

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES IN COACHING BASKETBALL

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Abstract

This study examined the use of leadership principles in coaching basketball. Specifically, this study examined the use of seven principles used to “lead down” proposed by John C. Maxwell in *The 360 Degree Leader*. Literature surrounding various aspects of coaching basketball such as Albert Bandura’s theories on self-efficacy, motivation, and leadership are discussed and reviewed. In the study, a seven-question survey was distributed among basketball coaches in order to determine which of the seven principles are used. Results show all seven principles are used at rates above 80% as reported by basketball coaches. Although each principle received high agreement ratings in the study, four of the seven principles were reported as being used above the 90.33% group average.

Key Words: Leadership, Leading Down, Coaching, Basketball, Bandura

Leadership Principles in Coaching Basketball

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A coach is a teacher and mentor. A coach is a leader. A coach is an expert in a chosen field. A coach is a role model, and may potentially become a parental figure. Wooden and Jamison (2005) accurately defined the role of a coach:

The coach must never forget that he is, first of all, a teacher. He must come (be present), see (diagnose), and conquer (correct). He must continuously be exploring for ways to improve himself in order that he may improve others and welcome every person and everything that may be helpful to him. As has been said, he must remember, Others, too, have brains (p. 93).

Coaching is essentially teaching. Coaches can have complete knowledge about a specific field of expertise but may fail to find success if they lack necessary teaching skills. A coach may have years of personal playing experiences, a wealth of knowledge from study, and a passion for not only the sport but for achieving success in the sport. Unless the coach can communicate and teach those experiences, knowledge, and passions to his players, success may be hard to attain. In order to potentially find success, it may be beneficial for coaches to not only learn how to teach fundamentals, terms, and concepts, but to learn how to teach lessons that apply to both on-court happenings and real life events. A coach can take on a role of “mentor”. According to Wooden and Yaeger (2009), there are many types of mentors. Mentors may include personal mentors, religious mentors, professional mentors, and leadership mentors. The act of mentoring is not limited to one definition. The definition most applicable to coaching as discussed by Wooden and Yaeger (2009) refers to mentoring as taking place at any time through any action that inspires another person.

Leadership mentors are generally authority figures, similar to coaches, who give strength, discipline, encouragement, and teach. Coaches in athletics are good examples of leadership mentors. According to Wooden and Yaeger (2009), it is a coach's duty to discipline their team members, to give both physical and mental strength to team members in situations of despair, and to teach not only lessons about sports, but to teach life lessons.

When an individual becomes a coach, he or she becomes a leader. A coach is a leader automatically due to the position of authority that comes along with being a coach. A coach is a leader for other reasons rather than merely those automatically given to him. One of the unique aspects about sports in general, is the presence of great emotion. These unique emotions can potentially be sparked daily in athletics through experiences of intense physical activity, daily competition against teammates and opponents, competing in hostile environments, and dealing with criticism from self, family, friends, and the media. A basketball coach has the task of being a leader which may include harnessing these players' emotions and focusing them on things such as team goals rather than personal aspirations. Wooden and Jamison (2005) famously said that emotions, both positive and negative, are the enemy as they taught, "it is up to you, the leader, to insist that those in the organization demonstrate the same great emotional control that you have" (p. 114). In moments of adversity, athletes may look to coaches for guidance and direction.

Coaches do not become coaches, and leaders do not become leaders without hard work and a wealth of expert experience. It is extremely difficult to effectively teach various skills, concepts, and ideas without having knowledge of those skills, concepts, and ideas through mastery experiences and intense study. For example, according to Wolff (2010), John Wooden, honored as the "Coach of the 20th Century" by ESPN, was a three-time All-American guard for the University of Purdue and won an NCAA National Championship his senior year before he

ever considered coaching basketball. Shortly after finishing his college career, he took his first coaching job at Dayton High School in Kentucky, and eventually ended up as the head coach at UCLA in 1948 winning 10 national championships (7 in a row), and accumulating 664 wins in 29 years with a winning percentage better than 80 percent. Coach Wooden did not find such great success by mere luck and good fortune. It may be that Coach Wooden found success by being an adamant teacher, a phenomenal leader, and an expert above any other in his field due to mastery experience, intense study and hard work.

Coaches may even become role models in their leadership role. In coaching, according to Wooden and Jamison (2007), not only are basic fundamentals, strategies, and special skills taught, but important life lessons can also be taught such as communication, hard work, respect, courage, authority, friendship, loyalty, honesty, friendship, and accountability. These concepts, which are often difficult to teach to youth and young adults, may become easily applied and understood in athletics by the instructions of coaches. Sports have the potential to open a teaching opportunity unlike any other as coaches demand respect by their authority and athletes are eager to learn, grow, and be motivated through the understanding of these concepts. What may be hard lessons for parents or other authority figures to instill is often easy for coaches to teach as the unique dynamic of player/coach relationships may combine respect, appreciation, friendship, trust, love, and sometimes even fear.

Coaches can often become a parental role model for those they teach and lead. Because of the unique relationship between players and coaches, it is possible that athletes may look to their coaches for guidance, reassurance, and direction. Coaches may be able to promote an athlete's self-efficacy, self-esteem, and overall attitude concerning both athletics and life in general. The time that is spent together between player and coach is extensive, and therefore the

teaching and learning opportunities between them are extremely frequent. These experiences and teaching/learning opportunities, especially in college level athletics, are what creates the fatherly perception of a coach. In many cases in collegiate athletics, athletes travel far from home after being recruited by college coaches. The coaches recruiting these athletes and taking them from their home can become a parental figure as athletes travel to foreign places across the country and across the world. In some cases when dealing with athletes who do not have parental figures, coaches can take on the parental role for athletes simply by default.

Because of the important role that coaches play in leading, teaching, and mentoring those under their stewardship, it is important to understand the styles and principles of leadership that coaches use. Two individuals, John Wooden and John C. Maxwell have given insight into leadership principles used by basketball coaches through their different studies in leadership. John Wooden has authored and co-authored multiple works (*A Game Plan for Life*, *The Essential Wooden*, *Wooden on Leadership*) about surrounding coaching and leadership both on and off the basketball court. Throughout his coaching and teaching career, Wooden created a “Pyramid of Success” in hopes “to define me as a leader” (Wooden & Jamison, 2005, 16). The 15 building blocks spoken of by Wooden include a leadership guidebook and other important concepts that ultimately will lead to success.

In speaking of experts on leadership positions in organizations, John C. Maxwell is regarded as “America’s expert on leadership” (Maxwell, 2005) who has communicated his ideas and principles on leadership to various organizations including Fortune 500 companies and sports organizations in the NBA, NCAA, and NFL. Maxwell’s (2005) seven principles of “leading down”, leading from the top of the organization to the bottom, are extremely applicable to basketball coaches in two ways. First, in terms of the hierarchy of organization for a

basketball team, the coach sits at the top of the organization and “leads down” to the players on the team. Second, each of Maxwell’s (2005) seven principles coincides with the levels and tiers of Wooden and Jamison’s (2005) “Pyramid of Success”. Although Maxwell’s concepts of “lead down” are not specifically tailored for basketball coaches, the similarities between the “lead down” principles and John Wooden’s leadership principles have led to the development of this study.

This study has the potential to lay the groundwork for future studies attempting to examine similar aspects of coaching basketball at not only the high school level, but at the collegiate and professional level as well to determine if coaching leadership principles change based upon levels of competition. Although the relationship between Wooden and Jamison’s (2005) “Pyramid of Success” and Maxwell’s (2005) principles of “leading down” are evident, the purpose of this study is to determine if high school basketball coaches use Maxwell’s (2005) principles of “leading down” in their leadership approach. The purpose of this study is to not only determine if each principle is used, but equally as important is to determine at which rate the principles are used, and also which principles are used most.

This chapter has defined the role of a coach, stated the purpose of the study, and provided justification in performing such a study. Chapter 2, titled “Literature Review”, will review literature surrounding coaching such as self-efficacy, motivation, and leadership. Chapter 3, titled “Method” will detail information regarding participants in the study, the measures used in the study, and the procedure in conducting the study. Chapter 4, “Results and Discussion”, will discuss the results of the study in regards to the posed research questions. Chapter 5, “Conclusions”, will discuss key findings in the study, limitations to the study, and possible future research that could be conducted to further the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is an extensive body of literature and research about leadership in coaching and sports. This chapter focuses on literature that is related to being a head coach of a high school basketball team. The following literature review discusses in depth the topics of Self-Efficacy, Motivation, and Leadership.

Self-Efficacy

In this section, self-efficacy is defined and aspects of self-efficacy including outcome expectancy theory, self-efficacy and athletic performance, and self-efficacy development by coaches are reviewed. Bandura (1997) defines perceived self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Bandura (1994) further defined perceived self-efficacy as the belief people have in their abilities to exercise influence and control over the events that occur in his or her life. Self-efficacy gives an individual a plan to exercise a certain level of control over events that affect his or her life. According to Bandura (1994), this exercised level of control gives individuals the opportunity to develop the ability to achieve desired outcomes, and to prevent undesired outcomes. For example, having a high level of self-efficacy allows athletes to exercise a level of control over their abilities in order to obtain desired outcomes and avoid undesired outcomes. The practices of striving for control can be seen throughout history and in everyday life. Bandura (1997) cites in primitive times where individuals practiced looking toward “supernatural agents” to wield control over events in their lives. With the shift from supernatural control to the belief that with high levels of self-efficacy individuals can exert personal control over their lives, the outlook of individuals on control over life events changed drastically. Bandura (1997) argues that perceived self-efficacy has nothing to do with the number of skills

one possesses. Instead, Bandura (1997) continues that perceived self-efficacy is concerned with the belief one has in what one can do with those skills in given circumstances. This belief in level of performance rather than a belief in pure ability, according to Maier & Curtin (2009) affects and influences the course of action, degree of effort, extent of perseverance and the amount of anxiety that is experienced.

Bandura (1997) believes there are two perspectives of self-efficacy: (1) self-efficacy is inherited as an inborn drive for control, and (2) personal self-efficacy is motivated by socially anticipated benefits. Bandura (1997) contends the difference between these two viewpoints is that drives push actions whereas anticipated incentives draw actions. Although there are arguments to both viewpoints, exercising personal control allows one to more easily deal with everyday events and the demands of life. Whether self-efficacy is an inborn drive or a developed trait, it is not always agreed upon by researchers. Bandura (1997) proposes the idea that development of personal perceived self-efficacy is not easily attained. Bandura (1997) argues that developing one's self-efficacy requires a certain level of mastery of knowledge combined with skill that is only attained through long hours of hard work.

Outcome Expectancy Theory

Self-efficacy can determine how we anticipate a particular event, performance, or action will result, and belief in ones efficacy can affect virtually everything we do in a given situation. Bandura (1997) writes that a belief in one's efficacy affects how individuals think, behave, feel, and motivate themselves. In other words, Bandura (1997) believes that a positive outlook on one's abilities to perform, or a high level of self-efficacy, leads to a strong belief that outcomes can be more directly controlled. This notion leads individuals with high levels of self-efficacy to be more active. Bandura (1997) supports this notion as he argues the anticipated outcomes that

individuals hold are directly correlated with judgments on abilities to perform certain actions in particular situations. For example, an individual wanting to try out for his or her high school varsity basketball team will not visualize themselves being cut from the tryout and then conclude they are not a good basketball player. Instead, before the tryout the individual will envision himself or herself as a poor basketball player and conclude he or she will be cut from the tryout. To distinguish plainly between self-efficacy and outcome expectancies, Bandura (1997) claims that perceived self-efficacy centers on judgments of one's ability to execute given performances, and outcome expectations are judgments of the likely consequences the performance will produce.

Further describing the relationship between efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancy is to analyze how individuals choose which actions and performances in which to participate. Maddux, Shere, and Rogers (1982) suggests that individuals view outcomes in relation to how well they can perform certain tasks, and the way individuals can decide the level and adequacy of certain performances may many times be through efficacy beliefs. Individuals try to veer away from tasks that they have low efficacy beliefs toward, and take headstrong action towards efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancy when they deem the action worthwhile (Bandura, 1997).

Studies have been conducted surrounding outcome expectancy and self-efficacy with physical activity. In many cases, efficacy beliefs do, in theory, influence the expected outcomes of an activity. For example, if a basketball player has low levels of perceived self-efficacy to run a certain play, those low efficacy beliefs can pre-determine the expected outcome of the play. Williams, Anderson, & Winett (2005) believe that outcome expectancy operates to directly influence self-efficacy beliefs. Williams et al. (2005) support their claim that a combination of

decreasing expected negative outcomes and increasing positive outcomes of physical activity can increase self-efficacy in performing physical activities. The claim that outcome expectancies have an influence on perceptions of self-efficacy is also supported by Maddux, Sherer, and Rogers (1982) as they found that the confidence in ones abilities to perform given tasks increases as the relationships between the behavior needed to perform the task and the desired outcome increases. Findings surrounding outcome expectancy theory and physical activity lead to a direct relationship of athletes self-efficacy and athletic performance.

Self-Efficacy and Athletic Performance

Self-efficacy is an extremely important concept when dealing with athletes and athletic competition. Many athletes, especially professional and collegiate athletes, are placed in the spotlight via the media. All aspects of an athletes performances are critiqued including physical performance, physical appearance, mental stability, rate of success, rate of failure, and even outward attitude. According to Turman (2005), our society was once characterized as a “game culture” where athletics were treated as games in which participants organized games and set rules. Some examples of events in a “game culture” are pick-up street basketball games, sandlot baseball games, or flag football games on the morning of Thanksgiving. Turman (2005) describes athletics as being a “sport culture” meaning athletics are now a money-making business where organizations, boosters, and sponsors control the organization of events. Seefeldt and Ewing (1996) write that athletics have changed over the years with a transition from opportunities for youth to participate in sports in social agencies to programs for adults to participate in athletic activities. Because of this change in culture, the efficacy beliefs of athletes are important as they determine levels of performance and perceived outcomes of performances.

Bandura (1997) argues that in most pursuits whether they are social, intellectual, or physical, those who see themselves as highly efficacious will expect and experience favorable outcomes. However, according to Bandura (1994) those who do not view themselves as highly efficacious tend to expect and experience negative outcomes. Bandura (1994) also has defined three main sources of self-efficacy which relates to athletes: mastery experiences, social experiences, and social persuasion. Bandura (1994) writes that mastery experiences can be defined as experiences that allow an individual to feel accomplished at a certain task, social experiences can be defined as experiences that allow an individual to have a high level of efficacy in social situations, and social persuasion experiences can be defined as experiences an individual has where individuals surrounding them increase their efficacy belief by giving praise for performances. In athletics, for example, a “mastery experience” can be described as self-efficacy developed as an individual makes one hundred free throws in a row, by seeing others on the team succeed, or by having their confidence boosted with a compliment from a teammate or coach.

Self-efficacy for athletes may depend highly on their level of skill. Long hours of arduous work must be dedicated to master specific skills that need to be performed in various athletic situations. Finding success in athletic competition requires more than physical skills. Bandura (1997) writes that efficacy is also influenced by goal setting and the ability to manage stress that results from failures and athletic performance slumps. For example, when a basketball player is struggling to make free throws, the reason he or she able to make the next set of free throws is due to great stress management, which allows efficacy to remain at a high level.

When determining the effect the process of athletic performance has on self-efficacy, Bandura (1997) concludes that when an individual has a high sense of efficacy and low stress

prior to competition, the result is generally a high level of athletic performance. One of the unique factors about athletics is the ever-changing situations of the sport whether it be culturally, environmentally, or emotionally. There will never be two athletic performances or two athletic situations that are exactly alike. Bandura (1997) argues that this diversity in competitive conditions creates reappraisal of personal efficacy for the athletes, which can either hinder or enhance competitive performance. This aspect of athletics also makes it hard to use past performances as a predictive tool and perceived self-efficacy as an accurate predictor. Another aspect of efficacy enhancement in athletics is the self-efficacy developed by coaches.

Self-Efficacy Development by Coaches

Leaders of organizations may have large influences on the development and maintenance of the self-efficacy beliefs of members of their organization. In terms of athletics, Bandura (1997) poses that the abilities of coaches to manage efficacy is a big determinant to the development of the resilience of athletes individual self-efficacy beliefs. The word *resilient* in terms of self-efficacy in Bandura's (1997) definition can be described as being able to withstand factors that may decrease efficacy beliefs. In sports and athletics, each day is a physical and emotional grind. In a situation where winning means everything, ones self-efficacy beliefs need to be *resilient* in order for efficacy levels to remain at a high level during low points of competition. In the role of a leader of an organization, or a coach of a team, developing resilient self-efficacy beliefs in athletes is not achieved solely through motivational pre-and-post game speeches, but as Bandura (1997) writes, it is through mastery experience, the promoting of self-improvement through intense practice, and underplaying the importance of tallying wins while avoiding losses. It is important to downplay wins and losses, but it is also important for athletes to develop resilient efficacy beliefs through dealing with failure and learning to find success.

Coaches can promote high self-efficacy beliefs in their players and athletes in a number of ways. Mageau & Vallerand (2003) state that one of the most common ways a leader or coach can develop efficacy in team members may be through positively spoken appraisals. For example, Mageau & Vallerand (2003) believe that when coaches remain outwardly confident in players capabilities, the levels of stress of failure are decreased which may contribute to helping increase self-efficacy. Many strategies do not need to be known by the athletes. There are ways to promote a players self-efficacy without outwardly informing them of your intentions. Some examples of this may include not always removing players from trouble situations in competition, giving players realistically attainable goals, and placing players in situations where they can be most successful. Bandura (1997) and Walsh & Dickey (1990), firmly believed and argued that the most creative coaches in athletic performances are able to exercise control over efficacy development by placing their players in, or creating situations in which their player's unique assets will be most valuably utilized. In doing this, a player's self-efficacy beliefs are enhanced because he or she finds himself or herself not only being individually successful, and helping the team to be successful.

Perceived collective efficacy, although important to consider as most major sports are team sports (basketball, football, baseball, soccer), has been in many ways overlooked when researching the role of efficacy beliefs on athletic performance. It is imperative that a collective team has a resilient sense of efficacy because "a resilient sense of team efficacy does not necessarily guarantee victory, but a team that disbelieves its capabilities is most likely to produce its own dispiriting validation" (Bandura, 1997, 402). Morrison, Chi, and Payne (2003) applied self-efficacy to groups and teams and termed team efficacy as Collective Interdependence Efficacy (CIE). Loss of high beliefs of self-efficacy by athletic teams can result in prolonged

team slumps (Bandura, 1997), viewing the failure of teammates (Brown & Inouye, 1978), and the loss of key team members due to injury or ineligibility (Brown & Inouye, 1978). In these cases, it becomes the efforts of team leaders and coaches to motivate players and promote positive situations which will raise collective team efficacy.

Motivation

Motivation is closely related to self-efficacy. In order for an athlete to be fully motivated, Weinberg, Butt, and Culp (2011) argue that athletes need to believe in themselves and have a strong sense of self-efficacy. Webb (2008) further defines the relationship between motivation and self-efficacy in making the argument of athletes that have lower levels of self-efficacy will generally have lower levels of motivation.

Motivation has been defined in various ways. Webb (2008) defined motivation as “an individual’s drive to do something” (p. 24). More specifically, Webb (2008) described an athlete’s level of motivation to be indicative and reflective of the effort that the athlete will put forth during competition. Pelletier et al. (1995) defined motivation in sports as being “at the heart of sports most interesting problems, both as a developmental outcome of social environments such as competition and coaches’ behaviors, and as a developmental influence on behavioral variables such as persistence, learning, and performance” (p. 36). Keegan, Spray, Harwood, and Lavalley (2010) followed with a broader definition that motivation is not only at the heart of sports, but it is the key determinant behind every action and every effort that is exerted.

Much of the conducted research surrounding athlete motivation to perform is centered on two forms of motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation as discussed by Pelletier et al. (1995). Specifically, Pelletier et al. (1995) defines intrinsic motivation as motivational

factors that come from within the individual athlete including ideas such as the desire to win, the need to stay physically fit, to feel better about themselves, or to simply have fun. In addition, Pelletier et al. (1995) defines extrinsic motivation as motivational factors that come from external sources. For example, many professional athletes are accused of being motivated extrinsically by extrinsic factors such as money, accolades, social recognition and fame. Pelletier et al. (1995) also found that an athlete's mindset and outlook on practice can be an indicator of whether the athlete is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. For example, an athlete is intrinsically motivated toward a sport if they practice their sport for enjoyment and self-progression, and extrinsically motivated if they practice their sport for recognition and social popularity. Mageau and Vallerand (2003) specifically analyzed motivational models between coaches and athletes and found that it is in the best interest of athletes when coaches nurture factors that contribute to intrinsic motivation and deter factors that contribute to extrinsic motivation among athletes. Mageau and Vallerand (2003) further described seven different ways coaches behaviors can influence their athletes' motivation: (1) provide as much choice as possible within specific limits and rules; (2) provide a rationale for tasks, limits and rules; (3) inquire about and acknowledge others' feelings; (4) allow opportunities to take initiatives and do independent work; (5) provide non-controlling competence feedback; (6) avoid overt control, guilt inducing criticism, controlling statements and tangible rewards; and (7) prevent ego-involvement from taking place.

Further research has been conducted surrounding the relationship between coaches and athletes concerning motivational theory both in youth and elite sports. Keegan et al. (2010) analyzed coaching influences on the motivational atmosphere of sport participants and eventually concluded that a coach's primary influence on motivation toward athletes came from

verbal feedback and behavioral reinforcement. Keegan et al. (2010) found that positive feedback from coaches enhanced motivation whereas negative feedback undermined motivation, produced frustration, and tarnished the coach/athlete relationship. Leidl (2009) analyzed motivational theory in athletics by interviewing elite Lacrosse coaches to find their motivational strategies. Coaches motivate by utilizing a number of different strategies including story-telling, promoting hard work, and establishing off-field relationships as shown by Leidl's (2009) description of coaches as "motivating their athletes to value empowerment, camaraderie, hard work, and growth while actively motivating them through a culture of stories of previous players and achievements and off-field efforts that strengthen bonds and awareness" (p. 169). In addition to Leidl's (2009) description of coaches as motivators, Leidl (2009) makes the argument that it is not only important to focus on skills development and on court activities, but it is equally as important to motivate through non-active athletic elements such as relationships and camaraderie. Coaches are able to motivate through these strategies because of their leadership position with the team.

Leadership

Leadership has been defined in a number of ways and in a number of areas of research. For example, leadership has been defined by various studies including Frey, Kern, Snow, and Curlette (2009), Denmark (1977), and Howard (2005). For the purpose of this study, Howard's (2005) definition of leadership will be used and is defined as "the process of communication (verbal & non-verbal) that involves coaching, motivating/inspiring, directing/guiding, and supporting/counseling others" (p. 385). Individuals in leadership roles exert power over the operation and direction of the organization, group, or team in which they lead.

Research discusses different leadership styles that include the Laissez-faire or Passive Leadership Style (Eeden, Cilliers, Deventer, 2008), the four styles of leadership by Howard (2005) which include Fact Based (Type A), Creative Based (Type B), Control/Power Based (Type C), and Feelings Based (Type D), and the charismatic leadership style (Rowold and Laukamp, 2009). In analyzing leadership styles of intercollegiate sport coaches, Ryska (2009) identified five styles of leadership in athletic coaching including: Directive Style – focusing on task completion and organizational purpose, Supportive Style – seeking happiness and harmony among team members, Bureaucratic Style – avoiding risk and doing the bare minimum requirements, Strategic Style – allowing team member input but still maintains strict control over decision making, and the Collaborative Style – value athlete and staff involvement and emphasize relationships.

Leadership in sports is unique in comparison with leadership roles in any other organization. In athletics, leaders are motivators, providers of guidance, teachers, authority figures, and friends. Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, and Bostrom (1997) defined the ideal leadership style in athletics as a leader who promotes team cohesion by being a master of training and instruction, interacting both professionally and socially with team members, operating as democratically as possible, and providing constant positive feedback. In terms of leadership styles in athletics, Pratt and Eitzen (1989) found that schools, the military, factories, and athletic teams have often been characterized as being a part of the authoritarian style of leadership in their study of athletic teams concerning the authoritarian and democratic leadership styles. Pratt and Eitzen (1989) found that autocratic and demanding coaches that include high insubordination intolerance coupled with multiple work centered workouts did not win any more than their opposite peers (democratic and less demanding).

Nielson and Munir (2009) defined transformational leaders as leaders who increase the interest in those they lead, generate a higher level of commitment to the groups missions among their followers, and encourage subordinates to transcend their own self-interest for the betterment of the group. In discussing athletic leadership, Chen (2010) analyzed the transactional and transformational leadership styles along with leader member exchange in order to find the most successful style of leadership when coaching baseball teams. According to Chen (2010), transactional leaders believe the goals, priorities, rules, and vision of the team are what's needed to succeed whereas the transformational leader suggests change in the teams vision, goals, and strategies to achieve those goals. Bass (1997) said that the transactional leader works more within the organization whereas the transformational leader looks to change the organization.

In further investigating literature surrounding leadership styles and strategies of coaches in athletics, Jambor and Zhang (1997) suggest six leadership behaviors including "situation consideration" as they believed leaders can be described and categorized based upon the very situation in which they are currently involved. Jambor and Zhang (1997) found that lower level coaches (junior high school coaches) tested lower on both training and instruction, and social support leadership behaviors than higher-level coaches (high school and college coaches). Although the findings of this study pose a number of different general leadership behaviors, others believe that behaviors are related to individual team members such as Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) argument of situational leadership theory where leadership style and behaviors depend directly on the unique situation of the moment.

Situational Leadership

One of the unique dynamics to coaching in athletics is the always changing and evolving *situation*. Hersey and Blanchard (1977) proposed a concept of leadership where the effectiveness of leadership behaviors would be more appropriately determined by the appropriateness of the behavior based on a particular situation rather than the specific behavior alone. Shockley-Zalabak (2006) write that Hersey and Blanchard (1977) described situational leadership as being more dependent on ideals such as relationships, tasks, and maturity of followers arguing that leadership effectiveness is more dependent on situational factors as every situation is different rather than on set leadership styles.

Yeakey (2002) wrote that the situational model rests on two concepts: (1) successful leadership comes from utilizing behavioral styles based on the environment; and (2) successful leadership comes from learning how to determine and assess what that environment is. Wooden and Jamison (2007) believe that athletic coaches are the best leaders when they are able to define the specific environment they are coaching in, and use behavioral styles based on that environment. According to Wooden and Jamison (2007) this environment not only deals with location and demographic aspects of the team, but it also deals with other group dynamics such as the “maturity” of the team, relationship with the team, and even the skill level of the team. Furthermore, in determining which behavioral or leadership style is appropriate for each environment, Farmer (2005) argues that leaders must be able to diagnose the performance, competence, and commitment of those they lead.

In reference to “maturity” as a dynamic to consider when determining the specific environment, according to Walter, Caldwell, and Marshall (1980), group maturity has three components as described in stating that a group achieves maturity when it is able to set high but

attainable goals, accepts responsibility for their actions, and has the experience and education needed. Hersey and Blanchard (1977) also created a situational grid that described four general styles of situational leadership. According to Shockley-Zalabak (2006), the four general styles included: (S1) *Telling* (high task and low relationship emphasis); (S2) *Selling* (high task emphasis, but high relationship emphasis); (S3) *Participating* (high relationship and low task emphases; and (S4) *Delegating* (low task and low relationship emphasis). Shockley-Zalaback (2006) discusses each style in depth. For example, according to Shockley-Zalabak (2006), *Telling* is said to be best used with immature followers where the leader clearly defines what needs to be done and instructs followers on how to accomplish it; *Selling* is best used with a mature following and involves leaders stressing the importance of the goal and how in accomplishing it a certain way; *Participating* is best used with a mature following in order to stimulate creativity as leaders support relationships within the group and encourage participation amongst the group in the processes of decision making; and *Delegating* is best used with a mature following as leaders let followers take the reigns with decision making processes based on their maturity level being sufficient to take responsibility for outcomes of those decisions. These general styles of situational leadership can be closely related to coaching athletics as coaching involves building different relationships with individual players and determining if emphasis needs to be placed on the relationship or the task in a given situation. Leaders must be able to effectively lead in any situation including leading down from the top of the organization to the other various levels of the organization.

John Wooden's Pyramid of Success

Famed coach, author, and teacher John Wooden is well known for his views on leadership. He has authored multiple books on leadership (*A Game Plan for Life*, *The Essential*

Wooden, Wooden on Leadership) that deal with leadership both on and off the basketball court. Throughout his coaching and teaching career, Wooden came to create a “Pyramid of Success” as he writes, “ultimately...I wanted the Pyramid’s 15 building blocks to define me as a leader” (Wooden and Jamison, 2005, 16). The 15 building blocks spoken of by Wooden include a “leadership guidebook” (p. 19), and other important concepts that ultimately will lead to success. The first tier, or foundation of the Pyramid, contains the cornerstones and foundation of leadership: Industriousness, Friendship, Loyalty, Cooperation, and Enthusiasm. Wooden often called this foundation to be values at the heart of leadership, whereas the next level is more specifically concerned with “how you put your head to use as an effective leader” (p.31). The concepts on the second level of Wooden’s Pyramid contain: Self-Control, Alertness, Initiative, and Intentness. The third level, or the “heart of the pyramid” (p. 41) includes: Condition, Skill, and Team Spirit. The final two levels of the Pyramid, or the top of the Pyramid, are defining concepts that Wooden describes as “a rich and rewarding harvest, one that will take you and your organization the rest of the way” (p. 50). In other words, the final three components to Wooden’s Pyramid are the results of leading by the previous twelve concepts. These components are listed in order as Poise, Confidence, and Competitive Greatness. John Wooden’s outline of leadership concepts that lead to organizational success is an applicable formula for leadership positions in all organizations.

Lead Down

In organizations, managers, CEO’s, and supervisors have the difficult task of leading the members within their organization. In athletics, and in college basketball, this responsibility falls on the head coach. Although individually and collectively leading the team also falls upon

assistant coaches, administrators, and managers on the coaching staff, the head coach maintains the responsibility to lead both the team and coaching staff in all aspects of the organization.

In John C. Maxwell's (2005) *The 360 Degree Leader*, he outlines how to effectively lead from all levels in an organization with three different sets of leadership skills. The three sets of leadership skills referred to are: Lead Up, Lead Across, and Lead Down. Maxwell (2005) simply defines "Lead Up" as leading from the bottom of an organization, "Lead Across" as leading from the middle of the organization, and "Lead Down" as leading from the top of an organization. Maxwell (2005) further highlights steps, techniques, and ideas for leaders at the top of the organizational hierarchy to "Lead Down" towards other members of the organization in lower level roles of organizational leadership. Maxwell (2005) presents leadership as a "top-down activity" (pg. 211) where the leader leads and the rest follow in line. However, he goes on to highlight seven different principles of how leaders of organizations can effectively "Lead Down". These seven principles include: (1) Walk Slowly Through the Halls; (2) See Everyone As A "10"; (3) Develop Each Team Member As A Person; (4) Place People In Their Strength Zone; (5) Model The Behavior You Desire; (6) Transfer The Vision; and (7) Reward For Results (Maxwell, 2005).

Walk Slowly Through the Halls

Maxwell (2005) describes leadership as a "people business" where relationship building is the core foundation of effective leaders that are "intentionally connected to the people they lead" (p. 213). Maxwell's (2005) first principle of leading down is to "Walk Slowly Through the Halls", or in other words, to connect personally with those you are leading on an individual basis. In order to do this, Maxwell (2005) makes a number of suggestions which include: (1) Slow Down, and (2) Express that You Care, and (3) Tend to the People. A leader must "slow

down” in order to connect and engage with others. A leader must “express that you care” in order to communicate the value that each member of the organization holds toward the organization as a whole, and a leader must “tend to the people” in order to “build up the people – and the business” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 218). According to Maxwell (2005), when a leader “walks slowly through the halls”, or builds both a professional and personal relationship with those who they are leading, the leader becomes “visible, available, and connected” (p. 219) and will ultimately find greater respect and success from those being led.

See Everyone As A “10”

In athletic performance, it has already been discussed how important high levels of efficacy beliefs are to the success of an individual and a team. In order to further promote high self-efficacy and make each team and staff member feel like a “10”, Maxwell (2005) states that leaders must show respect and value towards those they lead and bring a positive leadership style creating a positive working environment in which each team member feels they have a defined role on the team, and in which each team member shares in the win. It is important for organization members, especially on athletic teams, to feel valued by those leaders they look to for guidance, information, and motivation.

There are a number of strategies that can be used by leaders and coaches to make team members feel valued. In all organizations, most specifically in athletic society, leaders and coaches criticize and point out the things that are done wrong rather than the tasks that are performed right. When this happens, more often than not negative feelings and negative outcomes begin to surface. When a team member is repeatedly told they have done something wrong, Maxwell (2005) argues that they become defensive, they evade certain situations, and they begin to make more excuses. To counter this organizational problem, coaches and leaders

can make it a point to “catch them doing something right” (p. 223) by looking for the positive rather than the negative. One way to further achieve this goal of seeing every team and staff member as a “10” is to simply treat them like they are giving their best even if they are only giving a fraction of their best. Maxwell (2005) continues by giving three simple strategies to treating people as “10’s”: “(1) build people up by encouragement; (2) give people credit by acknowledgement; and (3) give people recognition by gratitude” (p. 227). In following these strategies, leaders and coaches will ultimately see increased success and more positive responses from those seeking their leadership.

Develop Each Team Member As A Person

The third lead-down principle posed by Maxwell (2005) is to “Develop Each Team Member as a Person”, or in other words, helping team members to improve as individuals both within and outside of the organization. Developing others attitudes and skills is not easily done, but is a key element to leadership and can be accomplished through three strategies: (1) Lead Everyone Differently, (2) Be Ready to Have a Hard Conversation, and (3) Celebrate the Right Wins. These three strategies proposed by Maxwell (2005) become an effective guide for a leader to positively develop their team members. It is important to understand these strategies will only be successful if the leader is “willing to conform their leadership style on an individual basis” (p. 232), “have difficult conversations” (p. 234), and “evaluate and critique both wins and losses” (p. 235). However, by employing these strategies, those individuals in leadership positions at the top of organizations can potentially see increased results in responses from members in the middle and bottom of the organization.

Place People in Their Strength Zone

A good leader, or a good coach, places members of the team in positions that will allow them to be the most successful. As Maxwell (2005) writes, “All players have a place where they add the most value” to a team (p. 240). Each member in an organization has his or her own set of skills and usually is good at everything but has one or two areas of expertise. The key to success as a leader is finding what areas each team member specializes in and place them in situations where those specialized skills will be most successfully utilized. In basketball if a shooting guard is a remarkable three point shooter; will he find the most success posting up close to the basket around taller players? A good leader will recognize his player’s greatest potential and place them in their “strength zone”.

Maxwell (2005) believes when employees, organization members, or team members are placed in their strength zones, their work output increases, their attitudes turn positive, and the overall success of the team seems to rise significantly. The reason for this, as Maxwell (2005) states is when people are placed in their strength zones, or in places where they are comfortable and can find success, their jobs can often become rewarding and fulfilling. In doing this, Maxwell (2005) continues to argue, it can be the difference in someone hating his or her job, and loving that job.

Maxwell (2005) discusses three different steps in placing team members in their strength zones. First, Maxwell (2005) argues it is important to discover and determine what the strength of each team member is. In athletics, this can most easily be done by concentrated observations of practices, by regular conversation about strengths and weaknesses of team members, and through rigorous evaluation of successes and failures.

The second step in placing team members in their strength zone is to simply “give them the right job” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 239). Once a leader has gone through the first step of finding out the strength of their team members, it is easy to find situations and jobs to place them in where they will most likely find the most success. Sometimes, this step can take time going through the trial and error process. But, once the right job is found for the right person, it is important to stay consistent and keep them in that job.

The final step in placing team members in their strength zone is to “identify the skills they’ll need and provide world class training” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 240). Once a leader or coach places a team member in a specific situation or job where they will be most successful, it is important to find what other skills they will need to be further successful in that job, and then provide training for those skills. These steps are important to follow as a leader because “if you don’t place people in their strength zones, you’re making it almost impossible for them – and you – to win” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 241).

Although there are ways in which any member can lead in an organization, in relation to being a head coach of a college basketball team it is most important to be able to “Lead Down”. As the leader of a program, staff, and team, it is the responsibility of the head coach to treat the members of his organization as valuable assets to the organization, and to place each member of the organization in positions where success is most possible.

Model The Behavior You Desire

In order for leaders to lead effectively, leaders must be the example, set the tone, and determine the culture that they want the organization to display. Maxwell (2005) believes that leaders are the one person in the organization who can most effectively set the tone and pace for the rest of the people working for them. In an organization, the behaviors, beliefs, and actions of

the members of an organization are directly correlated to the behaviors, beliefs, and actions of the organizations leader.

Maxwell (2005) goes as far as to say that the organization or teams atmosphere, decision making, investment return, trust, productivity, and potential all directly stem from the team leader's attitude, values, character, work ethic, and personal growth. With this description of the effectiveness of leadership, Maxwell (2005) concludes that although results may vary, it is always true that followers become like their leaders as their leaders influence them on a daily basis.

Transfer the Vision

Transferring the vision is an integral step in the leadership process when "Leading Down" in an organization. Maxwell (2005) says that leaders on top of an organization transfer the vision and those members in the middle and the bottom of the organization are the interpreters of the vision. Maxwell (2005) proposes seven elements that are essential in transferring a vision from top to bottom in an organization. These seven elements include: Clarity - "if the vision isn't clear, the people aren't clear" (p. 249), Connection of the Past, Present, and Future - "anytime you can show that the past, present, and future are unified, you bring power and continuity to your vision casting" (p. 250), Purpose - "although vision tells people where they need to go, purpose tells them why they should go" (p. 250), Goals - "without goals and a strategy to achieve them, vision isn't measurable or attainable" (p. 251), A Challenge - "if vision doesn't require people to stretch, they may wonder if it is worthy of their diction" (p. 251), Stories - stories "make the vision relational and warm" (p. 251), Passion - "if there is no passion in the picture, then your vision isn't transferable; it is just a pleasant snapshot" (p. 251).

If a leader of an organization can develop his or her own vision, and effectively transfer that vision to those leading in the middle and bottom of the organization, the organizational “ship” will be much easier to turn as Maxwell (2005) writes that the most size and abilities of the leaders within the organization are more important than the size of the organization.

Reward for Results

It is extremely important for leaders to reward the members of their organizations for producing results. Caution should be observed in rewarding for things other than results as Maxwell (2005) states that “whatever actions leaders reward will be repeated” (p. 255). Rewarding results will produce the desired repeated results. In order to do this most effectively, Maxwell (2005) poses six principles: (1) Give Praise Publicly and Privately, (2) Give More than Just Praise, (3) Don’t Reward Everyone the Same, (4) Give Perks Beyond Pay, (5) Promote When Possible, and (6) Remember That You Get What You Pay For. As a leader, according to Maxwell (2005), rewards are one of the only things that you have significant control over. When a leader focuses on what they can give rather on what they can get, they end up getting more out of those they lead.

Research Questions

After reviewing the literature, the concepts of self-efficacy, motivation, and leadership have been discussed in regards to coaching basketball. This study poses three research questions surrounding the concepts of self-efficacy, motivation, and most specifically, leadership. The research questions are designed to yield results to determine if the concepts of Maxwell’s (2005) principles of “lead down” are used by basketball coaches, and to find which principles are used the most. Finally, the research questions attempt to determine how basketball coaches can fill leadership roles through the use of Maxwells (2005) “lead down” principles.

RQ1: What rate do high school basketball coaches agree that they use the principles of “leading down” in their leadership roles?

RQ2: Which of the seven principles of “leading down” are applied most by high school basketball coaches?

RQ3: By applying the seven principles of “leading down” to coaching basketball, how can high school basketball coaches more fully fill the leadership roles of mentor, teacher, and role model?

Chapter 3: Method

The goal of this study is to examine which of John C. Maxwell's seven principles of "leading down" are employed by high school basketball coaches. In this section, the procedure of the study, the measures of the study, and the participants involved in the study are discussed.

Participants

The survey was distributed to 573 high school basketball coaches. During the course of the nine day period that the survey was open, 114 surveys were started with 95 surveys being fully completed accounting for a 16.57% completion rate. Four additional surveys were deleted due to incompleteness. Along with "Gender" and "Age", the amount of "Coaching Experience" of coaches was also asked.

Participants ranged between ages 20-29 (3%), 30-39 (31%), 40-49 (37%), and 50+ 22%. Participants were 97.9% male. Finally, 90% of participants coaching experience extended to high school varsity level, and although currently at the high school level, two percent reached a coaching position at a four-year institution at an earlier point in their career.

Measures

Variables in this study included Maxwell's (2005) principles of "lead down" including: (1) "Walk Slowly Through the Halls", (2) "See Everyone as a 10", (3) "Develop Each Team Member as a Person", (4) "Place People in Their Strength Zone", (5) "Model the Behavior You Desire", (6) "Transfer the Vision", and (7) Reward for Results. Other variables in the study were Gender, Age, and Coaching Experience. Each variable was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – "Strongly Disagree" to 5 – "Strongly Agree".

Procedure

This study was done through building an online survey using Qualtrics (see appendix A). Participants received the survey via e-mail. The purpose and benefits of participating in the study were outlined in the email along with an invitation to participate in the study. A link to the Qualtrics survey was also included in the e-mail.

Participants were asked to participate in the study via e-mail. Participants were given the option to consent to participate in the study. If participants did not consent to participation, they were taken to the end of the survey without having the option to answer any questions. However, if the participants consented to participate, they were directed to begin the survey. Participants were also asked to answer a series of demographic questions such as gender, age, and coaching experience.

The survey (see appendix A) went live and was distributed via e-mail on March 18, 2014. The survey was closed on March 27, 2014. The survey included seven questions regarding the seven principles of “leading down” proposed by John C. Maxwell. Each question was constructed to find out if coaches use the strategies while coaching basketball. Participants were also asked to answer a series of demographic questions such as sex, age, and coaching experience.

Chapter 4: Results/Discussion

Results of this study were extremely conclusive. Basketball coaches who participated in the survey reported to using “lead down” principles at a very high rate. Of the seven principles studied, basketball coaches reported to using four principles at a rate above 90% (Develop Each Team Member as a Person – 95.8%, Place People in Their Strength Zone – 94.7%, Model the Behavior You Desire – 94.7%, and Transfer the Vision – 90.5%). Along with an agreement rating of above 90%, three out of four principles were reported with a 0% disagreement rating.

Results also showed that although four principles received 90% and above agreement ratings, the other principles received agreement ratings above 82% (See Everyone as a 10 – 89.4%, Walk Slowly Through the Halls – 85.3%, and Reward for Results – 82.1%). These three principles, although receiving very high agreement ratings, received a higher reporting of disagreement ratings at 2.1%, 3.2%, and 3.2%. The following table illustrates the conclusive results of the study.

<u>Principle</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
Develop Each Team Member as a Person	1.1%	0%	0%	33.7%	62.1%
Place People in Their Strength Zone	0%	0%	1.1%	40%	54.7%
Model the Behavior You Desire	0%	0%	2.1%	35.8%	58.9%
Transfer the Vision	0%	0%	7.4%	46.3%	44.2%
See Everyone as a “10”	0%	2.1%	8.4%	52.6%	36.8%

Walk Slowly Through the Halls	0%	3.2%	11.6%	42.1%	43.2%
Reward for Results	0%	3.2%	12.6%	60%	22.1%

In this chapter, results and findings from the survey are further reported and discussed in relation to Research Question 1, Research Questions 2, and Research Questions 3.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked the following question: At which rate do high school basketball coaches agree that they use the principles of “leading down” in their leadership roles?

The answer to Research Question 1 can best be answered in looking at the overall results of the survey in relation to the seven “lead down” principles rather than discussing each principle individually. The purpose of Research Question 1 was to determine at what rate high school basketball coaches use the “lead down” principles. According to results, basketball coaches agree to applying Maxwell’s (2005) principles at an extremely high rate.

The principle receiving the highest agreement rating, “Develop Each Team Member as a Person”, received an agreement rating of 95.8% and a disagreement rating of only 1.1%. The principle receiving the lowest agreement rating, “Reward for Results”, received an agreement rating of 82.1% and a disagreement rating of 3.2%. The average agreement rating for the seven principles combined was an agreement rating of 90.33%. Four out of the seven principles received agreement ratings above the group average. Further, the median score for the seven principles on the Likert scale ranging from 1 – “Strongly Disagree” to 5 – “Strongly Agree” was a score of 4.38.

In analyzing the results in regards to Research Question 1, it is apparent that high school basketball coaches use all seven “lead down” principles at a very high rate. Although four of the seven principles received agreement ratings above the group average, all of the principles received agreement ratings of above at least 82%, and disagreement ratings at below 4%. Therefore, results conclude that Maxwell’s (2005) principles of “leading down” are not only applicable to coaching high school basketball, but are currently being used by coaches in their leadership positions.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked the following question: Which of the seven principles of “leading down” are applied most by high school basketball coaches?

Whereas the answer to Research Question 1 was best determined by looking at the overall results of the study, Research Question 2 is best answered by looking at the results in regards to each principle individually. The purpose of Research Question 2 was to determine which of Maxwell’s (2005) seven principles of “leading down” are applied the most. The results, in regards to Research Question 2, can be found in the following table.

<u>Principle</u>	<u>Agreement Rating</u>	<u>Disagreement Rating</u>
Develop Each Team Member as a Person	95.8%	1.1%
Place People in Their Strength Zone	94.7%	0.0%
Model the Behavior You Desire	94.7%	0.0%
Transfer the Vision	90.5%	0.0%

See Everyone as a “10”	89.4%	2.1%
Walk Slowly Through The Halls	85.3%	3.2%
Reward for Results	82.1%	3.2%

In reviewing the results of the study in regards to Research Question 2, although “Develop Each Team Member as a Person” was reported as being applied most by high school basketball coaches, and “Reward for Results” was reported as being applied least by high school basketball coaches, all seven principles were reported as being used at a high rate. There is a relatively small difference (just over 5%) between the second most used principle (“Place People in Their Strength Zone”) and the fifth most used principle (“See Everyone as a 10”), and less than a 15% difference between the most used principle and the least used principle further demonstrating that Maxwell’s (2005) principles are used by high school basketball coaches at a high rate from top to bottom.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked the following question: By applying the seven principles of “leading down” to coaching high school basketball, how can basketball coaches more fully fill the leadership roles of mentor, teacher, and role model?

In the introduction and literature review, it was discussed how coaches in our society often take on different roles for their players. As mentioned previously by Wooden and Yaeger (2009), a coach is also a mentor and a teacher – one that inspires and teaches by example of their individual character. A coach also can often take on the role of role model – one that builds self-efficacy, motivates, gives support, and provides an authority figure to both discipline and give positive feedback when necessary. Through this study, it can be determined that a coach’s high

use of Maxwell's (2005) "leading down" principles further promote the role of a coach to fulfill the leadership roles of mentor, teacher, and role model.

According to Maxwell (2005), leading down involves more than handing out instruction, giving orders, disciplining, scolding, rewarding, and controlling those below you. In other words, leading down from a coaches perspective is not merely handing out defensive assignments, punishing for not achieving desired results, or praising for achieving certain accomplishments. Maxwell (2005) describes leading down as:

when you lead down, you're doing more than just getting people to do what you want. You're finding out who they are. You're helping them to discover and reach their potential. You're showing the way by becoming a model they can follow. You're helping them become a part of something bigger than they could do on their own. And you're rewarding them for being contributors on the team.

In short, you are endeavoring to add value to them in any way you can. (p. 212)

In looking at this definition of "leading down" from the top of an organization, or more specifically a basketball team, it is apparent that when coaches apply the seven principles of "leading down", they are more completely fulfilling their role as not only coach, but as mentor, teacher, and role model. In considering the results of the study that show that overall high school coaches are employing the seven principles of "leading down" at a rate of above 82%, it can be concluded that leadership in athletics in our society will have a positive impact on the young people involved in those organizations. Therefore, the answer to RQ3 is: Basketball coaches can more fully fill leadership roles of mentor, teacher, and role model by applying Maxwell's (2005) principles of leading down. Basketball coaches can learn how to relate to their players both on and off the court as they "Walk Slowly Through the Halls". Coaches can begin to see the value

in their players that they may not have seen before as they “See Everyone as a 10”. Coaches can continue to develop their athletes as they strive to “Place People in Their Strength Zone”.

Coaches can continue to be an example and a role model for their players to admire on a daily basis as they continue to “Model the Behavior They Desire”. Coaches can improve their player’s mental focus and teach them to stay focused on positive things as they improve in “Transferring the Vision”, and coaches can continue to stand as mentors as they “Reward for Results” and encourage hard work and production from those they lead.

Findings from the study suggest that the seven “lead down” principles are not only applicable, but are commonly used by high school basketball coaches as they coach and lead their respective teams. The ultimate goal in coaching basketball is to find success. Success can be defined in a number of different ways, but as coaches continue to apply Maxwell’s (2005) seven principles of “leading down” the attainment of goals and finding success will be more easily reached.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

In this chapter, a brief summary of the study and its results will be given. Also, the limitations to the study will be discussed along with possibly future research opportunities that could potentially extend the study and the surrounding research of leadership principles in coaching athletics.

The study yielded conclusive results in answering all three research questions. The study also revealed that the “lead down” principles by Maxwell (2005) are applied by basketball coaches at an extremely high rate. The study similarly showed that each of the seven principles are used by basketball coaches at least 82% of the time, and the study finally concluded that because of the high rate in which coaches use the “leading down” principles, coaches can more fully assume the roles of mentor, teacher, and role model.

Although all seven principles reported receiving an agreement rating among basketball coaches of an average of 90.33%, four principles had extremely high agreement ratings that were above the group average (see Table 1 for complete results). Those four principles were: “Develop Each Team Member as a Person”, “Model the Behavior You Desire”, “Place People in Their Strength Zone”, and “Transfer the Vision”.

The highest rated principle in agreement rating among coaches was “Develop Each Team Member as a Person”. Among the coaches involved in the study, 95.8% agreed or strongly agreed that they employed this leadership principle in their coaching style. The second highest rated principle in agreement rating among coaches was “Model the Behavior You Desire”. Among the coaches involved in the study, 94.7% agreed that they employed this leadership principle in their coaching style. The third highest rated principle in agreement rating among coaches was “Place People in Their Strength Zone”. Among the coaches involved in the study,

94.7% agreed that they employed this leadership principle in their coaching style. The fourth highest rated principle in agreement rating among coaches was “Transfer the Vision”. Among the coaches involved in the study, 90.5% agreed that they employed this leadership principle in their coaching style.

Limitations/Future Research

In this study, research questions asked if the principles set forth by Maxwell were used by basketball coaches. Although the study answered the proposed questions, there were various limitations, which could possibly have limited findings in the study. For example, coaches were only asked to state if they use each principle. Results could have further been stated if coaches were allowed the opportunity to express their reasoning to using the principle, and how often the principle was used. Such information would give better insight into the choices coaches make in their leadership strategies. The survey was also only open for participation for a total of nine days, which may have limited the studies sample size. If the survey had been left open for a longer period of time, a larger sample could have been retrieved and results could possibly have been different.

There are many different paths of future research that may be taken to add to or further this study. For example, it could have been beneficial to also look at the same principles of “leading down” in regards to sports other than basketball. A large number of our societies youth participate in athletics, and a small percentage of that number participate in basketball. It may also be beneficial to look at the same study over different generations. For example, did coaches in the 1980’s apply these same principles in their leadership roles? It could be beneficial to see how the leadership position of “coach” has changed over time in order to attempt to predict how the role may change looking to the future. Another aspect that may need to be looked at in future

studies is if the same principles are used when coaching another gender. Studies involving men's sports vs women's sports in regards to "leading down" could produce interesting results. It may be beneficial to find out in future research not only if coaches use Maxwell's (2005) principles, but if they do report using them, *why* do they use them? A future study that may be conducted based off the groundwork produced from this study may be examining the same "lead down" principles in regards to both collegiate and professional basketball coaches. Collegiate and professional levels of athletics are very different than high school levels. For example, because there are more extrinsic motivators present in professional sports, do coaches use the same "lead down" principles at the same rate as high school coaches? The results of such studies may be able to give a more in depth look into the role of a coach based upon those he or she is coaching.

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Appendix A

Leadership Principles in Coaching Basketball

- 1. As a coach, do you feel you apply the principle of "Walking Slowly Through the Halls" by building a relationship and connecting personally with your players?**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 2. As a coach, do you feel you apply the principle of "See Everyone as a 10" by showing respect and value towards your players?**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 3. As a coach, do you feel you apply the principle of "Developing Each Team Member as a Person" by helping team members improve as individuals both on and off the court?**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 4. As a coach, do you feel you apply the principle of "Placing People in Their Strength Zone" by finding which areas team members specialize in and placing them in situations where those specialized skills will be most successful utilized?**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 5. As a coach, do you feel you apply the principle of "Modeling the Behavior You Desire" by setting the tone and pace, and determining the culture for all of those involved with the team?**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 6. As a coach, do you feel you apply the principle of "Transferring the Vision" by communicating the overall vision for the organization with the rest of the team?**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 7. As a coach, do you feel you apply the principle of "Reward for Results" by rewarding team members for achieving desired results?**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree