

Athletes' Perceptions of the Motivational Climate on Their Teams in Relation to Career
Exploration and Athletic Identity

By

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Abstract

The core mission of the National Collegiate Association of Athletes (NCAA) is to develop individuals as both students and athletes in preparation for life after their collegiate endeavors. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between collegiate athletes' perceptions of the climate on their sport teams to their career exploration and engagement, and their athletic identity. Student-athletes ($N= 101$) in both revenue and nonrevenue sport from various NCAA Division I institutions were administered online surveys assessing their perceptions of the climate on their sport teams, their athletic identity, career exploration, and career engagement. Canonical correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the climate variables (i.e. caring, task, and ego) to athletic identity (AIMS), career self-efficacy (CDSSES), and career exploration/engagement (EXPENG). Loadings revealed that perceptions of a high task-involving climate and moderate caring climate were positively associated with athletes' reporting higher athletic identity, career self-efficacy, and career exploration/engagement. Perceptions of an ego-involving climate did not contribute to the canonical relationship, although the variable was negatively associated with career self-efficacy. Results suggest that Division I coaches may want to consider fostering a caring and task-involving team climate for Division I athletes to help them develop as holistic individuals who spend their college years performing at a high level of sport and also preparing for their lives after sport.

Athletes' Perceptions of the Motivational Climate on Their Teams in Relation to Career Exploration and Athletic Identity

1 From the time of high school onward, individuals pursuing athletics at the collegiate
2 level, and potentially beyond, devote significant time and energy to their craft. Considerable
3 evidence suggests the physical and psychological benefits that can be reaped from participation
4 in organized sport at varying levels (Wann, 2006). The core mission of the National Collegiate
5 Association of Athletes (NCAA) is to develop individuals as both students and athletes in
6 preparation for life after their collegiate endeavors, although some evidence suggests that
7 collegiate level athletes, particularly at the Division I level are not adequately prepared for life
8 after termination of their athletic career (Beamon, 2012). For some athletes, the time
9 commitments and demands of playing competitive sport impair their ability to foster and pursue
10 interests in future careers in comparison to university students who were not meeting the
11 demands of NCAA sport (Houle, Brewer, & Kluck, 2010). Brewer (1993) and Beamon (2012)
12 revealed that many athletes form a strong athletic identity that can lead to identity foreclosure,
13 thus limiting the exploration in areas outside of their sport participation that they engage in at
14 such a key point in their self-developmental process.

15 According to developmental psychologist Marcia (1966), there are two processes which
16 characterize identity adoption, exploration and foreclosure. Exploration refers to individuals
17 dedicating a period of time to investigating and building upon their interests, and Marcia (1966)
18 suggests exploration occurs across the adolescent to young adult years. At some point across this
19 period individuals begin to decide which of these interests most strongly align with their goals

20 and beliefs. As they narrow their interests, this leads them to a state of commitment. Individuals
21 are able to devote these exploration years to participating in organizations, taking courses and
22 exploring opportunities to create a scaffold of sorts for the professional selves they would
23 ultimately like to construct (Krieshok, 2008). The second process involves foreclosure, which
24 involves premature commitment to an interest. Foreclosure can be characterized by little varied
25 exploration and discernibly high levels of commitment. Marcia describes individuals' healthy
26 development as occurring when they have a lengthy period of exploration resulting in late stage
27 foreclosure; this process is most likely to lead individuals to thrive in their lives and experience
28 high achievement. A concern arises when individuals foreclose early on in life, before they have
29 had adequate time to explore different activities (e.g., careers, hobbies). When this occurs,
30 individuals typically invest in an exclusive identity at an early stage, at the risk of under
31 developing other identity dimensions.

32 Research has revealed that many athletes who compete at a high level of sport form a
33 strong athletic identity (Brewer & Selby, 1993). This is not surprising given the rigor and
34 demands of elite athletic participation. For example, Division I athletes spend many hours in
35 practice and competition, in addition to team meetings, strength and conditioning sessions, and
36 community outreach and appearances. All these activities are spent with teammates and coaches,
37 and create a sport culture as a result of constant exposure. This culture can create an optimal
38 environment for achieving high levels of athletic performance, as excellence is rarely achieved
39 without this standard of commitment. However, research in sport has revealed that a high athletic
40 identity is sometimes harmful to athletes when looking at the bigger picture of their overall
41 development. Beamon (2012) found that Division I athletes with high athletic identity reported

42 investing less in their academic pursuits due to the demands of their sport. For example, in
43 Beamon's study, athletes gave less consideration to the majors they chose, because they saw the
44 selection of their majors as a requirement that needed to be met in order to play their sport and
45 not as an important decision impacting their future. These athletes also indicated they put less
46 effort into their class assignments and were less concerned with missing class. Adler and Adler
47 (1991) reported that athletes' salience of academic identity diminished over the course of their
48 college careers due to a lack of academic role reinforcement.

49 In addition to academic shortfalls, athletes with high athletic identity have also struggled
50 more with rehabilitation after injuries. Researchers found that athletic identity was threatened for
51 athletes dealing with ACL injuries. (Brewer, Cornelius, Stephan, & Van Raalte, 2010; Brewer,
52 Raalte, and Linder, 1993). Brewer, Cornelius, Stephan, and Van (2010) also found that injured
53 athletes with high athletic identity were more likely to experience heightened levels of
54 depression during the rehab process, than were athletes with lower athletic identity. These results
55 suggest cause for concern for athletes with high athletic identity, given the volatile nature of
56 sport and the potential for serious injury.

57 Research has also demonstrated that athletes with high athletic identity experience social
58 identity struggles when faced with the prospect of the termination of their athletic career.
59 Specifically, Beamon (2012) describes athletes experiencing a social shift after their athletic
60 career whereby they feel a hole in their social network (i.e., they no longer spend time with
61 teammates daily) that hasn't been replaced with new friendships. In addition, the social
62 interactions they do have can be less fulfilling. Individuals they know and meet often are focused

63 on their past athletic accomplishments, making it challenging to focus on their future rather than
64 their sport past.

65 Finally, research has revealed that high athletic identity can be harmful to athletes' self-
66 identity and self-satisfaction. Todd and Kent (2003) found that athletes with high athletic identity
67 and a low sense of competence in their sport reported more negative perceptions of self. In a
68 similar vein, Beamon (2012) also found that athletes with high athletic identity were negatively
69 influenced in this specific realm of self-identity.

70 Overall, research in the sport psychology literature examining athletic identity and its
71 consequences has revealed a number of concerns for future outcomes for student athletes. As
72 best described by Brewer et al. (1993), an individual with strong athletic identity ascribes a
73 significant level of importance to involvement in sport/exercise and is especially sensitized to
74 self-perceptions in the athletic domain. In sport specific identity formation, individuals can place
75 affective status, feelings of esteem and self-worth, and reason for motivation within a framework
76 heavily or solely based on their sport performance (Brewer, 1993). The potential for these
77 negative outcomes can denigrate the central goals for participation in collegiate sports. Given the
78 reality of elite collegiate athletic participation and its' affiliated demands, lowering athletic
79 identity does not seem to be a feasible manner to address these issues. High athletic identity is
80 likely to remain strong in sport. Rather, identifying a buffer between athletic identity and
81 negative outcomes is an important area of inquiry.

82 A theoretical framework which could provide insight to offset some of the negatives
83 affiliated with high athletic identity is Nicholls' (1984, 1989) Achievement Goal Perspective
84 Theory. This theoretical framework supports the notion that athletes at various levels can

85 optimize their health, enjoyment, performance, and overall wellbeing through sport, when
86 created as a safe space and with an overall positive coaching climate (Nicholls, 1984; 1989).
87 According to Nicholls, individuals perceive a motivational climate in achievement settings that
88 can impact their motivational responses. He identified two distinct climates: a task- and ego-
89 involving climate. In sport research, a task-involving climate is characterized by the coach
90 valuing each athlete's personal effort, improvement and mastery; encouraging cooperation
91 among teammates; and considering mistakes as part of the learning process. In turn, an ego-
92 involving climate in sport is characterized by a coach emphasizing the importance of competitive
93 outcomes and normative ability, creating rivalry among teammates, and punishing mistakes.
94 Nicholls predicts that in a task-involving climate where individuals are focused on their effort
95 and improvement, and have greater autonomy, they will display more adaptive motivational
96 responses (e.g., effort, persistence). In contrast, he warns of the potential detrimental effects on
97 individuals in ego-involving climates, as individuals have less control over normative
98 comparisons in environments where outcomes are the sole defining factor for success.

99 Recently, researchers have considered a third aspect of the climate, the extent that it is
100 perceived to be caring. A caring climate has been defined as an environment where everyone
101 perceives that all members of the group are treated with mutual kindness and respect, and feel a
102 sense of comfort and value (Newton, Fry et al, 2007). Research on caring in sport has stemmed
103 from Noddings' philosophical approach to human development, as she suggested that being in a
104 caring environment is critical to optimal achievement and life experiences (Noddings, 2004).

105 Research in sport has supported the importance of creating a caring and task-involving
106 climate for athletes, as well as concerns about strong ego-involving climates. A caring climate

107 has been associated with a host of critical positive outcomes such as greater emotional regulation
108 (i.e., being able to express joy when good things happen, and temper negative emotions in
109 challenging situations); psychological wellbeing (e.g., experiencing greater happiness and hope,
110 and less depression and sadness), and prosocial behaviors. In addition, athletes who perceive a
111 caring climate have reported engaging in more caring behaviors with their teammates and
112 coaches (Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010). Further, perceptions of a task-involving climate have
113 consistently been associated with higher levels of enjoyment, effort and overall intrinsic
114 motivation (Keegan, Spray & Lavallee, 2010). In contrast, athletes perceiving an ego-involving
115 climate have reported the converse of these responses, such as lower effort and enjoyment and
116 greater anxiety and burnout (Isoard-Gauthier, Guillet-Descas, & Duda 2013). Taken together,
117 this body of research suggests that athletes who perceive a caring and task-involving climate on
118 their teams are more likely to experience optimal physical and psychological well-being.

119 Although motivational climate research has not considered athletic identity or athletes'
120 levels of career exploration, it stands to reason that these constructs may be closely related.
121 Interestingly, a caring climate has been linked to athletes reporting greater teamwork, and desire
122 to take initiative, which could translate into them feeling more comfortable exploring activities
123 and pursuits beyond the athletic arena (Gould, Flett, & Lauer, 2012). There is potential that a
124 caring and task-involving climate plays a key role in athletes formulating a healthy athletic
125 identity, which is not at the expense of foreclosing on other important aspects of their lives. In a
126 caring and task-involving climate individuals are made to feel important exclusive of their
127 athletic performance. There is a genuine caring for each individual, and their interests and goals
128 both within and outside the arena of sport. This sense of caring is fostered both between coaches

129 and athletes and among all athletes. Such an environment would set athletes up to feel secure and
130 empowered to explore interests, careers, and potential nonathletic pursuits over the course of
131 their collegiate sport career. It seems less likely that athletes would have this same sense of
132 empowerment and support to explore to the same degree in an ego-involving climate. Thus, the
133 purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between collegiate athletes' perceptions of
134 the climate on their sport teams to their career exploration and engagement, and athletic identity
135 levels. It was hypothesized that all athletes would have a high athletic identity. However, those
136 athletes who perceived a higher caring and task-involving climate, and lower ego-involving
137 climate on their sport teams would score significantly higher on career exploration and
138 engagement.

139

Method

140 *Participants.* Respondents included 50 male and 50 female collegiate level NCAA athletes (18-
141 23 years old), along with one individual who did not identify gender ($n=101$). Athletes were
142 invited to complete a survey through a sport and exercise Listserv as well as through personal
143 contacts authors had with athletic departments around the nation. The sample included
144 individuals involved in both team and individual sports with a racially/ethnically diverse
145 population sample. Individuals were drawn from institutions across various regions of the United
146 States at the Division I level. Approval to conduct this study was obtained from the researchers'
147 university and consent was obtained from each athlete. The majority (53%) of respondents
148 identified as Caucasian, 43% identified as African American/Black, 6% identified as Hispanic,
149 and 3% identified as Mixed Race (unspecified). In terms of scholastic year of enrollment, 28%
150 identified as juniors, 23% identified as sophomores, 20% responded as freshman, 20% as

151 seniors, 5% as fifth year seniors, and 3% as graduate students. The average GPA reported was
152 3.42 ($SD= 1.07$).

153 *Procedure.* Participants were contacted directly at athletic meetings (e.g., study halls) or via
154 email, and they were able to complete the survey on line. The questionnaire assessed the
155 following: demographic information, perceived motivational climate, athletic identity, and career
156 exploration and engagement.

157 *Measures.*

158 *Motivational Climate.* The motivational climate on athletes' teams was being measured
159 using the 21-item Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire (PMCSQ). The
160 PMCSQ was developed by Seifriz, Duda, and Chi (1994). This questionnaire assesses the extent
161 that athletes perceive the environment on their team as more task- or ego-involving. The PMCSQ
162 consists of items with a five-point Likert Scale. Athletes responded to the questions with a 5
163 point scale ranging from 1= "strongly disagree" to 5= "strongly agree". The PMCSQ has
164 demonstrated both factorial validity and internal reliability (Ntoumanis, 2012). The task-
165 involving scale has 12 items (e.g. "On this team, the coaches focus on skill improvement") and
166 the ego-involving scale has nine items (e.g. "The coaches favor some athletes over others").

167 *Caring Climate.* The caring climate on athletes' teams was measured using the 13-item,
168 Caring Climate in Sport Scale created by Newton, Fry, Watson, et al. (2007). The Caring
169 Climate Scale has demonstrated both factorial and internal reliability (Newton, Fry, Watson, et.
170 al, 2007). Examples of items include "Athletes feel they are treated with respect". Athletes
171 respond to the items with a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

172 *Athletic Identity.* The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) developed by Brewer,
173 Raalte, and Linder (1993) was employed to assess the extent that the athletes identify themselves
174 primarily by their athletic participation. The measure contains seven items rated on a 7-point
175 Likert scale, 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Mean scale scores were calculated.
176 Brewer, Raalte, and Linder found support for the reliability of the scale $\alpha=.89$. (e.g., I feel bad
177 about myself when I do poorly in sport.)

178 *Occupational Exploration and Engagement.* Occupational engagement and levels of
179 exploration was assessed with the Student Occupational Engagement Scale (EXPENG)
180 developed by Cox and Krieshok (2013). This scale examines the extent that individuals are
181 exploring and preparing for their future training and employment. Permission was obtained by
182 the researcher to utilize the student-OES for the study. The measure contains nine items and
183 participants responded to the items with a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 5
184 (very much like me). A sample item is, "I volunteer in an area that I find interesting".

185 *Career Decision Self-Efficacy.* Student athletes' feelings of self-efficacy were measured
186 using the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale created Betz and Taylor (2001; CDSSES). This
187 scale examines the extent to which individuals feel confident to enact in career decision making
188 and pursuit. This is a 25-item measure using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (no confidence at all)
189 to 5 (Complete confidence). A sample item was "Make a plan of your goals in the next five
190 years."

191

192

193 Statistical Analyses

194 The mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach reliability coefficients were calculated for
195 each of the scales. Next, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for each of the
196 variables measured. Further, canonical correlation analyses were conducted to examine the
197 relationship between the climate variables (caring, task, ego) to the career exploration and
198 engagement scale and athletic identity.

199 Results

200 Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated for each of the scales and
201 revealed acceptable values ($\geq .72$) Mean scores and standard deviations for each of the scales
202 were calculated and are presented in Table 1. In general, athletes perceived a moderately caring,
203 task-involving climate and moderately higher ego-involving climate. Further, athletes reported
204 possessing high athletic identity, and moderately high career self-efficacy (CDSSES) and
205 exploration/ engagement (EXPENG).

206 Pearson correlation analyses were conducted on the scales and are also presented in Table
207 1. Perceptions of a caring and task-involving climate were positively and significantly correlated
208 with athletes' sense of career self-efficacy (CDSSES) and exploration/engagement (EXPENG).
209 Perceptions of a task-involving climate were also positively and significantly associated with
210 levels of athletic identity (AIMS). Perceptions of an ego-involving climate were not significantly
211 associated with the AIMS, CDSSES, and EXPENG scores.

212 Canonical correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the
213 climate variables (i.e., caring, task, and ego) to athletic identity (AIMS), career self-efficacy

214 (CDSSES), and career exploration/engagement (EXPENG). Results revealed one significant
215 function [$L=.57$, $F(9) = 5.46$ ($p < .001$)]. The canonical correlation was .61 with 37% overlapping
216 variance (See Figure 1). Loadings revealed that perceptions of a high task-involving climate and
217 moderate caring climate were positively associated with athletes' athletic identity, career self-
218 efficacy, and career engagement.

219 Discussion

220 The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Division I athletes'
221 perceptions of the climate to their athletic identity and career exploration and engagement.
222 Findings were in line with the hypotheses and previous literature in that athletes' perceptions of a
223 task-involving climate were positively associated with their athletic identity, along with their
224 career exploration and engagement.

225 These results suggest that the presence of a caring and task-involving climate may be
226 critical for the development of athletes as both students and holistic human beings. Creating this
227 positive and supportive environment appears to set the foundation necessary to assist athletes in
228 becoming well-rounded student-athletes, in alignment with the core mission of the NCAA.
229 Considering the small percentage of Division I athletes who continue their athletic career post
230 college, fostering an interest beyond athletic endeavors is important for optimizing students'
231 lives after graduation and/or their athletic career termination. Research conducted by Beamon
232 (2012) and Stone (2012) suggest that many college athletes care little about their academic
233 pursuits while in college and give minor consideration to the major they select during these
234 formative years. Research suggests this occurs because these athletes' total and complete focus
235 was on their athletic performance and participation. These individuals find themselves in the

236 predicament of seeking future employment, too often without the proper training and preparation
237 that could have been obtained while they were in their collegiate years (Yukhymenko–Lescroart,
238 2014).

239 This study employed measures of self-efficacy and behaviors related to exploration and
240 engagement as they determine whether student-athletes felt confident in their career decision
241 making, and if they engaged in active behaviors with regard to their future pursuits. One may
242 posit in light of Busseri’s research (2011) that athletic involvement and identification could
243 result in a lack of focus on ulterior interests for many athletes. The finding that a caring and task-
244 involving climate correlated positively with both athletic identity and career exploration
245 measures suggests career exploration did not have to be at the expense of athletes’ sport
246 development. The findings suggest that coaches who foster a caring environment and who are
247 invested in their athletes’ total development and preparation for the future as opposed to only
248 their competitive outcomes provide a strong foundation for their athletes to explore careers and
249 future endeavors beyond sport. In contrast, coaches who create a climate focused solely on
250 performance outcomes may severely hamper their athletes’ development off the field.

251 This study included two measures of development beyond sport, a measure of athletes’
252 confidence that they can make good decisions related to their future careers, as well as a measure
253 assessing the extent that athletes engage in behaviors that will strengthen their ability to make
254 career decisions. These measures were positively correlated as expected, but together serve to
255 paint a picture of athletes’ interest, commitment, and confidence in pursuing life after their sport
256 careers end. The inclusion of both these measures is a strength of the study and offers support

257 that Division I athletes can engage in high level sport while pursuing a college education and
258 developing their career preparation capabilities.

259 While the hypotheses predicting a relationship between athletes' perceptions of the
260 climate on their teams to their investment in life after sport were supported, interestingly the
261 hypothesis that Division I athletes would report high athletic identity regardless of their
262 perceptions of the climate was not supported. Instead, athletes who perceived a higher task-
263 involving climate were significantly more likely to report higher levels of athletic identity than
264 those perceiving a lower task-involving climate, and a significant correlation did not emerge for
265 the relationship between athletes' perceptions of an ego-involving climate with athletic identity.
266 Many high level coaches would likely perceive that an ego-involving climate would be crucial
267 for instilling in athletes a strong sense of their identity as an athlete, but the findings revealed that
268 a positive and supportive climate was more likely to be associated with athletes' high athletic
269 identity. This finding is new to the sport psychology literature, and highlights another benefit to
270 coaches' creating a caring and task-involving climate that helps each athlete focus on reaching
271 his/her potential on and off the playing field/court.

272 This study is the first to examine Division I athletes' scores on the AIMS. The mean
273 score of athletic identity for respondents in this study was 5.8 on a 7-point scale which is higher
274 than scores reported in prior research. For example, Brewer (2010) reported a mean AIMS score
275 of 5.28 with Division II athletes, and Gapin (2011) reported a mean AIMS score of 3.79 with
276 recreational youth sport participants. It follows that as athletes age and participate at a higher
277 level of sport they would in turn report higher athletic identity. However, previous literature
278 suggested that high athletic identity may be associated with less value placed upon academic

279 pursuits (Beamon 2012; Stone, 2012; Killeya-Jones, 2005). The current findings, however, are in
280 distinct contrast and suggest that an environment which encourages athletes to focus on their
281 personal effort and improvement and cooperation with teammates, can also foster the
282 development of higher athletic identity as well as greater interest in exploring future career
283 interests and pursuits. The current findings suggest that an ego-involving coaching climate may
284 be counterproductive to a healthy sense of athletic identification.

285 In addition to the AIMS scores, it is also noteworthy to consider the climate scales scores
286 in light of supplementary research. Published research examining motivational climate with
287 Division I athletes is missing from the sport psychology literature making comparison across
288 studies difficult. However, it is valuable to compare the Division I athletes' scores to those found
289 in youth sport research, where the caring and task-involving climate scores typically are
290 considerably higher than the ego-involving scale scores. Iwasaki and Fry (2013) recently
291 surveyed two samples of youth sport participants, finding that with each sample the caring and
292 task-involving climate mean scores were in the 4+ range (i.e., on a 5-point scale), whereas the
293 ego-involving climate scores were much closer to 2. In contrast, the Division athletes of the
294 present study reported scores of 3.6-3.9, with the ego-involving scale having the highest mean
295 score. While it is not necessarily surprising that the ego-involving climate would be high with
296 this population, it is important to note that research is consistently identifying the benefits of
297 athletes' perceiving a positive and supportive climate (i.e., caring and task-involving) on their
298 sport teams. The results of this study suggest that the strongest messages athletes are receiving
299 center on their performance and competition outcomes, though it could prove beneficial for
300 coaching messages to instead further emphasize their personal effort and improvement.

301 The fact that climate scores recorded highest for the ego-involving perceived
302 motivational climate is likely indicative of the highly competitive and stressful nature of
303 Division I sport. Many coaches' jobs are dependent upon their athletes outperforming others, so
304 the emphasis on winning has traditionally been part of high level sport. However, ego-involving
305 climates in some ways lead to outcomes that are counter-productive to winning and setting
306 athletes up to perform at their highest potential. Hogue (2011) found that participants in an ego-
307 involving climate learning to juggle experienced significantly greater cortisol stress response
308 than did participants in a caring and task-involving climate. Long term cortisol spikes have been
309 associated with numerous detrimental outcomes (Hogue, 2011; Gustafsson, 2013). In a similar
310 vein, Gustafsson et al. (2013) reported that stress contributed to adolescent soccer players'
311 emotional and physical exhaustion. Certain levels of stress are inevitable in the arena of athletics
312 though this research raises the possibility that a caring and task-involving climate could provide
313 athletes with a buffer between these stressors and other facets of life such as post-collegiate
314 pursuits. Athletes that sustain perpetual stress accompanied with a lack of social support may
315 experience decreased motivation and an increased likelihood for injury or extended rehab time
316 (Isoard-Gauthier, 2013). Common stressors that athletes must deal with include having new
317 talented recruits join the team, having to adjust to coaching changes, and experiencing illness,
318 injury, and poor seasonal performances. Dealing with such stressors over time in the absence of
319 those caring and task-involving climate features can prove as a deterrent to the prospective goals
320 outlined by NCAA participation for student-athletes.

321 This study was a first to examine the relationship of Division I athletes' perceptions of
322 the climate to their athletic identity and career exploration, and it is not without limitations. First,

323 a larger sample size would have been preferred, but gaining access to Division I athletes is
324 challenging, and once obtained, it is difficult to identify athletes who will take time out of their
325 busy schedules to complete a survey. A second limitation is that the sample size did not allow for
326 analyses based on specific sports, gender, race, academic classification, and context (e.g., win-
327 loss record, point in season). A third limitation is that the data collection occurred at a single
328 point in time, and surveying the athletes at more than one point in the season would be valuable.

329 This study directs the path for many interesting avenues of additional research. While
330 NCAA collegiate sport is huge in the United States, very little sport psychology research has
331 been conducted with athletes, particularly at the Division I level. A growing body of literature on
332 motivational climate suggests there may be tremendous benefits to athletes who experience a
333 caring and task-involving climate. However, supplementary research is needed examining a host
334 of variables, such as the dynamics of the climate across different sports (team vs. individual;
335 revenue vs. nonrevenue), potential gender differences, scholarship status, and division levels
336 (i.e., I, II, and III). Achievement Goal Perspective Theory would predict that a caring and task-
337 involving climate would be beneficial regardless of these varying factors but further research is
338 needed (Nichols, 1989). Another interesting area of inquiry would be examining the specific
339 behaviors that coaches engage in that are interpreted by athletes as being indicators of a more
340 caring and task-involving versus ego-involving climate. Such research could employ qualitative
341 and/or observational methods. It would be beneficial to examine both the coaches and athletes'
342 perspectives of how the team climate is created and the resulting outcomes. Specific to this
343 study, it would be worthwhile to examine how coaches convey to athletes that they are invested
344 in future development and lives outside of sport. It would also be of interest to conduct

345 longitudinal interviews with former collegiate athletes in the years following their NCAA
346 participation. Lastly, future research might examine the relationship between athletes'
347 perceptions of the climate on their teams to their self-reported stress levels and actual
348 physiological responses.

349 In summary, this study revealed a relationship between Division I athletes' perceptions of
350 the climate on their sport teams to their athletic identity and career exploration. The findings
351 support prior research (Roberts, 2012; Stebbings, 2012) highlighting benefits of positive
352 coaching through creation of a caring and task-involving climate, which in turn can foster
353 individual development as both students and athletes.

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- 436

437 Table 1

438

	CARE	TASK	EGO	AIMS	EXPENG	CDESES
CARE	1.00					
TASK	.58***	1.00				
EGO	-.41***	-0.17*	1.00			
AIMS	0.20*	0.35***	0.12	1.00		
EXPENG	0.39***	0.30***	-0.16	.252*	1.00	
CDESES	0.37***	0.41***	-0.19*	0.09	.554**	1.00
MEAN	3.60	3.84	3.91	5.76	3.74	3.75
SD	0.83	0.53	0.57	0.81	0.70	0.63
ALPHAS	0.95	0.74	0.82	0.72	0.88	0.94

439 *Pearson Correlations between Perceived Motivational Climate, Career Exploration and*
440 *Engagement, Career Decision Self-Efficacy, and Athletic Identity.*

441 *Note. *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01*

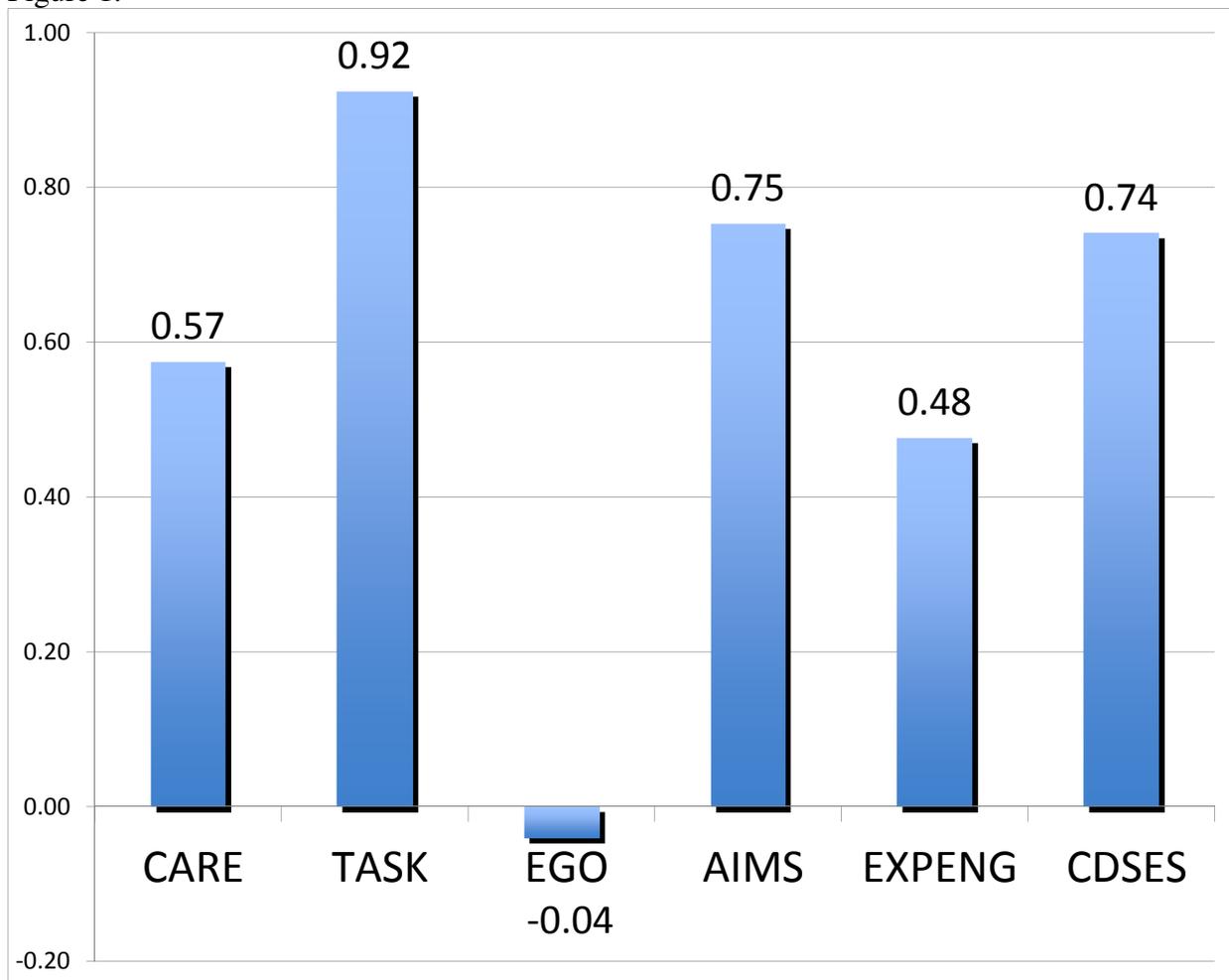
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446 Figure 1.



447

448 *Figure 1. Canonical Relationships between climate variables (Care, Task, and Ego) to athletic*
449 *identity (AIMS), career exploration and engagement (EXPENG), and career self-efficacy*
450 *(CDSSES).*

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457 **Appendix A**

458 **Extended Literature Review**

459

460

461 **Introduction**

462 Individual identity is a construct of different internal and external systems which
463 interplay with one another to represent the notion of “self”. This formation of “self” is
464 determined by social and psychological factors which in turn form a conglomerate of how
465 individuals internalize who they are and who they decide to project to the outside world. At its
466 core, identity has the ability to create a sense of cohesion or dissonance, camaraderie or conflict,
467 harmony or discord. Identity provides a manner in which individuals can form bonds and create
468 social interactions in order to ensure survival at a basic level, and at complex levels it provides a
469 sense of inclusion and belonging. As aptly described by Kleiber and Kirshnit (1991) this process
470 involves “intentionality of the individual in being a producer of his or her own development”.
471 Individuals can choose to adopt a certain persona and identify a group to which they gravitate
472 towards. The topic of foreclosure in regards to athletics and identity begs the question of what
473 occurs when an individual is not necessarily the primary locus of control in this developmental
474 process, and how this potentially results in the premature advent of identity commitment. This
475 question is particularly salient as it prompts the question of how this premature commitment and
476 early stage foreclosure can impact the individual on a holistic level.

477

478 **Identity Formation**

479 According to Klimstra et al. in their study of adolescents at various developmental
480 phases, there are three key components that contribute towards the development of one's
481 personal identity. These three factors are reconsideration, in depth exploration, and lastly
482 commitment (Klimstra et al., 2010). Klimstra introduce the idea of the identity status paradigm
483 devised by Marcia (1966), who elaborates upon the constructs of reconsideration and
484 commitment. For Marcia's framework exploration is selection of the most prominent and
485 pertinent factors for self-construct, and in turn, construction is the implementation of these
486 factors to form a holistic "character". From this foundation Marcia posits that in the identity
487 development process there are four discernible identity oriented outcomes. The first of the four
488 products is termed moratorium. Moratorium is characterized by high levels of exploration, with
489 no distinctive commitment. The next outcome is diffusion which is best defined by low levels of
490 exploration and in turn low levels of commitment. The next two constructs appear to be the most
491 salient and applicable when exploring the literature regarding general identity and athletic
492 identity formation. The first of this dichotomy is identity achievement which is characterized by
493 high levels of exploration resultant in high commitment. The converse of achievement is
494 foreclosure, which is characterized by little varied exploration and discernibly high levels of
495 commitment. The composite of these levels of exploration and commitment can lead to the
496 development of both identity dimensions and identity status. Identity status is qualified as a shift
497 between diffusion, which is less functional and adaptive, towards achievement, i.e. the ideal. The
498 idea of identity statuses fall in line most with Erikson's construct of identity development.

499 Klimstra et al. (1998) carried out their research focusing primarily upon the expansion
500 of the framework provided by Erikson, reasoning that identity formation is a progressive

501 developmental shift that primarily occurs between adolescence and adulthood, becoming most
502 solidified once one reaches early adulthood. This belief system functions under the identity
503 dimension premise adding the construct of reconsideration to the previously devised factors of
504 commitment and in-depth exploration. In order to quantifiably assess these markers, researchers
505 developed a multitude of scales. The scale accepted by Klimstra et al. as most representative of
506 how to assess these stages was the U-MICS or Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments
507 Scale (Crocetti et al. 2008). The U-MICS is a revised version of the Utrecht-Groningen Identity
508 Development Scale, U-GIDS, (Meeus, 1996) which contained factors concerning commitment
509 and exploration. The U-MICS is accepted as an enhanced and ameliorated scale as it considers
510 exploration not only for initial identity formation, but also explores the implications of
511 reconsideration while one is attempting to solidify an image of self. Reconsideration is depicted
512 as a dimension of exploration, however what differentiates the two is the time in development at
513 which one occurs versus the other. With these dimensions exploration is the act of investigating
514 and weighing the merit of the commitments one has chosen, whereas reconsideration involves
515 weighing current commitments in comparison to other potential venues open for exploration and
516 pursuit. At the micro level reconsideration can be immediately injurious or damaging to the
517 internal stability of an individual, typically adolescent's, psyche. Reconsideration does not mesh
518 well with individuals' inherent system of believing that which we value should be correct and
519 true because we have dedicated energy to said end. Crocetti argues however that this journey of
520 self-discovery is imperative and the reconsideration is necessary for adequate and extensive
521 exploration to occur to ensure an individual does indeed choose the most fitting and personalized
522 composite identity. One factor that can serve to propel or thwart the development of the
523 reconsideration dimension is external factors. External factors can include family, friends,

524 coaches, or any other individuals who the individual perceives to be a large source of acceptance
525 and importance.

526 The consensus in literature concerning identity formation is that as an individual's levels
527 of identity maturation increase, and identity achievement approaches, the level of commitment to
528 said identity increases. In-depth exploration of factors that could contribute towards this chosen
529 identity increases as well; conversely the levels of reconsideration and exploration of other
530 territories begin to decrease. With this construct in mind, the level of applicability in terms of the
531 dangers or nuances of premature foreclosure could become apparent. This notion could become
532 particularly salient if the stage of exploration decreases at an early stage of life, as it could cease
533 or disrupt the possibility for healthy construction of commitment and potential reconsideration in
534 regards to formation of the self. Due to changes in social norms such as postponed marriage
535 timing, post-secondary educations, etc. there is a hypothesis that the identity achievement
536 process may be delayed to an extent as theorized by Busseri et al. (2011). Knowledge that there
537 is an option to de-commit from one pursuit is something many individuals are able to
538 developmentally realize relatively early in life; however this is not the case for individuals who
539 prematurely foreclose on a specific identity. Another issue which can arise from lack of
540 reconsideration and excessive in-depth exploration of one facet of identity; a potential rise in
541 singularity of importance placed upon that one personal construct. This can thus result in
542 diminished levels of satisfaction if said construct of self does not pan out in the manner in which
543 one may expect. This type of early or premature foreclosure can become most prevalent in fields
544 where specialization is almost a necessity at a certain level, for example athletics.

545 **Identity Foreclosure vs. Identity Achievement**

546 Typical identity achievement occurs around adolescence and solidifies around the stage
547 of early adulthood. Typically identity is developed through overall assessments of self and values
548 and takes on a more global perspective according to Brewer et al. (1993). The literature supports
549 the notion that individuals compartmentalize different versions of self in relation to a variety of
550 domains. In youth there are a basic amount of constructs with which one assesses and affiliates
551 themselves. As time progresses one's competence and comfort with each construct allows an
552 individual to gravitate and identify most with specific paradigms. This developmental process
553 typically results in identity formation. This diminishment and selection of most relevant domains
554 occurs as individuals perceive achievement and success within a specific category or lack
555 thereof.

556 The issue of identity foreclosure occurs when individuals determine there is a
557 substantially significant level of success in one domain, and in turn neglects to explore other
558 potential areas of identification and self-discovery. Individuals can assess the overall value of a
559 given domain by determining whether there is a level of competence present, and by assessing
560 how this domain impacts self-esteem, affect or mood, and overall motivation. If individuals feel
561 that a specific area of focus or membership is not providing the expected returns or outcomes,
562 and the sense of competence or belonging is challenged, this will result in psychological turmoil
563 and a schism of sorts between what they believe they should be and actually are exemplifying
564 and enacting.

565 **Athletic Identity Formation**

566 A summation of the development of an identity profoundly based upon one's activity
567 level and athleticism is best encapsulated by Eldridge (1983) stating that many individuals

568 ascribe a great deal of psychological importance to their involvement in sport and exercise. The
569 identity of athletes is typically a composite of internal and external factors, which can many
570 times be described not only as factors, but pressures as well.

571 Identification as an athlete functions on the personal level as a label one can ascribe to
572 themselves, but it can also serve as a way to label one's social role and construct. Astle refers to
573 this form of labeling as a manner of applying "occupational self-image" (1986). These different
574 types of self-assessment are the result of applying self-description in terms relative to how others
575 see or perceive an individual. Many times an individual will engage in athletics in an exploratory
576 manner, whether self-motivated or imposed by an external force. A large determinant of whether
577 in-depth exploration of athletic identity will occur is based upon the initial outcomes and
578 competency one experiences, and the appraisal of said performance from the outside world. This
579 rationale stems from the Cooley "looking glass self" described in Brewer et al. (1993).
580 Individuals construct an identity based upon the assessments and appraisals provided by parents,
581 friends, coaches, media, or even at times rivals.

582 A positive outcome of athletic identity formation as opposed to foreclosure is evident in
583 the fact that an individual identity is created. Individuals can feel as if they are a part of a whole,
584 and a sense of belonging and comfort can be instilled. When developed properly, athletic
585 identification can enable social interaction and increase levels of confidence. The issue is how to
586 ensure the athletic identity is not the only manner in which individuals are able to derive these
587 factors. When individuals feel they are trapped in the facet of athletics and sport, there is a level
588 of danger in that a schism from truly believing in that identity could cause immense emotional
589 and psychological distress. There was once an argument that the narrow focus upon individuals'

590 sport and its related activities could be interpreted as a positive outcome; however, with further
591 exploration, such a narrow schema became more closely associated with foreclosure. While this
592 could have immediate benefits, in terms of long term observations, the level benefit can be called
593 into question.

594 **Outcomes of Athletic Foreclosure**

595 Within the university student-athlete schema premature foreclosure can result in a variety
596 of detrimental external outcomes and conflicting internal assessments. As analyzed by Woodruff
597 and Schallert, motivation and self-perception can perform a precarious dance resulting in a sense
598 of diminished internal locus of control and an overwhelming sense of incomplete function in
599 both major identity roles (Woodruff & Schallert, 2008). For many there is an expectation of
600 “success” in daily life; however where that achievement occurs can arise from a variety of
601 avenues and the level of pressure placed upon succeeding can vary. In terms of manners of
602 success measurement for the student-athlete, there is a high level of expectation placed upon not
603 only success in the academic arena, but the arena of sport as well. There is typically a higher
604 level of variability in terms of academic expectations for the student-athlete in comparison to the
605 “normal” student, which at times can increase the self-imposed pressure by the student athlete
606 (Woodruff& Schallert, 2008).

607 When dealing with a threat to this identity, for example a devastating and potentially
608 career-ending injury, not only is the physical-self impaired, the mental dimensions of the self are
609 also debilitated. Research conducted by Brewer et al. aimed to determine if anterior cruciate
610 ligament (ACL) tears and surgery held significant impact on the overall perception of self and
611 personal identity assessment. When an individual derives a sense of self from an activity as time

612 consuming as athletics, the ability to parse out other parts of what is personally important and
613 defining can be overlooked. If an athlete suffers from an event which can remove the factor in
614 life that is the base for almost or potentially all personal appraisal, the likely for destructive
615 thoughts and behaviors can be heightened.

616 Brewer et al. found that when a potential threat to the identity as athlete was presented,
617 divestment appeared to be the typical coping approach. The issue at hand is that divestment is
618 not counterbalanced with investment into another portion of self. Nor is it offset by the
619 development of additional aspects of self. If the exploratory phase of identity development is
620 halted as a result of early occurrence of foreclosure, divestment and removal of athletics can
621 prove especially problematic if the individual does not possess another medium through which
622 they are able to perceive who they are as an individual.

623 Brewer, Selby, Linder, and Pettipas (1999) found that athletic identity is a trait and
624 dispositional-like tendency and that they were more inclined to gravitate towards this
625 characteristic description of self in an exclusive manner. This tendency can lead to poor
626 adjustment and coping towards unforeseen situations which could potentially challenge their
627 framework of athletic identification. Brewer et al. also found that as certain athlete's
628 achievements, or perceived achievements, diminished they began to buffer against said effect by
629 distancing themselves from the level of identification they felt towards being a student athlete
630 (1999). This type of disengagement occurs most commonly with individuals dealing with issues
631 of esteem or perception. If an individual does not agree with an inherent portion of self, they are
632 apt to ignore or attempt to distance from that schema of identification in order to diminish
633 psychological discomfort. This behavior is typically an action of preservation of self-concept,

634 thus enabling a healthier personal perception; however issues arise when the distancing from that
635 self does not possess an alternative identity or group of identities to fall back upon. This
636 preservation of self-construct allows for the maintenance of self-esteem and positive self-regard,
637 however once again this is not applicable for the process of long-term distancing, such as in the
638 case of career retirement or unanticipated injury.

639 The literature has found a trend in this maneuver of psychological self-preservation in the
640 sports of football, volleyball, track, basketball, and field hockey in both male and female
641 population samples. In turn, additional success in one's career past a certain point does not
642 necessarily ensure a heightened identification with the given athletic identity role. Many
643 hypothesize that past a certain point the success is a given expectation thus after a certain point
644 an athlete's perception of self is so enmeshed with their sport that there is not a subsequent
645 construct with which they can identify. With early foreclosure of athletic identity, the importance
646 of discovering a "well-rounded" amount of interests and potential realms of personality
647 development are negated as a result of both internal and external factors. This returns to the
648 stages of Klimstra et al.'s identity formation in that the individual devotes excessive energy to in-
649 depth exploration of athletics and related components are thus negated from their personal
650 foundation of important items to explore. This in-depth exploration progresses to commitment,
651 which then results in a minimized opportunity to reconsider other constructs with which to
652 identify.

653 Specializations of sport at early stages of identity formation provide an increased
654 opportunity for foreclosure and lack of reconsideration over the progression of an individual's
655 lifespan. Erikson deemed identity formation as the primary developmental stage during

656 adolescence; however, with the case of foreclosure and specialization, in many cases a solidified
657 unilateral identity has formed prematurely. This formation is best described as an exceedingly
658 high level of commitment with minimized level of desire for exploration. The earlier this event
659 occurs, resultant lack of exposure to other potential areas of self-expansion can lead to
660 difficulties if said identity must be abandoned for any given reason, especially with lack of
661 preparation. In the instance of injury, individuals with high levels of athletic identity are subject
662 to feel the injury has left not only physical damage, but damage to their levels of perceived self-
663 worth and self-identification (Brewer, 1993). Diminished self-complexity will have an inverse
664 relationship with subjective well-being, and a parallel relationship with levels of depression and
665 self-esteem. Termination of career can also possess similar if not parallel outcomes as injury if
666 athletes do not have time to expand upon and investigate other facets of their personal selves.

667 Athletic identity foreclosure can prove to be a negative risk factor for a multitude of
668 negative outcomes in the event an athlete does unfortunately become injured. A level of
669 disconcerting irony present in literature is the idea that athletic identity foreclosure can leave an
670 individual more susceptible to overtraining and injury or diminished performance, both of which
671 then present an attack on their personal identity schema (Brewer et al., 1993). The actions which
672 an athlete may undertake during the recovery process after an injury can also prove detrimental
673 to overall physical along with psychological well-being. If an individual overextends or strains
674 themselves as a result of believing they are failing because they are not on par with prior
675 performance, they have a better chance of permanent damage, which then can cause even more
676 psychological distress.

677 From a professional perspective approximately one percent of student-athletes can
678 continue on to pursue their sport of choice at the professional level. With this percentage in
679 mind, it is safe to assume that retirement from sport at competitive levels early in the athlete's
680 life course is more likely than not. Even at the elite and professional level the advent of
681 professional retirement is earlier than for the average career. With these factors in mind, if an
682 individual is not prepared and holds a high level of foreclosure in athletic identity, an abrupt
683 redefinition of self and interaction with society must occur. The exclusivity of being an athlete in
684 a given sport as the level of competition increases can only bolster the personal belief that the
685 base of one's self in its entirety should revolve around said sport. Beamon (2012) attempted to
686 address how social influences of the external world could provide increased stressors which
687 could help solidify the reliance athletes' possess upon their athletic identity and the construct
688 of self as a student-athlete in particular. Over the course of athletes' lifetime, individuals will
689 typically pick and choose certain portions of life and activities to which they will personally
690 adhere or gravitate towards. These individual items could include religion, familial roles,
691 personality, academia, hobbies, or occupation. An issue arises when individuals do not pick and
692 choose from this array and a portion of that lone construct falls apart for any given reason as
693 previously mentioned. At times this dependence upon a lone construct of self is arguably more a
694 product of individuals' environment and societal factors.

695 Beamon makes the argument that in the instance of identity construction for African-
696 American males, there is an emphasis placed early on upon athleticism, thus presenting an
697 inherent disadvantage in attaining complete identity achievement. Beamon argues the deficit of
698 African-American male athletes, specifically in basketball and football, attaining adequate

699 identity achievement is also a result of media reinforcements. Within this specific population the
700 belief is that the community, peers, and media socialize these individuals to believe that they are
701 their capability on the track, field, court, etc. Because of this emphasis there is not a capability to
702 devise the aforementioned “cushion” to fall back upon in hard times, and thus in life-change
703 events the self-concept is diminished. Reinforcement of norms and expectations begin at a very
704 early stage, and thus the potential for initial foreclosure can occur in certain instances prior to
705 adolescence. The development of a realistic sense of self can become stagnated as a result of
706 perceived superiority in a certain sport, and from there dimensional mobility becomes
707 progressively difficult as the individuals increase in age.

708 An over exaggeration upon physicality has been a cultural and societal norm associated
709 with certain people groups, such as African-Americans, and as a result individual identity, and
710 many times masculinity become closely affiliated with athleticism for said people groups. Sport
711 becomes a determining factor from a very early stage as to whether an individual will be
712 accepted or rejected by their in-group. According to Harrison et al. (2011) African-American
713 males were apt to score higher on AIMS than their Caucasian male counterparts, which led to the
714 Beamon study. The focus of said study was to highlight the notion that identity foreclosure can
715 become increasingly difficult to cope with when the perceived social identity and self-identity
716 are both dependent solely or maximally upon sport. In the instance of Beamon’s sample, the
717 themes of self-identity, social identity, and impact of foreclosure on retirement were most salient
718 and had the highest levels of reoccurrence. With this qualitative sample individuals interviewed
719 felt that their identity was shaped for them at a very young age, thus returning to locus of control.
720 For many individuals involved in sport at an early age, there is a common theme of following the

721 instruction of adults, particularly coaches. Just as with other instances of development, athletes'
722 self-construct is a result of input from peers, parents, guardians, educators, and coaches. Athletes
723 feel that from an early stage in life they are expected to participate and excel in sport and thus
724 much of their energy should be devoted to such. The individuals repeatedly returned to the
725 notion that their identity was not necessarily something they possessed, but instead something
726 with which they were imposed. One individual interviewed in the Beamon work (2012) stated
727 that from the age of twelve he knew it was "us" and "them", and when asked to elaborate he
728 stated that "smart people and White people" constituted "them". In turn the same gentleman felt
729 that almost as early as he could remember "us" constituted the "jocks, Blacks, and the team".

730 Some of the individuals interviewed felt that athleticism was literally all they possessed
731 and could not fathom another role they could play in society, highlighting the social identity
732 factor. This devotion to one specific identity prevented said individual from contemplating the
733 possibility of career searching and development. This athlete felt there was literally no other
734 venue to explore and in researching other career options he could miss an opportunity to play at
735 the professional level. To some of these individuals they felt athletics had been present and was
736 an equally important influence in comparison to their parents or guardians. A common
737 occurrence for many individuals interviewed who left the sports arena entirely, had individuals
738 inquire regularly about their athletic achievements due to familiarity or stature. Even if they left
739 the field it still figuratively followed these athletes over the course of their lives. Many of these
740 individuals also revealed that their family members fixated upon athletic achievements from an
741 ego-oriented perspective thus only reinforcing the foreclosure they experienced.

742 At the collegiate level of athletics the emphasis of maintaining balance and being “well-
743 rounded” could arguably be considered impossible given the environment of certain programs.
744 Emphasis is placed upon being an exemplary student and a stellar athlete, however as examined
745 by Killeya-Jones (2005), there are certain restrictions that make it impossible to actively achieve
746 this balance, especially considering the backgrounds and mental “grooming” which has likely
747 occurred prior to their arrival to collegiate sport. At times the reason the “student” factor is
748 present is because the “athlete” title opened a window of opportunity which may not have
749 originally been present. In these instances in particular it would follow that emphasis should be
750 placed on using that time frame to teach and expand upon potential areas of interest, but instead
751 the reverse typically occurs.

752 The research of Beamon and Killeya-Jones, along with others, reiterates the notion that
753 life of the student-athlete is encompassed almost entirely by other student-athletes and sport on a
754 whole. The day revolves around their sport, practice, and competition, conversations with one
755 another typically revolves around sport and in many instances communication with “civilians” or
756 “regular” student’s centers around athletics. At this stage it is easier for these individuals to
757 accept the construct placed in front of them and not consider other facets that could be of interest
758 as to an extent there is no time if not minimal time to do so. In addition, the identity to adhere to
759 that is most readily available also appears to provide the highest level of rewards or returns.
760 Killeya-Jones utilized the identity-discrepancy model to explain the internal conflicts which can
761 occur as a result of discord between athlete expectations, both internal and external. The
762 framework for this model focuses upon the idea that extensive foreclosure in one realm can work
763 to the further detriment of the identity “juggling” which must inherently occur as a student-

764 athlete. An exaggerated investment in the “athlete” facet of being a student-athlete can also enact
765 in a dangerous cyclical pattern in the realm of academics and stereotype threat (Stone, 2012).
766 Stone (2012) found that individuals on campus such as administrators, faculty, and non-athlete
767 students provided an overwhelming response when surveyed of regarding the student-athlete
768 population as “dumb jocks”. While Stone posits stereotype cue threat can be most detrimental to
769 college aged athletes, he believes the trigger for internal disquiet when hearing the term “student-
770 athlete” begins at a far earlier stage. Stone found that amongst the athletes surveyed, they began
771 to feel the term student-athlete began to have negative academic connotations as early as middle
772 school. When an individual enters the University setting believing that there is already a negative
773 connotation with their identity in certain environments, their academic performance can in turn
774 suffer.

775 As touched upon by one of the individuals interviewed in the Beamon work, at time of
776 the collegiate process, the student-athlete may not feel competent in anything aside from sport. If
777 this is the case then providing individuals with temporal and psychological resource restrictions
778 can only hinder overall levels of satisfaction and senses of self-efficacy. If an individual is
779 acclimated to ego-involving climates and is never taught to place importance upon task-
780 orientation this can easily lead to the aforementioned psychological schism and distress. With
781 this framework if a student athlete is placed in a situation where the stressors presented, in
782 essence the requirements of fulfilling academic and athletic endeavors, conflict with one another
783 and the resources necessary to cope are in constant contrast to one another a heightened level of
784 psychological identity oriented anguish can occur. This internal conflict would be difficult with
785 internalized and accepted identities for an individual with a high level of identity maturity and

786 low levels of foreclosure. This struggle is heightened for an individual who can not necessarily
787 reconcile one facet of demands being required with the self they personally perceive. With the
788 specific instance of the student-athlete, they may have sensed a certain level “identity
789 competency” in earlier stages of life and in turn once they are thrown into a novel set of
790 expectations that do not necessarily correlate with their personal repertoire of qualifications and
791 identification a sense of unrest arises.

792 In order to minimize the effect of Identity Discrepancy a sense of integration and
793 convergence of roles is necessary. This integration could potentially translate into a theory that
794 the convergence between perception of self as both a “student” and “athlete” can expand on the
795 individual’s self-perception and thus buffer against any potential “failures” which may have
796 elicited more negative responses when only one sense of worth was placed upon the athletic
797 identity. As soon as the athlete realizes that they are regarded as both a student and an athlete, a
798 sense of harmony can become resultant and they can in turn begin to minimize the levels of
799 stress felt in both arenas of life.

800 **Achievement Goal Perspective Theory**

801 A theoretical framework which could offset some of the shortcomings affiliated with high
802 athletic identity is Nicholls’ (1984, 1989) Achievement Goal Perspective theory. This framework
803 supports the notion that athletes at various levels can optimize their health, enjoyment,
804 performance, and overall wellbeing through sport, when created as a safe space and with an
805 overall positive coaching climate (Nicholls, 1984; 1989). According to Nicholls, individuals
806 perceive a motivational climate in achievement settings that can impact their motivational
807 responses. He identified two distinct climates: a task- and ego-involving climate, respectively. In

808 sport research, a task-involving climate is characterized by the coach valuing each athlete's
809 personal effort, improvement and mastery; encouraging cooperation among teammates; and
810 considering mistakes as part of the learning process. In turn, an ego-involving climate in sport is
811 characterized by a coach emphasizing the importance of competitive outcomes and normative
812 ability, creating rivalry among teammates, and punishing mistakes. Nicholls predicts that in a
813 task-involving climate where individuals are focused on their effort and improvement, and have
814 greater autonomy, they will display more adaptive motivational responses (e.g., effort,
815 persistence). In contrast, he warns of the potential detrimental effects on individuals in ego-
816 involving climates, as individuals have less control over normative comparisons in environments
817 where outcomes are the sole defining factor for success.

818 Recently, researchers have considered a third aspect of the climate, the extent that
819 athletes perceive a level of care and concern from coaches, staff and teammates. This research
820 has been explored in the realm of youth sport, physical activity, collegiate, and elite level sport.
821 A caring climate has been defined as an environment where everyone perceives that each
822 member of the group is treated with mutual kindness and respect, and feels a sense of comfort
823 and value (Newton, Fry et al, 2007). Research on caring in sport has stemmed from Noddings
824 philosophical approach to human development, as she suggested that being in a caring
825 environment is critical to optimal achievement and life experiences (Noddings, 2004).

826 Research in sport has supported the importance of creating a caring and task-involving
827 climate for athletes, as well as concerns about strong ego-involving climates. A caring climate
828 has been associated with a host of critical positive outcomes such as greater emotional
829 regulation, psychological wellbeing, and prosocial behaviors. Athletes who perceive a caring

830 climate have reported engaging in more caring behaviors with their teammates and coaches (Fry,
831 Gano-Overway 2010). Further, perceptions of a task-involving climate have consistently been
832 associated with higher levels of enjoyment, effort and overall intrinsic motivation (Keegan,
833 Spray & Lavallee 2010). In contrast, athletes perceiving an ego-involving climate have reported
834 the converse of these responses, such as lower effort and enjoyment and greater anxiety and
835 burnout (Isoard-Gauthier, Guillet-Descas, & Duda 2013). Taken together, this body of research
836 suggests that athletes who perceive a caring and task-involving climate on their teams are more
837 likely to experience optimal physical and psychological well-being.

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842 **Climate and Orientation in Relation to Athletic Identity**

843 In sport specific identity formation, an individual can place affective status, feeling of
844 esteem and self-worth, and reason for motivation within a framework heavily or solely based on
845 the premise of sport performance. If an individual is acclimated to ego-involving climates and is
846 never taught to place importance upon task-orientation this can easily lead to the aforementioned
847 psychological schism and distress. As best described by Brewer et al. “an individual with strong
848 athletic identity ascribes great importance to involvement in sport/exercise and is especially
849 attuned to self-perceptions in the athletic domain” (1993). For the individual described by
850 Brewer et al. there is an assumption that these self-perceptions are driven by outcomes and thus

851 the perceptions and judgments of worth or balanced upon the base of success or failure and
852 whatever manner they choose to define each of these constructs.

853 Within an ego-involving climate the primary focus is upon success, outcomes being
854 defined as winning and being the best, most elite, fastest, and strongest, etc. The issue with this is
855 that there is no way for everyone to accomplish this in the arena of sport, thus individuals are left
856 feeling denigrated and each “failure” is internalized as a blow to the psyche and identity. If an
857 individual does not possess other “buffers” to facilitate resilience after a perceived failure, it
858 could be theorized the time to regroup and rebound from the feeling of incompetence would be
859 exponentially higher as the athlete does not have other pieces of self from which they can draw a
860 sense of success and competency.

861 Wippert theorizes that when athletes are placed in premature career termination
862 situations, coaching can also play a significant role in player health outcomes (2008). Wippert
863 found that when athletes dealt with unforeseen circumstances that would remove them from their
864 professional careers, coaching climate determined how well they would cope with being
865 removed from a sport career. If coaches were not emotionally supportive in the time of and after
866 career termination, athletes were more likely to suffer from traumatic stress disorder symptoms.
867 Terminations which lacked support and discussion were viewed as socially disintegrative and
868 delayed the time necessitated by the athlete to actively cope and begin a process of progress into
869 other facets of life. With a lack of coaching support, individuals reported higher levels of stress,
870 anxiety, along with depressive symptoms. These facts appear intuitive in that they follow the
871 general schemas provided by research regarding coaching climates. It could then follow that the
872 coaches in the supportive group were more likely to interact with the athlete as more than an

873 athlete, both pre- and post-termination, thus allowing these athletes to examine themselves
874 outside the concept of their athletic identity.

875 With a caring and task-involving climate that promotes and fosters task-orientation, one
876 could posit there would be a higher level of resilience when coping with lack of perceived
877 success as the individual understands there are other factors within themselves that are valued
878 and appreciated. In addition, one could postulate that if an individual is working with a more task
879 focused orientation, they are less likely to possess a traditional outcome based perception of
880 success and thus the cushion to their psyche is further bolstered. A hearty barrier between the
881 developed identities of an athlete with various other facets could minimize the need for
882 reconsideration at later stages of development as there is less need to feel that said identity is
883 challenged by incompetency and lack of self-worth. Working with the same logic one could
884 minimize the threat of early retirement for any given reason or career ending injury using the
885 task-involving base. If an individual had to leave their athletic realm for a given reason, if they
886 are able to internalize and accept the notion that they are more than an athlete, performance, and
887 outcomes, the negative aforementioned consequences could be reduced.

888

889 **Measurement**

890 The manner in which individuals attempt to assess whether identity foreclosure versus
891 formation has occurred within athletics is a bit less concrete or substantial on a whole in
892 comparison to other fields such as vocational studies. The Perceived Importance Profile, or the

893 PIP, developed by Kendzierski, focused upon the importance of physical activity and exercise,
894 however it lacked applicability to the realm of competitive and athletes in particular (1988).

895 The scale of measurement with the highest level of consensus within the field does not
896 necessarily account for exploration and identity formation in other facets of life, thus providing a
897 realm for further elaboration and development. The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale, or
898 AIMS, is however the most applicable scale when attempting to examine at least a basic
899 construct of intensity or level of importance placed upon athletic identity for a given athlete. The
900 AIMS is a seven item scale reduced from ten items developed by Brewer et al. in 1993. This
901 scale provides a basic measurement of devotion to athleticism as a means of identifier for an
902 individual; however said scale works upon the assumption that a strong affiliation to the identity
903 of athlete excludes other realms of exploration and self-representation. The Athletic Identity
904 Measurement Scale includes items such as “I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport” or
905 “I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport” (Brewer, 1993).
906 This scale is a foundation or starting block from which practitioners can assess a basic level of
907 identity foreclosure in relation to athletics, and thus from there ideally work on expansion and
908 exploration so as to avoid these aforementioned outcomes.

909 **Conclusion**

910 Identifying with a particular group, organization, belief system, occupation, etc. can
911 prove to be beneficial and even necessary for human function. However, development of a
912 particular form of identity can possess polarized outcomes. When an individual becomes
913 excessively attached to one facet of self, and neglects to explore the assets they have to offer to
914 themselves or others, the issue of foreclosure arises. This rift in complete identity is a cause for

915 concern due to a multitude of factors including adjustment deficiencies, potential physical and
916 mental health risks, and lack in feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. In order to be considered a
917 holistic and functional individual, it is imperative to develop an internal locus of control when
918 considering passions, pursuits, and identity. For this to become a possibility for any individual
919 pursuing athletics from the kindergarten to professional level, emphasis must be placed not upon
920 accomplishments and success being marked by pay grades, but instead a focus upon a well-
921 rounded exploration of interests and celebration of any personal advancement regardless of
922 whether it is in the sports arena or the arena of life.

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1008 **APPENDIX B**

1009 **APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL**

1010 **April 18, 2014**

1011 **Kiira Poux**

1012 **Dear Kiira Poux:**

1013 **On 4/18/2014, the IRB reviewed the following submission:**

1014 **Type of Review: Initial Study**

1015 **Title of Study: Relationship between Motivational Climate, Athletic Identity and Career Exploration**

1016 **Investigator: Kiira Poux**

1017 **IRB ID: STUDY00001016**

1018 **Funding: None**

1019 **Grant ID: None**

1020 **The IRB approved the study on 4/18/2014.**

1021 **1. Any significant change to the protocol requires a modification approval prior to altering the project.**

1022 **2. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new**
1023 **investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.**

1024 **3. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.**

1025 **4. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed**
1026 **consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.**

1027

1028 **Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:**

1029 **<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm>**

1030

1031 **You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the “Documents” tab in**
1032 **eCompliance.**

1033

1034 **Sincerely,**

1035

1036 **Stephanie Dyson Elms, MPA**

1037 **IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus**

1038 **APPENDIX C**1039 **Career Decision Self Efficacy Scale**

1040

1041 INSTRUCTIONS: For each statement below, please read carefully and indicate how much
 1042 confidence you have that you could accomplish each of these tasks by marking your answer
 1043 according to the key. Mark your answer by filling in the correct circle on the answer sheet.

1044

1045

HOW MUCH CONFIDENCE DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU COULD:	No Confidence At All	Very Little Confidence	Moderate Confidence	Much Confidence	Complete Confidence
1. Use the internet to find information about occupations that interest you.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Select one major from a list of potential majors you are considering.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Make a plan of your goals for the next five years.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Determine the steps to take if you are having academic trouble with an aspect of your chosen major.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Accurately assess your abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Select one occupation from a list of potential occupations you are considering.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Determine the steps you need to take to successfully complete your chosen major.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Persistently work at your major or career goal even when you get frustrated.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Determine what your ideal job would be.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Find out the employment trends for an occupation over the next ten years.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Choose a career that will fit your preferred lifestyle.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Prepare a good resume.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Change majors if you did not like your first choice.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Decide what you value most in an occupation.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Find out about the average yearly earnings of people in an occupation.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Make a career decision and then not worry whether it was right or wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Change occupations if you are not satisfied with the one you enter.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Talk with a person already employed in a field you are interested in.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Choose a major or career that will fit your interests.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Identify employers, firms, and institutions relevant to your career possibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Find information about graduate or professional schools.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Successfully manage the job interview process.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Identify some reasonable major or career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choice.	1	2	3	4	5

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1047 **Caring Climate Scale**

<p>Read each statement and think about how much you believe the statement describes your team environment. Then choose the answer that shows</p> <p>How much you agree or disagree with each statement.</p> <p>On my team...</p>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) Athletes are treated with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
2) Coaches respect athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
3) Coaches are kind to athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
4) Coaches care about athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
5) Athletes feel that they are treated fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
6) Coaches try to help athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
7) Coaches want to get to know all the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
8) Coaches listen to athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
9) Teammates like athletes for who they are.	1	2	3	4	5
10) Coaches accept athletes for who they are.	1	2	3	4	5
11) Athletes feel comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
12) Athletes feel safe.	1	2	3	4	5
13) Athletes feel welcome every day.	1	2	3	4	5

1049 **Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire (PMCSQ)**

1050 Directions: As you read each of the following statements think about your experience with
 1051 coaches and staff. Please choose the number on the 5-point scale listed below that best describes
 1052 how you truly feel. There is no right or wrong answer, so please answer honestly.

On this team . . .					
	Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Agree
1. Athletes feel good when they do better than their teammates.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Trying hard is rewarded.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Athletes are punished for mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The coaches focus on skill improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Athletes are taken out of the game/ off the field for mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Each athlete's improvement is important.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Out-playing teammates is important.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Athletes try to learn new skills.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Coaches pay most of their attention to "the stars".	1	2	3	4	5

10. Athletes are encouraged to work on their weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Doing better than others is important.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The coaches want athletes to try new skills.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The coaches favor some athletes over others.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Athletes like competing against good teams.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Athletes are encouraged to outplay other teammates.	1	2	3	4	5
16. All athletes play an important role on the team.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Every athlete wants to be the one with the most points, goals, yards, best time, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
18. All athletes get playing time.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Only the top athletes “get noticed”.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Athletes are afraid to make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Only a few athletes can be the “stars”.	1	2	3	4	5

Choose the answer that shows how much you agree or disagree with each statement.							
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I enjoy being on this team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I think I am pretty good at my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I put a lot of effort into my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It is important to me to do well at my sport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel tense while playing my sport,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. I try very hard in my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Participating in my sport is fun.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I would describe my sport as very interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I am very satisfied with my performance in my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I feel pressured while participating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

in my sport.							
11. I am anxious while participating in my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I do not try very hard in my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. While on this team, I think about how much I enjoy this sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I feel pretty competent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I am very relaxed while participating in my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. I am pretty skilled at my sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. My sport does not hold my attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I can't do my sport very well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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1062 Student Occupational Engagement Scale (EXPENG)

How well does each statement describe you?	Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Agree
1. I talk about my career choices with family or friends.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have contact with people in fields I find interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I gain hands on experience that I might use in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I volunteer in an area that I find interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I attend presentations or talks related to a career I might find interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I ask people in social settings about what they do for a living or what they are interested in doing.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I visit places I am interested in working so I can learn more about them.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I pursue opportunities in life because I just know they will come in handy.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I do lots of things that are interesting to me.	1	2	3	4	5

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1065 **Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS)**

Please choose which corresponds most closely to your personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences.	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. I consider myself an athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I have many goals related to sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Most of my friends are athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Sport is the most important part of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1066