutive NBA championships. This example highlights the complex nature of team cohesion. Teams that apparently display low social cohesion but high task cohesion can win games, thereby highlighting the potential independent nature of social and task cohesion, suggesting that one may not be reliant on the other. Furthermore, Papanikolaou, Voutselas, Mantis, and Laparidis (2012) suggested that task cohesion might play a more important role in the performance of interactive team sports. Additionally, the nature of the group task is a strong mediator of group cohesion (Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985).

Measurement of Cohesion. When cohesion began to be the focal point of work group and sport team research, many researchers sought out different methods to measure cohesion. Early research on cohesion utilized the Sport Cohesiveness Questionnaire developed by Martens, Landers, and Loy (1972). The SCQ had seven items that either measure interpersonal attraction or directly rate closeness or attraction to the group (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). More so, two questions ask team members to assess other

members of the team relative to feelings of friendship and team influence; three questions ask the athlete to assess his or her relationship to the team in terms of a sense of belonging, value membership, and enjoyment; and the remaining two questions ask athletes to evaluate the team as a whole in terms of teamwork and closeness (Kent, 2007). However, no reliability or validity measures were established on the Sport Cohesiveness Questionnaire, and majority of the items addressed only social cohesion.

Since cohesion has been labeled as a multidimensional construct, Yukelson, Weinberg, and Jackson (1984) developed a 22-item tool called the Multidimensional Sport Cohesion Instrument. It was created to account for the multidimensional nature of cohesion (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). The questionnaire contains four broad dimensions of team cohesion: attraction to the group, unity of purpose, quality of teamwork, and valued roles, that are rated on an 11-point Likert scale (Yukelson, Weinberg, & Jackson, 1984). The first factor, attraction to the group, addresses social cohesion. The other three factors reflect task cohesion because they all pertain to working together as a team in pursuit of common goals. The Multidimensional Sport Cohesion Instrument was originally designed for basketball teams, but its versatility allowed it to be used with other sport teams (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Subsequently, Widmeyer, Brawley, and Carron (1985) developed the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ), which distinguishes between the individual and the group and between task and social concerns. The GEQ was based on theory related to group processes and systematically developed to guarantee reliability and validity (Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1987; Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998). Furthermore, the GEQ proposes that group members possess views of what personally

attracts them to the group and how the group functions as a total unit (Slater & Sewell, 1994). The GEQ has been used successfully in numerous studies of group cohesion in sport and has shown that level of cohesion to be related to team performance, increased adherence, group size, attributions for responsibility for performance outcomes, reduced absenteeism, member satisfaction, and intrateam communication (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

The GEQ contains four related factors that bind members to the team. Individual Attraction to the Group-Social (ATG-S) is an individual team member's feelings about his or her personal involvement, acceptance and social interaction within the group. Second, Individual Attractions to the Group-Task (ATG-T) is an individual team member's feelings about his or her involvement with the group task, productivity, and goals and objectives. Third, Group Integration-Social (GI-S) is an individual team member's feelings about the similarity, closeness and bonding within the team around the group as a social unit. Last, Group Integration-Task (GI-T) is an individual team member's feelings about the similarity and bonding within the team as a whole around the group's task. The GEQ is comprised of 18 items, rated on a nine-point Likert scale that measures the four aspects of the assessment (ATG-S, ATG-T, GI-S, and GI-T).

The GEQ has been used in several studies investigating the nature of team cohesion. For example, Terry, Carron, Pink, Lane, Jones, and Hall (2000) investigated the impact of perceptions of team cohesion on mood in netball, rowing, and rugby. The participants completed the GEQ and the Profile of Mood States-C. For task cohesion, attraction to the group predicted low tension and anger, and group integration predicted low depression. For social cohesion, attraction to the group predicted low tension, low

depression and high vigor but group integration was not predictive of mood. The results were discussed in relation to Baumeister and Leary's (1995) propositio that the "need to belong" is fundamental human motive.

Other means of assessing group cohesion beyond the use of questionnaires have also been developed. For example, sociograms are specifically utilized for measuring social cohesion and to confirm social peer status and hierarchy (Leung & Silberling, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Sociograms disclose affiliation and attraction among group members, illuminating various aspects of the dynamics of the group, such as: the presence or absence of cliques, members' perceptions of group closeness, friendship choices in the group, the degree to which athletes perceive interpersonal feelings similarly, social isolation of individual group members, and the extent of group attraction (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). To generate information for the sociogram, a researcher would ask individual group members specific questions such as "Name the four people in the group you would most like to attend a party with and the four people you would not like to attend a party with". Based on the responses to the questions, a sociogram is created, which should reveal the pattern of interpersonal relationships in a group (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). The most frequently chosen person(s) (i.e., the person most chosen by group members who they would prefer to be around) is placed toward the center and the less frequently chosen person(s) is placed outside (see Figure 2).

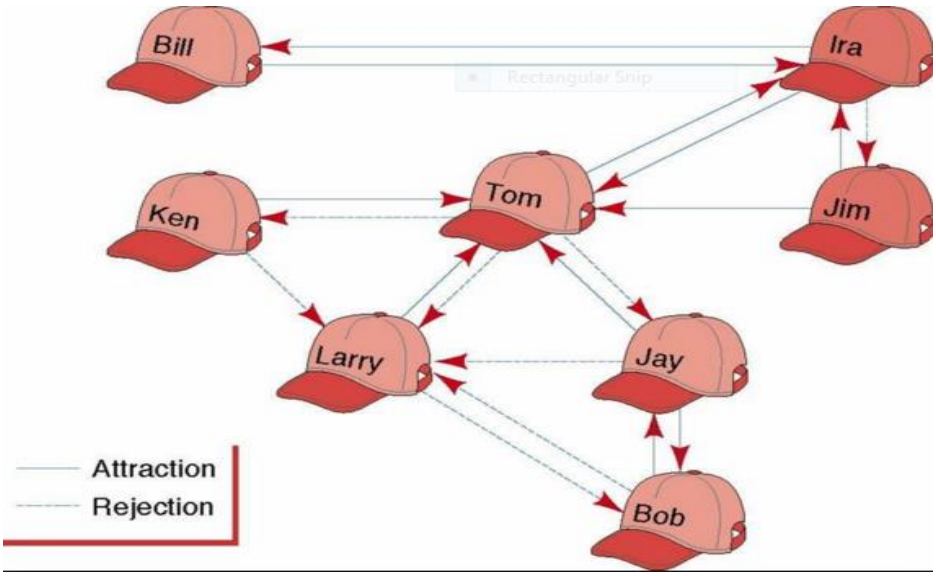

Figure 2. Example sociogram was adapted from Weinberg & Gould (1995). The solid arrows represent attraction, while the dashed arrows represent rejection. "Tom" was the most frequently chosen individual, as to why he is placed in the center of the sociogram.

Carron (1982) argued that operational measures of cohesion based on attraction underrepresent the concept because goals and objectives relating to performance are also important in the study of cohesion. Carron (1982) further explained that measures based on attraction fail to explain cohesion in situations characterized by negative affect and proposed that direct observation of group behavior maybe a better way to study cohesion. For example, observing the number of passes exchanged between teammates as related to friendship choices. Carron (1982) expressed the importance of studying cohesion because cohesion has been shown to influence productivity, conformity, individual satisfaction, behavior change, role clarity among group members, and group stability.

Models. In an effort to understand the nature of cohesion and its development, researchers have put forth different models and perspectives (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Specifically, four models have been proposed, including: (1) linear perspective, which holds that groups develop in stages or in a linear fashion; (2) cyclical theory, which holds that groups follow a life cycle pattern; and (3) pendular perspective, which holds that groups develop in a "back-and-forth" like manner. (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

In the linear perspective of team development, there is an assumption that groups move progressively through different stages (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, critical issues arise in each stage, and when the team has successfully surpassed these issues, the team can move onto the next stage. The most popular example of the linear model was spearheaded by Bruce Tuckman (1965). Tuckman (1965) proposed that all groups go through four stages as they develop and prepare to carry out the group's tasks: forming, storming, norming, and performing. The sequence the stages follow and the duration of each stage can vary from one group to another.

The first stage of the linear model, *forming*, deals with team members familiarizing themselves with other team members (Tuckman, 1965). Furthermore, team members of a team engage in social comparisons, assessing one another's strengths and weaknesses. The second stage, *storming*, is characterized by resistance to the leader, resistance to control by the group, and interpersonal conflict. In this stage, great emotional resistance emerges, and infighting can occur as individuals and the leader establish their roles and status in the group (Tuckman, 1965).

The third stage, *norming*, is seen as the replacement of hostility with solidarity and cooperation (Tuckman, 1965). Additionally, conflicts are resolved, and a sense of unity forms. During this stage, athletes work together to reach common goals. Also, players strive for economy of effort and task effectiveness. The final stage, *performing*, is

when team members band together to channel their energies for team success (Tuckman, 1965). More so, the team focuses on problem solving, using group processes and relationships to work on tasks and test new ideas. In addition, structural issues are resolved, interpersonal relationships stabilize, and roles are well defined (Tuckman, 1965).

In comparison, the cyclical perspective model takes on the assumption that groups develop in a manner similar to the life cycle of individuals-experiencing birth, growth, and death (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Moreover, the cyclical perspective is distinguished from linear models in their emphasis on the terminal phase before group dissolution. Weinberg and Gould (1995) further emphasized that the main element of the cyclical model is the assumption that as the group develops, it psychologically prepares for its own breakup.

Furthermore, the cyclical perspective holds relevance in exercise classes and recreational sport teams (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Exercise classes and recreational sport teams have a set time period before they break-up. Many consultants advise that instructors and coaches address the eventual break-up of the group when developing team-building strategies (Lidor & Henschen, 2003; Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007; Weinberg & Gould, 1995; Williams, 2006).

Gersick (1988) stated that the majority of the earlier linear and life cycle models were based on the underlying assumption that groups possess an inherent static development that is unresponsive to the demands of the environment. However, the pendular models emphasize the shifts that occur in the interpersonal relationships during the growth and development of groups (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, the

pendular model take the assumption that a group does not move progressively through stages in a linear fashion from the instant it forms. Gersick (1988) suggests that group develops through the sudden formation, maintenance, and sudden revision of a "framework for performance".

Additionally, the model describes the processes through which such frameworks are formed and revised and predicts both the timing of progress and when and how in their development groups are likely, or unlikely, to be influenced by their environment (Gersick, 1988). The proposed model works in the following way: phase 1, midpoint, and phase 2. Phase 1 is when a framework of behavioral patterns and assumptions through which a group approaches its tasks emerge. Midpoint is where groups experience transitions in their approaches to their tasks enabling them to capitalize on the gradual learning they have done and make significant advances. Phase 2 is at the completion (i.e., end of a season); this is when the team makes a final effort to satisfy outside expectations. Teams during phase 2, also experience the positive and negative consequences of past choices.

Factors That Affect Cohesion

Many factors can affect cohesion. These factors include the ones proposed by Carron and Hausenblas (1998) which include: environmental factors (e.g. schloarships, contracts, and geographical restrictions), leadership factors (e.g. team captain's leadership style), personal factors (e.g., similarity, sex, behavior), and team factors (e.g., group norms, group roles, and team stability). Furthermore, each of these factors contain different aspects that can affect the cohesiveness of the team, such as (in no particular order) gender, personality, diversity, social loafing, efficacy, and the team's leaders.

Gender. The influence of gender in behavior and performance in sport has not been widely researched (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Men's and women's athletic teams may be faced with similar problems, but how they usually deal with them is vastly different. For example, women athletes have difficulty giving each other positive and helpful feedback (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Furthermore, Tuffy (1996) summarized gender differences in sport and noted differences in reporting anxiety (which was higher for females), small differences in self-confidence, and some differences in achievement motivation and leadership style.

Gender differences within a group have the potential to decrease cohesion. For example, Rosen, Bliese, Wright, and Gifford (1999), conducted a study investigating the impact of gender on cohesion in the military, by examining survey data from several overseas military operations. It was found that the impact of gender differences was inconsistent. For example, a higher percentage of women in the unit was strongly associated with lower cohesion in one military operation, while there was a much smaller association between these variables in another sample. More so, this relationship was present only among junior enlisted soldiers in one sample but was absent in another. Overall, Rosen et al. (1999) concluded that in most cases, a higher percentage of women was associated with lower cohesion. Furthermore, the researchers suggested that males and females differing views regarding the objective and importance of the mission as well as differences in deployment circumstances (i.e., the level of danger of each mission and the casualty risk) may play a role in the impact of gender differences on cohesion.

In contrast, Fenwick and Neal (2001) provided support for the notion that having a mixed group, both males and females, may be more beneficial for a group. Senior

undergraduate students were placed into groups and competed for five-firm (group/business companies) industries for 10 weeks, submitting group reports on their performance (i.e., marketing campaigns, advertisements, etc.). The study further explained that the number of women per group was positively related to simulation performance, with few women-dominated groups ranking lower than first or second within each industry. Conversely, few men-dominated groups achieved first or second within each industry. Fenwick and Neal (2001) reasoned the superior performance of mixed groups was that women's more interactive, people-oriented and co-operative work styles facilitated the group process simulation that was utilized for the study. Plus, the superior performance of mixed groups were apparent because of the combined women's work style and the men's more analytical decision-making tendencies and competitive orientation. The researchers concluded that groups may be more effective when women outnumber or equal men, especially in complex management activities requiring extensive information management and processing, planning and decision-making over prolonged periods.

Fenwick and Neal's (2001) results are consistent with the functionalist view of sociology. Functionalists maintain that gender differentiation has contributed to overall social stability (Schaefer, 2001). Parsons and Bales (1955) contended that women take the expressive role, meaning the emotionally supportive role, the people-oriented role whereas men take the instrumental role, the more practical, goal-oriented role. This notion was intended for examining family dynamics and understanding how tasks should be divided between spouses.

The functionalist view helps in explaining some of the problems observed in women's teams. Women athletes have difficulty giving each other positive and helpful feedback (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Furthermore, women athletes fear offending a teammate and will not give technical corrections or feedback, such as "toss that ball more to the right" or "follow me closely when the defender moves back". Women also tend to take strong offense when receiving such feedback from a teammate; this in turn, affects their intensity and ability to bounce back from mistakes (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Women's concern for harmony inhibits them from giving and receiving constructive criticism. If they cannot be willing to listen to their teammates for feedback, team performance can drop, which can lead to team cohesion dropping.

Carron, Colman, Wheeler, and Stevens (2002) conducted a meta-analytic summary of the cohesion-performance relationship in sport. The results from the study had shown there was a significant moderate to large relationship between cohesion and performance. However, one major finding from the study had revealed that the cohesion-performance relationship was significantly stronger for female teams as compared with male teams. This finding is supported by the Fenwick and Neal (2001) study that revealed women-dominated groups had better performance than the men-dominated groups.

Eys, Ohlert, Evans, Wolf, Martin, Van Bussel, and Steins (2015) conducted a study that explored perceptions of the cohesion-performance relationships by coaches who have led teams of both genders. Semi-structured interviews were utilized with Canadian and German coaches with previous experience leading both male and female sports teams. The interviews revealed information that yielded a number of categories pertaining to potential similarities and differences within female and male sport teams

including: the nature of cohesion (i.e. the direction of the cohesion-performance relationship), antecedents of cohesion (i.e. the approaches to conflict), and the management of cohesion (i.e. developing social cohesion). The Canadian and German coaches indicated their belief that the development of cohesion is particularly important for female teams and that female teams require more task cohesion and males require more social cohesion. In addition, the study found that male teams are more likely to derive cohesion from successful performance, whereas female teams may be more likely to derive successful performance by having a cohesive group. The study concluded by stating the results offer testable propositions regarding gender differences and group involvement in a sport context as well as informing best practices such that teams can attain optimal performance.

Diversity. Another factor potentially influencing a team's dynamics and cohesion is the diversity of the members of the team. The term culture has had a strong presence in anthropology and psychology, and intersects both domains in the field of cultural psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). Furthermore, cultural psychology developed out of the ethnocentric approach of psychology and the way cross-cultural psychology represented culture as an independent variable rather than as a process. Choosing to focus on "the understanding of not only how mind constitutes culture but more importantly how culture constitutes mind" (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009, p.5).

Harrison, Price, and Bell (1998) examined the impact of surface-level (race, ethnic background) and deep-level (attitudinal/values/personality) diversity on group social integration. As hypothesized, the length of time group members worked together weakened the effects of surface-level diversity and strengthened the effects of deep-level

diversity as group members had the opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions. Suggesting, that spending long periods of time with team members will increase cohesion among the members regarding their age, gender, or ethnic background.

In addition, Harvey (2015), investigated the issue of information elaboration in an energy company. The article defined information elaboration as the mechanism through which diverse group members share unique knowledge and perspectives to form better and more creative responses to tasks. Meaning, group members share knowledge they had acquired from their own personal experiences with other members to aid in succeeding in various tasks. The results from the study suggested that group members who have deep, underlying differences (i.e., different personalities, differing opinions, etc.) in perspective from the group engage in less information elaboration. Hinting, it is the personality differences that cause group members to become less cohesive rather than the superficial differences (i.e., ethnic background, age, etc.). Harvey (2015) explained that it is helpful to recognize personality, values, and moral differences, but even more so when an individual also differs from the group in regards to culture, because those differences fosters information elaboration. Harvey (2015) concluded by stating that cultural diversity prompts group members to understand and appreciate their personal differences.

Both, the Harrison et. al. (1998) and the Harvey (2015) studies have shown that superficial differences among group members does not create hindrance as some might have speculated. Furthermore, the studies have shown that time can foster cohesion among group members who differ at the surface-level. More so, differences among individuals in a group can improve group performance by combining unique knowledge

to help complete various tasks and goals. These findings were illustrated by Disney's *Remember the Titans* (2000).The players, who were Caucasian and African-American kids who played for a recently integrated high school in 1971, had animosity at first, but grew to understand and appreciate each other's unique, individual qualities and not focus on skin color.

Personality. Personality can be examined through several viewpoints including: the trait approach, situation approach, and the interactional approach (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). The trait approach assumes that the fundamental units of personality (i.e., its traits) are relatively stable (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Meaning, an individual's personality traits are constant regarding the situation he or she has been placed in. Furthermore, the individual's traits predispose the person to act in a certain manner regardless of the circumstance (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). For example, a competitive athlete on a basketball team is predisposed to playing aggressively and with bravado. That same athlete might be more cohesive in regards to the team's objective to win games (i.e., displaying high task cohesion), as opposed to being social, or friendly with his or her teammates off the court (i.e., displaying low social cohesion).

Researchers examining personality through the trait approach have developed the Big Five model of personality (Allen, Greenless, & Jones, 2013; Gill & Williams, 2008; Vealey, 2002). The Big Five model of personality posits that five major dimensions of personality exist: neuroticism (nervousness, anxiety, depression, and anger), extraversion (enthusiasm, sociability, assertiveness, and high activity level), openness to experience (originality, need for variety, curiosity), agreeableness (friendliness, altruism, modesty), and conscientiousness (constraint, achievement striving, self-discipline) (Weinberg &

Gould, 1995). Across the set of Big Five traits, agreeableness was positively related to task cohesion and extraversion was positively related to social cohesion (Aeron & Pathak, 2012). Additionally, Bradley, Baur, Banford, and Postlehethwaite (2013) found that agreeableness affects performance by using communication and cohesion and that communication precedes cohesion in time. Specifically, individuals with high levels of agreeableness will communicate with their teammates more efficiently. Moreover, a team that possesses excellent communication skills will become more cohesive over time. The study also added that teams only benefitted from high levels of agreeableness when interacting face-to-face, meaning the team members have to be able to speak with one another in person. Additionally, Aeron and Pathak (2012) found that neuroticism was negatively related to both task and social cohesion.

The situation approach for examining personality argues that behavior is determined largely by the situation or environment (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Moreover, this approach holds that environmental influences and reinforcements shape the way an individual behaves. For example, a football player may be shy and sweet off the field, but will become assertive and aggressive on the field, especially during a game with serious post-season implications. Suggesting that the level of group cohesion can be dependent upon the situation. High-reward games (i.e., playoff game or championship game) can bolster a higher level of group cohesion as opposed to a low-reward game (i.e., a preseason game).

The interactional approach posits a combination of both the trait approach and the situational approach. Meaning, the interactional approach to examining personality considers the situation and person as co-determinants of behavior (i.e., variables that

together determine behavior) (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). For example, two starting guards on a basketball team, both of whom displaying high levels of neuroticism, may not get along off the court and do not display cohesion on the court might actually perform differently during a particular circumstance. Such as, during a playoff game in which the team the players are on is facing elimination. The two players, who during the regular season did not display much cohesion because they did not pass the ball to each other, might have played like they were the best of friends. Passing the ball, setting screens for one another and overall, performing in a cohesive manner. Through the interactional approach, it is important to consider both an individual's traits and the situation that individual is placed under equally. Bowers (1973) found that the interaction between persons and situations could explain twice as many behaviors as traits or situations alone could. Furthermore, the interactional approach requires investigating how people react individually in particular sport and physical activity settings (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Many studies have been conducted to examine the effects of personality on team effectiveness and cohesiveness. Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, and Mount in 1998 examined the relationship among team composition (ability and personality) and team process (social cohesion), by having 652 employees, composing of 51 work teams, take various surveys to assess personality, general mental ability, social cohesiveness, and team performance. The results indicated that a team possessing higher levels of extraversion and emotional stability are more likely to experience increased time spent interacting with fellow team members, thereby enhancing social cohesion. In addition, the results showed that a team member with high disagreeableness (choosing to remain isolated

from the group) within a team can lead to lower performance, less cohesion, more conflict, less open communication, and less sharing of the workload.

Social Loafing. Despite how many teams/groups can effectively work together, many teams/groups may contain members who engage in social loafing. Social loafing is the term psychologists use for the phenomenon in which individuals in a group or team put forth less than one hundred percent effort because of losses in motivation (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, research has shown that social loafing is heightened when the contributions of individual group members are not identified, are dispensable, or are disproportionate to the contributions of other group members. In addition, Williams (2006) expanded on the reason an individual may engage in social loafing by stating that once more people take part in a task, it is easier to get lost in the crowd and, thus, not expend as much effort.

Karau and Williams (1993) found that many variables moderate social loafing. More specifically, evaluation potential, expectations of coworker performance, task meaningfulness, and culture had especially strong influence on social loafing. Liden, Wayne, Jawoski, and Bennett (2004) also found that increased group size, task interdependence, and decreased cohesiveness were related to increased levels of social loafing. However, the Liden et. al. (2004) study had limitations. One limitation of the study was the cross-sectional design. The researchers stated that the cross-sectional design restricts their ability to make casual inferences, and that research would benefit from a longitudinal design which can address issues of causality. In addition, longitudinal studies would be best because researchers can examine social loafing from the time that groups form.

Stark, Shaw, and Duffy (2007) developed a multilevel interactive model for predicting social loafing behavior in groups and tested this model in a study of 367 individuals working in 102 groups during a four-month period. They found that preference for group work had an inverse relationship with social loafing (for both self-reported and peer rated). The relationship was moderated by team members' desire to accomplish/succeed the task (winning orientation) and the amount of interaction between team members driven to complete the task (task interdependence). Group members were more likely to self-report social loafing when their preference for group work and desire to accomplish the task were both low. For peer-rated social loafing was most likely reported when individuals saw that their fellow team member did not want to work with anyone, had little desire to accomplish the task, and displayed little interaction to help complete the task. Stark et al. (2007) proposed that social loafing persists when team members: (1) do not want to work in a group, (2) have little desire to accomplish a task (win), and (3) do not make an effort to interact, or work with fellow teammates, to complete a task. If individuals on a team display any of these listed reasons, they can create a loss of cohesiveness among the members of a team.

Lam (2015) determined the influence of communication quality and task cohesion on social loafing. The study also included other various models to compare to the communication and task cohesion model. The other models included were: group size, peer review, the scope of the project, and method of how teams were formed. The results indicated the communication quality and task cohesion model significantly reduced social loafing, explaining 53% of the variance in social loafing. Thus, social loafing was significantly decreased when team members can effectively communicate to one another

and when team members can interact to accomplish a set task (task cohesion). The researchers also examined the impact of additional factors, including group size, peer review, the scope of the project, and the manner in which the teams were formed. These other factors only explained four percent of the variance in social loafing. This suggests that social loafing is not necessarily caused by group size, the nature of the project, or if the performance of the group is going to be scrutinized by others (peer review). The results from this study support the results from Bradley et. al. (2013) which stressed the importance of communication to reduce social loafing.

Kidwell and Bennett (1993) examined social loafing, along with shirking and free riding among employees at their respective jobs. Shirking is defined as increase in the tendency to supply less effort when it is possible; whereas, free riding refers to social loafing that occurs when an individual is able to obtain some benefit from the group without contributing a "fair share" of the work or effort into the benefit. The study further explained how social loafing, shirking, and free riding were examined as distinct concepts in previous research, but the study explains that there is a common thread that underlies the concepts, propensity to withhold effort (PWE). All three concepts are seen as individuals not "giving it their all" while performing in a group or team. Kidwell and Bennett (1993) claimed that the main difference between the three concepts is the context in which or the reasons why withholding effort occurs. For example, free riding occurs when an individual on an intramural basketball team does not show up to practices and barely plays just to avoid the possibility of getting hurt, but that same individual shows up to receive the championship trophy and acts in a manner as if he was the team's most valuable player (MVP). That individual obtained a benefit (the championship victory and

all that accompanies it) by supplying minimum effort. An example of shirking is when a wide receiver on a football team does not go after the defender when he intercepts the ball. The wide receiver shuns his responsibility to go after the ball, regardless of his position. Example of social loafing would be a linebacker not going after the running back because two other linebackers are in closer proximity of the running back.

Hoigaard, Safvenbom, and Tonnessen (2006) investigated the relationship between group cohesion, group norms, and perceived social loafing in a sport setting. One hundred and eighteen soccer players playing in a junior league in Norway completed a questionnaire to assess group cohesion (both social and task cohesion), team norms (how productive the team is, understanding individual roles, and the types of social support), and perceived social loafing. The results from the study had shown that there was an inverse relationship between perceived social loafing and the cohesion subscales and the team-norm subscales. Specifically, when both task and social cohesion are high and the understanding of team norms is high, perceived social loafing is low. Furthermore, the study had revealed that the player's attraction to their team's task as well, the player's perception to how productive the team is and the types of social support predicted perceptions of social loafing. The combination of high social cohesion, low task cohesion, and low team norms seems to underlie perceptions of social loafing. Therefore, even if team members can get along on a social level, if they do not agree on task objectives and display a low understanding of what the task objectives are and the role they are supposed to take, social loafing is more likely to occur.

Efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as a person's judgment about her or his capability to successfully perform a particular task (Bandura, 1986). Furthermore, such

judgments relate to the level of performance expected, the strength or certainty of those attainment beliefs, and the generality of those beliefs to other related tasks or domains. Bandura (1995, 1997) refined the definition of self-efficacy to encompass those beliefs regarding individuals' capabilities to produce performances that will lead to anticipated outcomes. With that, self-regulatory efficacy was formed. The term now encompasses a social cognitive approach that articulates the role cognition plays in performance above and beyond simple behavioral or skill beliefs (Williams, 2006).

People's judgment of their capability to perform at given levels affect their behavior (i.e., choice of activities, effort expenditure, persistence), their thought patterns, and their emotional reactions in demanding or anxiety-provoking situations (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). Bandura (1986) argued that our efficacy beliefs mediate subsequent thought patterns, affective responses, and action. Bandura (1986) also argued that self-efficacy is positively related to positive motivational patterns. Sport research has shown that self-efficacy is a positive predictor of motor skill acquisition, execution, and competitive sport performance; and self-efficacy has been the most extensively used theory for investigating self-confidence in sport and motor performance (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007; Treasure, Monson, & Lox, 1996).

Perceived efficacy has potential to influence the dynamics of sports teams, and it has been found that efficacy positively relates to team performance (Marco, Miguel, Oliva, & Calvo, 2010). Marco et. al. (2010) examined the relationship among, cohesion, self-efficacy, coaches' perceptions of their players' efficacy at the individual level and athletes' perceptions of their teammates' efficacy. The participants were recruited from four semi-professional soccer and basketball teams and completed cohesiveness and

efficacy questionnaires. The results from the study indicated significant correlations between self-efficacy and task and social cohesion. A regression analysis of the results suggested that task cohesion positively related to coaches and teammates' perception of efficacy.

Marco et al. (2010) stated that the results are consistent with previous research which have indicated that collective efficacy is more strongly related to task cohesion than to social cohesion. In addition, teammates' perception of efficacy were significantly related with the sociogram data. The findings indicated that the players who were judged by teammates as having higher levels of efficacy also had more positive relationships and lower frequencies of negative relationships with teammates than did those players who were considered by their teammates to have lower levels of efficacy.

Kozub and McDonnell (2000) examined the relationship between perceived cohesion and collective efficacy in rugby teams. The participants were 96 athletes from seven rugby union clubs and the researchers had the athletes complete the GEQ and a collective efficacy measure designed to assess the athletes' perceptions of their team's functioning in seven performance areas. Multiple regression analyses indicated that the cohesion dimensions accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in the collective efficacy scores. Similar to the results from the Marcos et. al. (2010) study, the results from Kozub and McDonnell (2000) revealed that the task measures of cohesion were stronger predictors of collective efficacy than were the social measures of cohesion.

Leadership. Leadership is the process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010). The process of influence typically involves facilitating motivation in others, where the leader focuses on getting

individuals to collaborate in the pursuit of a common goal (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Attempts to understand leadership should be concerned with why people comply as well as with how one person influences another (Williams, 2006). Schein (1970) suggested that people comply because of a psychological contract. Implying that individuals will do many things because they believe they should, and they expect reciprocation for what they do in the form of rewards, privileges, or other forms of compensation or perks.

Bennis (2007) states that exemplary modern leaders create a sense of vision or mission for the group, motivate others to join them in pursuit of that mission, create social architecture for followers to operate, generate optimism and trust in followers, develop other leaders in the group, and achieve results. Despite the multitude of ways leadership is defined or reviewed, heavy emphasis should be placed on better understanding leadership as a complex, social process by examining the interaction among the leader, followers, leader and follower dyad (leader and follower relationship), and the context in which leadership occurs (Eberly, Johnson, Hernandez, and Avolio, 2013).

Over the past several decades, researchers have investigated trait, behavioral, situational, and transformational approaches to leadership theory (Williams, 2006). In the 1920's, researchers tried to determine what characteristics or personality traits were common to great leaders in business and industry (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). At this time, researchers have considered leadership traits to be relatively stable personality dispositions. Proponents of the trait theory argued that successful leaders have certain personality characteristics that make it likely they will be leaders no matter what situation they are in (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Such as individuals with high levels of

conscientiousness would be more motivated toward order, self-discipline, and dutifulness (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

More recent research on leadership theory has focused on actual leadership behaviors, or how a leader leads rather than what a leader is (Williams, 2006). Additionally, the behavioral approach examines the behavior of leaders and group effectiveness, or the productivity and satisfaction of group members (Williams, 2006). Proponents of the behavioral approach posits that anyone could become a leader by simply learning the behaviors of other effective leaders (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Tharp and Gallimore (1976) observed coaching behaviors in former UCLA coach John Wooden who won 10 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball championships. Tharp and Gilmore (1976) identified 10 categories of behavior that Wooden exhibited. Most of Wooden's behaviors involved giving instructions; Wooden also encouraged intensity and effort. For communicating, Wooden spent about 50% of his time in verbal instruction, 12.7% in hustling players to intensify instruction, 8% in scolding and reinstructing with a combination statement, 6.9% in praising and encouraging, and 6.6% in simple statements of displeasure.

Perrow (1970) argued that leader characteristics are not as important as the trait and behavioral approach to leadership make it. According to the situational approach to understanding leadership, effective leadership depends much more on the characteristics of the situation than on the traits and behaviors of the leaders in those situations (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Some situational factors that are important to leadership success are the characteristics of subordinates, the organizational situation, and the demands of the specific situation (Williams, 2006).

Since the 1980's, transformational leadership paradigms have become the focus of the study of leadership (Williams, 2006). Transformational leadership occurs when the leader takes a visionary position and inspires people to follow that vision and supportively work with each other to excel (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Additionally, transformational leadership involves having the ability to motivate and inspire followers to achieve new heights and accomplish more than they originally believed they could. Chelladurai (2007) stated that leaders who help individuals and teams pursue excellence "transform" the person by facilitating attributes such as self-efficacy and competitiveness and at the same time create a situation or environment that supports a compelling vision, key goals, and productive motivational climates. The models of leadership being developed and intensively studied today focus more on what constitutes charismatic or transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional models of leadership (Avolio, Sosik, Jung, & Berson, 2003).

