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Leadership Styles of College and University Athletic Directors and the Presence of NCAA Transgender Policy

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Abstract

In September 2011, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) announced the *Policy on Transgender Inclusion*. It provides guidelines for transgender student athletes to participate in sex-separated athletic teams according to their gender identity. The *2012 LGBTQ National College Athlete Report*, the first of its kind, provided information to help serve gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) students. Although the *Policy on Transgender Inclusion* has been around since 2011 and the *2012 Report* provided insights, the extent by which best practices have been implemented has not been adequately explored. This study examined the relationship of athletic directors' leadership frames to transgender inclusion policies at institutions with NCAA athletics. Athletic directors from active member NCAA schools were contacted: 340 in Division I; 290 in Division II; and 436 in Division III. Leadership was examined according to the Multi-frame Model for Organizations in addition to Intersectionality Theory. The human resource frame was the most common and the political frame was the least. There were no statistically significant differences among NCAA

Divisions or between private and public institutions. Although athletic directors acknowledged transgender policies and were aware of the legal parameters, lack of policy presence was prevalent on campuses.

Keywords: Leadership, NCAA athletics, Transgender policy, Intersectionality theory

1. Introduction

In September of 2011, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) officially announced the approval of the *Policy on Transgender Inclusion*. The development of the participation policy was generated due to the increasing number of college-aged young people, who identify as transgender (Griffin & Carroll, 2010). The policy provides guidelines for transgender student athletes to participate in sex-separated athletic teams in accordance with their gender identity. It allows transgender athletes to compete, as long as the hormone therapy being utilized meets current NCAA medical policies (Lawrence, 2011). Finally, it relates a series of best practice resources. Although the policy is not mandatory, "[f]ew collegiate athletic programs, administrators, or coaches have been prepared to fairly, systematically, and effectively address a transgender student's interest in participating in athletics" (Office of Inclusion, 2011, p. 4). College athletics still reflect cultures of heterosexism and prejudices (Cunningham, 2015; Griffin, 2012; Santore-Baldwin, 2012).

2. Literature

The NCAA *Policy on Transgender Inclusion* has existed since 2011. However, the extent by which the best practices have been addressed by athletic directors as sport leaders has not been adequately explored. However, there is an increased focus toward policy production and implementation (Brown, 2004) and sport leaders are needed as advocates (Edwards, 2015; Melton, 2015). They tend to have credibility, trust, and cultural power to create a culture more receptive of diversity other than heterosexism (Burnett, 2006). Even though sport leaders can be key advocates, nothing is known about their leadership traits related to transgender policy. The NCAA Office of Inclusion (2011) conveyed that few administrators have been prepared to address transgender issues fairly. Watkins (1998) indicated this is particularly true when it comes to supporting issues of social justice, including issues facing the LGBT community.

Moreover, sport research's primary focus has been on White lesbian, bisexual, and gay intercollegiate athletes (Walker & Melton, 2015). Institutions still largely remain unwelcome for individuals who have been identified as having marginalized identities (Walker & Santore-Baldwin, 2013). In contexts where a dominant positionality exists, such as at leadership positions in NCAA athletics (Wright, Eagleman, & Pedersen, 2011) complications arise surrounding the co-existence or intersectionality between the dominant groups and marginalized individuals (Levine-Rasky, 2011). Intersectionality is a theory addressing overlapping social identities of individuals or groups, who are considered marginalized and how they relate to systems of oppression, discrimination, and/or domination (Levine-Rasky).

Rankin and Merson (2012) released the *2012 LGBTQ National College Athlete Report*. Their report, the first of its kind, provided research, best practices, and resources in order to help

serve gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer students. However, the report failed to represent a significant number of transgender respondents, which limited the analysis of campus climate. Although the number of transgender respondents was low, the data indicated a need for campus improvement (Rankin & Merson, 2012). Campus climate is determined by institutional practices (Taylor, 2015) as a result of leadership. However, leader behaviors and stereotypes often perpetuate a climate where the LGBT community is less welcome (Burton, 2014; Cunningham, 2008).

Policy issues often arise because multiple stakeholders have various perspectives and in many cases they are a top-down approach (O'Toole, 2004), often influenced by leadership (Scott, 1999). An athletic director is responsible for the oversight of athletic events, logistical operations of each athletics team, budgeting, fundraising, marketing, facility oversight, personnel management, and developing processes and procedures (Judge & Judge, 2009; Wright, Eagleman, & Pedersen, 2011). An athletic director is "the individual responsible for planning, organizing, leading, and evaluating a program of intercollegiate athletics" (Branch, 1990, p. 162). Athletic directors are also responsible for promoting cultural diversity among athletes and across campus. However, building a diverse environment is difficult.

Differing social identities often give rise to discrimination, inequalities, and oppression. A dominant group may create conditions to where marginalized individuals experience an inordinate amount of pernicious interactions (Veenstra, 2013). For example, Calafell (2014) related that university life is a male dominated environment where males determine the rules and violating them creates troublesome situations. When trouble and tensions rise to the level of litigation, the landscape is not much better. Best, Krieger, Edleman, and Eliason (2011) conveyed that people identifying with multiple disadvantages are less likely to be successful with their law cases than dominant groups. Employers often operate by social stereotypes, leading to litigation in which "[j]udges, juries, and lawyers are subject to the same institutionalized stereotypes" (p. 994). Compounding the problem is the issue of claim intersectionality. The legal environment is one-dimensional in which a case of sex discrimination, for example, is treated the same across all marginalized groups without distinguishing their unique situations and traits (Best, Krieger, Edleman, & Eliason). In collegiate athletics, the situation is even more narrow.

Embedded deep within competitive athletics is a gender binary model. Since the 1920s, the binary model has significantly restricted physical participation into male and female categories (Baljinder, Knawaljeet, & Narinder, 2010; Wagman, 2009; Sullivan, 2011). Sport governing bodies have consistently attempted to determine ways in which to segregate males and females by enforcing policy on athletic competition on the basis of personal and societal pressures of this binary gender model (Sullivan, 2011). It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that the notion of intersex, transexualism, and transgenderism was introduced as sex/gender distinctions (Baljinder, Knawaljeet, & Narinder, 2010). In the 1960s and continuing to today, the United States has been undergoing a period of heightened awareness of social justice with a particular emphasis on discrimination, which includes transgender issues (Baljinder, Knawaljeet, & Narinder, 2010; Lawrence, 2011).

Unfortunately, there is a lack of literature that examines the relationship of leadership in college athletics and its support of the implementation of transgendered policy. Athletic directors, themselves, tend to be primarily white males, yet athletes come from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and orientations (Wright, Eagleman, & Pedersen, 2011). Coakley (2009) suggested the reason there are more males is they have had more sports alliances and networking contacts than females in the past. Furthermore, the environment itself tends to reinforce hiring a homogeneous group. Two decades of research show an enduring status quo approach to an organizational culture that strengthens the selection of a particular athletic director profile (Slack, 1997). Wright, Eagleman, and Pedersen (2011) related there is a lack of representation at the athletic director level and it indicates a limited approach to decision making on important policies, as well. According to Schein (2007), in order for significant changes to be made to any policy pertaining to sport organizations, the status quo has to be challenged.

3. Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to examine the relationship of athletic directors' leadership frames to the presence of NCAA best practices of transgender inclusion policies at colleges and universities with NCAA athletics. Beginning in 2011 the NCAA Office of Inclusion expanded its mission to encompass issues involving the LBGT community (Cooper, 2012; Office of Inclusion, 2011). This study attempts to examine the extent of that expansion.

4. Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical models are used to guide the study. First, Bolman and Deal (1991) provide the basis for leadership frames among NCAA athletic directors. Second, Intersectionality Theory provides the foundation for NCAA *Policy on Transgender Inclusion* for further understanding.

Bolman and Deal's (1991) Multi-frame Model for Organizations was used. It also is an instrument, providing respondents with leadership scenarios with which to respond. However, there are no known studies that have examined actual leadership styles that may be conducive to LGBT and/or social change models and then relate them to LGBT and/or social change issues among NCAA athletic directors. The supposition is that in order for change to occur, a particular type of leadership frame is needed. However, how well does a particular leadership frame of a dominant culture intersect with policy that affects the participation of transgendered athletes in NCAA institutions? The following provides descriptions of the theoretical foundations for the Multi-frame Model for Organizations and Intersectionality Theory.

4.1 Multi-Frame: Human Resources

The *human resource frame* emphasizes the feelings of others and the basic needs of individuals. The primary method of response is interpersonal and fosters participation and involvement. It is based on the premise that meeting basic human needs by organizations will produce a better work force (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Leaders with this framework stress the importance of open discussion on issues affecting employees' personal well-being. People

want to know they are being heard. They want to be a part of decision-making and have an impact on morale (Bolman & Deal).

4.2 Multi-Frame: Structural

The *structural frame* is centered on defining clear goals, roles for individuals in the organization and setting policies, which define the direction of an organization. Leaders who exhibit the *structural frame* are focused on the bottom line and accountability. They focus on goal clarity, role expectations, planning, budgeting, analysis, and evaluation. Precise actions are the most important feature and they include organizing or reorganizing, implementing or clarifying policies, developing budgets or control mechanisms, and adding new procedures for efficiency and effectiveness (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

4.3 Multi-Frame: Political

The *political frame* understands organizations through a competitive lens. Leaders who are politically driven often are pragmatic and value power in building the success of their organization through negotiations and networking. These leaders view the organization in a constant state of conflict and competition for resources, which are scarce. Thus, they exert their energies toward networking, creating coalitions, and negotiating compromises. These leaders align and realign themselves with interest groups (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

4.4 Multi-Frame: Symbolic

The *symbolic frame* emphasizes finding meaning in facts and interpreting them rather than objectively analyzing situations. Leaders who are symbolic stress enthusiasm, loyalty, and a strong sense of vision. Often, organizational traditions are important. Leaders from this perspective place a great deal of meaning in existing practices, artifacts, rituals, and symbols. They stress the importance of institutional culture and identity. For them, the world is chaotic and key symbols help shape shared meaning, vision, and identity. They tend to be charismatic and full of drama (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

4.5 Intersectionality Theory

With its roots in Critical Race Theory (Delgado, 2011), Intersectionality Theory reflects how marginalized individuals or groups identify with overlapping social identities and how they relate to systems of oppression, discrimination, and/or domination (Levine-Rasky, 2011). According to Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013), the practice of intersectionality encompasses a wide range of phenomena. It applies to social, work, organizational environments, demands for economic justice, and legal and policy remedies, and government equalities among marginalized groups. It is a heuristic theory often used as a tool to bring attention to differences and harmony in a quest for social justice. It exposes how single-minded thinking, whether dominant group-think or approaches to discrimination, undermines inclusion and equality. A key feature of the theory, and its primary value for this study, is that it applies to infinite combinations of identities that overlap (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). Thus, an NCAA athletic director may possess a particular leadership frame, but also may have to identify with NCAA policy on transgender athletes for inclusion. This

research looks at leadership frames and how NCAA athletic directors address the NCAA *Policy on Transgender Inclusion*.

5. Research Questions

There was one independent variable, the four leadership frames of the Multi-frame Model for Organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The leadership frames consisted of four aspects: (a) *human resource*; (b) *structural*; (c) *political*; and (d) *symbolic*. The dependent variable was the best practices items from the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion*. They included the presence of (a) best practices for athletic administrators and (b) additional guidelines for transgendered student-athlete inclusion. Demographic data were also collected in order to describe the participants. The dependent variable was the best practices items from the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion*. These variables led to the development of specific research questions:

1) What are the leadership frames of intercollegiate athletic directors at NCAA institutions?

2) To what extent is the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion* present at NCAA institutions?

3) What is the relationship between the leadership frames of intercollegiate athletic directors and the presence of the best practices for implementation of the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion*?

To ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for transgender student athletes, there must be a proactive approach. However, the problem lies in the policy presence stage. The policy has been disseminated to organizations and it is up to conference representatives, individual universities, and college administrators to implement the policy (Office of Inclusion, 2011). It is not known to what extent these policies are even present among athletic directors at the 1,068 NCAA active member institutions. Furthermore, it is not known how leadership behaviors relate to the presence of transgender policy inclusion.

6. Method

When examining effectiveness of an athletic departments, it is incumbent upon athletic directors' ability to serve as a leader and a manager while maintaining overall vision, goals, ethics, and integrity (Wright et al., 2011). This study was conducted to examine the concept that the presence of best practices to ensure transgender inclusion is related to leadership frames of NCAA athletic directors.

6.1 Design

The study employed correlational research. They are conducted to determine the magnitude and direction of the relationships among variables (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Due to non-experimental nature of the study, no causal inferences were drawn and because of non-probability nature of sampling, external validity was limited to the participants.

6.2 Participant Selection

The participants were identified from active member NCAA schools. Recently, the NCAA reported that there were 1,066 active member schools; 340 in Division I, 290 in Division II, and 436 in Division III (The National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2013). All athletic directors were invited to participate in the study. Contact information was obtained through The National Directory of College Athletics. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board. Consent to participate in the study was obtained online.

6.3 Instrumentation

A three-part online questionnaire was developed, the Athletic Director Leadership and Transgender Policy Implementation Inventory, ADL-TPII. Part I was derived from the Leadership Orientations Inventory, LOI (Bolman & Deal, 1997), and measured the four frames of leadership. Bolman and Deal (1997) created the LOI to measure three aspects of leadership, (a) *behaviors*, (b) *leadership style*, and (c) *overall rating*. This study was delimited to the *behaviors* section of the LOI, which includes 32 attitudinal items. The 32-item questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert-type scaling (5 = always to 1 = never).

Part II was derived from the *NCAA Best Practices and Guidelines for Inclusion of Transgender Student Athletes* (Office of Inclusion, 2011). This part of the instrument was designed to gather information on the extent by which the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion* was present at the NCAA institutions. The assessment consisted of 16 yes/no questions, which were used to determine the outcome measure.

Part III was designed to collect demographic data to describe the participants. Specifically, data on the NCAA Division classification (I, II, or III), institution type (public or private), academic classification (baccalaureate, master's, doctoral), number of sports teams, number of years as an athletic director, gender, and age were collected. The demographic data was collected to identify participant characteristics, which was used to provide an enriched understanding (Lee & Schuele, 2010).

A panel of experts among faculty colleagues was formed to examine the content validity of the ADL-TPII. The online version of the instrument was pilot-tested to examine its utility and to make sure that the obtained data could be downloaded correctly.

6.4 Data Collection

The directory file contained 1,066 athletic directors. First, following IRB approval, an initial email was sent to each athletic director. The initial email explained the purpose of the study, described how the subjects were selected, and included a link to the online questionnaire. The link to the online questionnaire included the Letter of Informed Consent. A second follow-up email was sent two weeks later, thanking those who had responded to the questionnaire and encouraging others to kindly participate. A third follow-up email was sent two weeks after the second email. Of the 1,066 athletic directors who were sent the survey, 119 responded, resulting in a response rate of 11.14%.

6.5 Data Analysis

The data were coded and entered into the computer. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to manipulate and analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and organize the data. Specifically, frequency and percentage distribution tables, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability were reported. Skew coefficient was used to examine the normality of the distributions and for skewed distributions; median was reported as the most appropriate measure of central tendency.

7. Results

Generally, the participants were more likely to use leadership behaviors associated with the *human resource frame*, and least likely to use leadership behaviors association with the *political frame*. Post hoc analysis showed that, with the exception of the *structural frame* compared to the *human resource frame* and the *political frame* compared to the *symbolic frame*, all pairwise comparisons were statistically significant. Multivariate analysis of variance showed no statistically significant differences among the three NCAA Divisions and between private and public institutions.

7.1 General Results

Examination of the unique and combined contributions of the four leadership frames in explaining the variation in the outcome measure revealed none was statistically significant. Thirty-two items were used to measure the four frames of leadership: *structural frame*; *human resource frame*; *political frame*; and *symbolic frame*. Each frame is defined by eight items. The reliability coefficients, as estimated by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, ranged from 0.74 to 0.82, attesting to adequate internal consistency of the four scale scores. The *human resource frame* was reported the most, followed by the *structural frame*, *symbolic frame*, and *political frame*. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability coefficient, means, and standard deviations for leadership frames, n = 119

Leadership Frame	# of items	Reliability Coefficient	Mean*	SD
Structural	8	0.74	4.11	0.40
Human Resource	8	0.77	4.15	0.39
Political	8	0.77	3.79	0.44
Symbolic	8	0.82	3.80	0.48

Note. *5 = always, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = occasionally, 1 = never.

The non-probability sample consisted of 119 athletic directors who served at active NCAA member institutions. The respondents were largely male athletic directors from NCAA

Division III baccalaureate private institutions. A typical athletic director was 50 years old (*SD* = 9.17). As can be seen in Table 2, number of sports teams in the respondents' institutions and years as an athletic director were positively skewed, thus, median must be used as the most appropriate measure of central tendency, which was 17.00 and 7.00, respectively (See Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. Profile of subjects, categorical variables, n = 119

Variable	f	%
Gender		
Male	79	66.40
Female	40	33.60
NCAA Division		
Division I	26	21.80
Division II	38	31.90
Division III	55	46.20
Academic Classification		
Baccalaureate	67	56.30
Master's	29	24.40
Doctoral/Research	23	19.30
Institution Type		
Public	51	42.90
Private	68	57.10

Table 3. Profile of subjects, continuous variables, n = 119

Characteristic	Mean	Median	SD	Skew Coef.
Age	50.32	51.00	9.17	0.01
Number of Sports Teams	17.45	17.00	5.06	0.85
Years as an Athletic Director	9.63	7.00	7.99	0.94

Respondents were mostly male, 50 years old, and been in the position almost 10 years, and from Division III institutions in the private sector. The results of their leadership frame and relationship to the presence of NCAA transgender policy are below.

7.2 Research Question Results

Research Question One: What are the leadership frames of intercollegiate athletic directors at NCAA institutions? Both the Greenhouse-Geisser Epsilon (0.90) and the Huynh-Feldt Epsilon (0.92) were greater than .70, indicating that the sphericity assumption was met (Stevens, 2009). The differences were statistically significant, $F(3, 354) = 55.29$, $p < .001$. Results are summarized in Table 4.

A univariate repeated measures analysis of variance was performed to test the differences among the four leadership frames. Both the Greenhouse-Geisser Epsilon (0.90) and the Huynh-Feldt Epsilon (0.92) were greater than .70, indicating that the sphericity assumption was met (Stevens, 2009). The differences were statistically significant, $F(3, 354) = 55.29$, $p < .001$. Results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Repeated measures ANOVA results for leadership frames

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Leadership Frame	13.49	3.00	4.50	55.29*
Block	28.79	354.00	0.08	
Residual	58.87	118.00	0.50	

Note. *$p < .01$.

The Modified Tukey procedure was employed for the purpose of post hoc analysis. Results showed that, with the exceptions of the *structural frame* versus *human resource frame* and the *political frame* versus *symbolic frame*, all pairwise comparisons were statistically significant (Table 5).

Table 5. Post hoc results for leadership frames

Pair-wise Comparison	Significance*
Structural Frame vs. Human Resource Frame	NS
Structural Frame vs. Political Frame	S
Structural Frame vs. Symbolic Frame	S
Human Resource Frame vs. Political Frame	S
Human Resource Frame vs. Symbolic Frame	S
Political Frame vs. Symbolic Frame	NS

Note. *NS = not statistically significant. S = statistically significant.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed no statistically significant differences among the Division I, II, and III participants on the basis of the group centroid of the four leadership frames, $F(8, 288) = 1.02$, $p = .42$. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 6.

Table 6. Means and standard deviations for leadership frames by NCAA division

	Division I, n = 26		Division II, n = 38		Division III, n = 55	
Leadership Frame	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Structural	4.09	0.41	4.15	0.43	4.10	0.39
Human Resource	4.22	0.35	4.14	0.37	4.14	0.43
Political	3.87	0.36	3.74	0.41	3.80	0.49
Symbolic	3.80	0.49	3.84	0.46	3.79	0.50

Another MANOVA showed no statistically significant differences between the participants from the private and public institutions on the basis of the group centroid of the four leadership frames, $F(4, 114) = 0.95$, $p = .44$. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 7.

Table 7. Means and standard deviations for leadership frames by institutional type

Leadership Frame	Public, n = 51		Private, n = 68	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Structural	4.17	0.42	4.07	0.38
Human Resource	4.23	0.35	4.10	0.41
Political	3.85	0.47	3.74	0.42
Symbolic	3.86	0.50	3.77	0.46

Research Question Two: To what extent is the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion* present at NCAA institutions? The athletic directors were also asked to complete Part II of the survey instrument, which was designed to gather information on the presence of the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion*. There were 16 yes/no questions, indicating whether or not the best practices for transgender inclusion were present within the athletic directors' athletics department. Results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Frequency and percentage distributions of responses to the NCAA best practices and guidelines for inclusion of transgender student athletes, n = 199

Best Practice and Guideline for Inclusion	Response	f	%
Does your institution have an inclusive non-discrimination and harassment policy thatincludes gender identity?	No	10	8.40
	Yes	109	91.60
Are you knowledgeable about collegiate non-discrimination and harassment policies that includes gender and expression?	No	14	11.80
	Yes	105	88.20
Is gender identity and expression included in your departmental non-discrimination statements on official documents and websites?	No	65	54.60
	Yes	54	45.40
Does your department have an effective and fair departmental policy that addresses the participation of transgender student athletes that is consistent with the school policy and state or federal non-discrimination laws?	No	67	56.30
	Yes	52	43.70

Best Practice and Guideline for Inclusion	Response	f	%
Do you educate all members of the athletics department community (including staff, student athletes, and parents) about departmental and school policies regarding the participation of transgender student athletes in athletics?	No	72	60.50
	Yes	47	39.50
Are you familiar with transgender identity, the preferred terminology, and current scientific perspectives on the participation of transgender student athletes on men's and women's sports teams?	No	40	33.60
	Yes	79	66.40
Have you worked with your conference office to adopt fair and effective policies governing the participation of transgender student athletes?	No	110	92.40
	Yes	9	7.60
Have you recommended that your conference office sponsor educational programs for coaches and student athletes on the inclusion of transgender student athletes, preferred terminology, and understanding transgender identity?	No	107	89.90
	Yes	12	10.10
Have you recommended that professional organizations you belong to sponsor educational programs on the inclusion of transgender student athletes, preferred terminology, and understanding of transgender identity?	No	98	82.40
	Yes	21	17.60
Do you educate all members of the sports information department about transgender identity, preferred terminology, department policies governing the participation of transgender student athletes, and confidentiality requirements when discussing transgender student athlete participation with the media?	No	86	72.30
	Yes	33	27.70
Do your athletics facilities include changing areas, toilets, and showers that would be available for transgender student athletes if requested?	No	59	49.60
	Yes	60	50.40
Do you, your student athletes, coaches, and other staff members utilize preferred names and pronouns, which reflect a student's gender and pronoun preferences?	No	53	44.50
	Yes	66	55.50

Best Practice and Guideline for Inclusion	Response	f	%
Does your athletics department have a dress code and team uniform policy that is inclusive of transgender student athletes?	No	83	69.70
	Yes	36	30.30
Are most members of your university community educated about transgender identities, non-discrimination policies, language, and expectations to create a respective team and school climate?	No	72	60.50
	Yes	47	39.50
Are all school and athletics representatives informed about the privacy protections of transgender student athletes and ways in which to speak with the media?	No	92	77.30
	Yes	27	22.70

The responses to the 16 questions were coded by assigning one to "yes" and zero to "no" responses and summed to measure the extent of the presence of transgender inclusion policies, ranging from 0 to 16. The mean was 7.24 (SD = 3.48). There were no statistically significant differences among Division I (M = 6.38, SD = 2.93), Division II (M = 6.82, SD = 3.59), and Division III (M = 7.95, SD = 3.56) on the basis of the outcome measure, $F(2, 116) = 2.25$, $p = .11$. Additionally, the difference between public (M = 6.59, SD = 3.11) and private (M = 7.74, SD = 3.68) institutions on the basis of the presence of transgender inclusion policies was not statistically significant, $t(117) = 1.80$, $p = .07$.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between the leadership frames of intercollegiate athletic directors and the presence of the best practices for implementation of the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion*? The study looked at the relationship between the leadership frames of intercollegiate athletic directors and the best practices of the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion*. Since there were no statistically significant differences among the participating athletic directors, all data were used to examine the unique and combined contributions of the four leadership frames in explaining the variation in the outcome measure, which was the presence of various transgender inclusion policies.

Bivariate associations between each of the predictors and the outcome measure were obtained. On the basis of the magnitude of the bivariate associations, predictor variables were ranked from the highest to the lowest. The predictor variables were entered into the regression equation on the basis of the rankings one at a time. Then, the unique contribution of each variable was examined. Table 9 shows the rank order of the simple correlations between each of the predictor variables and the outcome measure.

Table 9. Leadership frames by transgender inclusion score correlation matrix

Independent Variable	r	*p*
Symbolic Frame	.18	.05
Human Resource Frame	.19	.52
Political Frame	.19	.97
Structural Frame	.19	.98

8. Discussion

The *human resource frame* was identified as the more likely used leadership behavior among athletic directors, and the *political frame* being reported as the least likely frame to be used. The results should indicate to NCAA personnel that when making suggestions for best practices of policy implementation, it is important to understand the leadership behaviors of their leaders and how Intersectionality Theory informs those behaviors.

The extent to which the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion* is present at NCAA institutions is an indicator of the environment of intercollegiate athletics. When leadership is aware of gender-based participation issues but little is being done at an institutional level, there is some disconnect present, which is preventing the implementation process from taking place. The issue, viewed through an intersectionality lens, appears to be two-fold. Initially, the disconnect can be interpreted as a power differential. That is, those in power make the rules (Calafell, 2014; Walker & Melton, 2015). When subordinate-individuals or subordinate-groups identify with multiple marginalized distinctions, they become subject to greater forces of oppression than what the status quo is willing to accommodate (Veestra, 2013). Second, intersectionality emphasizes categories of identity instead of structures of inequality (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). This appears to be consistent with the human resource leadership frame, but can be problematic toward the NCAA policy. For example, the human resource frame emphasizes interpersonal relationships, where people are more connected to the organization when they feel they matter (Bolman & Deal, 1991). A human resource frame, as a power structure, could promote intersectionality. Much of the intersection would depend on the strength of the openness in a campus culture. By contrast, the NCAA policy focuses on identity, presumably as mechanism for addressing inequality. The implication is that if students are properly identified, equality will follow. This is not necessarily the case, though. As MacKinnon (2013) noted, identities lead to instruments of inequality and are difficult to move. Similarly, just because an athletic director identifies with a human resource frame, it is not a foregone conclusion that stronger intersectionality is made with transgendered athletes.

Additionally, results showed no statistically significant relationship between leadership frames and transgendered inclusion policy presence. Although the NCAA has addressed best

practices for athletic administrators, it does not mandate member institutions to adhere to them (Office of Inclusion, 2011). By doing so, the NCAA has left this issue open to individual institutional athletic directors to make the decision of whether or not transgender issues are important to them and/or are important on their campuses. No statistical significance, then, is not surprising. According to intersectional theory, social hierarchies create particular structures of dominant/subordinate relationships (MacKinnon, 2013). As long as the NCAA policy on transgender inclusion remains more of a guide than a legally binding rule, current campus hierarchical structures tend to remain static. Athletic directors may acknowledge and be aware the NCAA policy on transgender inclusion, but the organizational climate must be conducive to both implicit practices and explicit policies (Walker & Melton, 2015).

Addressing fair, legal, informed, and ethical transgender participation policies and is not going away any time soon. The issue will only continue to gain attention as today's youth continue to challenge the meaning of gender binaries, which exist in sports (Sullivan, 2011). If athletic administrators continue to leave transgender participation policies on their campuses unchanged, this creates an athletic environment where these students "feel invisible or marginalized if little or no effort is made to acknowledge their presence, much less meet their needs" (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005, p. 51). It is not enough just to change policies. Intersectionality brings attention to events and forces where two or more categories intersect (Delgado, 2011). For effective transgender inclusion, at minimum, attention needs to be given to the intersection(s) of campus culture, leadership styles, presence of transgender policy, and campus policies. This is a difficult task, particularly given the presence power differentiations, as well social, political, and ideological contexts (Levine-Rasky, 2011). In order to change, there are at least two areas to be addressed: compliance; and the lawfulness of transgender participation.

Addressing this issue from an NCAA compliance standpoint would take some effort, but is a viable pursuit. Currently, the NCAA *Policy on Transgender Inclusion* specifically addresses best practices for athletics administrators. The policy does not mandate institutions to implement these policies, as it is more of a recommendation (Office of Inclusion, 2011). As Cunningham (2011) related, among NCAA Division I athletic program, policies and strategies that emphasized diversity and inclusion are positively related to organizational outcomes. In the case of the issues, the NCAA has taken a stance not to establish blanket policies and allow their member institutions to set campus policy (Elfman, 2013). However, the NCAA could take a stronger stance to monitor implementation. Yet, the results of this study show that only 43.70% of athletic directors have departmental policies, which address the participation of transgender student athletes.

In addition to NCAA compliance concerns, there are also legal issues pertaining to Title IX. Since the 1970s, Title IX has regulated the legal conditions of all schools and institutions in the United States so individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of sex (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005; Office for Civil Rights, 1979; United States Department of Justice, 2001, p. 7). Federal protections also include the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and the Matthew Shepard and James

Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. All set the precedent for potential legal implications (Office of Inclusion, 2011). It is only a matter of time before the legal implications concerning the disregard for transgender participation policy implementation forces the NCAA to integrate transgender participation specifically into the bylaws. Although, legal relief may prove to be difficult at best and distressing at worst. Intersectional-based legal claims face disadvantageous since discrimination laws place people in categories versus examining issues as intersected. Additionally, categories make it difficult to examine evidence as intersected. Moreover, there is judicial skepticism as the judicial system is subject to stereotypes (Best, Krieger, Edleman, & Eliason, 2011). Ontiveros (2010) wrote that judges and juries lean toward not believing what plaintiffs say about their harassment because of the dominant culture's beliefs of sexuality. These are serious matters and it raised a concern from the study that only 119 of 1,068 athletic directors responded.

Another concern emerging from the study was that the four predictor variables, *human resource frame*, *political frame*, *symbolic frame* and *structural frame*, only explained 3.5% of the variance. Although it appears that the leadership frames performed well with the sample, the transgendered best practices seemed to split into two categories: (a) policy knowledge; and (b) policy implementation. Athletic directors are quite aware of the policies. However, they have not made specific recommendations for adoption and implementation of such policies. Given this outcome, other leadership frames may explain the presence and implementation of policies better than the four frames.

Pasque (2010) presented a Dialogic Process Model, which may accurately represent the current state of the NCAA *Policy on Transgender Inclusion.* The Dialogic Process Model, also known as the Dialogic Model of Change consists of four parts: awareness; understanding; commitment; and action (Pasque, 2010; The National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good, 2013). *Awareness* refers to the knowledge of the issue environment, the issue itself, and the stakeholders involved in the change process. *Understanding* occurs once *awareness* is achieved. This step of the process includes gathering empirical research, answering complex questions, and generally assembling material that will inform the issue. *Commitment* is established once *awareness* and *understanding* of pressing issues is achieved. When *awareness* and *understanding* are achieved, an obligation to advocacy and commitment to being a change agent is reached. *Action* is the ultimate goal in the Dialogic Model, to create change once *awareness*, *understanding*, and *commitment* are attained (Pasque, 2010; The National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good, 2013). The Dialogic Process Model may provide opportunities for more intersection activities regarding the dynamics of differences and similarities (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall) involved in power differentials (Calafell, 2014).

The findings concerning the extent to which the *NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion* is present at NCAA institutions provide implications for the NCAA and athletic administrators. While athletic directors acknowledge transgendered policies at their institutions and are aware of legal parameters, they do not necessarily engage in their implementation. This gap in awareness and policy implementation could potentially result in legal issues and threaten the integrity of individual institutions.

9. Implications

One implication surrounds the *human resource frame* as the most likely used leadership behavior by athletic directors followed by the *structural frame*. The *structural frame* allows leaders to utilize policies and procedures to effectively develop their organizations (Scott, 1999). Effective structural leaders have the ability to analyze the areas of weaknesses within their organizations and develop strategic solutions to manage those problems successfully (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Athletic directors, who exhibit a combination of human resource and structural frames, may be best positioned to be inclusive of transgendered policy and athletes. It appears this person would possess the ability to challenge the norms to where individuals gain access to the sport or organization (Walker & Melton, 2015).

Another implication is that there may not be a mechanism on college campuses to allow athletic directors to be knowledgeable about the processes, procedures, and resources available. Having a mechanism would allow an athletic director to create and implement transgender participation policies. There is a gap between the knowledge of NCAA best practices for transgender participation and the implementation of such policies. Multiple factors that may influence this gap include, but are not limited to, financial resources, size of the institution, religious affiliation, personnel who serve as content area experts, administrative expertise, as well as willingness to shift power differentials, decrease oppressive, discrimination, and/or domination environments, and alter organizational climate.

The gender of the athletic director may also provide some implications to this study. The number of women who responded to the survey accounted for 33.60% of the respondents. Would a woman athletic director be more inclined to implement such a policy due to potential acts of discrimination that she as a woman has faced, or could potentially face in the world of intercollegiate athletics? Title IX has provided opportunities for women administrators to participate in intercollegiate athletics, so it begs the question of whether or not women would be more inclined to support an issue that would provide more opportunities for participation in athletics by a population also protected under Title IX (Wright, Eagleman, & Pedersen, 2011).

Finally, descriptive results for age, number of sports teams, and years as an athletic director showed fairly homogenous groupings. This reveals a profile of a dominant group, which could reinforce stereotypes, making it difficult for marginalized individuals and groups to participate. The implication is that an athletic director is cut from a particular mold, potentially perpetuating an oppressive, discriminatory, and/or status-quo dominant athletic environment. Institutions are looking for particular characteristics or behaviors when they hire an athletic director to lead their programs. If athletic programs are to be more inclusive of marginalized athletes, college and university executives and administrators need to change their perspective about what type of characteristics are important for an effective athletic director.

10. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship of athletic directors' leadership frames to the presence

of NCAA best practices for implementation of transgender inclusion policies at colleges and universities with NCAA athletics. While the four frames provide a greater insight into the general behaviors of athletic directors, they do not necessarily help with understanding the extent to which best practices from the NCAA *Policy on Transgender Inclusion* are present in intercollegiate athletic departments. Intersectionality Theory, however, sheds some light on the matter. The theory frames phenomena in a myriad of complexities. Additionally, it acknowledges power differentials to where a dominant group controls the intersectional activities and stereotypes that may hinder movement toward equality.

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