Research has shown that leadership can affect team cohesion and performance. For example, Sivasubramanian, Murry, Avolio, and Jung (2002) examined how leadership within a team predicts levels of group cohesion and group performance over time. The results showed that groups that rated themselves high on transformational team leadership behaviors soon after the groups were formed saw themselves as being more cohesive over time and also achieved a higher level of group performance. Further, the team has to see leader as inspirational (transformational) for positive performance to occur. This notion is supported by Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir's (2002) examination of the impact of transformational leadership training on follower development and performance. The participants included 54 military leaders, their 90 direct followers, and

724 indirect followers. The experimental group leaders received transformational leadership training focusing on communication skills that help inspire, intellectual stimulation, promoting self-efficacy and self-esteem, fostering competitiveness in the team, and emphasizing the importance of winning but not winning at any cost. The control group leaders received eclectic leadership training. Eclectic leadership is the combination of different leadership approaches. Specifically, individuals within the control group received training that combined skills from other approaches, such as the trait behavioral approaches to leadership.

The results indicated that the leaders in the experimental group had a more positive impact on direct followers' (i.e., the immediate followers) development and on indirect followers' (i.e., the individuals that do not report directly to the leader) performance in comparison to the leaders in the control group. Dvir et al. (2002) suggested that the indirect followers' performance could improve by transformational leadership because of the strong social bonds created between the leader and the followers, whether the followers be direct or indirect. Thus, the researchers suggested that social bonds can spread like wildfire; bonding between leader and direct follower can reach to indirect followers who come into contact with direct followers.

The impact of other "leaders" on the team has also been examined. For example, Park & Shin (2015) recently determined that a single person, such as a star player, can have a big impact on the team (Park & Shin, 2015). Park and Shin (2015) explored whether the most competent member (i.e., the "star" player) in the group can facilitate high group performance. The researchers hypothesized that the most competent member in a group increases group performance in high cohesive groups where members interact

more frequently and maintain closer relationships with one another. The results from the study showed that the star player impacted both members' and upper management's perceptions of group performance in cohesive groups. Specifically, when the star player (who can also be the leader) performs well, his or her teammates and the coaching staff will perceive the group performance at a high level.

Cohesion in Sport

Cohesion has historically been considered one of the most important variables in the study of small group dynamics and has historically been one of the most frequently studied of group-level constructs (Pescosolido & Saavedra, 2012). Furthermore, Pescosolido and Saavedra (2012) examined why and how group cohesion influences behavior in sports teams and why and how it operates differently in different types of teams. More specifically, Pescosolido and Saavedra (2012) noted that sports teams operate in extremely well-defined contexts, with greater clarity in terms of goals, member roles, working procedures, available resources, and so forth, than most other types of teams.

Research on cohesion in sport and exercise settings dates back to the early 1950's, when researchers from social psychology began to examine the relationship of team dynamics (i.e., group cohesion) to team effectiveness in various sports (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). More so, during the early 1970's, the relatively new discipline of sport psychology started to reveal increasing interest in exploring this domain; and by the mid-1970's, enough information was gathered in this area from both social and sport psychological studies to justify an extensive review (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). Carron, Bray, and Eys (2002) examined cohesion in a sport setting.

The Carron et. al.(2002) study has shown that team cohesion is perceptive, and that the entire team shares the perception of cohesion (i.e., each individual team member share the same emotion/feeling in regards to cohesion). The article used elite university basketball teams and club soccer teams and both teams were assessed for cohesiveness and winning percentages, and the measures were recorded towards the end of each team's competitive season. Along with team cohesion being perceptive, the results have also shown a strong relationship between cohesion and success. Meaning, when the team was having success (i.e., winning games) the perception of team cohesion was high.

Cohesion within a sport team can be affected by different aspects of the team. Group roles, coaches, and the type of team sport: interactive or co-acting, have been shown to alter the cohesiveness of a sport team. Each of the aspects listed will be further discussed in terms of their relationship with team cohesion.

Roles. Within every group there are two general categories of roles, formal and informal (Mabry & Barnes, 1980). Formal roles are explicitly set out by the group or organization (Williams, 2006). Coaches, team captain, and managers are examples of explicit leadership roles; whereas a setter in volleyball, forward in basketball, and a quarterback in football are examples of explicit performance roles (Williams, 2006). Additionally, the sport team as an organization requires specific individuals to carry out each these roles, thus, individuals are trained or recruited for these roles, and specific expectations are held for their behavior (Williams, 2006). Informal roles evolve as a result of the interactions that take place among group members (Williams, 2006). Examples of informal roles that can emerge on a sport team are leader, enforcer, social director, and team clown (Williams, 2006).

There are a variety of elements associated with athletes' roles that determine how effective they can be performed (Williams, 2006). Furthermore, one element is the degree to which athletes understand, or do not understand, what constitutes their role. The term role ambiguity is often used to describe this element of role involvement and is defined as the lack of clear consistent information regarding one's role (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Eys, Carron, Bray, and Beauchamp (2003) examined the relationship between athletes' perceptions' of role ambiguity and satisfaction. The relationship was investigated at the beginning and at the end of the season, as well as from early season to end of season. The analyses of the study had shown that lowered perceived role ambiguity was associated with higher athlete satisfaction. More specifically, role ambiguity was significantly related to the leadership facets of athlete satisfaction (i.e. ability utilization, strategy, and training/instruction) both at the beginning and at the end of the season. Satisfaction is a personal factor that contributes to cohesion (Weinberg & Gould, 1995; Williams, 2006). Additionally, satisfaction is considered the most important personal factor in cohesion. When an athlete is not satisfied with a team or group, there is a strong possibility that the athlete will quit that team or group, or not display much effort towards the team or group.

Eys and colleagues (2005) conducted an additional study examining athletes' perception of role ambiguity. The athletes were asked to identify why ambiguity might exist in relation to the scope of their role responsibilities, the behaviors necessary to fulfill those responsibilities, the evaluation of their role performance, and the consequences of not fulfilling their role responsibilities. The results indicated an extensive set of possible sources for each dimension of role ambiguity that emerged from

the responses that included factors associated with the role sender (e.g., coach), the focal person (e.g., the athlete), and the situation. Suggesting that the coach can create role ambiguity by not clearly defining the particular role the athlete has been assigned to and if that athlete will keep that particular role throughout the season or for specific plays. Eys et. al. (2005) also suggested that due to the types and frequency of factors that differed among the various dimensions of ambiguity, there is a necessity of considering role ambiguity in sport as a multidimensional construct. Beauchamp, Bray, Eys, and Carron (2002) noted that it is important for athletes to understand four aspects with regard to their role: (1) the scope of their responsibilities or generally what their role entails; (2) the behaviors that are necessary to successfully fulfill their role responsibilities; (3) how their role performance will be evaluated; and (4) what the consequences are should they not successfully fulfill their role responsibilities.

If an athlete fails to truly understand what his or her role entails, than role ambiguity occurs. When role ambiguity happens, than that athlete can lose interest in the team and in turn, become dissatisfied, which can lead to teams becoming less cohesive. Previous research has shown that athletes who understand their roles better are more satisfied, experience less anxiety, and are likely to view their teams as more cohesive (Beauchamp, Bray, Eys, & Carron, 2003; Eys et. al., 2003; Eys & Carron, 2001).

Coaches. Coaches have an instrumental impact on the cohesion of a sport team. Effective coaching depends on many factors (Williams, 2006). Coaches must have excellent knowledge of their sport and be innovative strategists, skilled motivators, and effective personal counselors (Williams, 2006). Furthermore, a coach acts as a teacher and a character-builder (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). The coach molds personalities, similar

to a teacher, but the coach has unique opportunities in this sort of craftsmanship (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007).

There are numerous approaches to coaching style that include, but are not limited to: the psychodynamic approach, cognitive behavioral approach, and the solution-focused approach. Psychodynamic approach to coaching emphasizes choice and freedom for coachees (athletes) (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014). Furthermore, the psychodynamic approach emphasizes having a deep, understanding of coachees' emotions, and also teaching the client how to become more self-aware (Cox et. al., 2014). In contrast, the cognitive behavioral approach to coaching has been defined as an integrative approach which combines the use of cognitive, behavioral, imaginal and problem solving techniques and strategies within a cognitive behavioral framework to enable coaches to achieve their realistic goals (Cox et. al., 2014). The main goals of the cognitive behavioral approach include: (1) facilitating the coachees in achieving their realistic goals; (2) facilitating self-awareness of underlying cognitive and emotional barriers to goal attainment; (3) equipping the individual with more effective thinking and behavioral skills; (4) building internal sources, stability, and self-acceptance in order to mobilize the individuals to their choice of action; and (5) enabling coachees to become their own self-coach (Cox et. al., 2014). Finally, the solution-focused approach to coaching places primary emphasis on assisting the coachee to define a desired future state (i.e., an emotional state) and to construct a pathway in both thinking and action that assists the coachee in achieving that state (Cox et. al., 2014). The solution-focused approach sees the coachee as fundamentally capable of solving his or her problem, as in, the coachee already has all her or she needs to create the desired future state. Multiple

research studies have examined the different coaching approaches and its relationship with cohesion and other constructs within sport teams.

Westre and Weiss (1991) examined the relationship between perceived coaching behaviors and group cohesion in high school football teams. The players assessed their coach's leadership style and behaviors using the Leadership Scale for Sports, and the cohesion of their team using the Group Environment Questionnaire. The results revealed that there was a positive relationship between coaching behaviors and group cohesion. Specifically, when the athletes had high opinions regarding their coach's competency, their perception of group cohesion would also be high. The results also indicated that coaches who were perceived as engaging in higher levels of social support, training and instruction, positive feedback, and a democratic style were associated with higher levels of task cohesion within their team. Further analyses revealed that perception of success colors the athlete's perceptions of leadership style and team cohesion. Athletes who believe that they or their team were more successful perceived that their coach gave positive feedback more often and had a more democratic style, and that their team exhibited greater task cohesion.

Co-acting versus Interacting. Sports can be broken down into two different types with regards to the manner in which the members of the team are required to coordinate their actions. For interacting sports, success depends upon appropriately combining each player's diverse skills in an interdependent pattern of team work (i.e., football, basketball, volleyball) (Williams & Widmeyer, 1991). Furthermore, interacting teams have regular training and gathering together which include every team member. For co-acting teams, players independently perform the same skills and team success is

determined by the sum of individual performances (i.e., golf team, bowling team, swim relay team) (Williams & Widmeyer, 1991). Additionally, team members may have training together, but training may focus on individual skill.

Previous research argued that the cohesion-performance relationship was stronger in interactive sports than in coactive sports (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). However, more cohesiveness is related to better performance in both coactive and interactive sports (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Albeit, the absolute level of cohesiveness is typically higher in interactive sports than in coactive sports, mainly because of the close on-court or on-field interactions required in sports such as soccer and ice hockey (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Williams and Widmeyer (1991) examined the cohesion-performance relationship in co-acting sports utilizing 85 female golfers from 18 NCAA Division I teams. Their results showed that cohesion relates positively to performance in co-acting sports. Cohesion significantly predicted performance outcome, with task cohesion being the best predictor. If athletes perceived that the collective task cohesion of the team was high, the athletes would produce a greater performance compared to when they had a low perception of task cohesion. Further, based on previous research, the researchers hypothesized that cohesion was related to team size, members' satisfaction with opportunities provided by team membership, similarity of members, coaches' efforts to foster cohesion, prior team success, existence of team goals, the importance of team goals, participation in establishing team goals, intrateam task communication, and prior liking. The results indicated that nine of the independent variables had a significant amount of the variance in each of the four aspects of cohesion, but the single best

predictor of each type of cohesion was total satisfaction. Consistent with other research, individual satisfaction was the most important personal factor in cohesion (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). If members are not satisfied with the team, they will quit the team or not contribute to team goals, which lessens overall cohesion. Williams and Widmeyer (1991) also noted that some factors were more related to task cohesion, such as prior performance, and other factors more related to social cohesion, such as prior liking.

Matheson, Mathes, and Murray (1997) examined the influence of winning and losing on team cohesion of two co-acting (swimming and gymnastics) and two interacting (lacrosse and basketball) female intercollegiate athletic teams. Fifty-six participants were administered the group environment questionnaire (GEQ) three times during the playing season: preseason, after winning, and after losing contests. The results indicated that co-acting teams scored significantly higher than the interacting teams after a loss on the attraction to group-task (AGT) and group integration-task (GIT) subscales on the GEQ. Matheson et al. suggested that co-acting teams scored higher on the AGT because athletes on co-acting teams compete autonomously in specified events. Thus, the athletes may be more likely than those on interactive teams to feel that amount of time they compete, opportunities for improvement, style of performance, and team desire to win are self-determined and under their control. As for the higher scores on the GIT subscale by the co-acting teams, they suggested that the higher scores may be due to clearer identified responsibility. The GIT subscale measures individual team members' perception of the task-oriented, similarity, closeness, and bonding within the team as a whole. Further, the items on the subscale measure shared goals for performance, responsibility for losing or poor performance, shared team aspirations, concerns for those

who experience performance problems, and communication about responsibilities during competition and practice. Matheson et. al. (1997) concluded by stating that greater levels of perceived cohesion enable team members to resist the negative impacts of disruptive events (such as poor performance) and have an increased ability to share responsibility for failure. This explains why coaches, either alone or with the help of a sport psychologist, invariably seek ways to build an effective, more cohesive team (Williams, 2006).

More recently, Paiement and Bischoff (2007) examined the difference between cohesion and success in a highly interactive sport, lacrosse, compared to a co-acting sport, tennis. The participants were 401 intercollegiate varsity athletes from 19 lacrosse teams and 10 tennis teams. The results revealed that the winning percentages for both the interacting and co-acting teams were positively related to social and task cohesion. Therefore, regardless of the type of sport, if athletes are winning games or matches, their perception of cohesion (both task and social) will be high. However, the results did show that tennis (the co-acting sport) had a higher perception of task cohesion than the lacrosse team (the interacting sport). Athletes participating in co-acting sports have greater autonomy; the athletes have their own sense of what the task objectives are, as opposed to athletes participating in interacting sports, who have to have a shared perception of task cohesion. However, some athletes might not perceive task cohesion as the same of their teammates, which could lower the overall level of task cohesion.

Consequences/Outcomes of Cohesion

Lack of cohesion is often cited as a reason when a team of talented individuals fails to meet expectations (Westre & Weiss, 1991). Kalisch and Begeny (2005) had stated

that a lack of a cohesiveness among nursing staff affects care delivery and unit operations. Successful performance often involves interaction among several individuals who must work as a team (Brannick, Salas, & Prince, 1997). Lack of cohesion then can be detrimental to a team or group by effecting the not on the performance and dynamics of the team, but also the individual members.

Performance. Team performance is the end result from group cohesion, which is effected by other factors based off the conceptual model for cohesion in sport teams proposed by Carron (1982). According to this model, four factors affect the development of cohesion: (1) environmental factors, (2) leadership factors, (3) personal factors, and (4) team factors. All four factors flow into the development of cohesion, and from there, the outcomes, both group and individual, are created.

Widmeyer, Carron, and Brawley (1993) found that 83% of studies reported a positive relationship between cohesion and performance, with higher team cohesion linked to greater team success. Carron et. al. (2002) found that increases in both task and social cohesion were associated with increases in performance. It has been proposed that higher levels of cohesion may increase performance by producing higher levels of effort (Bray & Whaley, 2001).

Slater and Sewell (1994) examined whether team cohesion in university-level field hockey was a cause for, or an effect of, successful performance. The researchers utilized a quasi-experimental longitudinal design with cross-lagged correlational analysis and with measures of cohesion and performance taken midway and later in the season. The results had shown a positive relationship between team cohesion and performance outcome and the results indicated a circular relationship among the two. Furthermore, the

results showed that the magnitudes of both, the cross-lagged correlations and the partial correlations, together with multiple regression analyses, revealed that the stronger flow was from cohesion to performance. Thus, the results provided support for the notion that performance outcomes are based on team cohesion. Moreover, the results from the study had shown that the socially oriented aspects of cohesion had significant associations with performance. More specifically, that social cohesion is a better predictor of performance outcome than task cohesion. Slater and Sewell (1994) concluded by stating that the results imply that cohesion-performance relationships should be examined within a circular model, in which cohesion and performance are interdependent.

In contrast, some research has found no difference between the cohesion-to-performance and the performance-to-cohesion relationships (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Landers, Wilkinson, Hatfield, and Barber (1982) stated that performance seems to affect later cohesion, and these changes in cohesion then affect subsequent performance. These findings appear to be consistent with research suggesting that the relationship between cohesion and performance is circular.

Team Dynamics. Group processes are defined as the dynamic interactions characteristics of group membership (Carron & Hausenblas, 1998). These group processes can include team communication patterns, team goals, and making sacrifices for team both inside and outside of sport (Stevens & Bloom, 2003). Additionally, another construct included in group processes is the establishment of rewards (Williams, 2006). Moreover, there is an opportunity for the gifted individual competitor to obtain special recognition and rewards. Williams (2006) urges that for a concept of unity to form, the coach must emphasize the group's goals and objectives as well as the rewards that will

accrue to the group if these are achieved. Williams (2006) also mentioned that individual goals and rewards should be deemphasized.

A key component of team dynamics is communication. Communication is associated with increased group cohesiveness (Williams, 2006). Furthermore, the relationship between communication and group cohesion is circular. As the level of communication relating to task and social issues increases, cohesiveness is enhanced; and as the group becomes more cohesive, there is also increased communication (Williams, 2006). More so, an effective group needs to create an environment where everyone is comfortable expressing thoughts and feelings (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, open line of communication can alleviate many potential problems. Communication has a circular relationship with cohesion. If teams display effective communication skills, the team will become more cohesive.

There has been evidence that supports the importance of group processes for enhanced perceptions of cohesion (Stevens & Bloom, 2003). Prapavessis and Carron (1997) demonstrated that perceived sacrifice behavior both within (e.g., playing a different position) and outside sport (e.g., less time with family) were related to perceptions of cohesion in 127 male cricket players. More so, the relationship between these variables was circular as higher levels of cohesion were found to lead to greater sacrifice behavior among team members. Thus, it can be assumed that teams that display lower levels of cohesion will not possess team members willing to set forth any form of sacrifice for the team.

Individual Effects. The most important personal factor (i.e., individual characteristics of group members) associated with the development of both task and

social cohesion in sport teams is individual satisfaction (Carron & Dennis, 2001; Williams, 2006). Another factor often cited as a correlate of cohesiveness is similarity-similarity in attitudes, aspirations, commitments, and expectations (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). However, similarity in all aspects may not be critical in sport teams (Williams, 2006). Furthermore, differences in personality, ethnicity, racial background, economic background, ability, and numerous other factors are inevitable (Williams, 2006).

Low cohesion can show effects on individual members, such as individuals enrolled in an exercise class (Estabrooks & Carron, 1999). The Estabrooks and Carron (1999) study showed that class cohesion plays a significant role in exercise class participation, both short-term and long-term. Two studies were conducted. The first study examined the predictive ability of the four dimensions of cohesion (group integration-task, group integration-social, individual attraction to the group-task, and individual attraction to the group-social) on exercise participation at one, six, and 12 months following the initial assessment of cohesion.

The second study examined the effectiveness of a team-building intervention, designed to enhance class cohesion, on improving exercise adherence and return rates. The participants were assigned to a team-building, placebo, or a control condition. The results from the first study had shown three measures of cohesion: individual attraction to the group-social, group integration-social, and group integration-task, were all significantly related to exercise class attendance following a one-month interval. Furthermore, group integration-task was significantly related to class attendance following a six-month and a 12-month interval. The results from second study had shown that participants placed in the team-building condition attended more classes than the

control and placebo conditions and the participants in the team-building condition had a higher return rate following a 10-week hiatus than the control condition.

Estabrooks and Carron's (1999) suggests that exercisers enrolled in exercise classes, initially joined the class because their friends were also enrolled, which explains why the individual attraction to the group-social was a significant measure after the one-month interval. Additionally, exercisers enrolled in an exercise class initially joined because of the shared goal to get healthy and lose weight (explains the high group integration-task measure after the one-month, six-month, and 12-month interval) and because of the support everyone provided to one another (explains the high group integration-social measure after the one-month interval). Thus, if exercise classes want to increase their enrollment and return rate, they should develop team-building methods, similar to how coaches and sport psychologists use for athletes on a sport team. Exercisers with higher feelings of cohesion attend class more regularly and are more punctual than exercisers with lower cohesion (Carron & Spink, 1993; Spink & Carron, 1992, 1993).

Negative Aspects of Cohesion. Despite the overwhelming evidence that supports the notion that high levels of cohesion is beneficial for a team, Hardy, Eys, and Carron (2005) examined the potential negative consequences of high team cohesion. Hardy et. al. (2005) asked 105 athletes open-ended questions relating to the potential disadvantages of high task cohesion and high social cohesion. The results from the study had shown that fifty-six percent of the athletes indicated that there could be disadvantages to high social cohesion, while 31% of the athletes indicated that there could be disadvantages to high task cohesion. In addition, 22% of the athletes indicated potential disadvantages to both

high social and high task cohesion. Further analysis of the results also indicated that the nature of the potential disadvantages of both high social and task cohesion was multidimensional, but different disadvantages were cited for the two separate aspects of cohesion. The study further explained that the disadvantages of high social cohesion seem to relate more strongly to not setting team goals, wasting time by not practicing to accomplish goals, and by not discussing team goals; whereas the disadvantages of high task cohesion seem to be more strongly affecting enjoyment (i.e., not being able hang out with friends).

Prapavessis and Carron (1996) operationally defined psychological costs and benefits of cohesion in an investigation of the relationship between team cohesion and athlete state anxiety. The psychological benefits were assessed as the degree to which athletes perceived that their teammates would not criticize their poor play, would share responsibilities for a loss, would come to their rescue, and would provide support in tough times. Psychological costs were assessed as the degree to which athletes perceived pressure not to let teammates down, worried about living up to teammates' expectations, considered teammates' expectations for performance to be reasonable, and felt a demand to play well. Prapavessis and Carron (1996) found that psychological costs mediated the task cohesion-cognitive state anxiety relationship. Team members that have a perception that task cohesion is high on the team, will put forth less effort in their responsibilities. As stated previously, social loafing occurs when individuals put forth less effort in the presence of a group. The presence of social loafing can contribute to poor team performance which in turn, can create a less cohesive team, due to the proposed circular pattern of the cohesive-performance relationship.

Carron, Prapavessis, and Grove (1994) examined the relationship of group cohesion to self-handicapping. Self-handicapping is defined as a cognitive strategy by which people avoid effort in the hopes of keeping potential failure from hurting self-esteem. The first issue of the study focused on the relationship between personality trait of self-handicapping and perceptions of group cohesion. The results indicated that when individuals engage in making excuses to not participate, their perception of the group's task cohesion is low. This suggests that when the perception of the group's task cohesion is low, individuals have the opportunity to minimize failure. If the group fails at a particular task, that individual's threat to self-esteem is reduced. A follow-up of the study focused on whether group cohesion serves to moderate the relationships between the trait of self-handicapping and the use of self-handicapping strategies. Results indicated that social cohesion was a significant moderator between the tendency to make excuses and the use of strategies to create those excuses. Specifically, when social cohesion was high, the participants high in the self-handicapping trait of making excuses reported greater disruptions to their preparation before a competition. Thus, these individuals are having an internal battle between the consequences of participating and the benefits of being a part of a highly cohesive group. Individuals with high self-handicapping want to participate in the competition but the fear for their self-esteem impedes them in their preparation.

The consequences for teams with low cohesion levels can be detrimental to team performance. Furthermore, individuals on a less cohesive team can become dissatisfied with the team and might contemplate removing themselves from the team. To help

combat this, some researchers have begun to focus on specific interventions for enhancing cohesion in sport groups (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Facilitating Cohesion

Newman (1984) noted that team building is designed to "promote an increased sense of unity and cohesiveness and enable the team to function together more smoothly and effectively" (p.27). More so, the term team building has been used to describe a method for a team to: increase effectiveness, satisfy the needs of its members, or improve work conditions (Brawley & Paskevich, 1997). There are multiple exercises that can aid in enhancing team cohesion. Social and task cohesion have been studied as separate constructs, which creates the reason why they are facilitated differently.

One method for facilitating social cohesion is developing pride within subunits (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). In sports subunits naturally exist. For example, the offensive linemen of football. Players need to the support of their teammates, especially those playing the same position (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Teammates who support each other are building social cohesion, which leads to better performance. Another method to facilitate social cohesion is understanding the team climate. Inside any formal organization lies an informal, interpersonal network that can greatly affect the organization's functioning (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, a coach or leader should identify the group members who have high interpersonal prestige and status in the group. These people can be the links for communication between the coaching staff and players and help give coaches and athletes ways for expressing ideas, opinions, and feelings regarding what's happening on the team (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

One of the main methods for facilitating task cohesion is to set challenging group goals. Setting specific, challenging goals has a positive effect on individual and group performance (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Additionally, goals set a high norm for productivity and keep the team focused on what it needs to accomplish. Another method for facilitating task cohesion is to enhance team efficacy. Heuze, Bosselut, and Thomas (2007) indicated that focusing on developing team efficacy early in the season can have positive influence on the development of task cohesion later in the season. More so, the development of collective competence can increase players' feelings about their personal involvement with their team's productivity and objectives.

Carron and Eys (2012) and Loughead and Bloom (2012) suggested practical exercises to help facilitate team cohesion which include focusing on group norms, individual roles, distinctiveness, individual sacrifice, and communication and interaction. For example, identifying group norms could entail having team members work in small groups to describe how an ideal teammate would react to a list of hypothetical but realistic situations (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, the team as a whole then discusses and agrees on unacceptable and acceptable behaviors. By having a meeting and coming to a joint decision on acceptable team norms, players will better understand what is expected of them on and off the field (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). An exercise to foster individual roles could entail each athlete anonymously writing "I want [player's name] on my team because…" for everyone on the team (Carron & Eys, 2012). The coach then collects and distributes the responses to the appropriate athlete, which helps each athlete understand the importance of their particular role on the team (Carron & Eys, 2012). This method helps ensure that role ambiguity is minimized. Enhancing distinctiveness could

entail having team members wear matching uniforms with team mottos stitched on them (Loughead & Bloom, 2012). Wearing matching uniforms is an easy method to bring the team together and create distinctiveness (Loughead & Bloom, 2012). Additionally, athletes who travel together to competitions will increase their interactions with their teammates, making them more distinct from other groups (Loughead & Bloom, 2012).

Facilitating individual sacrifice could entail requiring a team member to perform tasks they probably would not of their own free will (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). This could include having an offensive player play a more defensive role, or asking a team captain or veteran to make efforts to mentor a younger or new team member (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Working on facilitating communication and interaction is essential to fostering strong team cohesion. For example, having the team navigate an obstacle course together can work to enhance the effectiveness of their communication and interaction (Carron & Eys, 2012). Williams (2006) stresses the importance for teams to improve communication skills, because communication affects motivation, team dynamics, internalization of team goals and objectives, and expectations coaches and athletes have for one another. Furthermore, effective communication has been identified as an integral part of team success (Connelly & Rotella, 1991; Harris & Harris, 1984; Janssen & Dale, 2002; Krzyzewski, 2000; Martens, 2004; Orlick, 1986; Salmela, 1996). However, lack of communication can create a less cohesive team, which can lead to poor performance, unstable group dynamics, and complete dissatisfaction with the team.

Researchers have done an excellent job at developing and outlining interventions for enhancing task and social cohesion for sport teams (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

However, group members, coaches, and leaders must also assume responsibility for developing group cohesion (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Implementing Qualitative Inquiry

The growth in qualitative research is a well-noted and welcomed fact within the social sciences (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Qualitative research analyzes data from direct fieldwork observations, in-depth, open-ended interviews, and written documents (Patton, 2005). Furthermore, qualitative researchers engage in naturalistic inquiry, studying real-world settings inductively to generate rich narrative descriptions and construct case studies, yielding patterns and themes which are considered to be the "fruit" of qualitative research (Patton, 2005). In addition, qualitative research is used to capture expressive information not conveyed in quantitative data about beliefs, values, feelings, and motivations that underlie behaviors (Berkwits & Inui, 1998). To keep with the consistent goals of qualitative inquiry, the point of the present study was to understand the meaning of the experience sport psychology consultants go through while facilitating social cohesion within a sports team.

Philosophical Assumption. Researchers always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research (Creswell, 2013). Philosophical assumptions shape how researchers formulate problems and research questions to study and how they seek information to answer the questions (Creswell, 2013). For example, a cause-and-effect type question, most commonly seen in quantitative research, in which certain variables are predicted to explain an outcome is different from an exploration of a single phenomenon as seen in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). With ontological assumptions in place, issues relate to the nature of reality and its characteristics, in which,

researchers with ontological assumptions embrace the idea of multiple realities (Creswell, 2013). In ontological assumptions through the social constructivism framework, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2013). The present study assumed an ontological assumption and embraced multiple realities, as do the individuals being studied. Creswell stressed the important goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation.

Interpretive framework. As stated previously, the present study utilized the ontological philosophical assumption within the social constructivism framework which emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on understanding (Kim, 2001). Therefore, the aim of this study, was not to just to be accommodated to new information and knowledge, but to become integrated into a knowledge community (Vygotsky, 1978). Essentially, to rely on the participants' experiences with sports teams.

Social constructivism. Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning (Kim, 2001). Such that, reality is constructed through human activity where members of a society together invent the properties of the world (Kukla, 2000). For the social constructivist, reality cannot be discovered: It does not exist prior to its social invention (Kim, 2001).

Furthermore, the social constructivist views knowledge as a human product and is socially and culturally constructed (Ernest, 1999; Gredler, 1997; Prawat & Floden, 1994). Individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in (Kim, 2001). In addition, social constructivist view learning as a social process, meaning learning does not only take place within an individual, nor is it a

passive development of behaviors that are shaped by external forces (McMahon, 1997). Social constructivist believe that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities (Kim, 2001).

Researchers utilizing the social constructivism framework develop meanings of their experiences which are varied and multiple, leading the researchers to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2013). Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically, which in turn, these meanings are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives (Creswell, 2013).

Based on the plethora of research studies examining cohesion and its effects on different aspects of sport teams, such as Eys, Carron, Beauchamp, and Brays (2005) study on cohesion and role ambiguity; Hoigaard, Tofteland, and Ommundsen (2006) study on social loafing and cohesion; Barrick et. al. (1998) study on cohesion and personality; and the others presented earlier in this chapter, cohesion brings about a new reality, knowledge, and learning. Individuals, such as sport psychology consultants, seek an understanding in this world they have submersed themselves in. The social constructivism framework is the best paradigm suited for significance of this present study.

Qualitative Approach. Phenomenology is the study of essences, and according to it: all problems amount to finding essences: the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1996). However, phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an

understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their "facticity" (Merleau-Ponty, 1996). Phenomenology is a transcendental philosophy which places in abeyance the assertions arising out of the natural attitude, the better to understand them; but it is also a philosophy for which the world is always "already there" before reflection begins-as an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophical status (Merleau-Ponty, 1996).

Furthermore, a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their "lived experiences" of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence, "a grasp of the very nature of the thing" (Creswell, 2013, p.76). With an emphasis on a phenomenon, there are other features that define this form of qualitative research that include: having a philosophical discussion about the basic ideas involved in conducting a phenomenology; in some forms of phenomenology, the researcher "brackets" himself or herself out of the study by discussing personal experiences with the phenomenon; data collection procedure that involves interviewing individuals who have experienced the phenomenon; and the data analysis that can follow systematic procedures that move from the narrow units of analysis, and on to broader units, and on to detailed descriptions that summarize two elements, "what" the individuals have experienced and "how" they have experienced it (Creswell, 2013).

As mentioned previously, data in phenomenological research studies is collected through the use of interviews. Bevan (2014) proposed a method of interviewing for

descriptive phenomenological research that offers an explicit, theoretically based approach for researchers. More so, Bevan (2014) stated that the approach enables application of descriptive phenomenology as a total method of research, and not one just focused on data analysis. In addition, the proposed approach to interviewing applies questions based on themes of experience contextualization, apprehending the phenomenon and its clarification.

Summary and Purpose

Multiple studies in this review highlighted the relationship cohesion has with other aspects of a sports and working team, and how the different types of relationships can have an effect on the individuals within the team. In addition, the studies that were presented in this study have the possibility to be influenced by social cohesion specifically, and for social cohesion to be effected by them. However, the research that specifically addresses the effects of social cohesion is minimal. Most research on cohesion focuses on either cohesion as a whole entity, or specifically, task cohesion.

The main problem researchers are having with social cohesion is the lack of a true understanding of what social cohesion is. Investigators interested in developing a general theory of social cohesion are confronted with a complex body of work that involves various definitions of social cohesion, specialized literatures on particular dimensions of social cohesion, and lines of inquiry focused on the social cohesion of specific types of groups (Friedkin, 2004). Friedkin (2004) further explained the literature of social cohesion has become increasingly confused as the number of investigators who research it has increased. Furthermore, there has been integrative efforts that have organized the

literature around different focal constructs so that what is taken as cohesion varies and what are taken as cohesion's antecedents and consequences also vary (Friedkin, 2004).

More so, studies examining cohesion and its relationship with other aspects of groups and teams have had various limitations to the study. For example, Prapavessis and Carron (1996) and Carron et. al. (1994) had difficulty with having a proper, operational definition of the psychological costs and benefits of cohesion. Furthermore, other limitations found in group cohesion research include: the use of college students, small sample size, and the use of peer-ratings to assess group cohesion. With limitations abundant in cohesion research, the understanding of cohesion, and subsequently, social cohesion, will not exist.

The purpose of this study was to discover how sport psychology consultants facilitate social cohesion among individuals in a sport team. More specifically, phenomenological interviews were utilized for each participant to assess their experiences with assisting in the development of social cohesion.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This qualitative study is designed to discover sport psychology practitioners' experiences with facilitating social cohesion among individuals on a sport team. In this phenomenological study, the experience of facilitating social cohesion was investigated with regards to each individual practitioner's recalled accounts of the phenomenon. The aim of the study was to identify common themes that reflected the experiences of each consultant. This chapter will further address the methodology, participants, and procedures utilized in this study.

Methodology

This study used the principles of phenomenology. The purpose of employing a phenomenological approach to research studies is so that the researcher can capture the richness of individual experience (Finlay, 1999). Phenomenology is popular in the social and health sciences, especially in sociology, psychology, nursing and the health sciences, and education (Creswell, 2013). The aim of the present study is to investigate the methods sport psychology practitioners use to facilitate social cohesion among members of a sport team. Taking a phenomenological approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the practitioners. In addition, conducting one-on-one interviews allows for detailed, personal accounts from each participant.

Participants

Sampling is a very complex issue in qualitative research (Coyne, 1997). Because this study took a phenomenological approach, criterion sampling was used. Criterion

sampling works when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The participants of this study consisted of ten sport psychology consultants, eight males and two females, who have a minimum of three years working with a sports team, aged between 31-52 years old (M= 37.80; SD= 6.23). Furthermore, nine of the sport psychology practitioners were from the United States and one participant was originally from South Korea but lives in the United States and all ten participants worked or are currently working with American teams. Participants were also asked about their gender, degrees earned, certification, licensures, associations they are affiliated with, and a brief history of the work they have done with the team. Polkinghorne (1989) recommends that researchers interview from five to 25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. However, 10 to 20 participants will be sought after to reach saturation. Both male and female participants were included in the study. A description of the participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. *Description of Participants*

Participant Name	**Age**	**Gender**	**Degree(s) Earned**	**Certifications**	**Associations**
Amy*	31	Female	M.S.	CC-AASP	AASP
				Coach	
Ben	37	Male	M.A.	CC-AASP	AASP
Danny*	40	Male	Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					APA
					SHAPE
Doug*	36	Male	M.A./M.S.	CC-AASP	AASP
Jesse	32	Male	M.A./M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
				USOC	APA
Larry	42	Male	M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					APA
					USPTA
					USPTR
Otto*	52	Male	M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
				Ski Instructor	PSIA
Shane	32	Male	M.A.	CC-AASP	AASP

				Counselor	APA
					NAADAC
Sim*	40	Male	Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					NASPSPA
Zoey*	36	Female	M.A./M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					NCACE
					USOC

Note: *-denotes the use of a pseudonym to protect confidentiality. Participants age (M= 37.80 years; SD= 6.23). Certifications: Certified Consultant for Association for Applied Sport Psychology (CC-AASP), United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Associations: Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), American Psychological Association (APA), Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE), United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA), United States Professional Tennis Registry (USPTR), Professional Ski Instructor of America (PSIA), The Association for Addicted Professionals (NAADAC), North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA), The National Committee for Accreditation of Coaching Education (NCACE).

Procedure

The procedures used in this study were based on recommendations for conducting phenomenological research specified by Groenewald (2004). These include: *Bracketing*, *Selection of Co-Participants*, *Data Collection*, *Data Analysis*, and *Developing Thematic Structures*.

Bracketing. Moustakas (1994) focuses on epoche, or bracketing, which was a concept proposed by Husserl. Bracketing is when investigators set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination, thus eliminating or minimizing any biases the researcher may have (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, “bracketing out” takes no position either for or against the researcher’s own presuppositions and not allowing the researcher’s meanings and interpretations or theoretical concepts to enter the unique world of the participant (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers often are required to put aside assumptions so that the

true experiences of respondents are reflected in the analysis and reporting of research (Ahern, 1999). However, van Manen (1990) did mention that bracketing may prove difficult for the researcher to implement because interpretations of the data always incorporate the assumptions that the researcher brings to the topic.

For the purpose of this study, the primary researcher participated in a phenomenological bracketing interview to gather an understanding of the meaning, process, and importance of facilitating social cohesion.

Selection of Co-Participants. The selection of participants is the initial step in the data gathering process (Englander, 2012). The concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the inquirer selects individuals for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2013).

Upon the approval from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB), participants for the study were contacted. Participants were sought after by locating them through the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) website. The website contains a webpage where one can locate certified consultants, with their contact information, in their area. Additionally, participants were also located through the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) website, the Canadian Sport Psychology Association (CSPA) website, and the Temple University Listserv. The consultants found on the website were contacted via email. The email explained why they are being contacted. Furthermore, the email included the purpose of the study, what their contributions meant, a reassurance that their privacy and confidentiality would be maintained, and the primary researcher's name and contact information. Additionally,

snowball (or chain) sampling was used, by asking the participants and graduate advisors if they knew any colleagues, who fit the inclusion criteria, that would be interested in participating in the study.

Data Collection. Once the IRB approved of the study, participants were recruited. Participants were contacted by email, which was obtained through the AASP, ISSP, and CSPA website and the Temple University Listserv. The participants that agreed to participate were contacted again to discuss the setup of the initial interview. The initial interview consisted of getting some background knowledge, by the use of a demographics form, and for a consent form to be signed. Furthermore, the initial interview was utilized to setup times to meet either in person, through telephone/cellular phone, or by using "Skype". Data was collected by interviews, whether in person, over the phone, or through Skype and the data was documented with the use of a digital voice recorder. Participants were informed that their responses to the questions would be kept confidential, by the use of pseudonyms. Also, participants were informed that their participation is completely voluntary and may cease to participate in the study at any time with no consequence.

The interviews begun by asking each participant the following question: "When you think about your experiences in working with teams on social cohesion, what comes to mind?" Open-ended questions were asked for participants to further expand upon their experience. The participant was able to answer any of the questions in any manner of their choosing. Several authors have advanced the steps necessary in conducting qualitative interviews, such as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) who developed seven stages of an interview inquiry report that setup a logical sequence of stages from "thematizing"

the inquiry, to designing the study, to interviewing, to transcribing the interview, to analyzing the data, to verifying the validity, to reliability and generalizability of the findings, and finally to reporting the study.

Data Analysis. The responses from each interview was transcribed verbatim to generate a transcription for later use. Participants were contacted and presented the transcripts of their interview for feedback. If necessary, improvements and changes were made to suit the requests of the participants. Furthermore, interpretive research groups from Barry University aided in reviewing the transcripts. The interpretive research group consisted of professors, advisors, and graduate students who were familiar with phenomenological research design.

After reading the transcripts, meaning units were pulled from each interview. This is a critical phase of explicating data, in that those statements that are seen to illuminate the researched phenomenon are extracted or "isolated" (Creswell, 1998; Holloway, 1997; Hycner, 1999). More over, the significant statements extracted from the transcripts are further created into sub-themes. From the sub-themes, a thematic structure will be created to form a common concept of the experience of facilitating social cohesion on a sport team.

Developing Thematic Structures. Themes in qualitative research are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea (Creswell, 2013). DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000) noted the importance of themes since they are critical to the accurate interpretation of qualitative data. More so, literature review of qualitative research methodology reveals considerable diversity in the identification of themes, the interpretation of the concept, and its function in data analysis. Furthermore,

care must be taken not to cluster common themes if significant differences exist (Englander, 2012).

The consistency of the themes across all the transcripts were assessed by the interpretive research group. The themes were also assessed by the participants to check for validity. Once the themes have been checked for validity and accuracy, they were interpreted. Interpretation in qualitative research involves abstracting out beyond the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, the interpretation process begins with the development of the codes, the formation of themes from the codes, and then the organization of themes into larger units of abstraction to make sense of the data (Creswell, 2013). Once the data has been interpreted, it was represented in the form of a figure.

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CHAPTER V

MANUSCRIPT IN JOURNAL ARTICLE FORMAT

Sport Psychology Practitioners' Perspectives on the Nature and Facilitation of Social Cohesion

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine sport psychology practitioners' experiences with facilitating social cohesion. Ten sport psychology practitioners (*M*= 37.80; *SD*= 6.23) were interviewed about their experiences with and approaches to working with teams to enhance social cohesion. A total of 395 meaning units were used to create fifteen sub-themes and two over-arching main themes: *Understanding Social Cohesion* and *Facilitating Social Cohesion*. The results are discussed in relation to previous research, future directions for further exploration, and practical implications for sport psychology practitioners.

Keywords: team cohesion, team culture, applied sport psychology, social cohesion

The necessity of developing harmony amongst members of a team has become an important priority for sport psychology practitioners in the team sport setting (Lidor & Henschen, 2003). Team harmony occurs when teams display high levels of cohesiveness. Many practitioners believe that group cohesiveness is a positive determinant of success (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). By increasing group cohesiveness, sport teams reduce the importance of "I" and develop the sense of "we," thereby increasing team effectiveness (Williams, 2006). Cohesion has been considered one of the most important variables in the study of small group dynamics and has historically been one of the most frequently

studied of group-level constructs (Pescosolido & Saavedra, 2012). In a recent study, Pescosolido and Saavedra (2012) examined why and how group cohesion influences behavior in sports teams and why and how it operates differently in different types of teams. More specifically, Pescosolido and Saavedra (2012) noted that sports teams operate in extremely well-defined contexts, with greater clarity in terms of goals, member roles, working procedures, available resources, and so forth, than most other types of teams. Furthermore, cohesion within a sport team can be affected by different aspects of the team, such as group roles, coaches, and the type of team sport (i.e., interactive or co-active).

Cohesion is defined as "a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs" (Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998, p.213). Cohesion has been categorized into two types: task cohesion (i.e., the team's ability to work together successfully to coordinate their actions and collectively commit to achieving their goals) and social cohesion (i.e., sense of belonging and quality of relationships among the members of the team) (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007). Brawley, Carron, and Widmeyer (1987) proposed a multidimensional model of group cohesion to demonstrate that group, individual, task, and social factors impact a team. According to their model, cohesion occurs in two forms: group integration and individual attractions to the group. Group integration refers to each individual's perception of the team environment as a whole while individual attraction to the group refers to each member's personal reasons for becoming and staying a part of the team. Each category can be further broken down into task and social components, resulting in four types of cohesion:

group integration- task (i.e., overall commitment to the team's performance and success), group integration- social (i.e., team environment and relationships of the team as a whole), individual attraction- task (i.e., each member's individual perceptions of and contribution to the team's performance and success), and individual attraction- social (i.e., each member's individual perceptions of and impact on the team environment and relationships).

Lack of cohesion is often cited as a cause when a team of talented individuals fails to meet expectations (Westre & Weiss, 1991). Successful performance often involves interaction among several individuals who must work as a team (Brannick, Salas, & Prince, 1997). Lack of cohesion then can be detrimental to a team or group by affecting not only the performance and dynamics of the team, but also the individual members and their performances. It has been proposed that higher levels of cohesion may increase performance by producing higher levels of effort (Bray & Whaley, 2001). Widmeyer, Carron, and Brawley (1993) found that 83% of studies reported a positive relationship between cohesion and performance, with higher team cohesion linked to greater team success. Carron et al. (2002) found that increases in both task and social cohesion were associated with increases in performance.

Several models have been put forth in an effort to understand the nature of cohesion, its development, and its impact on team performance. Specifically, four models have been proposed, including: (1) linear perspective, which holds that groups develop in stages or in a linear fashion; (2) cyclical theory, which holds that groups follow a life cycle pattern; and (3) pendular perspective, which holds that groups develop in a "back-and-forth" like manner (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). In the linear perspective of team

development, there is an assumption that groups move progressively through different stages (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Furthermore, critical issues arise in each stage, and when the team has successfully surpassed these issues, they can move onto the next stage. According to Tuckman (1965), groups go through four stages as they develop and prepare to carry out their tasks: forming, storming, norming, and performing. The sequence of the stages and the duration of each stage can vary from one group to another.

The cyclical perspective model takes on the assumption that groups develop in a manner similar to the human life cycle, experiencing birth, growth, and death (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Moreover, the cyclical perspective is distinguished from linear models in their emphasis on the terminal phase before group dissolution. Weinberg and Gould (1995) further emphasized that the main element of the cyclical model is the assumption that as the group develops, it psychologically prepares for its own breakup.

The pendular model emphasizes the shifts that occur in interpersonal relationships during the growth and development of groups (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). According to this, a group does not move progressively through stages in a linear fashion from the instant it forms but rather oscillates back and forth between cohesion and conflict as various factors and situations (e.g., injury to a key player, change in starting lineup, loss to a key opponent) are experienced by the group. Gersick (1988) suggests that a team develops through the sudden formation, maintenance, and sudden revision of a "framework for performance". Meaning, a team can go back and forth, like that of a pendulum, in terms of its development depending on a multitude of factors.

Many factors can affect the cohesion of a team. For example, according to Carron and Hausenblas (1998) four types of factors impact cohesion: (1) environmental factors

(e.g. scholarships, contracts, and geographical restrictions), (2) leadership factors (e.g. team captain's leadership style), (3) personal factors (e.g., similarity, sex, behavior), and (4) team factors (e.g., group norms, group roles, and team stability). Several of the factors within these four categories have been highlighted in previous research on team cohesion, such as gender, personality, diversity, social loafing, efficacy, and leadership. For example, Tuffy (1996) noted gender differences in reporting anxiety (which was higher for females), small differences in self-confidence, and some differences in achievement motivation and leadership style. Which can relate to personality differences. As mentioned above, personal factors can impact the cohesion level among team members. Teams that have a varying degree of personalities can create tension and strain on the cohesion of the team. Harrison, Price, and Bell (1998) examined the impact of surface-level (i.e., race, ethnic background) and deep-level (i.e., attitudinal/values/personality) diversity on group social integration. As hypothesized, the length of time group members worked together weakened the effects of surface-level diversity and strengthened the effects of deep-level diversity as group members had the opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions. This suggests that spending longer periods of time with team members will increase cohesion among the members.

The roles and norms of a team have been proposed to have a large influence on team cohesion and team performance. Within every group there are two general categories of roles, formal and informal (Mabry & Barnes, 1980). Formal roles are explicitly set out by the group or organization (Williams, 2006). Coaches, team captain, and managers are examples of explicit leadership roles; whereas a setter in volleyball, forward in basketball, and a quarterback in football are examples of explicit performance

roles (Williams, 2006). The sport team as an organization requires specific individuals to carry out each of these roles, thus, individuals are trained or recruited for these roles, and specific expectations are held for their behavior (Williams, 2006). Informal roles evolve as a result of the interactions that take place among group members (Williams, 2006). Examples of informal roles that can emerge on a sport team are leader, enforcer, social director, and team clown (Williams, 2006).

In order to better understand and assess cohesion, several methods to measure cohesion have been developed and utilized in both research and practice. Early research on cohesion utilized the Sport Cohesiveness Questionnaire (Martens, Landers, & Loy, 1972) that was designed to measure degree of closeness and attraction to the group. Subsequently, the Multidimensional Sport Cohesion Instrument (Yukelson, Weinberg, & Jackson, 1984) was developed to assess four broad dimensions of team cohesion: attraction to the group, unity of purpose, quality of teamwork, and valued roles. Widmeyer, Brawley, and Carron (1985) developed the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ), a widely used measure consistent with the multidimensional model of cohesion, which distinguishes between the individual and group as well as task and social concerns. Other non-questionnaire methods have also been developed to assess team cohesion. For example, sociograms are specifically utilized for measuring social cohesion and to confirm social peer status and hierarchy (Leung & Silberling, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Sociograms disclose affiliation and attraction among group members, illuminating various aspects of the dynamics of the group. To generate information for the sociogram, individual group members are asked specific questions, such as “Name the four people in the group you would most like to attend a party with and the four people you would not

like to attend a party with." Based on the responses to the questions, a sociogram is created, which should reveal the pattern of interpersonal relationships in a group (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Given that cohesion plays such an important role for both individual and team performance, efforts to optimize the cohesion of a team are a necessity. Newman (1984) noted that team building is designed to "promote an increased sense of unity and cohesiveness and enable the team to function together more smoothly and effectively" (p.27). The term team building has been used to describe a method for a team to increase effectiveness, satisfy the needs of its members, or improve work conditions (Brawley & Paskevich, 1997). Furthermore, Carron, Eys, and Burke (2007) stressed the need for team-building strategies. Moreover, Carron, Eys, and Burke (2007) stated to maximize cohesiveness, team-building strategies are recommended. Additionally, team-building is designed to (1) set team goals; (2) ensure that athletes'roles are understood and accepted; (3) ensure that team meetings and practices are efficient; (4) ensure that leadership is coherent, effective, and acceptable; (5) examine the way in which the team functions; (6) examine the relationships among team members; and (7) diagnose potential weaknesses and minimize their effects on the team.

There are multiple exercises that can aid in enhancing team cohesion, task and social. Yukelson (1997) stated that team building is an on-going, multifaceted process where group members have to learn how to work together for a common goal, and share pertinent information regarding the quality of team functioning for the purpose of establishing more effective ways of operating. According to Yukelson, the core components to consider for team building include: (1) having a shared vision and unity of

purpose, (2) collaborative and synergistic teamwork, (3) individual and mutual accountability, (4) an identity as a team, (5) a positive team culture and cohesive group atmosphere, (6) open and honest communication processes, (7) peer helping and social support, and (8) trust at all levels.

For the development of task cohesion, one of the main methods is to set challenging group goals (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Additionally, another method for facilitating task cohesion is to enhance team efficacy (Heuze, Bosselut, & Thomas, 2007). Heuze et al. (2007) indicated that focusing on developing team efficacy early in the season can have a positive influence on the development of task cohesion later in the season. Further, the development of collective competence can increase players' feelings about their personal involvement with their team's productivity and objectives.

Recent research has highlighted the building of team coordination (i.e., creating synergy in the actions of team members so that they are coordinated by type, timing, and location in order to produce the most effective result), an important element of task cohesion. According to Eccles and Tran (2012), a prerequisite for achieving team coordination is effective communication between team members about game plans and the roles and responsibilities of team members. Specifically, they discussed the importance of communication to fend off the presence of role ambiguity. If an athlete fails to truly understand what his or her role entails, role ambiguity occurs resulting in the athlete losing interest in the team and in turn, becoming dissatisfied, which can lead to teams becoming less cohesive. Previous research has shown that athletes who understand their roles better are more satisfied, experience less anxiety, and are likely to view their

teams as more cohesive (Beauchamp, Bray, Eys, & Carron, 2002; Eys, Carron, Bray, & Beauchamp, 2003; Eys & Carron, 2001).

The development of shared knowledge is also an important component for achieving team coordination (Eccles & Tenenbaum, 2004). Shared knowledge is beneficial because each team member can generate expectations about the behavior of the team and its constituent members such that coordination can be achieved. Eccles and Tenenbaum (2004) stated that shared knowledge can be achieved before, during, and after a performance. Specifically, shared knowledge prior to a game is achieved by deciding goals, planning, and allocating role responsibilities. Shared knowledge during a game is achieved by utilizing situational probabilities, meaning athletes use their knowledge of probable scenarios with the information gleaned from the current situation. Shared knowledge is achieved after a game by reviewing the game and identifying coordination breakdowns. Eccles and Tran (2012) provided several recommendations for developing team coordination, such as training situational probabilities through discussion and video review, encouraging position switching, communicating plans effectively through the use of multiple sensory modes, and making sure plans are received effectively by using check backs and encouraging questions.

Teambuilding can also focus on the development of social cohesion. For example, Holt and Dunn (2006) outlined and evaluated a Personal-Disclosure Mutual-Sharing (PDMS) team-building intervention in which athletes were asked to share in a team meeting written responses to questions about why they play soccer, who they play for, and what they will bring to the team at the national championship tournament. The use of personal disclosure interventions is based on the notion that athletes require an

understanding of their teammates' roles, views, values, motives, and needs in order to improve team functioning (Hardy & Crace, 1997). The results of the interviews subsequent to the intervention indicated that the PDMS meeting enhanced their understanding of themselves and their teammates, increased their perceptions of closeness and desire to play for each other, and enhanced personal confidence and feelings of invincibility. Holt and Dunn (2006) cautioned that trust and rapport between the consultant and the athletes is absolutely critical for this type of interventions. Further, they suggested that practitioners should utilize other exercises to facilitate readiness for these types of disclosures and the creation of an appropriate climate, consider timing of the intervention and the length of time the meeting might take, make sure to secure a private location for this type of meeting, consider who attends the meeting (e.g., coach attendance), and give careful consideration to the instructions provided (i.e., what to discuss, order of speakers). They also highlighted that a practitioner should consider him/herself a "climate engineer" by summarizing and interpreting the meanings of the stories shared and connecting them to the team's values and norms.

Inside any formal organization lies an informal, interpersonal network that can greatly affect the organization's functioning (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). Therefore, efforts should be made to not only build the task cohesion of a team but also their social cohesion. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to interview sport psychology practitioners about their experiences with facilitating social cohesion in sport teams. The results from the study can provide practitioners a clearer, non-murky, view of what social cohesion can entail and also provide firsthand accounts from certified practitioners on their experiences with social cohesion and the methods they employed to facilitate it.

More so, the results can possibly aid in devising more plans on how to directly combat role ambiguity. There is a compelling motive to re-examine cohesion using qualitative analysis strategies (McLeod & von Treuer, 2013). A qualitative approach allows for a more in-depth understanding of social cohesion, how it can be enhanced, and how individual sport psychology practitioners approach facilitating social cohesion. Additionally, Chang and Bordic (2001) stated that researchers interesting in investigating the concept of cohesion should study the task and social aspects of cohesion separately and not as one.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of nine sport psychology practitioners from the United States and one participant originally from South Korea but lives in the United States and all ten participants worked or are currently working with American teams. The participants aged between 31-52 years old (*M*= 37.80; *SD*= 6.23). Of the 10 participants, eight were males and two females, and all had a minimum of three years working with sports teams. A description of the participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. *Description of Participants*

Participant Name	**Age**	**Gender**	**Degree(s) Earned**	**Certifications**	**Associations**
Amy*	31	Female	M.S.	CC-AASP	AASP
				Coach	
Ben	37	Male	M.A.	CC-AASP	AASP
Danny*	40	Male	Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					APA
					SHAPE
Doug*	36	Male	M.A./M.S.	CC-AASP	AASP
Jesse	32	Male	M.A./M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP

				USOC	APA
Larry	42	Male	M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					APA
					USPTA
					USPTR
Otto*	52	Male	M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
				Ski Instructor	PSIA
Shane	32	Male	M.A.	CC-AASP	AASP
				Counselor	APA
					NAADAC
Sim*	40	Male	Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					NASPSPA
Zoey*	36	Female	M.A./M.S./Ph.D.	CC-AASP	AASP
					NCACE
					USOC

Note: *-denotes the use of a pseudonym to protect confidentiality. Participants age (M= 37.80 years; SD= 6.23). Certifications: Certified Consultant for Association for Applied Sport Psychology (CC-AASP), United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Associations: Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), American Psychological Association (APA), Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE), United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA), United States Professional Tennis Registry (USPTR), Professional Ski Instructor of America (PSIA), The Association for Addicted Professionals (NAADAC), North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA), The National Committee for Accreditation of Coaching Education (NCACE).

Qualitative Approach

The present study utilized a phenomenological qualitative approach. A phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their "lived experiences" of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence, "a grasp of the very nature of the thing" (Creswell, 2013, p.76). Data in phenomenological research studies is collected through the use of interviews. Bevan (2014) proposed a method of interviewing for descriptive phenomenological research that offers an explicit, theoretically based approach for researchers. More so, Bevan (2014) stated that the approach enables application of

descriptive phenomenology as a total method of research, and not one just focused on data analysis.

Procedures

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB), participants for the study were contacted. Participants were sought after by locating them through Certified Consultant Finder on the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) website, the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) website, the Canadian Sport Psychology Association (CSPA) website, and the Temple University Listserv. Potential participants were contacted via email to explain the purpose of the study, what their contributions meant, a reassurance that their privacy and confidentiality would be maintained, and the primary researcher's name and contact information. Additionally, snowball (or chain) sampling was used, by asking the participants and graduate advisors if they knew any colleagues, who fit the inclusion criteria, that would be interested in participating in the study.

An initial interview consisted of getting some background knowledge, by the use of a demographics form, and for a consent form to be signed. Furthermore, the initial interview was utilized to setup times to meet either over the telephone or by using "Skype". The interviews began by asking each participant the following question: "When you think about your experiences in working with teams on social cohesion, what comes to mind?" Follow-up, open-ended questions were asked for participants to further expand upon their experience. Interviews lasted between 30-90 minutes, with an average time of 43 minutes.

Data Analysis

Each interview was transcribed verbatim to generate a transcription for later use. Participants were contacted and presented the transcripts of their interview for feedback. Furthermore, interpretive research groups from Barry University aided in reviewing the transcripts. The interpretive research group consisted of the thesis advisor and a graduate student, both of which being familiar with phenomenological research design. The interpretive research group reviewed the transcripts to help identify the meaning units. Having different people view the transcripts ensured that no essential meaning units were overlooked.

After reading the transcripts, meaning units were pulled from each interview. A meaning unit is a word or cluster of words that disclose certain meaning that differs from other outlined units (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). This is a critical phase of explicating data, in that those statements that are seen to illuminate the researched phenomenon are extracted or "isolated" (Creswell, 1998; Holloway, 1997; Hycner, 1999). Subsequently, the significant statements extracted from the transcripts were then categorized into sub-themes. From the sub-themes, a thematic structure was created to form a common concept of the experience of facilitating social cohesion on a sport team.

Results

Qualitative analysis of the transcripts revealed a total of 395 meaning units, which were further grouped into two main themes and 15 sub-themes. Though the purpose of the study was to elucidate experiences with the facilitation of social cohesion, the participant interviews also highlighted the practitioner's perceptions of the nature of

social cohesion. Thus, the two main, overarching themes uncovered from the interviews were *Understanding Social Cohesion* and *Facilitating Social Cohesion*. *Understanding Social Cohesion* (see table 2) encompasses themes related to the consultant's perceptions of what social cohesion is and the impact it has on the teams. *Facilitating Social Cohesion* (see table 3) encompasses themes related to the consultants' experiences and approaches working with teams on social cohesion. Additionally, *Understanding Social Cohesion* consists of eight sub-themes *and Facilitating Social Cohesion* consists of seven sub-themes (see Figure 1).

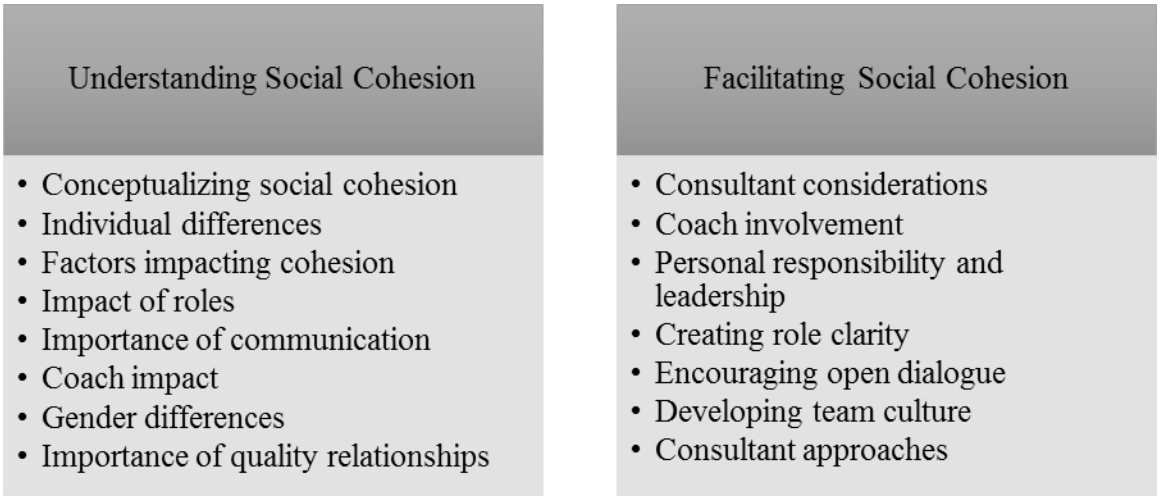

Figure 1. Thematic Structure

Table 2. Sub-themes and example meaning units for understanding social cohesion

Sub-Themes	Meaning Units
Conceptualizing Social Cohesion	Social cohesion equals trust Two constructs Big concept Impacts task cohesion Makes team more fluid

	In this together
Individual Differences	Individual personality
	Opinions about the team
	Maturity
	Goals
	Expectations
Factors Impacting Cohesion	Comfort level
	Proximity
	Type of sport
	Time of season
	Performance level
	Culture
Impact of Roles	Knowing and accepting roles
	Hierarchies
	Social roles and sport-specific roles
	Strife occurs when ambiguity happens
Importance of Communication	Transparent communication is very important
	Open dialogue
	Listening skills more vital than speaking skills
	Shared language
	Nonverbal communication
Coach Impact	Coach job to define roles
	Coaches can influence/dictate cohesion
	Coach holds it together…they are the cohesion of the team
Gender Differences	More impactful on female teams
	Males better at compartmentalizing
	Males functional relationships
	Females deep relationships
	Social cohesion is valued for both
Importance of Quality Relationships	Right relationships
	Misperceptions
	Empathy
	Trust off field leads to trust on field
	Built away from sport environment
	Understanding each other
	Respecting and valuing each other
	Feeling connected

Table 3. Sub-themes and example meaning units for facilitating social cohesion

Sub-Themes	**Meaning Units**
Consultant Considerations	Understand at own pace
	Don’t think conflict is a bad thing
	Consulting philosophy

	Process takes time
	Understand the team from a different perspective
	Important to be mediator
	Get athletes on board at the beginning
Coach Involvement	Coaches have to be on board
	Help coaches be better coaches
	Default to the coach
	Lack of understanding from coach leads to detriments
Personal Responsibility and Leadership	Peer accountability
	They have to feel that they own it
	The core leaders are brought into the mission
	It's what you do with what I teach you
Creating Role Clarity	Communicate role clarity
	Define roles to players
	Mix up players on the team
	Illustrate the importance of that role
Encouraging Open Dialogue	Authentic conversations
	Push towards a more effective language
	Improve nonverbal communication
	Shared conversation cohesion is lapped around some kind of shared experience
	Common ground
Developing Team Culture	Build a culture
	Discuss what type of culture to have
	Safeguard the culture
	Getting them to understand that the team is bigger than they are
Consultant Approaches	Provide activities and opportunities
	Educate them
	Create awareness
	Reframe their thinking
	Building the norms
	Utilizing leadership group
	A lot of sessions about trust
	Create closeness
	The team to share and talk
	Building a form of consensus

Understanding Social Cohesion

Understanding Social Cohesion emerged as one of the main themes after reviewing and analyzing all the transcripts. While being asked about their experiences with facilitating cohesion, the consultants' also provided perspective on their perceptions and ideas of what social cohesion entails, the factors that affect it, and the impact it has on the individual team members and team as a whole. Eight sub-themes emerged as it pertains to understanding social cohesion, including: *conceptualizing social cohesion*, *individual differences, factors impacting cohesion, impact of roles*, *importance of communication, coach impact, gender differences*, and *importance of quality relationships*.

Conceptualizing social cohesion. This sub-theme encompasses the views the participants had regarding what social cohesion entails, namely how social cohesion can be conceptualized. Jesse stated that "social cohesion equals trust" and it impacts many areas, such as task cohesion, the team as a whole, individual team members, and perceptions. According to Sim and Doug, improving social cohesion should lead to improvements in overall team cohesion. Consistent with this, Danny summed up the importance of social cohesion by stating it's "a big concept."

Individual differences. A team is as strong as its individual members, and those members can have a direct influence on the social cohesion level of that team. Simply put, Otto stated "people are different." Many of the practitioners discussed that individual differences can impact the social cohesion of the team. For example, Jesse mentioned a consideration of how introverted or extroverted team members are, as personality differences might influence how the team members interact. Larry specified this even further mentioning variables such as individual differences in character, beliefs, goals,

opinions about the team, and motivational profiles. In addition, Danny highlighted the importance of viewpoints on winning and Otto took this a step further by discussing how success-oriented players, players who view themselves in high regards, picture any form of disagreement or criticism as threatening. Otto stated, "Success-oriented…others…hear open disagreement…feel it as a threat…and usually someone is going to fight back." Finally, both Larry and Ben mentioned that the maturity level of the team members may have an important impact on the social cohesion of the team.

Factors impacting cohesion. Individual differences do factor into social cohesion levels on a team, but according to the participants, it is not the sole determining factor. This sub-theme discusses the multitude of factors that practitioners mentioned as having an impact on the social cohesion. For example, Otto mentioned the characteristics and behaviors of the group, intimating that the norms of the team play a role in their social cohesion. Sim mentioned time spent together as an important factor and, similarly, Beau highlighted the impact of physical contact while Amy highlighted proximity as a playing a role in the social cohesion of a team. Several of the participants mentioned timing during the season and the type of sport/performance as having an impact on social cohesion. For example, Ben explained, "whereas basketball…that season doesn't start until November …school starts in August and even into the summer…where team members can be working on relationships and getting to know each other…in my experience it's been easier with basketball." Danny highlighted the timing aspect by mentioning that he has seen differences in social cohesion in the off season compared to during season.

Interestingly, Jesse mentioned how athletes' comfort level can be a factor in their willingness to play a role in developing the social cohesion on their team. According to Jesse, "social cohesion is all about feeling comfortable around the rest of the people on your team." Relatedly, Sim highlighted the importance of considering cultural factors. He mentioned how teams from Korea differ from teams from the United States by stating, "Korean team…coaches have the power". Lastly, several participants mentioned how different levels of sport can result in differences in social cohesion. For example, according to Amy, "It depends on what type of team I'm going into …a youth team…might be more important in terms of…getting them to enjoy each other's company…where a collegiate team…might be more task oriented."

Impact of roles. As mentioned in previous research, it is imperative that athletes understand and accept their roles on a team. Several of the participants discussed the importance of athletes understanding and accepting their roles. According to Larry, "the roles you have…are very important to social cohesion…players are sort of defined by their role." Danny mentioned the positions on a team, starter versus nonstarter roles, and leadership roles can all impact social cohesion. For example, he gave an example of offensive and defensive lineman in football and how the social cohesion is highest among the linemen of the same line, whether offensive or defensive.

Relatedly, Shane discussed the hierarchies on a team created by the various roles as an important consideration for understanding the social cohesion on a team. Finally, Jesse discussed the challenges that a team can face if they don't have clearly defined roles or don't accept the roles they have been given. According to him, this can create

havoc on the team leading to the potential for conflict to arise when role ambiguity happens.

Importance of communication. When discussing the nature of social cohesion, participants mentioned the importance of clear, effective communication. Communication helps reinforce openness, respectfulness, and honesty. According to Larry, words can either enhance or harm relationships. Larry stated, ”I think transparent communication is very important…that you’re honest…you don’t have any hidden agendas.” Relatedly, Doug emphasized the importance of teams being able to have authentic and real conversations. Otto suggested that teams should push towards a more effective language, emphasizing that listening skills should be considered more valuable than speaking skills (i.e., “what is heard” is more important than “what is said”).

Having open dialogue as many of the participants referred to it, requires that the environment on the team allows the team members to openly engage with each other both as a sender and receiver of communication. Thus, Ben highlighted the importance of being able to give and receive feedback without judgment and initiate discussion. Further, according to Otto, understanding that everyone has their own filters is important for understanding the communication patterns on a team. Several of the participants also highlighted the importance of body language and nonverbal communication as having an impact on the social cohesion of a team. Finally, Amy explained how conflict on a team, such as between athletes and coaches, is centered around a lack of clear, quality communication. She suggested a consideration of communication styles in understanding the nature of social cohesion on a team. As Amy put it, “That communication is kind of

lost…and especially if it's a freshman coming onto team…if they're still used to their other coach…they're not used to this communication style."

Coach impact. According to the participants, coaches have the ability to positively or negatively impact the social cohesion of their team as well as the various factors that play a role in the cohesion. Shane stated, "Coach holds it together…they are the cohesion of the team." Participants mentioned the coach's control style (Sim) and expectations (Jesse) as having an impact on the social cohesion of the team. According to Jesse, "As far as the coaching staff…it's kind of their job…to help the players…figure out what their roles are going to be."

Zoey and Amy eluded to the importance of understanding not just what coaches do or don't do that impacts the cohesion of the team, but also the perceptions of the coaches by the athletes. Zoey explained, "Coaches have good intentions…but they may not realize what they say…how and what they say may do…influence the team…and the team might also might be misperceiving what the comments really are." Similarly, Amy said she has "seen more athletes hurt when a coach gives them corrections" leading to the athlete feeling like the coach was a bully. Thus, according to the participants the coach sets the tone for the cohesion and culture of the team.

Gender differences. One factor that was mentioned by almost all of the participants was the role that gender can play in social cohesion. Jesse noted that males are better at compartmentalizing and females are more open, which has an impact on the nature of the social cohesion on their teams. According to Ben, he found that female teams can have deeper, more intimate relationships while the relationships on male teams are on the surface, just functional. Sim stated how he saw that males are more open to

each other and willing to hang out and socialize with other team members they normally do not hang out with. In contrast, for female teams, he noticed how female members prefer socializing with just their friends only. Doug added, that in his experience, male teams use a common goal to determine whether they can get along whereas female teams first want to see if they get along and like each other in order to determine if they can work together to achieve team goals.

Given the different ways that participants viewed males and females relate to each other, Sim mentioned that cliques on female teams can negatively affect their social cohesion. For example, Doug experienced how success on female teams can become detrimental:

> The female team tried to adopt that {rewarding players with stickers}…but totally back fired…it became really threatening…like how does she have so many…I don't get the chance to get as many as she does because she plays all the time and I'm not in the starting lineup, so I can't get as many stickers as she can.

Accordingly, in Jesse's opinion, social cohesion has a greater impact on female teams. However, despite the differences that may occur as a result of the gender of the team, Amy suggested that both male and female teams value social cohesion equally.

Importance of quality relationships. Regardless of gender, all participants highlighted the importance of teams being able to foster quality relationships, athlete-athlete and coach-athlete, in order to develop effective social cohesion. According to Ben, teams need to have the "right relationship" (i.e., deep, functional, and democratic) in which there is understanding, awareness, and empathy. Jesse emphasized that players need to know each other, be able to forgive each other, and see similarity in each other.

Many of the participants highlighted the notion of understanding. According to Doug, "understanding always lead to compassion" and it "creates a tighter bond." Zoey stated, understanding is a "foundation of success." Both she and Larry discussed that understanding stems from various elements, such as teams needing to respect and value each other, appreciate each other, be able to manage misperceptions, and feel connected. In Zoey and Otto's opinion, it is okay and natural for cliques to develop and to have teammates you are closer with than others as long as everyone respects and values each other and the culture is safeguarded.

Several of the participants mentioned that quality relationships on a team and the trust needed to have those kinds of relationships are not only built on the court/field, but also outside of the sport environment. According to Jesse, "trust off field leads to trust on field." Amy also stated that quality relationships are built when athletes socialize outside of the sport setting by explaining, "They needed to hang out in a non-formal setting, not practice, not games…the more you hang out with someone…it's proximity…it builds trust." Finally, Doug discussed the importance of vulnerability, seeing it as a strength that allows team members to open up to each other in order to build quality relationships.

In summary, along with facilitating the social cohesion on a team, the practitioners' interviews suggested that they also viewed it as important to understand what social cohesion is and what it entails. Upon understanding the nature of social cohesion on teams, practitioners can engage in efforts to facilitate a strong cohesive environment on a team. The next section outlines the sub-themes that emerged when participants discussed how they go about trying to help a team develop social cohesion.

Facilitating Social Cohesion

Facilitating Social Cohesion is the second main theme that emerged after analyzing all the transcripts. Seven sub-themes emerged as it pertains to facilitating social cohesion, which included: *consultant considerations, coach involvement, personal responsibility and leadership, creating role clarity, encouraging open dialogue, developing team culture,* and *consultant approaches*.

Consultant considerations. Practitioners have to be cognizant of a multitude of elements before and during consulting with a team. Throughout the interviews the participants mentioned several factors they take into consideration when trying to facilitate social cohesion on teams. For example, Amy and Shane discussed the idea of collaboration and getting multiple perspectives. Specifically, Amy emphasized trying to "understand the team from a different perspective other than the coach." Jesse discussed the impact of his consulting philosophy on his work and both he and Danny mentioned the importance of not forcing anything onto the athletes or team. Both Ben and Otto mentioned that building social cohesion is a process. Further, Ben discussed that it is important to educate the team about this, ensuring that they understand that results will not appear overnight. He suggested that practitioners should take into consideration time constraints and mentioned that he has experienced "challenges" and "mixed results" in trying to help teams develop effective social cohesion. Additionally, Otto also stated that it is important to understand who requested the services of the consultant before beginning any session. As Otto explained, he ensures he has a "candid discussion with whoever asks me to come in first."

Amy suggested that it is important to "get athletes on board at the beginning" and also have both coaches and leaders on board, believing in and understanding the process.

Zoey suggested not trying to avoid conflict stating, “Don’t think conflict is a bad thing. Good can come from conflict.” She followed up by suggesting that practitioners “go with the ‘goers’” when confronted with a team who is not all on board or is experiencing some sort of conflict and according to Otto it is “important to be mediator” in these types of situations. Finally, Shane suggested it is important to build rapport, be creative, and be persistent.

Coach involvement. As mentioned previously, coaches have the ability to impact the social cohesion of a team. Thus, the practitioners thought it was essential for coaches to have an understanding of what benefits the consultants’ services will provide and make sure to involve them in the process of developing the social cohesion of the team. As Zoey put it, “If he {the coach} doesn’t believe in it {the services}, then how is the team going to believe in it.” Amy stated that if consultants can get coaches on board before they begin conducting their services, the coaches will be more receptive to the services provided. Jesse stated practitioners should “gain the trust of the coaches” and Amy highlighted that “athletes trust the coach more than the sport psychologist.” Thus, all the practitioners seemed to suggest that involving the coaches is essential for being able to effectively facilitate the social cohesion on a team.

Danny further explained how important it is for coaches to not only be involved with the consultant’s services, but to also understand that consultant’s process and how he or she goes about delivering the services and conducting sessions. In Danny’s opinion, coaches are only a problem if they do not understand the role of the sport psychology practitioner. Doug mentioned that “coaches are the clients, they have the final say” so it is important for practitioners to “default to the coach” understanding that “it’s the coach’s

job that's on the line." Amy cautioned that, "it's a fine line stepping over the coach's toes" therefore she often does more with coaches separately suggesting that sometimes it's better to have conversations with them away from the athletes. Thus, Otto suggested it is important to involve and support the coaches because the "coach isn't going anywhere." Ultimately, in Shane's opinion, a practitioner while working on building social cohesion can also "help coaches be better coaches."

Personal responsibility and leadership. Not only is it vital for coaches to be involved, but the practitioners also discussed that fostering a sense of individual responsibility among the team members as well as utilizing the leadership can also have important influence on the facilitation of social cohesion. For example, Otto explained that he emphasizes that it is the athletes' responsibility to make use of what he teaches them. He stated that he tells the team that his work with them will only have an impact if they take ownership over applying it to their team and performance: "it's what you do with what I teach you." The participants also discussed how developing social cohesion can also enhance personal responsibility. According to Doug, "I believe peer accountability is the greatest driver of performance…by increasing social cohesion…it would increase peer accountability."

Larry commented on how it is important to utilize the team leaders for developing social cohesion. He explained:

> Those people {core leaders} are going to be the…people…who are going to set the tone for the team…if the core leaders are bought into the mission…then…I think it brings everybody in.

Similarly, Jesse explained how he believes it is important for practitioners to provide team captains with strategies to help develop social cohesion, especially away from the sport setting.

Creating role clarity. Given the stated importance of role clarity and acceptance, the practitioners discussed that fostering role clarity was part of the work they did to develop and enhance social cohesion on teams. They suggested methods such as reevaluating or reassigning roles depending on performance (Jesse), mixing up players on a team and defining roles to players (Jesse), and illustrating the importance of particular roles (Larry). For example, Sim conducted open communication sessions as to have a clear understanding of each other's roles in which the team members openly discuss what roles each player will have and further discuss what function each role will serve.

Jesse explained that it is important for practitioners to first check in with coaches about whether they are providing role clarity and then work with the team further on roles. He stated:

> Start with talking to the coaching staff and making sure they're communicating role clarity to their players…once you do that…do a bunch of activities…how important it is for people to accept their roles…in order to make the team better.

Amy emphasized the importance of assigning roles and expectations related to those roles, specifically leadership roles, by stating, "Clarify the leader…because leaders come in several different ways…have the coach clarify what your roles on the team and what they expect from you…it's really helpful."

Encouraging open dialogue. To solidify the importance of communication, it is important to have clear and open dialogue among a team, including coaches. Thus, the

participants emphasized that they make an effort to foster open dialogue when working on social cohesion. Zoey explained how having open dialogue on a team she worked with helped decrease the tensions that were arising between the athletes and the coaches. She stated, “Having open dialogue and communication…really helped out because they were all on the same page and they all knew they were valued.” Doug conducted open dialogue sessions and tried to foster authentic conversations between the athletes. Moreover, the authentic conversations were utilized to keep every player accountable for their actions. Ben stated that it’s “really healthy to have open dialogue” particularly emphasizing the importance of this for allowing players to communicate any of the frustrations they have with their coaches and coaches being open to hearing them out.

The practitioners highlighted in general that their aim in team sessions is to create an environment in which open dialogue can occur. The aim of this is to reach a “common ground” and “push towards a more effective language” (Otto), enhance the team’s communication and develop “collective goals” (Shane), and enable the team to have “real conversations” (Doug). When this is done, Larry stated, “the sharing that can occur is amazing.” Finally, Shane also emphasized not only focusing on helping the team enhance their verbal communication, but also working with them on improving their nonverbal communication.

Developing team culture. According to participants, the identity and culture of a team is important for facilitating social cohesion. Doug stated, the “best team environment leads to best performance.” Amy further explained that, in her view, the athletes need to “understand that the team is bigger than they are.” According to Amy, a first consideration when working with a team on social cohesion is the current status of

their culture. When asked about how she facilitates social cohesion, she stated, "It depends on the team I'm working with because the culture of the team…might already be there…might not."

The participants also discussed that they work on enhancing or redefining the culture of a team, but that this is not always a smooth or welcomed process. For example, Sim explained how some of the athletes were resistant with his services because he tried to change the culture of the team. As he put it:

> I have had a few conflicts with the athletes…senior, junior players…they want to…keep their power…they're seniors, juniors…you know…the culture…new players come…and they have to do some basic stuff like stand in the back of the dining line…so I try to change those norms, culture…then…but…you know…especially with the seniors like to try to keep those things…they like those things…I try to understand that kind of stuff…but can effect team cohesion…eventually can effect your team performance, but still they…didn't like to change it.

Regardless, Zoey explained how it is important to have an open discussion to find what kind of culture the team wants to have. Zoey further added that when she thinks of social cohesion, she thinks of building a culture where people feel connected with one another. Otto explained that he works with teams on safeguarding their culture by discussing the ways in which it can be sustained or destroyed. Safeguarding helped athletes understand and be aware of what harmful behavior can destroy the culture they built. He stated, "Talk about how to safeguard that {culture}, because it can thrive…but life happens…and go through a whole another exercise…if we wanted to, in a subtle, innocuous way destroy this culture…what are some of the behaviors we can do…to sabotage it."

Consultant approaches. Lastly, the participants described the approaches they have utilized in order to facilitate social cohesion. According to the participants, practitioners should "provide activities and opportunities" (Ben), "create events for social cohesion" (Jesse), "build experiences" that "create closeness" and provide opportunities for "the team to share and talk" (Larry), "stimulate discussion" (Zoey), and help in the "building and maintaining of healthy relationships" (Shane). For Otto, working on social cohesion is about building a form of consensus. Specifically, he explained, "Building a form of consensus within that organization and how they are going to operate, the values they are going to hold sacred and so forth is a critical component." Danny focuses a large amount of time on reframing athletes' ways of thinking, specifically for the athletes who do not get to play in many games who may suffer from a lack of confidence and feeling like they are not good enough. Amy mentioned that she has "a lot of sessions about trust" that consist of "more sitting down and talking about it" and trying to get the team to understand that "trust is something built over time." Additionally several of the participants discussed developing and utilizing leadership groups to enhance social cohesion.

Many of the participants discussed the use of teambuilding activities to facilitate social cohesion. Shane discussed the importance of using these types of kinesthetic approaches rather than power point presentations since they are athletes and are accustomed to learning in this manner. Ben provided an example of an activity that addresses the need for the athletes to break out of their cliques and to spend time with the athletes on their team who they do not normally hang out with. As Ben described:

We have them make a bullseye and put their name in the middle and on each of the rungs outside of that, they put all their teammates…and the ones closest to that middle circle are the ones they feel closest to…the ones that are more towards the outside are the teammates they don't feel as close to…and we use that as kind of a guide and to lead them to…okay the ones that are outside of your circle…let's find some time to really work on the relationship with that person.

Additionally, Zoey provided an example of an activity she employs to help develop communication skills and a feeling of connection between the athletes. As Zoey explained:

> I have a spider web activity…it's called spider web, it's with yarn…and…it's a way to get to know each other too…the team is in a large circle and they…let's say they answer a question about themselves…like…what's their favorite hobby…it could be anything…like what's their greatest strengths…or what's the strength of their sport and out of sport…or what's one word to describe themselves…and…with that one question…they all have to answer it…and when one person answers it…has the string…while still hanging on the end of the string…pass the other end of the string to the teammate across from them…they answer it and then pass it to another person until it passes through the entire group…usually go through two or three questions that way…so at the end they are holding onto the string and it looks like a spider web…in the middle we talk about what that means…first ask them what that looks like…and they say spider web…talk about how they are all connected…I have them pull on the rope…on the strings and see how…one person pulls…they feel it in some way…and so we relate that to the team…and their connection to each other and their cohesion…and how does that translate to the field…we talk about what happens when…maybe a teammate or two or three drops their string…if they happen to do that…we talk about what that means…for example, if someone is…speaking poorly

about a teammate…can they all still…can they still all function together…is it going to be as strong as it was…probably not…and they see that visual representation they can feel it.

In summary, the practitioners provided a great deal of perspectives and experiences with regards to how they going about facilitating social cohesion. Beyond just utilizing teambuilding activities or fostering open dialogue, many factors have to be considered before even speaking with the athletes. Furthermore, practitioners also have to be aware of the attitudes of the athletes and coaches as well as the culture of the team.

Discussion

This study expanded on previous literature by providing an in-depth examination of sport psychology practitioners' experiences with facilitating social cohesion. Chang and Bordic (2001) suggested that researchers should study social cohesion and task cohesion separately and not together, however the majority of the research in sport psychology has focused either on cohesion in general or the facilitation of task cohesion. Little attention has been paid to social cohesion, and according to the practitioners in the current study, this aspect of cohesion can have significant effects on the general cohesion as well as performance of the team.

With regards to *understanding the nature of social cohesion*, the practitioners highlighted various factors and considerations. One of the main factors they viewed as having influence on social cohesion were the individual differences of the members of a team. For example, differences in personality were highlighted by several of the participants. Consistent with this notion, Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, and Mount (1998) showed that a team whose members possess higher levels of extraversion and emotional

stability is more likely to have increased interaction amongst the team members, thereby enhancing social cohesion. In contrast, a team whose members have high disagreeableness (i.e., choosing to remain isolated from the group) can lead to lower performance, less cohesion, more conflict, less open communication, and less sharing of the workload. Therefore, understanding the different personalities on a team is vital for practitioners who try to build social cohesion amongst the team members.

One of the main individual differences discussed by the participants was the difference they have seen in terms of social cohesion among male and female teams. Jesse and Ben mentioned how social cohesion seems to be more meaningful in female teams than male teams, yet Sim and Doug noted how social cohesion is more impactful on male teams than female teams. Doug even pointed out how team members on female teams who perform better at their roles are considered threatening to the other members. When researching social cohesion and gender, Widmeyer and Martens (1978) failed to find any gender differences in cohesiveness. Yet, Reis and Jelsma (1978) had shown that males and females do differ in terms of competitive sports. More specifically, males most strongly endorsed competition, winning, and beating one's opponent; while females most strongly endorsed participating in the game, interacting with teammates and opponents, and everyday socializing. Despite the differences seen, Amy explained that in her opinion and experience social cohesion is valued equally between males and females.

Consistent with previous research, the practitioners also identified the importance of roles and the ways in which they to assist in helping a team develop role clarity and acceptance. Beauchamp, Bray, Eys, and Carron (2002) noted that it is important for athletes to understand four aspects with regards to their role: (1) the scope of their

responsibilities or generally what their role entails; (2) the behaviors that are necessary to successfully fulfill their role responsibilities; (3) how their role performance will be evaluated; and (4) what the consequences are should they not successfully fulfill their role responsibilities. Based on this information and the information provided from the participants, practitioners have to stress the need for clear definitions of roles for each team member, including coaches and athlete leaders. If roles are not clear, role ambiguity occurs, which can lead to teams becoming less cohesive.

It was also noted that coaches are vital for social cohesion development. Several of the participants stated how essential it was to have the coach involved in the consulting sessions. Most importantly, it was essential to make sure that coaches were on board with the services provided by the practitioner at the very beginning. Turman (2003) identified key behaviors that coaches possess to help promote team cohesion including: motivational speeches, team prayer, athlete directed techniques, and dedication.

The practitioners also emphasized the importance of communication and encouraging open dialogue. Williams (2006) stated that as the level of communication relating to task and social issues increases, cohesiveness is enhanced; and as the group becomes more cohesive there is also increased communication. The practitioners in the current study explained the impact of communication and open dialogue on many facets of team cohesion and interaction, such as helping to increase role clarity, clear out frustrations, and build understanding which can lead to trust. Consistent with their viewpoints, Weinberg and Gould (1995) stated that an effective group needs to create an environment where everyone is comfortable expressing thoughts and feelings.

Acknowledging and building the culture of the team was stressed by several of the participants. Doug claimed that the best team environment leads to the best performance. Amy stated consultants have to be aware of any existing culture a team might have before beginning any consulting session, because the team might already have a culture set in place and may not be willing to make any changes to it. Which was evidence by Sim, who experienced difficulty when trying to adjust the team's already existing culture. Highlighting the importance of culture, Janssen (2016) proposed a matrix of eight types of cultures teams can have which include: corrosive culture, country club culture, congenial culture, comfortable culture, competitive culture, cut-throat culture, constructive culture, and championship culture. According to Janssen, the type of culture of a team will be dependent on how much emphasis the team places on relationships and results. Low emphasis on both relationships and results leads to a corrosive culture that is highly toxic and is characterized by a lot of conflict, negativity, frustration, cliques, gossiping, distrust, and selfishness. High emphasis on relationships, but low emphasis on results leads to a congenial culture where the focus is primarily on getting along and preserving harmonious relationships. The team becomes more of a support group and social club rather than a high-performance team focused on achieving winning results. Low emphasis on relationships, but high emphasis on results leads to a cut-throat culture in which talent and performance are the sole criteria of success in this merciless and unforgiving culture, whereas character and people skills are often neglected. High emphasis on both relationships and results (i.e., strong social and task cohesion) leads to a championship culture in which the team has a strong sense of

mission and purpose and, at the same time, team members are treated with respect and their contributions to the team are valued.

With regards to the *facilitation of social cohesion*, participants highlighted several important considerations for practitioners such as the time of season. Sometimes teams might need to spend time developing social cohesion earlier in the season than other teams or later in the season. Some teams might have to revisit some strategies on building social cohesion depending on the needs of the team. This "back-and-forth" manner is characteristic of the pendular model of group development. The pendular model postulates that team development can go forward or backwards depending on what the team needs at any moment (Gersick, 1988). Additionally, the linear perspective of group development can also relate to the need for social cohesion development. As mentioned earlier, Tuckman (1965) discussed the four stages of team development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. As Sim stated, the need for social cohesion can depend on where the team is at during the season. For example, if the team falls is in the storming stage where team members are not getting along and experiencing conflict, then social cohesion will need to be emphasized more heavily during this time of the season. In contrast, during the performing stage, the team members have put any differences aside and are able to work together cohesively and thus work on social cohesion may be used to maintain the level of cohesion attained despite and performance challenges.

Active team building strategies were also emphasized by the participants. Specifically, Ben and Zoey both discussed in detail what type of team building activities they employ. Team building activities can vary between practitioners. As mentioned previously, Yukelson (1997) stated that that team building is an on-going, multifaceted

process. Multiple strategies can be utilized. For example, Widmeyer and Ducharme (1997) discussed how team goal setting can be used for team building which can lead to enhanced team cohesion. Furthermore, the study made note that when implementing a team goal setting program, sport psychologists should establish long-term goals first, establish clear paths to long-term goals, involve all team members in establishing team goals, monitor team progress toward team goals, reward team progress toward team goals, and foster collective efficacy concerning the accomplishment of team goals.

A recent article in The New York Times titled "What Google Learned from Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team" illuminates the results of an internal research project (i.e., Project Aristotle) that was conducted by Google in order to determine the factors that can predict team success (Duhigg, 2016). In analyzing the various Google teams, the researchers found that the successful teams had different behaviors: some teams had a mix of intelligent people and they would split up the work while other teams had average people, but the team would utilize each members' strengths to their advantage. Therefore, of great importance was the finding that neither the makeup of the team (i.e., who the team members were) or the system they utilized for carrying out their tasks significantly predicted team success. Instead what was noted was that all the successful teams shared two behaviors: (1) everyone spoke in roughly the same proportion, which the researchers referred to as "equality in distribution of conversational turn-taking" and (2) the teams had what was termed high "average social sensitivity" (i.e., team members were skilled at intuiting how others felt based on their tone of voice, their expressions, and other nonverbal cues). Thus, what the researchers called "psychological safety" (i.e., an environment conducive to open dialogue, openness, vulnerability, and shared

understanding) was the factor found to have significantly influence on the success of the Google teams. This not only supports the findings of the current study but also provides important anecdotal evidence that social cohesion is a key variable in team performance and success. Therefore, the findings of the present study provide essential information with regards to how practitioners can and should approach working with teams on this influential facet of team cohesion.

Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations may impact the results of this study. First, a limited number of participants were interviewed. For phenomenological studies it is more advantageous to have at least twenty participants to fully capture the essence of the phenomenon that is experienced (Polkinghorne, 1989). Despite the small sample size, saturation was still met. The research study was able to create a full grasp of the phenomenon of social cohesion with the limited number of participants. Second, the results may provide an unintentional gender bias given that only two of the practitioners interviewed were female. Only having two female participants likely does not provide a complete depiction of female sport psychology practitioners' experiences with facilitating social cohesion. Last, all but one of the participants were American, thereby limiting the ability to understand the facilitation of social cohesion by practitioners in other countries and cultures. Schinke and Hanrahan (2009) stated that the need for sport psychology to take a cultural approach, for both research and practice, is necessary. If culture is ignored, the study of sport psychology will remain a unidimensional science that will be at risk of becoming culturally obsolete. Given these limitations, future research in this area should aim to get

perspectives from a larger group of practitioners' representative of both genders as well as various countries and cultures.

Practical Implications

The practitioners interviewed in this study provided many insights into their perspectives on social cohesion as well as the considerations and methods they utilize to facilitate it. The following summarize key recommendations for practitioners:

- Understand that cohesion is complex, multidimensional, and has a large influence on team cohesion in general.
- Consider the many factors that might influence social cohesion on a team, such as individual differences, gender differences, time of season, sport and performance level, culture, and the proximity and amount of time the team spends together.
- Understand that team member roles influence social cohesion and works towards helping teams and coaches to clarify and accept roles.
- Ensure team members understand that building social cohesion is a process that takes time.
- Understand the significant impact, positive and negative, coaches have on social cohesion and get them on board with building an effective team culture. Also, ensure to get the athlete leaders and team members in general on board with the process to foster personal responsibility and accountability for the cohesiveness of the team.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for the team to engage in open dialogue and develop effective communication (verbal, nonverbal, listening) in order to help them

build quality relationships characterized by respect, value, trust, and shared understanding.

- Build rapport with the team, be creative, utilize leadership groups, and incorporate teambuilding activities in order to effectively help a team build and sustain social cohesion.

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APPENDIX A

Barry University

Informed Consent Form For use with Skype

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is The Facilitation of Social Cohesion. The research is being conducted by Stedwin Rafael Coleman, a student in the Human Performance and Leisure Science department at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of sport psychology. The aims of the research are to examine social cohesion through the viewpoint of sport psychology practitioners. In accordance with these aims, the following procedures will be used: in-person, over the phone, or through "Skype" interviews. We anticipate the number of participants to be 55.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: answer open-ended questions that detail your experience with facilitating social cohesion on a sport team. Each interview will last 30-90 minutes.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects.

There are no known risks to you. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our understanding of the viewpoints and experiences sport psychology practitioners have regarding facilitating social cohesion.

As a research participant, information you provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. As this project involves the use of Skype: to prevent others from eavesdropping on communications and to prevent impersonation or loss of personal information, Skype issues everyone a "digital certificate" which is an electronic credential that can be used to establish the identity of a Skype user, wherever that user may be located. Further, Skype uses well-known standards-based encryption algorithms to protect Skype users' communications from falling into the hands of hackers and criminals. In so doing, Skype helps ensure user's privacy as well as the integrity of the data being sent from one user to another. If you have further concerns regarding Skype privacy, please consult the Skype privacy policy. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will establish a separate Skype account for this research project only. After each communication, the researcher will delete the conversation history. Once this is done, the conversation cannot be recovered. For interviews conducted through Skype, a digital voice recorder will be placed next to the computer and record the entire conversation. The audio files will be transcribed, by the primary researcher. All email conversations between the researcher and participant will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Any published results of the research will refer to participants by their pseudonym unless the participant chooses to waive their right to anonymity as indicated below in the voluntary consent designation. Data will be kept in a locked cabinet file. The audio files on the digital voice recorder will be deleted after they are transcribed. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data. All data will be kept indefinitely.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Stedwin Rafael Coleman, at (318) 573 5607 or stedwin.coleman@mymail.barry.edu, my supervisor Dr. Lauren Tashman, at (305) 899 3721 or ltashman@barry.edu, or the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Barbara Cook, at (305)899-3020 or bcook@barry.edu. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

Voluntary Consent

_____I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this experiment by Stedwin Rafael Coleman and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this experiment and wish to protect my rights to confidentiality.

_____I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this experiment by Stedwin Rafael Coleman and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this experiment and wish to waive confidentiality allowing my name to be used in the results.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____ _____ _____

Researcher Date Witness Date

(Witness signature is required only if research involves pregnant women, children, other vulnerable populations, or if more than minimal risk is present.)

APPENDIX B

Dear Mr. Coleman:

On behalf of the Barry University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have verified that the specific changes requested by the convened IRB on January 20, 2016, have been made.

It is the IRB's judgment that the rights and welfare of the individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with requirements and that the potential benefits to participants and to others warrant the risks participants may choose to incur. You may therefore proceed with data collection.

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved by the IRB. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form.

It is a condition of this approval that you report promptly to the IRB any serious, unanticipated adverse events experienced by participants in the course of this research, whether or not they are directly related to the study protocol. These adverse events include, but may not be limited to, any experience that is fatal or immediately life-threatening, is permanently disabling, requires (or prolongs) inpatient hospitalization, or is a congenital anomaly cancer or overdose.

The approval granted expires on February 5, 2017. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request a progress report from you approximately three months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB point of contact, Mrs. Barbara Cook at (305)899-3020 or send an e-mail to **dfeldman@barry.edu.** Finally, please review your professional liability insurance to make sure your coverage includes the activities in this study.

Sincerely,

David M. Feldman, PhD
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Barry University
Department of Psychology
11300 NE 2nd Avenue
Miami Shores, FL 33161

Cc: Dr. Lauren Tashman

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Note: The investigator will be solely responsible and strictly accountable for any deviation from or failure to follow the research protocol as approved and will hold Barry University harmless from all claims against it arising from said deviation or failure.

APPENDIX C

Demographics Form

Please answer the following questions:

Age:

Gender:

Degrees Earned:

Certification(s):

Association(s):

A brief history of your experiences/work done providing sport psychology services, specifically with teams: