ASSESSING COACH AND ATHLETIC DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SOCIAL MISSION OF HIGH SCHOOL SPORT

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

High school sport has long been considered a viable space to promote student-athlete psychosocial development (e.g., life skills and character). So much so that a focus on promoting life skills development is included in the mission statements of education-based athletics organizations, such as high school state associations. Research supports that life skills development can happen from high school sport participation, but no studies have explored coach and athletic director perceptions of their responsibility to help fulfill this mission. Therefore, the overall purpose of this study was to assess how coaches and athletic directors in the state of Michigan currently perceive their responsibility for promoting student-athlete psychosocial development, and additionally begin to test possible job characteristics that may predict levels of responsibility in this area.

The study sampled 191 coaches and 112 athletic directors using the Job Diagnostic Survey to measure their responsibility for the social mission and job characteristics such as *skill variety*, *task identity*, *autonomy*, *task significance*, *feedback from the job*, *feedback from agents*, and *working with others*. Results showed that coaches perceived a higher level of responsibility for the social mission than athletic directors, and that coaches also perceived the same amount of responsibility for both the social mission and fostering the athletic success of the student-athletes. Follow-up focus groups were also conducted where coaches and athletic directors described *perceived definitive responsibility* and *nuanced responsibility*, which specifically included the feeling that fulfilling the social mission was a *shared responsibility* between many parties. Coaches shared that there is a *balance of responsibility* in their jobs knowing that student-athlete psychosocial development and athletic skill development are both prioritized.

Athletic directors mentioned that they fear that *accountability and evaluation* would follow if responsibility for the social mission was explicitly prescribed to their jobs.

For coaches, *task identity* and *task significance* significantly predicted the responsibility for student-athletes psychosocial development, while in the athletic director sample, *task identity* and *feedback from the job* significantly predicted the social mission responsibility. Coaches also discussed in the focus groups that *task identity, feedback, motivation for joining the profession, time demands of the job,* and *external support* were important influences on responsibility. Athletic director similarly shared that *task identity, feedback, motivation for joining the profession,* and *time demands of the job* were influential as well as *athletic director responsibility for the perception of the school*.

This study provides foundational data to aid in the understanding of coach and athletic director responsibility for the social mission of high school sport. Future research should advance this understanding through clarifying the meaning of responsibility to coaches and athletic directors and exploring other job characteristics that may influence this responsibility.

ABSTRACT

High school sport has often been considered a viable context for promoting youth development of life skills and character (Turgeon et al., 2019). So much so that key stakeholders, including coaches and athletic directors, have been charged with meeting the mission statements of these education-based sport programs (Camiré et al., 2009). However, despite a focus on promotion of psychosocial development in the very definition of education-based athletics (Blanton et al., 2021), coach and athletic director perceptions of their responsibility for fulfilling this 'social mission' of student-athlete psychosocial development has not been explored. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to answer the following research questions: (1) How do coaches and athletic directors perceive their responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and student athletic success, and (2) what job characteristics predict perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and student athletic success? This study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design with stratified sampling of 191 coaches and 112 athletic directors spanning all four divisions in Michigan. Responsibility and predictors of responsibility such as *skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback from the job, feedback from agents*, and *working with others* were measured using the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), and explanatory follow-up focus group interviews were conducted (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018).

Results from Research Question 1 indicate that coaches perceive the same amount of responsibility for both the social mission and the athletic success of student-athletes. Athletic directors perceive more responsibility for the social mission than they do for promoting athletic success, although coaches had higher levels of perceived responsibility for the social mission than the athletic directors. In the follow up focus groups the coaches indicated feelings of

perceived definitive responsibility for the social mission, as well as some level of *nuanced responsibility* when recognizing that others also may share the responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development. Coaches also commented on the *balance of responsibility* between promoting athlete life skills development while fostering athletic success. Athletic directors discussed a *perceived definitive responsibility* for the social mission, with their conversations highlighting that *nuanced responsibility* includes the multitude of other duties assigned to their jobs. Specific to the athletic director group was the mentioning of *accountability and evaluation* as an obvious, and mostly unwanted, next step from assuming responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development.

Results of Research Question 2 revealed that *status as an educator, task identity* and *task significance* significantly predicted coaches' level of responsibility for fulfilling the social mission of high school sport. In follow-up focus groups, the coaches discussed *task identity, feedback, motivation for joining the profession, time demands of the job,* and *external support* as important influences on responsibility. In the athletic director sample, *task identity* and *feedback from the job* significantly predicted athletic directors' responsibility for fulfilling the social mission. In follow-up focus groups, athletic directors emphasized *task identity, feedback, administrator responsibility for the perception of the school, motivation for joining the profession,* and *demands of the job* as important influences the responsibility for the social mission of education-based athletics. The current study provides foundational data on the responsibility of coaches and athletic directors for future lines of research

For Papa –
The ultimate believer that high school sports could be a tool for something bigger.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A unique context for adolescent development in the United States is high school sport. For years proponents of high school sport have espoused their educational value. More recently, in the push for promoting more positive youth development, high school sport, or education-based athletics, has been touted by scholars as a potentially fruitful context for promoting positive youth development (Turgeon et al., 2019). Part of the distinction of high school sport in the US and Canada versus other countries is the inseparability of sport from the educational institutions within which it is housed. School sport was justified because it was believed to foster values and skills that would supplement the school curriculum. In many ways the goals of education have found their way into the sport setting.

Given the potential of scholastic sport as context for youth development, it is not surprising that researchers have been studying the area. In a study soliciting the views of state high school sport administrators, for instance, Blanton, Pierce, and Ault (2021) derived a definition of education-based athletics. It was defined as an "extracurricular sport-based context that supports the mission of the academic institution through offering youth experiential learning of life skills with the aim of developing constructive members of society" (pg. 9). This definition points to the intentional use of the term 'education-based' specifically to describe high school sport in the United States and helps differentiate the purpose, as well as benefits and challenges, of scholastic sport compared to its club sport counter-part. This intentionality is also highlighted by Camiré and colleagues (2009) through their discussion of institutional mission statements in scholastic sport as a guide for establishing values and ethics. Many, if not all, high school state associations in the United States, including the National Federation of High Schools Associations (NFHS), include some components of the definition of 'education-based' athletics

found by Blanton and colleagues (2021) in their mission statements. In particular, in education-based athletics institutions, there is an emphasis on the potential developmental gains, like experiential learning of life skills, in the suggested 'ideal' version of the mission of high school sport (Camiré, 2014).

In an effort to promote positive youth development, there has been a push for increasing awareness of these institutional mission statements (Camiré et al., 2009), and an increase in research aiming to assess the actual development of high school athletes or strategies that produce development through sport (Camiré et al., 2013; Forneris et al., 2015; Pierce et al., 2018). However, it is still unclear if awareness and education is enough to move high school sport stakeholders to action in fulfilling the social mission of education-based athletics. One underexplored area in high school sport is the extent to which high school sport stakeholders feel personally responsible for and accountable to fulfilling this social mission. Specifically for coaches and athletic directors who are *employed* under the promise of providing high school sport programming, it is unknown as to whether, and how much, they perceive themselves as bearing the responsibility for fostering youth development in their programs. Further, do their perceptions of personal accountability relate to their level of directly engaging in, or encouraging such engagement in the case of administrators, development-focused actions?

Responsibility & Accountability

The constructs of responsibility and accountability have been examined minimally in the sport context, especially the scholastic sport context. They have most often been recognized as pertinent in professional sport organization settings or in understanding sport law (Chung, 2018; Ma & Kaplanidou, 2021; Parent, 2018). Rarely has accountability been used in assessments of individuals in sport. Felt accountability was explored from the perspectives of college athletes

and was found to mediate the relationship between coaching leadership and performance (White & Rezania, 2019). However, accountability has otherwise been missing in sport literature. Given the structure of high school sport and its interrelationship with institutional missions, it is therefore valuable to assess responsibility and accountability from the lens of a field that has an established body of responsibility and accountability literature: education.

Often in the education context, researchers and community stakeholders are concerned with teacher and school leadership's responsibility for producing the goal outcomes in student learning. In this case responsibility is considered 'the personal causal influence of an event' (Cummings & Anton, 1990, p. 252) and is related to objectives expected of the individual teacher (Hoskin, 1996). For example, how much a teacher feels personally responsible for helping their students to read at grade level by the end of the school year. Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) have posited that a teacher's feelings of personal responsibility are impacted by both contextual and personal factors. Contextual factors include job autonomy, position in the hierarchy of the organization, availability of resources, and role or goal ambiguity. Personal factors posed include perceived organizational support, proactive personality, internal locus of control, self-efficacy, trust, and work ethic (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011). This proposed understanding of internal responsibility in teachers recognizes that perceptions of responsibility for students' success is in part a result of the teacher's external surroundings.

Similarly, Lenk (2002, 2007) posed a six-component framework of responsibility that suggests responsibility should be explored by recognizing (1) who is responsible, (2) for what, (3) to whom, (4) the instance of judgement, (5) the criteria of responsibility, and (6) in what realm. Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) argue that through this model is where responsibility and accountability meet. Specifically in regard to the external instances of judgement or criteria,

education has built a typically explicit system of accountability. Lerner and Tetlock (1999) define accountability as 'implicit or explicit expectations that one may be called on to justify one's beliefs, feelings, and actions to others' (p. 255). Thus, the Lenk (2002, 2007) responsibility framework merges with accountability in components 4 and 5, through the instance of judgement and criteria of responsibility. Additionally, some scholars have asked the question 'judgment *by whom*?' and introduced the concept of internal accountability, where the self is included as an audience for judgment (Firestone & Shipps, 2005). This notion of internal accountability could be considered an aspect of professional accountability and does not ignore the potential presence of external accountability as well. Internal and external accountability have been explored in teachers to better understand their perceptions of judgement for their performance meeting specific student outcomes (Rosenblatt, 2017). Through these conceptual and empirical distinctions, it is clear there is value in assessing both responsibility and accountability for goal outcomes in a variety of contexts. In the present study, coach and athletic director responsibility for and accountability to fulfilling the social mission of education-based athletics will be explored.

Nature of the Problem

Sport psychology and youth development literature often focuses on the mechanisms with which coaches or sport stakeholders can facilitate life skills development (Camiré et al., 2013; Forneris et al., 2015). The field's understanding of positive youth development and the transfer of life skills from sport to other contexts has continued to grow (Gould & Carson, 2008; Pierce et al., 2017). However, many coaches and sport administrators continue to operate under the assumption that life skills development "just happens" and acknowledge that there are barriers to implementing intentional life skills programming in their jobs (Bean & Forneris,

2016). It is also possible that some athletic directors and coaches do not view the social development of participants as a top priority. For these reasons, it appears that there is a gap between the mission of education-based athletics as touted by state athletic associations and the behaviors of coaches and athletic directors – stakeholders in pivotal roles for promoting youth development through sport. It has often been assumed that these stakeholders are either unaware of the need to intentionally develop life skills with athletes, misunderstanding *how* to develop life skills with athletes, or simply have barriers (e.g., time and resources) to develop life skills with athletes. However, it is vital to recognize the current assumption in the literature – that coaches and athletic directors perceive it is as *their* responsibility to develop athletes as young people, as opposed to the natural by-product of participation or the responsibility of other adults in the student-athletes' life. But is this the case? Further, do coaches and athletic directors perceive that they are personally held accountable for promoting this development?

If coaches and athletic directors have a high sense of responsibility for promoting psychosocial development of their athletes as people, then scholars will need to explore how these perceptions impact coach and athletic director behaviors in their programs. Should coaches and athletic directors have a low sense of responsibility, then perhaps providing more understanding of *how* to develop life skills in athletes will not have the impact scholars are hoping for. Or if coach and athletic director responsibility is found to influence the social mission of scholastic sport, evidence of these traits should be considered in the hiring process. Until coach and athletic director responsibility for the social mission of education-based athletics is explored, a large gap in the understanding of the broader context of education-based athletics will remain.

Significance of the Study

Assessing coach and athletic director perceptions of responsibility for the psychosocial development of athletes through education-based athletics will expand the current literature in two primary ways. First, it will provide a contextual understanding of responsibility in athletics that is currently understudied and not known. Much as the education literature connects teacher and school administrator levels of responsibility for student outcomes (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011; Rosenblatt, 2017), recognizing the presence of these constructs in scholastic sport may expand the field's knowledge of youth development outcomes education-based athletics. This study will provide a foundational understanding of the construct in the sport context with the hopes of providing opportunities for further study and theory creation in the future.

Second, this study will expand upon the current sport literature exploring the social mission statements in education-based athletics. Although coach and athletic director *knowledge* of the social mission and formal mission statements has been explored (Camiré et al., 2009), assessing responsibility for fulfilling this mission may fill the current gap between the knowledge of and *acting on* these mission statements. In a sense, this study provides an understanding beyond *how* to promote development of athletes, and instead explores *if* those employed to facilitate sport programming in education-based athletics perceive it as their mission to fulfill.

Purposes of the Study

When considering these constructs in high school sport, scholars must also consider the contextual change from institutional education, seen as a core responsibility of schools, to educational athletics which is seen as a supplement or extracurricular activity. For this reason, it

is valuable to explore coach and athletic director perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of education-based athletics and its relationships to other variables such as skill variety, task identity, autonomy, task significance, feedback from the job, feedback from agents, and working with others. In doing so, researchers and practitioners can gain further understanding of the current state of responsibility in coaches and administrators, as well as potential direction for personal and contextual factors that may influence perceptions of responsibility and accountability. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to answer the following research questions:

(1) How do coaches and athletic directors perceive their personal responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for student athletic success?

(2) What contextual and personal factors predict perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for student athletic success?

A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was used to answer these research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Initially, survey data was used to measure the current perceptions of personal responsibility for the social mission of high school sports with coaches and athletic directors. Additional data was collected assessing potential predictors of responsibility, such as skill variety, task identity, autonomy, task significance, feedback from the job, feedback from agents, and working with others. The survey portion of the study was followed by focus groups with coaches and athletic directors. This was done to further explain and interpret the results, as well as add depth in understanding of the main constructs in the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

High school sport in the United States is often considered a unique context for sport participation for adolescents. It is estimated that nearly 8 million high school students participate in sports through their school system (NFHS, 2019). This setting, often referred to as 'education-based athletics,' counters club and non-school agency sponsored sport programming due to the nature of its connection to the education system with a formal governance structure, the prioritized mission to promote youth development, and the relationship of sports to the 'social fabric' of the community (Bennett et al., 2020).

Although the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) has existed since 1920, the highest level of governance of high school sport operations lies at the state level due to the connection of sport to the education system, which is governed at the state level in the United States (NFHS, n.d.-a). This decentralization creates clear geographical boundaries around high school sport programming within the United States. Specifically, the NFHS membership includes 51 individual state associations (including Washington, D.C.) that create policy, provide opportunity, and encourage participation in high school sport (NFHS, n.d.-a).

High School Sport as a Context for Youth Development

Due to the symbiotic relationships between school sports and the educational institutions in which they are housed, education-based athletics is often thought to be a highly viable context for youth life skills development (Turgeon et al., 2019). Life skills are defined as 'internal personal assets, characteristics, and skills, such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings' (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 60). Although the term 'life skills' is often exchanged for other synonyms such as developmental assets, character, or positive youth

development more generally, research has supported the potential for sport to be a tool in the life skills development process. Forneris and colleagues (2015) found that sport participation in Canadian High School students was linked to higher ratings on developmental assets profiles than those who participated in no extra-curricular activities. Moreover, in their comprehensive review of the scholastic sport Turgeon and colleagues (2019) concluded that teaching life skills in high school sport is 'inconsistent at best', highlighting that although education-based athletics is a viable space for life skills development, it is not always leveraged (p. 191).

To further explain the development process Pierce and colleagues (2017) proposed a model for life skills development and transfer in sport which highlights three components of sport as learning context for life skills: the inherent demands of sport, the program design, and coach characteristics and coaching strategies. While the inherent demands of sport are certainly influential in the life skills learning process on their own (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009; Holt et al., 2008), coaches personal characteristics and decisions in designing their sport program play a large role in fostering athletes' development as people beyond sport (Camiré et al., 2012; Gould & Carson, 2008; Turnnidge et al., 2014). While scholars have certainly positioned building character and teaching life skills as a key component to coaching effectiveness and efficacy (Feltz et al., 1999), education-based athletics also has a unique focus on promoting the development of athletes as people emphasized by administrators as a *purpose* of high school sport programming.

High School Sport Mission Statement Literature

Beyond the data that demonstrates the potential for education-based athletics to be an arena for facilitating youth development, the organizations who oversee the provision of these

sport programs often implicitly or explicitly operate with a mission for fulfilling this promise of development. The NFHS outlines this focus in its mission statement (NFHS, n.d.-b, para. 1):

> The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) serves its members by providing leadership for the administration of education-based high school athletics and activities through the writing of playing rules that emphasize health and safety, educational programs that develop leaders, and administrative support to increase opportunities and promote sportsmanship.

Additionally, member state associations that oversee their geographical jurisdiction of education-based athletics also adopt similar mission statements. For example, the Michigan High School Athletic Association articulates this through its 10 basic beliefs (MHSAA, n.d.-a; see Table 1). Notably, several of the 10 beliefs express the connection between athletics and the scholastic institutions, even mentioning that the sport programming must be 'compatible with the academic mission of schools' (MHSAA, n.d.-a).

Despite the positive intentions with the creation of these mission statements, one challenge high school sport organizations face is dispersing the responsibility for fulfilling these ideals to those in direct contact with the student-athletes and athletics events (i.e. coaches and athletic directors). Camiré and colleagues (2009) found that there can be a gap between those who create and disseminate the mission statement in a sport organization and the coaches, parents, and athletes. Only half of the coaches in their study indicated that they were somewhat familiar with the school's mission statement, with others only being able to articulate main principles or no knowledge of the mission (Camiré et al., 2009). Further, the researchers only assessed knowledge of the mission statement, relying on participants to indicate their familiarity with the school's mission, and did not explore the stakeholders' commitment to, or agreement

with, the mission set for their programming. Of course, knowledge of the organizational mission is an important step to actualizing the mission.

Table 1

Ten Basic Beliefs of Michigan Interscholastic Athletics

1	Interscholastic athletics were begun outside of the school day and curriculum and remain there as voluntary, extracurricular programs in which qualifying students earn the privilege of participation.
2	Interscholastic athletics are not courses offered by schools but are tools used by schools to reach and motivate students and to rally support within the community for school's academic and activity programs.
3	In order to justify school sponsorship, interscholastic athletics must be compatible with the academic mission of schools, giving priority deference to the academic schedule and requiring proper decorum at athletic events.
4	Interscholastic athletics are secondary to the academic program of schools and are partners with the schools' non-athletic activities in providing students opportunities to develop loyalty and school spirit, to practice teamwork, hard work, discipline, sacrifice, leadership and sportsmanship and to gain lifetime appreciation of the arts, sports and healthy lifestyle.
5	There is equal potential to achieve these objectives in every sport and on the subvarsity as well as the varsity level.
6	A proper philosophy of interscholastic athletics emphasizes participation by many, not for few, and academic scholarship in school, not athletic scholarships to college.
7	To promote competitive equity and a program that is educational in both its means and its ends, the policies and procedures of interscholastic athletics must be determined by school representatives, not by courts, legislatures or commercial interests.
8	Schools, through their elected boards of education and their appointed administrators, are solely responsible, legally and practically, for governing and conducting interscholastic athletics at the local and league levels.
9	Any statewide organization which schools join to assist their administration of interscholastic athletics must be independent of outside interests and guided exclusively by the direct input of its member schools
10	Interstate competition in interscholastic athletics is unnecessary in most situations; regional and national events are harmful to the purposes of interscholastic athletics in Michigan.

However, there is often a discrepancy between the stated mission of promoting youth development through education-based athletics and the perceived reality of experiences for those involved. In an assessment of stakeholders in a Canadian province, Forneris and

colleagues (2012) found a gap between administrators, coaches, and parents' expectations of sport to develop life skills and their perceived experiences. They posit that administrators, coaches, and parents are not directly participating (e.g. competing) in sport but are instead invested in education-based athletics through their 'responsibility to oversee the development of youth' (Forneris et al., 2012, p. 20). Yet, some scholars have found that there is a presence of possible negative psychosocial outcomes from high school sport participation. For example, Partridge and Knapp (2016) found that female high school athletes experience conflict in their peer relationships through their sport experience. Participation in high school sport has also been connected to higher alcohol consumption when compared with other options for extracurricular activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Although negative psychosocial outcomes does not necessarily mean the absence of life skills development, it certainly warrants concern over whether or not the mission of education-based athletics is being fulfilled.

While there may be many barriers that expand this divide between expectations of sport to promote youth development and reality, one that has not been explored is the possibility that adult sport stakeholders, such as athletic directors and coaches, may not have a high sense of personal responsibility for fulfilling this mission. In education-based athletics, as in other domains like education, personal views of responsibility are rarely openly addressed and are often assumed. This is important to explore because individuals are likely to align behaviors with their personal feelings of responsibility and attribute all other tasks to other stakeholders (Helker & Wosnitza, 2014). This allows for potential conflict between different stakeholder perspectives (i.e. coaches, athletic directors, parents, athletes, and scholars) if perceptions of responsibility do not overlap, which may lead to conflicting goals (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011; Peterson et al., 2011). Specifically, athletic directors and coaches may have high

expectations that *sport* can be an agent of development without perceiving the facilitation of development as their *own* individual responsibility.

Responsibility

The definition of responsibility has evolved in the literature over time and been adapted in many ways to different contexts. In an effort to conceptualize responsibility, Schlenker and colleagues (1994) posed the Triangle Model of Responsibility, which highlights that responsibility is 'the adhesive that connects an actor to an event and to relevant prescriptions that should govern conduct, and thus it provides a basis for judgment and sanctioning' (p. 649). The Triangle of Responsibility is comprised of three components: (1) a well-defined set of prescriptions for an event, (2) the actor on the event (e.g. coaches or athletic directors) are bound 'by virtue of identity' to the prescriptions, and (3) the actor has some sense of control over the event (Schlenker et al., 1994, p. 635). Underlying the model is the assumption that responsibility is a product of the linkages between the prescriptions, the event, and the actors. Responsibility is then the connecting point between prescriptions (e.g., developing life skills), the event (e.g., high school sport), and the actors (e.g., coaches and athletic directors). For example, the focus of developing life skills (i.e., prescription) is inseparable from high school sport (i.e., the event), just as it is often assumed that coaches and athletic directors (i.e., actors) are dutifully bound to be the ones to promote development (i.e., prescriptions), and those same coaches and athletic directors (i.e., actors) have roles inseparable from high school sport itself (i.e., event).

This model has been used to guide studies of responsibility. For example, Britt (1999) studied responsibility and engagement in soldiers using the Triangle Model of Responsibility and measured the three 'links' between the prescriptions, actors, and event through survey items

such as ‘the guidelines for my job are clear’ (prescription-event link), ‘I am doing what I was trained to do’ (prescription-actor link), and ‘I have personal control over my job’ (actor-event link). The study revealed that all three ‘links’ were independent significant predictors of solider perceived responsibility before and during deployment (Britt, 1999). Although the Triangle Model of Responsibility has not been empirical tested in this manner in many other domains, it informed exploration of responsibility in other areas such as self-directed learning (Kohns & Ponton, 2013), pharmacy (Planas et al., 2005), and working adults (Brees & Matinko, 2015). From this model’s perspective, a lack of responsibility would disconnect the actors, the prescriptions or the events from the other components, which may lead to the impact of high school sport falling short of its mission. This could be caused by unclear expectations between adult stakeholders or a lack of commitment from vital actors who are needed to maximize the impact of education-based athletics.

Auhagen and Bierhoff (2001) echoes this three-component description of responsibility by stating that the concept is comprised, at the very least, of being responsible *for something*, *towards someone*, and *in relation to some instance*. They further explain that responsibility is a social phenomenon in which a person accepts that they may be held accountable for their actions (Auhagen & Bierhoff, 2001). This *acceptance* of responsibility of is a pivotal factor to consider before assessing accountability of stakeholders within a system. In high school sport literature scholars have often prescribed responsibility for life skills development to coaches and administrators, and even posed implications for holding these stakeholders accountable, before seeking to assess the acceptance of responsibility for the developmental focus of the job.

After exploring previous literature, Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) posed a definition for responsibility as ‘a sense of internal obligation and commitment to produce or

prevent designated outcomes or that these outcomes should have been produced or prevented' (p. 135). Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) continued to discuss implications of responsibility and this definition for teachers and educators at large, however, they emphasize that responsibility should be considered domain specific. This consideration for responsibility as it relates to each unique context stresses the importance of studying responsibility in education-based athletics in its own right. However, given the current lack of research focused on creating models of responsibility in the sport domain, utilizing an accepted definition from an adjacent domain (e.g. education) is appropriate for this study on responsibility in education-based athletics. Therefore, the definition, and multidimensional aspects of influences on responsibility (i.e., contextual and personal influences) shared by Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) that focus on the education domain will be primarily used and modified for this study until more work is done in this area.

Measuring Responsibility

As a result of the lack of conceptual consensus on responsibility, it is no surprise that there is variety in the measurement of responsibility as a variable. Lauermann and Karabenick (2013) highlight these discrepancies in the education literature by compiling measurement tools that have commonly been leveraged for assessing responsibility or an adjacent construct. This includes single-item measures of responsibility, multi-item measures of responsibility for specific educational outcomes (e.g. Inventory of Teacher Social Behavior Standards and Expectations), collective teacher responsibility (e.g. Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire), or the general measure of responsibility (e.g. Job Diagnostic Survey) among others. In response, the researchers created the Teacher Responsibility Scale with a four-factor structure which considers overall personal responsibility as comprised of responsibility for the specific

outcomes of student motivation, student achievement, relationships with students, and teaching practices (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2013). Of course, the Teacher Responsibility Scale should be considered specific to teaching. Although education-based athletics shares similarities with the education domain in many ways, the goal outcomes for which coaches and athletic directors may be considered responsible are quite unique. Additionally, in the case of this study, there is one primary goal outcome of interest – life skills development of athletes – and therefore a more general measure of responsibility, such as the Job Diagnostic Survey, may be modified to be most appropriate.

In addition to providing a definition and measurement tool for responsibility, Lauermann and Karabenick (2011; 2013) posited personal and contextual characteristics that may have an influence on internal senses of responsibility such as job autonomy, perceived organizational support, and self-efficacy. Although more work is needed to assess these influential characteristics and to create a clearer picture of what may foster personal responsibility (Matteucci et al., 2017), education and sport literature provide a foundation for possible predictors of responsibility to systematically examine. Some of the influencial characteristics discussed below align with Lauermann and Karabenick's (2013) suggestions for responsibility predictors in education, while others are from responsibility and sport literature more generally.

Autonomy & Responsibility

One possible factor related to personal responsibility is autonomy. As a component of Self-Determination Theory, autonomy is also considered a basic psychological need (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In SDT, the presence of autonomy has been posited to play a role in fostering self-determined, or intrinsic, motivation, and this has been supported in sport literature (Amorose et al., 2016; Chu & Zhang, 2019; Fenton et al., 2014; Sevil-Serrano et al., 2021). Outside of

motivation, Hackman and Oldham (1975) have posited that autonomy may also be related to increased perceptions of responsibility in the workplace. Although there is currently no agreed upon theory connecting autonomy and responsibility, Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) include autonomy as a contextual influence on teacher internal sense of responsibility as well. This is also supported by Fuller and colleagues (2006) in a study that found a correlation between job autonomy and felt responsibility for constructive change. Evidence from a meta-analysis further emphasizes these ideas by indicating that the relationship between autonomy and job performance is mediated by experienced responsibility (Humphrey et al., 2007). However, while the relationship between autonomy and motivation has been examined in sport, there has yet to be an assessment of the relationship between autonomy and responsibility in the high school sport context, and particularly with coaches and athletic directors. Given the discussion of autonomy as a potential influential factor in education literature (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011) and in a frequently used measure of responsibility (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), it is important to consider autonomy when exploring responsibility in education-based athletics.

Self-Efficacy & Responsibility

Among other possible predictors of responsibility is coach or athletic director self-efficacy in engaging in the behaviors that focus on promoting athlete development of life skills. Self-efficacy refers to beliefs about an individual's ability to succeed in meeting domain specific demands (Bandura, 1977). The construct of self-efficacy has even been adapted to the specific domain of education through teacher efficacy (Denham & Michael, 1981), and then further into coaching efficacy (Feltz et al., 1999). Feltz and colleagues (1999) provided the Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES) for measuring general coaching efficacy and included a

'character building' subscale as one of four specific efficacies. Later, Myers and colleagues (2008) adapted this instrument to be specific for high school sport coaches, the Coaching Efficacy Scale II – High School Teams (CES II-HST), and further promoted the character-building subscale as a pivotal aspect of coaching efficacy. Given the previously mentioned mission of developing athletes as people through education-based athletics, the inclusion of character building in assessing coach efficacy makes sense.

In regard to self-efficacy's relationship with responsibility, Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) posit that self-efficacy leads to higher acceptance of responsibility due to the perceptions of being capable of fulfilling said responsibility and lower concerns for failure. In a study assessing teacher responsibility for educational outcomes, Matteucci and colleagues (2017) found that teacher self-efficacy was in fact a positive predictor of teacher personal responsibility. Further, teacher responsibility for educational outcomes mediated the effects of teacher self-efficacy on instructional behavior in the classroom, demonstrating the importance of exploring the role that both self-efficacy and personal responsibility may play in the high school sport context as well (Matteucci et al., 2017).

Supportive Leadership & Responsibility

A key factor worth considering in the education-based athletics context when it comes to responsibility is supportive leadership. Supportive leadership is more often thought of as a contributing influence on collective efficacy in the teacher education literature (Donohoo et al., 2020). In the process of conceptualizing responsibility in education, Walstrom and Louis (2008) highlight that collective efficacy was often confused with collective responsibility. However, Derrington and Angelle (2013) argue that an *outcome* of collective efficacy is collective responsibility. Regardless, the relationship between supportive leadership and coach or athletic

director responsibility for developing athletes as people is worth exploring. Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) emphasize this by including perceived organizational support and position in the organization as possible influences on teacher sense of responsibility. This notion of supportive leadership influencing individual levels of responsibility aligns with the notion that leaders set the normative expectations for other staff in education-based athletics. In the same way that school leadership sets priorities for teachers, school leadership may also set expectations for coaches and athletic directors in the athletics arena of high school sport.

Goal Consensus & Responsibility

Similar to supportive leadership, the goal consensus among the coach and athletic director community in a school district may relate to responsibility for the social mission of high school sport. In education, goal consensus has been found to be a pivotal school process that is related to teacher ownership over school success and failures (Ross et al., 2004). Donohoo and colleagues (2020) also articulate that the absence of group goals may lead to challenges with monitoring progress and impact in certain areas of performance, and goal consensus indicates knowledge of shared goals amongst peers. In the case of education-based athletics, knowledge of and agreement on the mission for athlete development may relate to coach or athletic director ownership and responsibility for high school sport outcomes. Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) do not include goal consensus specifically as a contextual influence on responsibility, but do include role ambiguity, of which goal clarity has been theorized to be a component of role ambiguity (Sawyer, 1992). Considering the previous research revealing the lack of knowledge of sport mission statements from key sport stakeholders (Camiré et al., 2009), assessing goal consensus as it may relate to perceived responsibility could be a crucial addition to the high school sport literature.

Task Significance & Responsibility

Hackman and Oldham (1975) include task significance among other influences on job motivation and responsibility. They define task significance as 'the degree to which a job has a substantial impact on the lives of others' (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 5). This aligns with Helker and Wosnitza's (2014) heuristic framework on responsibility in education as well where they state that responsibility is in part influenced by the subjective perception of the importance of the task. Outside of education, Ong and colleagues (2018) found that task significance significantly influenced employee's responses to their company's corporate social responsibility efforts. In education-based athletics, the more significant a coach or athletic director perceives the task of developing athletes as people, the more they may perceive their own responsibility for contributing to the development.

Feedback & Responsibility

Although the influence of feedback on responsibility is still unclear, it is likely that it has some relationship to the responsibility construct. Hackman and Oldham (1975) consider feedback from agents as a job dimension in a similar vein to task significance and posit that it is helpful for understanding employee reactions to job responsibilities. Feedback from agents would include the depth of clear information that is received about job performance from supervisors or co-workers, in this case school leadership, athletic directors, or other coaches (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). However not all feedback should be treated equal. Firestone and Pennell (1993) shared in a review that when feedback becomes more evaluative instead of informative for teachers, they have lower perceptions of personal responsibility for their instructional practices. Similarly, Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) consider providing teachers with information about their organization's underlying principles, or feedback about

performance in adhering to those principles, enables teachers to take responsibility for contributing to the mission if the feedback is delivered in autonomy-supportive ways. Not only may feedback allow for adjustment of behaviors by coaches and athletic directors in high school sport, but it may allow for reinforcement of the importance of the mission and priorities of developing athletes. For this reason, the role of feedback from others in influencing personal responsibility in high school sport should be further explored.

In summary, it is hoped that by exploring responsibility, and its possible predictors, in the high school sport context will further scholars' understanding of coach and athletic director roles in fulfilling the social mission of education-based athletics. As Turgeon and colleagues (2019) articulate, it is possible that practical recommendations are insufficient to make changes needed to fulfill this social mission, especially if coaches or athletic directors do not see the practical recommendations as relevant to their primary job duties. Similarly, by assessing autonomy, self-efficacy, supportive leadership, goal consensus, task significance, and feedback in relation to responsibility, this study may add to the foundation of future literature by translating findings from education to the high school sport context. In addition to these variables, it is important to discuss coach and athletic director *accountability* for the social mission of education-based athletics. The following section will outline the definition of accountability and how it differs from responsibility. Although accountability is not measured in this studied, the construct should be considered as related and understood in the interpretation of results.

Accountability

An adjacent concept to responsibility worth exploring with high school sport coaches and athletic directors is accountability. Lerner and Tetlock (1999) define accountability as "the

implicit or explicit expectation that one may be called on to justify one's beliefs, feelings, and actions to others" (p. 255). An essential aspect of accountability is that one is answerable to some audience (Rosenblatt, 2017). Often accountability is considered in terms of system-wide focus via external accountability systems. However, researchers have posited that individual actors have roles to play in group and organization functioning and thus it is important to assess personal-level accountability. One area of literature aiming to accomplish this focuses on felt accountability. *Felt accountability* is the "perceived expectation that one's decisions or actions will be *evaluated* by a salient audience and that rewards or sanctions are believe to be contingent on this expected evaluation" (Hall & Ferris, 2011, p. 134). In this case, an evaluation does not necessarily need to be conducted, but the belief that one could be conducted must be present. This form of accountability recognizes that the individual's perceptions of accountability, regardless of the external accountability systems, may differ and thus change actions (Hall et al., 2017; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). Thus, research focusing on the individual perceptions of accountability, as opposed to the outward systems in place, are a valuable area of exploration.

One important distinction in personal accountability addresses the salient audience as mentioned by Hall and Ferris (2011). *External accountability* recognizes all audiences outside of the individual answering for their actions (Firestone & Shipps, 2005). However, it is imperative to additionally address the self as a possible audience. *Internal accountability* refers to the self as a salient audience through personal values and standards (Hochwarter et al., 2005; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). In the education literature, internal accountability is viewed as critical to professionalism (Rosenblatt, 2017). In many ways, this encompasses the notion that teachers should have some aspect of answerability to their own moral standards (internally) and

the outward work environment (external) to be fully accountable. In the education-based athletics context, this would require coaches and athletic directors to have values and standards for holding themselves accountable *and* to be answerable to other high school sport stakeholders for promoting student-athlete life skills development. This is not to be confused with coach or athletic director responsibility which should be considered a related, but distinct construct in its own right.

Responsibility and Accountability as Distinct Constructs

In colloquial language, accountability is thought to be a synonym of responsibility. Although there is often concern over overlap between the constructs of responsibility and accountability, many models of responsibility and accountability have been refined to separate the two as related, but different concepts. As discussed earlier, responsibility is the sense of internal obligation to produce specific outcomes or behaviors (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011). Accountability on the other hand is being *answerable* for fulfilling these obligations (Schlenker et al., 1994). In other words, responsibility is a focus on commitment to fulfilling a duty while accountability requires a focus on evaluation and judgments of an individual's behavior for which they are responsible. Additionally, Brees and Martinko (2015) found that a two-factor model identifying a distinction between judgments of responsibility and accountability fit better than a one-factor model when assessing perceptions of adult business employees, emphasizing the empirical distinction between the two constructs.

Wood and Winston (2005) distinguished between the two by stating that 'it is possible for someone to be responsible without being accountable' (p. 86). In high school sport, these concepts may differ as well. In this study, coaches and athletic directors may seem themselves has having internal obligations to promote athlete development of life skills (i.e., responsibility)

without feeling as though they are evaluated and judged, by themselves or others, for their behaviors toward fulfilling this obligation. Further, a larger debate may be not how the two constructs are distinct, but how they are related to each other.

Schlenker and colleagues (1994) explain that responsibility could be considered necessary for stakeholders to be held accountable for their actions. Being answerable to fulfilling specific obligations requires that an individual must have obligations in the first place. In the same vein, responsibility has been considered a component of accountability. So much so, that Wood and Winston (2007) designed a measure of accountability in which there is a responsibility subscale. Using this scale, responsibility is considered one of three variables of accountability, including openness and answerability as the other two (Frederick et al., 2019).

Instead of considering responsibility as a component of accountability, Holdorf and Greenwald (2018) posit that accountability is a measurable manifestation of a latent responsibility. Through a lexical analysis and interviews with organizational leaders they created a model similar to Lauermann and Karabenick (2011), which includes internal and external factors that influence responsibility, while also acknowledging other possible indicators of responsibility including accountability. Clearly, there is still debate about the relationship between these two variables, and little to no understanding of how they interact in the sport context. Regardless, both responsibility and accountability should be further explored to add to the greater understanding of their role in fostering positive youth development through education-based athletics.

Gaps in the Literature

The study of responsibility and accountability for the personal development of high school athletes should be prioritized in empirical work. Although there is a growing body of

literature focused on responsibility and accountability in education settings (i.e. with teachers and principals), there is limited literature on the same topic in sport settings. Of the research focused on youth development, many studies assess coach behaviors that support life skills development and explore the process of *how* the development can be fostered (Camiré et al., 2012; Gould & Carson, 2008; Turnnidge et al., 2014). However, no empirical work has explored coach and athletic director perceptions of responsibility and accountability for fulfilling the social mission of education-based athletics. Further, scholars have little understanding of possible predictors for responsibility in high school sport.

This is essential to understand as scholars aim to translate knowledge to practice. If coaches and athletic directors have low sense of responsibility or accountability for promoting youth development through education-based athletics, then continuing to focus on the provision of knowledge on how to develop athletes may not be the most viable route to change. Instead, further understanding of the perceptions of responsibility and accountability for this mission may guide future research on how to foster understanding and ownership of the social mission for education-based athletics. To begin to close this gap, this study foundationally explores responsibility with the hopes that future studies will expand on results to assess accountability.

Study Purposes

As a result of the literature previously described and the current gap in responsibility literature in education-based athletics, the purpose of this dissertation study is to answer the following research questions:

(1) How do coaches and athletic directors perceive their personal responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for student athletic success?

(2) What core job dimensions predict perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for student athletic success?

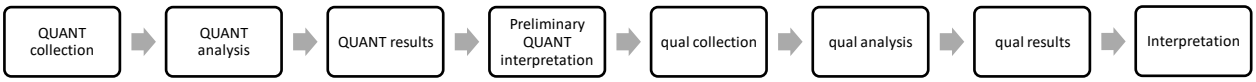
This dissertation aimed to answer these research questions with the goal of initiating a research line that will continue to address responsibility and accountability in high school sport. Results from this study will be used to guide future theory generation for responsibility and understanding the connection between accountability and organizational behavior in education-based athletics.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This study employed a mixed methods approach using a sequential explanatory follow-up design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Specifically, this dissertation explored the current perceptions of responsibility concerning the social mission of scholastic sports in coaches and athletic directors in education-based athletics by administering a descriptive survey. Contextual and personal factors that predict personal responsibility for the social mission in education-based athletics through quantitative measures and multiple regression analyses were also conducted. For comparative purposes, all participants were also asked to rate the responsibility they felt for athletic talent development/success, as well as contextual and personal factors that predicted their responsibility in this domain. Following the sequential explanatory design process (see Figure 1), this current investigation also included follow-up focus group interviews with coaches and athletics directors to further understand and describe the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Figure 1

Sequential Explanatory Follow-Up Design



This study aimed to answer the following research questions: (1) How do coaches and athletic directors perceive their personal responsibility for the social mission of high school sport, and, (2) what factors influence perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of high school sport? To do so, this study primarily emphasizes quantitative data collection methods and analysis, using qualitative data collection methods and analysis to further explain the findings from the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The participants, instrumentation, and analyses are described below.

Participants

This dissertation initially sampled 303 participants (N = 112 Athletic Directors, N = 191 coaches) for the quantitative portion of the study. Considering Research Question 2 (examining predictors of responsibility) a goal sample size was computed using small (f^2= .02), medium (f^2 = .15), and large (f^2 = .35) effect sizes with an alpha level of $p < .05$ at statistical power of .80 based on 9 predictor variables (2 control and 7 continuous research variables). Recommendations were 822 participants for small, 118 for medium, and 57 for large effect sizes. With limited previous literature to indicate potential effect sizes for the proposed multiple regression, a sample size appropriate for detecting a medium effect size was selected as an appropriate aim for each sample of participations (i.e., coaches & ADs). Due to the increased size of the coach population in comparison to the athletic directors, the coach sample is a larger sample. All participants must have been currently serving as an athletic director or coach at a Michigan high school.

While there are no exclusion criteria for size of school or type of school (public or private) stratified random sampling was used to target athletic directors and coaches from each of these criteria. Stratified random sampling aimed to represent the Michigan High School

Athletic Association school membership population in the study sample. The MHSAA divides schools by student population into Class A (814 or more students), Class B (388-813 students), Class C (183-387 students), and Class D (less than 182 students). For the 2022-2023 academic year, the MHSAA has 187 Class A school members, 188 Class B school members, 187 Class C school members, and 188 Class D school members (MHSAA, 2022). Based on these population proportions, stratified random sampling was used to recruit athletic directors and coaches from each class classification in the state of Michigan. Due to the Class divisions holding a nearly equal amount of schools, the athletic director sample was kept as equally distributed as possible with 32 Class A, 27 Class B, 20 Class C, and 31 Class D. Two athletic directors did not provide their school Class size information. Additionally, the MHSAA has 12,560 teams on record for the 2022-2023 school year with 4733 (37.68%) in Class A, 3440 (27.39%) in Class B, 2810 (22.37%) in Class C, and 1577 (12.55%) in Class D. In recognizing that each team has at least one coach on staff, the sample for this study aimed to accurately represent these percentages with the coach sample as opposed to equivalent samples from each class. In this study, of the 191 coaches, 72 (37.7%) are Class A, 53 (27.7%) are Class B, 36 (18.8%) are Class C, and 27 (14.1%) are Class D with 3 participants (1.6%) not indicating their school's MHSAA class. Further participant demographics are described at the beginning of chapter four (see Tables 3-6).

For the qualitative portion of the study, nested purposive sampling was conducted via maximum variation sampling. Maximum variation sampling guided the primary investigator in selecting 16 participants (N = 8 coaches; N = 8 athletic directors) from the original sample to participate in the qualitative follow-up portion of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Patton, 2014). Nested maximum variation sampling is a form of purposive sampling that

involves selecting cases from the previously collected sample that represents participants that are as different as possible from each other (Patton, 2014). For example, selection for participation in follow-up focus group interviews aimed to provide variation in focus group participants based on gender, race, age, MHSAA school class, type of coach/sport, and years of experience in sport/CAP level. The focus group sample of coaches included 3 Class A, 2 Class B, and 3 Class C participants. Despite extra researcher efforts to recruit a Class D coach, none contacted were able or willing to participate at the time of the study. Seven of the coaches were men and 1 was a woman. Six participants identified their race as white/Caucasian with 1 participant identifying as Hispanic, and 1 participant identified as mixed race. Further focus group participant demographics are provided in the chapter four (see Table 7).

Table 2

Participant Breakdown for Focus Groups by MHSAA School Class Size

Focus Group	Total # of Participants	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D
Coaches					
Group 1	3	2	1	0	0
Group 2	3	1	0	2	0
Group 3	2	0	1	1	0
Athletic Directors					
Group 1	3	1	0	1	1
Group 2	3	0	1	1	1
Group 3	2	1	1	0	0
Total	**16**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**2**

The focus group sample of athletic directors included 2 Class A, 2 Class B, 2 Class C, and 2 Class D participants. Five of the participants were men and 3 were women. Despite extra efforts to recruit from the small pool of non-white participants in the original sample who had indicated they were interested in focus group participation, all participants that were willing and able to participate identified as white. Further participant demographics are provided later in

chapter four (see Table 8). Due to scheduling necessities and considering the focus group facilitation was held over zoom, each focus group held two to three participants to facilitate conversation between participants without overpowering any participant's voice (Finch et al., 2018). See Table 2 below for a breakdown of each focus group participation numbers.

Procedures

Following approval of from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Michigan State University, the electronic survey link was sent out to Michigan high school athletic directors and coaches at schools that represent each strata of MHSAA membership (i.e., school "class" size and school type). Strata included Class A, Class B, Class C, and Class D schools. The consent information was included in the first page of the online survey for potential participants to read which outlined the purpose of the study, role of the participants, minimal risks associated, and contact information of the researcher. This page also included the option for participants to provide contact information if they were interested in being contacted about follow-up focus group participation.

All survey links were distributed through the athletic directors in each district with a request for the athletic director to send the coach link to their hired coaches. The survey was distributed until the appropriate sample size was reached, including efforts to maintain reasonable proportions matching the MHSAA class distinctions as mentioned above for coach data, and the MHSAA class levels even for athletic director data. To accomplish the appropriate ratios, this required the lead researcher to intentionally spend more recruitment efforts towards Class C and Class D athletic directors. Once the goal number of participants were reached for a class (e.g., 30 athletic directors) was reached, recruitment for that class was discontinued. This procedure was primarily only used for Class A. In total, 151 of the Class A athletic directors

were contacted with both surveys one time, and an additional 33 were contacted with just the athletic director survey. All 188 Class B athletic directors were contacted with both survey links, and an additional 30 athletic directors were contacted a second time specifically for recruiting the athletic director as a participant. Every Class C and Class D athletic director was contacted twice with both survey links, and a third time just for the purpose of recruiting the athletic directors. The lead researcher continued to recruit Class C athletic directors until each Class C athletic director in the state of Michigan was contacted three times by the researcher, at which point recruitment stopped despite being short of the goal participant numbers.

Participants were contacted via email about participation in focus groups following the survey data collection. All willing participants chosen for maximum variation were provided with focus group times and given autonomy to choose which time slots fit with their schedule. Ninety-one participants were contacted (n = 60 coaches, n = 31 athletic directors) about participation with 16 completing participation. Many potential participants contacted did not respond, and some indicated that they were not available at the selected times. Focus groups were held over Zoom to allow for participation from coaches and athletic directors regardless of their geographic location throughout the state, and all focus groups were audio recorded via Zoom for later transcription. Once a participant selected their available time, a Zoom link was sent via email, and all focus group participants were sent a $20 electronic Amazon gift card following their participation to compensate them for their time. One participant requested that their $20 be donated to the Spartan Strong fund at Michigan State University, which was granted. All data were de-identified and focus group participants were given a pseudonym prior to the transcription process.

Quantitative Instrumentation

General Demographic Questions

Basic demographic information was collected in the survey, including age, gender, race, school district/school size, sport(s) coached, years working in high school athletics (for athletic directors), if the coach is an educator or not (e.g., a formally hired teacher, paraprofessional, or staff person in the K-12 buildings), and if the athletic director was involved in athletics outside of their AD role. Additional questions were asked targeting participants' perceptions of responsibility and overall job characteristics. Sample questions include "what percentage of your time in your job do you actually spend focusing on promoting development of athletes as people," and "what percentage of your time in your job would you ideally spend focusing on developing athletes as people." All general questions asked of participants can be found in the full survey measure provided in Appendix A (for coaches) and Appendix B (for athletic directors). Additionally, instructions were provided at the start of the survey with the hopes of limiting social desirability. These instructions read:

Coaches and athletic directors are asked to do a lot today - often more than time allows. Many stakeholders have different priorities and views of what is important in high school sports. For some coaches it's winning, for others it is teaching sport skills, and still others developing athletes as people. We are interested in what you value most in working with your student athletes and what you are actually able to do given limited time and resources. They are no right or wrong answers to these questions - just indicate what you feel and what you really do.

Responsibility

Responsibility was assessed using the *experience responsibility for work outcomes* subscale of the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This six-item subscale measures the degree to which an individual feels personally responsible for the results of the work that they do (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). In this case, questions were modified to focus on responsibility for the development of athletes as people as well as a second time for the promotion of athletic success. The JDS uses a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "disagree strongly" to "agree strongly." Four of the items focus on perceptions of their own work experience in their job, asking questions such as "I feel I should personally take the credit or blame for the results of my work on this job." The remaining two items ask similar questions to the previous items with a projective format focusing on how the individual perceives *others* holding the same job. A sample question includes, "most people on this job feel that whether or not the job gets done right is clearly their own responsibility." After appropriately scoring, the items are averaged for a subscale score ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 7 with higher scores signifying taking more responsibility. The *experienced responsibility for work outcomes* subscale has been found to have a Cronbach's alpha of .62 when used with high education sport administrators (Cleave, 1993).

Skill Variety

The Job Diagnostic Survey *skill variety* subscale was used to measure skill variety (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This is a three-item subscale using a seven-point Likert scale assessing "the degree to which the job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involve the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 61). Items were modified to ask about skill variety in developing

athletes as people (i.e., the social mission of education-based athletics) and promoting athletic development. For example, a sample item is "to what extent does developing athletes as people require you to do many different tasks, using a variety of your skills?" An example of a reverse-coded item used is "promoting athletic success is simple and repetitive." Participants completed this subscale, and all subscales in the JDS, twice to create scores for both the social mission and athletic success separately. The subscale score was created from averaging the scores on the three items (and reverse coding the items when required). A subscale score could range from a low of 1 to a high of 7 with a higher score indicating a belief that their job requires a higher level of skill variety. This subscale has shown to be moderately reliable ($\alpha = .64$; Cleave, 1993).

Task Identity

The Job Diagnostic Survey *task identity* subscale was used to measure "the degree to which the job requires completion of a 'whole' and identifiable piece of work" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p.61). For example, a teacher would create an entire test for their students as opposed to only making a few questions for someone else to use as they wrote the test. This is a three-item subscale that uses a seven-point Likert scale, and items were modified to focus on, first, developing athletes as people, and second, promoting athletic success. A sample item is "the job provides me the chance to completely see the end of developing athletes as people." The subscale score is an average after all items are appropriately scored and can range from 1 to 7 with a higher score indicating that the job requires more completion of the 'whole' piece of work. This subscale has been found to have good reliability ($\alpha = .79$; Cleave, 1993).

Task Significance

The Job Diagnostic Survey *task significance* subscale was used to measure task significance (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This is a three-item subscale using a seven-point

Likert scale assessing "the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 61). Sample items were modified to focus on the social mission of high school sport and include "this job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well I develop my athletes as people" and "in general, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people?" After appropriately scoring, the subscale items are averaged for a subscale score ranging from a low of 1 of to a high of 7 with higher score indicating a belief that their work has more significance. This three-item subscale has been shown to have good reliability (α = .76; Cleave, 1993).

Autonomy

The Job Diagnostic Survey was used to measure autonomy via the *autonomy* subscale (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This three-item subscale uses a seven-point Likert scale assessing the perception of freedom and discretion given to the coach or administrator for determining the procedures to be used in carrying out their job (in this case in developing their athletes as people). Sample items include "to what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about doing the work" and "this job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work." After scoring appropriately, the items are averaged for a subscale score ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 7 with higher scores indicating more perceived autonomy. It has been shown to have good reliability (α = .79; Cleave, 1993).

Feedback from the Job

The Job Diagnostic Survey was used to measure *feedback from the job* itself, which encompasses "the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of their

performance" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 61). This is a three-item subscale which uses a seven-point Likert scale. As with other subscales, the items were answered twice – once modified to focus on developing athletes as people, and another modified to focus on promoting athletic success. A sample item includes, "the job itself provides very few clues about whether or not I am performing well at developing athletes as people." Items are scored or reversed scored as appropriate and then averaged to create the subscale score, which can range from 1 to 7. Higher scores indicate a higher degree of feedback received from the job itself. This subscale has been shown to have good reliability ($\alpha = .80$; Cleave, 1993).

Feedback from Agents

The Job Diagnostic Survey was used to measure feedback from agents via the *feedback from agents* subscale (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This is a three-item subscale found to be reliable ($\alpha = .78$) using seven-point Likert scale assessing the degree to which the coach or administrator "receives information about their performance effectiveness from supervisors or from co-workers" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 61). Sample items include "to what extent do supervisors and co-workers let you know how well you are doing on your job" and "supervisors and co-workers on this job almost never give me any 'feedback' about how well I am doing my work." After scoring appropriately, the items are averaged for a subscale score ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 7.

Working with Others

The Job Diagnostic Survey was used to measure "the degree to which the job requires the employee to work closely with other people in carrying out work activities" with the *working with others* subscale (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p.61). This is a three-item subscale using a seven-point Likert scale and has been found have a Cronbach's alpha of .59 (Hackman

& Oldham, 1975). A sample item after being modified to measure the promotion of athletic success includes, “promoting athletic success requires a lot of cooperative work with other people.” The subscale score is calculated through averaging the individual item scores, with a low of 1 to a high of 7. A higher score indicates the job requires more working with others.

Quantitative Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 28.0 was used for all quantitative data and statistical analyses. A missing values analysis was conducted for coach data revealing that less than 1% of data were missing for each survey item. Little’s MCAR test indicated that all missing data were missing completely at random (p = 1.00). Because adequate power had been achieved for a medium effect size, no imputation procedures were used and 4 participants with missing values were removed from the analysis. The remaining 191 participants used all had complete data. A missing values analysis was also conducted for the athletic director data revealing that 0.65% of all values were missing with less than 4.5% of data missing on any given item. Little’s MCAR test indicated that all missing data were missing completely at random (p = .856). Due to the need for all cases to remain in the data set to meet an acceptable power for the study, no cases could be removed as done with the coach data. Given the low levels of missing data and the use of SPSS 28.0 for the statistical analysis, mean imputation procedures were used to address the missing values prior to conducting any statistical analysis.

Normality of each data set was assessed using graphical demonstrations of the data via histograms, skewness, and kurtosis normative values (skewness: -1 to 1; kurtosis: -1 to 2). Assumptions of normality were met for the coach data. Assumptions of normality were tested with the athletic director data following the multiple imputation procedures, and all variables

met the assumptions for normality except *task significance* for the social mission, *working with others* for the social mission, and *working with others* for athletic success. All 3 variables were slightly beyond acceptable markers of skewness (-1.05, -1.34, -1.17 respectively). No variables violated the assumption of kurtosis (-1 to 2). Due to the nature of the statistical tests being performed with the data set, a conservative approach to not transforming the data was taken. This was decided given that non-normal distributions in social science research are highly common (Bono et al., 2017), and that for statistical tests using *F* and *t* values, normality violations do not typically have a large impact on validity as long as the sample size is >30 (Bock, 1975; Glass et al., 1972; Pituch & Stevens, 2016). Additionally, with the skewed variables only being used in the multiple regression analyses, where normality of residuals is assessed, the lead researcher felt it most appropriate to leave the data untransformed.

Descriptive statistics including means and frequencies have been used to assess responsibility as well as participant demographics. Paired samples t-tests were used to compare levels in responsibility for the social mission to responsibility for promoting athletic success in both the coach and athletic director samples. A one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess group differences between coaches and athletic directors with responsibility for the social mission and responsibility for athletic success as the dependent variables. Post hoc analyses were used to determine where differences lied between the groups, including univariate pair-wise testing with Bonferroni corrections for multiple tests.

Linear multiple regressions were conducted to assess possible predictors of responsibility in both samples separately. Coach data was assessed for normality using P-P plots of the residuals in the multiple regression and the assumption was met. Homoscedasticity was assessed using a scatterplot of the residuals with no obvious pattern detected, indicating the

assumption was met. Therefore, the assumption of linearity in the coach data was also met. Predictor variables were assessed for multicollinearity using the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) where all were less than 1.46 (for social mission regression) and 1.79 (for athletic success regression) indicating the assumption was met in both analyses. A good power of .985 was indicated via a post-hoc power analysis given an α-error probability of .05 and a sample size of 191 (Cohen, 1988). Assumptions of multiple regression analysis (i.e. normality, homoscedasticity, linearity, and multicollinearity) were also assessed in athletic director data through P-P plots and scatterplots, in which all assumptions were met. Predictor variables were assessed for multicollinearity using the VIF where all variables were equal or less than 1.69 (for social mission regression) and 1.97 (for athletic success regression), indicating no multicollinearity concerns in either analysis. A post-hoc power analysis given an α-error probability of .05 and a sample of 112 indicated a good power of .841 (Cohen, 1988).

Qualitative Instrumentation

The qualitative explanatory portion of this study used focus group methods for gaining depth and description of the quantitative results from the survey data. Focus groups were selected instead of individual interviews to allow participants to foster critical thinking and discussion amongst themselves. A strength of focus group interviews is the opportunity for participants to share their experiences with others in similar roles in education-based athletics (Gibbs, 2012).

Lead Researcher Paradigmatic Perspective & Background

The procedures and methods of any research project are inseparable from the lead researcher's paradigmatic perspective. In alignment with a mixed-methods approach, the lead researcher adopts an approach of pragmatism, which espouses the belief that the purpose is to

align methods design with the purpose of the study and the research questions being asked (Feilzer, 2010). Underlying the pragmatic approach is the epistemological and ontological perspective that reality is based on the centrality of the human experience and is socially constructed (Morgan, 2014). Dewey (2008), a prominent pragmatist asserts that knowledge is a result of taking action and experiencing the outcomes. This positionality allows for investigators to be oriented towards solving practical problems that are impactful in the 'real world' (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8). In this study specifically, the purpose certainly outlines a focus on understanding coach and athletic director perceptions of constructs like responsibility and accountability in their own lived experiences.

In addition to the lead researcher's paradigmatic positionality, she has previous experience facilitating focus groups for research purposes. Having conducted several focus group interviews for previous research projects, she is well prepared to navigate the potential challenges of facilitating group discussion, directing the flow of conversation, and ensuring all voices are able to be heard in the groups. Additionally, the lead researcher will aim to use probes appropriately to gain breadth and depth of knowledge from participants.

It is also important to recognize the lead researcher's positionality relative to the social mission of high school sport. As a former high school and collegiate athlete, she believes that the high school sport experience shaped the person she is today and allowed her to learn leadership, initiative, and performance enhancement mental skills. For the last four years she has worked in the office of a state association for high school athletics witnessing and being involved with various projects focused on the social mission of education-based athletics like the student athlete advisory council and Sportsmanship Summits, a one day workshop hosting roughly 200 student-athletes to discuss good sporting behavior. As a doctoral student focusing

on applied sport psychology research and practice she has studied key issues influencing the social mission of scholastic sport like fostering youth leadership and the influence of coaches on the psychological make-up of athletes. While the investigator believes in the social mission of high school sport and the potential for making education-based athletics impactful, she recognizes that not all coaches and athletic directors do so to the same degree. As she designed this study she has tried to recognize her biases and beliefs about the social mission of high school sport and worked to take a balanced approach to uncovering evidence that may support or refute her beliefs. She also used a critical friend during the data analysis process to help her reflect on her interpretation of the findings.

Focus Groups

Three coach focus groups and three athletic director focus groups were conducted, providing six focus groups in total to support the quantitative data. The length of the focus groups ranged from 46 to 63 minutes (M = 53 minutes) and were conducted over Zoom to allow for participants to join from various locations throughout the state of Michigan. All focus groups were semi-structured with open-ended questions for participants to discuss their own perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and discuss preliminary quantitative results from the study (Roulston, 2010). The semi-structured interview guides included a total of six pre-selected questions. Each focus group interview began with questions to build rapport with and between participants, and then moved to scripted questions to serve as prompts for topics related to the quantitative results. Specifically, the scripted questions focused on perceptions of their role in the process of developing athletes as people and life skills development, and whether or not it is a responsibility of their role to do so. To guide the brief discussion around preliminary quantitative results of the study, slides were created to provide a

visual representation of the multiple regression results via a figure, as some of the variables would be unfamiliar to participants. Each interview guide was adjusted to address the specific stakeholder group in the interview (i.e., coaches and athletic directors) although as participants shared their experiences, it was not uncommon that some focus group discussion focused on the group's role as well. The semi-structured interview guide for the coach focus group is provided in Appendix C, and the athletic director focus group guide in Appendix D. Probing questions were used throughout the focus groups to help gather complete responses from participants as necessary, and to help guide the conversations between participants. All participants were given a pseudonym during the transcription process to protect participant anonymity.

Qualitative Data Analysis & Integration

Integration, as discussed by Plano Clark (2019) is the 'explicit conversation between the quantitative and qualitative components of the mixed-methods study' (p. 108). Connecting analyses is a type of integration that allows for the use of results from one method, in this case quantitative methods, to inform the collection and analyses of data in another, in this case qualitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). As mentioned previously, the quantitative results informed the questions asked in the focus group interviews as well as guided the analysis of focus group data.

For this study, a constant comparative analysis method (Glaser, 1965) allowed for the qualitative data to be assessed for similarities and differences with previous data (i.e. quantitative data). In this way, the qualitative data helps explain and further refine the quantitative model that had been tested. The constant comparative analysis method includes four stages: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category (i.e., theme), (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing theory. For example, in

this study, constant comparative analysis was used to (1) compare themes in the focus group interviews to the quantitative results throughout the coding process, (2) integrate key findings from the qualitative results with the quantitative data, (3) draw overarching conclusions from the integrated findings about the responsibility of coach and athletic directors in high school sport, and (4) write up the results in a manner that highlights the complementarity and contradiction between the quantitative and qualitative data. Often constant comparative analysis is used for grounded theory studies. Although the purpose of this study is not to conduct a grounded theory process, this analysis procedure is appropriate for its ability to help 'develop ideas on a level of generality which is higher than the qualitative material being analyzed' (Glaser, 1965, p. 444). In this way, constant comparative analysis is appropriate for two reasons. First, it supports the integration of quantitative and qualitative data in an iterative process that extends the value of both the quantitative and qualitative data. Second, since no current theory of responsibility for the social mission of education-based athletics exists, constant comparative analysis aids in providing a foundational understanding of potential key constructs being explored in this study for possible future theory generation.

During the analysis process, a critical friend was used challenge the lead researcher through the qualitative coding and analysis process to address any potential biases from the lead researcher. This critical friend has qualitative research experience and expertise in coaching and positive youth development literature. The critical friend had not been involved with the design of the study prior, which provided assisted with her role to challenge the lead researcher in her findings and interpretations of the data.

The lead researcher used structural, abductive coding processes to break focus group interview transcripts into discrete meaning unit sections with labels that summarize the

overarching meaning of the selected text passage (Saldaña, 2015). Structural coding was selected due to its usefulness in categorization of broader themes, and its application for 'exploratory investigations to gather topics lists of major themes' (Saldaña, 2015, p. 67). Due to the mixed-methods design of this study, and the purpose of the *preliminarily* assessing possible understandings and predictors of responsibility for future research, structural coding was deemed appropriate to identify broader concepts to interpret quantitative results and to be explored further. The coding process was abductive in nature, using specific variable names from the quantitative data as codes as well as language from the participants and other literature as appropriate.

Following this, axial coding was used to combine the previously coded meaning units with similar codes to form initial themes (Saldaña, 2015). Once initial themes were created, the lead researcher shared the results with the critical friend who had read the focus group transcripts and met to discuss any adjustments that needed to be made. The adjustments were made via an in-person conversation between the two researchers where the critical friend asked questions of the lead researcher about their analysis choices and offered suggestions for improvement. The final themes were then compared to the quantitative results as outlined in step one of the constant comparative analysis method (Glaser, 1965). Further, the critical friend assisted in the integration of quantitative and qualitative data to establish appropriate findings and identify how the qualitative data compliments and/or contradicts the quantitative data.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to explore coach and athletic director perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of education-based athletics, with an additional focus on examining possible predictors of responsibility for the social mission of high school athletics. For comparison purposes, the participants were also asked to rate their perceived responsibility for athletic success and the same predictors were measured as in the social mission of educational athletics assessment. This results chapter will begin by providing demographics from the coach and athletic director sample followed by results from the primary research question. This section will share primary research question results from the coach data, including quantitative and qualitative results, followed by the quantitative and qualitative athletic director data, and then providing comparative analysis between the two sets of data. The final section will provide results from the second research question exploring possible predictors of responsibility in the coach data and the athletic director data respectively. This will first be described by the results from the multiple regression analyses, followed by the qualitative explanations and discussion from the focus group data. In all cases, the social mission responsibility data will be paralleled and contrasted with the athletic success responsibility analyses.

Demographic Information

Coach Demographics

The coaches (n = 195) in the sample ranged in age from 19 to 86 (M = 44.4, SD = ±14.0). A majority of the coaches were men (n = 131, 68.6%), although over one-third of the sample were women (n = 60, 31.4%). The racial demographics of the sample included White/Caucasian (n = 175, 91.6%), Black/African American (n = 4, 2.6%), Hispanic (n = 2,

1.0%), Native American (*n* = 1, .5%), and mixed race (*n* = 5, 2.6%) with 4 coaches not providing responses (2.1%). A majority of the coaches in the sample were formally hired educators (e.g. teachers, school staff, administrators; *n* = 113, 59.2%).

Table 3

Demographics of Coach Sample

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Men	131	68.6%
Women	60	31.4%
Race		
White/Caucasian	175	91.6%
Black/African American	4	2.1%
Hispanic	2	1.0%
Native American	1	0.5%
Mixed Race	5	2.6%
Not Provided	4	2.1%
Educator Status		
Educator	116	60.4%
Non-Educator	76	39.5%
CAP Training		
None/Unsure	75	39.3%
Grandfathered In	18	9.4%
Level 1 or 2 (Required)	82	42.9%
Level 3 to 5	11	5.8%
Level 6 to 8	5	2.6%

Due to a lack of clarity in participant responses relative to teams coached, specific data on the level and gender of teams are unable to be concretely reported. When asked about their completion of the MHSAA Coach Advancement Program (CAP) levels (the MHSAA's coach education program), which includes levels one through eight, 75 coaches (39.3%) indicating they had completed none of the program, left the response blank, or indicated that they were unsure. Eighty-two of the coaches (42.9%) indicated that they had completed levels one or two of CAP, which aligns with current head coach requirements by the MHSAA that either level

must be completed prior to coaching. Additionally, 18 coaches (9.4%) had been 'grandfathered' into the program since they had been coaching prior to its establishment. Few levels beyond the requirements had been completed by coaches (level 3: n = 7; level 4: n = 3; level 5: n = 1; level 7: n = 1; level 8: n = 4).

Table 4

Demographics for Coaching Positions in Coach Sample

	Frequency	Percentage of Coach Sample
Sports Coached		
Baseball	14	7.3%
Basketball	42	21.9%
Bowling	6	3.1%
Cheerleading	6	3.1%
Equestrian	1	0.5%
Football	26	13.6%
Golf	10	5.2%
Hockey	3	1.6%
Lacrosse	2	1.0%
Rowing	1	0.5%
Soccer	12	6.3%
Softball	9	4.7%
Swimming & Diving	9	4.7%
Track & Field	30	15.7%
Tennis	11	5.8%
Volleyball	22	11.5%
Water Polo	2	1.0%
Wrestling	7	3.7%
Cross Country	15	7.9%
Team Indicated w/o Sport Identified	13	6.8%
# of Teams Coached		
Single Team	121	63.4%
Two Teams	61	31.9%
Three Teams	8	4.2%
Not Provided	1	.5%
Level of Coaching		
Coaches a Varsity Team	148	77.5%
Coaches a JV Team	37	19.4%
Coaches a Freshman Team	7	3.7%
Coaches Middle School Team	15	7.9%
Level Unidentified	18	9.4%

Nineteen sports were represented in the sample of coaches including baseball (*n* = 14), basketball (*n* = 42), bowling (*n* = 6), competitive/sideline cheerleading (*n* = 6), equestrian (*n* = 1), football (*n* = 26), golf (*n* = 10), hockey (*n* = 3), lacrosse (*n* = 2), rowing (*n* = 1), soccer (*n* = 12), softball (*n* = 9), swimming and diving (*n* = 9), track and field (*n* = 30), tennis (*n* = 11), volleyball (*n* = 22), water polo (*n* = 2), wrestling (*n* = 7), and cross country (*n* = 15). There were also 13 other teams mentioned in participant responses without identifying the sport (ex., A participant would write "Varsity girls"). Within the coach sample, 110 coaches (57.6%) indicated that they coached boys in some capacity (i.e. either a full boys team or a co-ed team) with 117 coaches indicating they coached girls (61.3%). Still, 23 teams were referenced by coaches without indicating whether they included boys, girls, or both (e.g., "varsity soccer"). A majority of the coaches (*n* = 121, 63.4%) only indicated a single team coached, with 61 (31.9%) and 8 (4.2%) coaching two or three teams respectively. Only 1 coach did not indicate what sports and teams they lead at all.

Table 5

MHSAA Class Frequencies and Percentages in Sample and in the State of Michigan

MHSAA Class	Sample Frequency	Sample Percentage	MHSAA Teams Frequency	MHSAA Teams Percentage
Class A	72	37.7%	4733	37.7%
Class B	53	27.7%	3440	27.4%
Class C	36	18.8%	2810	22.4%
Class D	27	14.1%	1577	12.56%
Not Provided	3	1.6%	-	-
Total	191	100%	12560	100%

Athletic Director Demographics

The athletic directors in this sample (*n* = 112) ranged in age from 25 to 67 (*M* = 46.4, *SD* = ±9.9). Most of the sample were men (*n* = 96, 85.7%) with 14.3% of the sample (*n* = 16)

identifying as women. Similar to the coach sample, nearly all of the athletic director sample identified as White/Caucasian (*n* = 103, 92.0%), with 2 ADs identifying as Black/African American (1.8%), 3 Hispanic (2.7%), 1 mixed races (0.9%) and 3 did not provide a response (2.7%). The sample included 32 Class A, 27 Class B, 20 Class C, and 31 Class D athletic directors. Additionally, 2 ADs completed the survey without indicating their MHSAA school class. A majority of the sample indicated that they are involved in sport in some way outside of their role as athletic directors as well (*n* = 78, 69.6%), although participants were not asked about what this involvement entailed (e.g., it was a yes or no question). The years working in high school athletics ranged from 1 to 42 years (*M* = 19.2, *SD* = ±10.3).

Table 6

Demographics of Athletic Director Sample

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Men	96	85.7%
Women	16	14.3%
Race		
White/Caucasian	103	92.0%
Black/African American	2	1.8%
Hispanic	3	2.7%
Mixed Race	1	0.9%
Not Provided	3	2.7%
Sport Involvement		
Outside of AD Role	78	69.6%
None outside of AD Role	33	29.5%
Not Provided	1	0.9%
MHSAA Class		
Class A	32	28.6%
Class B	27	24.1%
Class C	20	17.9%
Class D	31	27.7%
Not Provided	2	.02%

Focus Group Participant Demographics

The 16 focus group participants were selected with the purpose of maximizing as much variability as possible within personal and school demographics from the list of 231 participants (n = 160 coaches, n = 71 athletic directors) who provided contact information for follow up participation (this includes participants who submitted contact information but did not fully complete the initial survey in order to allow for more diverse participants in the sampling). In the coach sample of eight participants, most were men (n = 7, 87.5%) and most were formally hired educators (n = 6, 75%). Five of the participants identified as White/Caucasian (62.5%), with Hispanic (n = 1, 12.5%) and mixed race (n = 1, 12.5%) represented, and one race not provided.

Table 7

Coach Focus Group Participant Demographics

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Men	7	87.5%
Women	1	12.5%
Race		
White/Caucasian	5	62.5%
Hispanic	1	12.5%
Mixed Race	1	12.5%
Not Provided	1	12.5%
Educator Status		
Educator	6	75%
Not an Educator	2	25%
CAP Training		
Grandfathered In	2	25%
Level 1 or 2 (Required)	5	62.5%
Level 7	1	12.5%
MHSAA Class		
Class A	3	37.5%
Class B	2	25%
Class C	3	37.5%
Class D	0	

The majority of the sample had completed the required Coach Advancement Program trainings level one or two (n = 5, 62.5%), with two participants having been grandfathered in (25%), and one having completed CAP level 7 (12.5%). The sports coached included hockey, soccer, golf, football, track and field, volleyball, wrestling, tennis, and softball. Three participants coached two separate sports teams at their schools and the remaining five currently coach one sports team. Varsity and junior varsity teams were represented as well. The mean age of the coach participants was 51.5 years old (range: 39–60)

Table 8

Athletic Director Focus Group Participant Demographics

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Men	5	62.5%
Women	3	37.5%
Race		
White/Caucasian	8	100%
Sport Involvement		
Outside of AD Role	7	87.5%
None outside of AD Role	1	12.5%
MHSAA Class		
Class A	2	25%
Class B	2	25%
Class C	2	25%
Class D	2	25%

For the sample of eight athletic director participants, most were men (n = 5, 62.5%) and all participants identified as White/Caucasian (n = 8, 100%) despite extra efforts to recruit participants from the original sample who had provided contact information and identified as any other race. Nearly all participants indicated that they were involved in sports outside of their role as an athletic director (n = 7, 87.5%; e.g., as a parent, coach, or otherwise). One participant

indicated that they were both an athletic director and physical education teacher, and another indicated that they were both an athletic director and a school principal. The mean age of participants in the athletic director sample was 51.25 years old (range: 41-63) and the eight ADs spent a mean of 29 years working in sports in some capacity.

Research Question 1: How do coaches and athletic directors perceive their personal responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and student athletic success?

Coach Quantitative Perceptions of Responsibility

Descriptive statistics revealed that the mean scores for coach responsibility for promoting the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for promoting athletic success were nearly identical. Coaches in the sample indicated a mean responsibility score of 5.02 (±.69) for the social mission and 5.02 (±.80) for promoting athletic success.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Coach Responsibility

	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Responsibility for social mission	5.02	±.69	3.33	6.67
Responsibility for athletic success	5.02	±.80	2.50	6.83

Differences in Responsibility. A paired samples T-test was conducted to assess the difference in the coaches' means for the responsibility score between the social mission and promoting athletic success dependent variables. The mean difference was .003 with a moderate correlation of .41 and a p-value of .96 indicating that there is no significant difference between the levels of responsibility for the social mission and promoting athletic success. The Cohen's *d* estimate was .003, indicating a negligible effect size. A one-way ANOVA indicated that there was no significant effect of MHSAA Class categorization on responsibility for the social

mission at the $p < .05$ level [$F(3,184) = .85$, $p = .47$, $\eta^2 = .01$], and for promoting athletic success [$F(3,184) = 1.33$, $p = .27$, $\eta^2 = .02$].

Open-Ended Responses on Priorities. In addition to being asked about their felt responsibilities, coaches were asked to complete open-ended questions about the percentage of their time that would spend 'ideally' on the development of athletes as people as well as their 'actual' percentage of time spent in their coaching roles doing so. The same question was asked of their time, both 'ideally' and 'actually' for promoting athletic success. One-hundred and seventy-one of the coaches replied with viable numeric responses which resulted in a mean of 59.9% (±22.8) in response to how much time they would "ideally" spend developing athletes as people. This is compared to the mean of 47.8% ($n = 173$, $SD = \pm 26.3$) of time estimated to be spent in actuality on the social mission. Coaches responding with numeric answers indicated a mean of 56.0% ($n = 172$, $SD = \pm 26.4$) for the "ideal" time spent promoting athletic success compared to the mean of 57.8% ($n = 173$, $SD = \pm 25.0$) of time they spend on promoting athletic success in actuality (see Table 7).

Paired samples t-tests were conducted to assess mean differences between the ideal and real time spent in each area. The mean difference between ideal and actual time spent developing athletes as people was 11.84 with a moderate correlation of .63 and a *p*-value of < .001 indicating a significant difference between the ideal percentage of coaching time spent on the social mission and the actual percentage estimated by participants. In this case, the participants had a significantly higher percentage of ideal time than actual time spent doing so. Similarly, the mean difference between ideal and actual time spent promoting athletic success was -2.36 with a moderate correlation of .48 and a *p*-value of 0.24 indicating no significant difference between the reported ideal and actual time spent on athletic success among the coach

sample. However, it is worth noting that the actual time spent as estimated by the coaches has a larger mean than the ideal time spent focusing on athletic success of athletes.

Table 10

Descriptive Values for Open-Ended Responses About Coaches' Time Spent

Percentage of Time	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Developing athletes as people				
Ideally	59.9%	±22.8	10%	100%
Actuality	47.8%	±26.3	1%	100%
Promoting Athletic Success				
Ideally	56.0%	±26.4	0%	100%
Actuality	57.8%	±25.0	0%	100%

Many of the coach participants provided written responses that did not include a percentage for various reasons. When asked to provide their "ideal" time percentage spent on developing athletes as people, one participant said, "I don't know how you could do one without the other. I'm sure there are coaches that only focus on development of skills and physical talent. Teachings thing[s] like good sportsmanship, how to be a good teammate, overcoming adversity and learning self-confidence are all part of talent development, at least in a team sport." Another coach shared that identifying a percentage was difficult because, "in an ideal world, the athlete would come in as an ideal person with all their life skills developed and they would remember and perform every technique taught so all the life skills come from their own 'village'."

This was not just limited to the "ideal" scenarios. In response to their "actual" time percentage spent developing athletes as people, a coach shared that, "they all go together…hard work, discipline, teamwork, etc…all include the development of athletes and people. So 100% or 50% depending on how you look at it." A mixture of responses were present when asking about time spent promoting athletic success as well. Another participant wrote, "some come

prepared and some needs LOTS of help that the fun and challenge of coaching [is] to find out what is needed for each on a personal basis and finding the way to meet the needs of each individual," when talking about how much time is spent on athletic success for their athletes. These comments demonstrate that the clarity on developing athletes as people is still quite muddy in how it translates to coach time responsibilities.

Coach Qualitative Description of Responsibility

In the focus group discussions, coaches shared their perceptions of their responsibility for the psychosocial development of their student-athletes and the athletic success of the student-athletes. Three main themes were identified in the coach focus group data related to perceptions of responsibility: *definitive responsibility, balance of responsibility,* and *nuanced responsibility. Balance of responsibility* also includes the subtheme *inseparable nature of life skills and athletic success*. *Nuanced responsibility* includes the two subthemes *individual pursuit* and *shared responsibility*. The four themes and their respective subthemes are described below.

Definitive Responsibility. A heavily present theme within the coach data was *definitive responsibility* where coaches expressed that the responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development is definitely a part of a coach's job. Coaches shared their perspective on this responsibility in various ways, but all coaches echoed this feeling to some degree. Isabelle attributed this definitive responsibility to the fact that high school sport is working with youth populations. She said, "I think anytime you sign up to work with youth in any capacity, it's kind of an unwritten rule that you are going to be responsible to teach some sort…of life skills." In a separate focus group, Carter made a similar comment addressing the purpose of high school sports stating, "we're not in the business of producing athletes. We're in the business of

building young men and women who are going to be the future of our community." In Tim's opinion, he sees this as a responsibility that he hopes other coaches are taking ownership over. He said,

> The athletic lesson that we teach, my daughters learned from their coaches are, you know, just as valuable as a lot of things that they're learning in the classroom. And it's it's a significant responsibility that we take on. And so, you know, I know the best coaches that I know take that responsibility seriously.

This *perceived definitive responsibility* was the most pervasive theme throughout the coach focus groups even when the coaches were asked about other coaches who may not be likeminded. To the coaches in this study, it was clear that this was a part of the job in some capacity.

Balance of Responsibility. When discussing the quantitative values of responsibility for the athletic success of student-athletes as well as their psychosocial development from the study data, coaches described a necessary *balance of responsibility* for both outcomes. This theme also includes the subtheme describing the *inseparable nature of life skills and athletic success*. It was shared with the coaches that the quantitative data revealed nearly identical means for responsibility for the social mission and athletic success in the coach sample. Luke was one of the first to describe it as a balancing act. He said,

> I think it's a balance, Kylee, I mean you know, we're there as athletic coaches. It doesn't say in our contract, you know, develop the personalities…the strengths off the ice, or you know off the field, or what have you, but it just comes with…with the territory.

In his focus group, Josh shared that it may not always be equal, but being willing and able to support both life skills development and athletic success is key. He explained,

> I take my queues from the players. If they are gung ho about winning and doing all these things, then yeah, we can certainly set our program differently than we currently do…we shift our focus, and that's a life lesson, too.

Carter even shared in his focus group that while he was surprised at how equivalent the mean responsibilities were for both promoting psychosocial development and athletic success, he did not anticipate one to clearly have been more than the other by saying, "I don't know if you were to ask me which one I thought would be higher." Isabelle added that for her it made sense when she thinks about what makes for a quality coach stating,

> Think back to a coach that you thought was a really good coach. They had a good balance between teaching you to be responsible and life skills and those kinds of things, and someone you looked up to. But they also knew how to win…when you think about an ideal coach, you think about a good balance.

It was evident in all three focus group discussions that many of the coaches inherently see the *balance of responsibility* for both types of student-athlete outcomes as a part of their jobs in high school athletics.

***Inseparable Nature of Life Skills & Athletic Success*.** A subtheme of *balance of responsibility* is the *inseparable nature of life skills and athletic success* that coaches described as being intertwined in their jobs. Josh described this subtheme well by sharing on his soccer teams he believes that having fun and be a good team allows for more athletic success as well. He stated

> Fun isn't a four-letter word, right? It shouldn't be alien to what we're trying to do…we can have both. We can have competitiveness. We can have fun. We're gonna work hard,

> we're gonna have fun together….If it's not fun, and they don't want to be there, we're not gonna achieve much, right?

This sentiment of leveraging the connectedness of life skills and athletic success was discussed by Nolan as well. He shared that on his team, he makes life skills that will help the athletes on the wrestling mat a part of their team goals. He said,

> We try to create measures of success, and we put them in their hands so they can look at it. Some of them are character traits, how they treat each other, and leadership traits, things like that…they'll see that they're making improvements and I think it'll…give them a boost of confidence.

The coaches confidently shared that they felt the even means for responsibility in the coach sample was accurate, and the *inseparable nature of life skills and athletic success* may be one aspect that contributes to why that is the case.

Nuanced Responsibility. The coaches recognized that although they may feel a *perceived definitive responsibility* for the psychosocial development of athletes at times, there is certainly a level of *nuanced responsibility* that is at play in the current high school sport system. This often was present when a coach discussed their own responsibility with some caution in fully accepting it, either personally or other coaches in general. This caution of complete acceptance of responsibility was subtle, and usually had a coach diverting the conversation to how it is understandable that others may not accept it, or that the responsibility is shared between multiple parties. Therefore, *nuanced responsibility* also includes the subthemes of *individual pursuit of responsibility* and *shared responsibility*.

Tim described this hesitation by explaining that he understands why some coaches would not to be responsible for a student-athletes' behavior when they are out of the sports space. He shared,

> You look in the mirror, and I'm gonna try to be a 7 [the highest point of the Likert scale]. I'm gonna try to make every bit of time I can count. But…when the kids are heading off on vacation, you know, you hope that some of the lessons you try to teach them in the back of their [head]… but…is it my responsibility for them at a level 7?

While most of the coaches in the focus groups did not indicate that this was their own personal stance, they often recognized that other coaches could feel this way. This was in part confirmed through the coaches all agreeing that a 5.0 mean for responsibility in promoting psychosocial development was not surprising that it was above average, but not as high at the top of the scale.

***Individual Pursuit of Responsibility*.** This subtheme of *nuanced responsibility* encompasses when coaches would recognize that responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development is a part of the job, but the degree to which a coach pursues this responsibility is determined by each individual coach. Evan explained that due to the lack of explicit outlining of this responsibility, some coaches, "would probably be down on the lower side, or…they don't think that, you know, they're doing anything wrong." In this case, this demonstrates the belief that the onus is on each individual coach to take on this responsibility. Carter echoed that he knows that as much as he sees it as his responsibility, it was his personal choice. He shared, "I never thought of it as a job description. I always thought of it as this is what I wanted to be, this is what I wanted my program to be." He later added that in talking with one of his colleagues about this choice she said, "it sucks to have a passion, doesn't it?" and he agreed, "yeah, it really does." Similar sentiments were echoed throughout the focus groups of coaches that in the

current format of high school sports, to some degree it was an individual decision to fulfill this responsibility.

Shared Responsibility. This subtheme of *nuanced responsibility* includes the presence of coaches recognizing that although it may be a part of their jobs, the responsibility for psychosocial development of student-athletes also falls on others in the high school sport system. This includes a *shared responsibility* with parents, teachers, athletic directors, and the student-athletes themselves. Josh directly identified this subtheme by explaining

> We certainly take a great deal of responsibility on our own…and then the players have to put in their part, right?...But there's another key piece. There's a, you know, for lack of a better number, 33-33-33, right? The parents have to be involved, the players have to be invested, the coaches have to be invested. There's a lot more to it than just the coach saying, 'I take responsibility.'

Nolan emphasized that sometimes the other stakeholders may not agree to hold up their end of the bargain by saying,

> What the parents want seems to be a little bit more than what, you know…they want a coach that's going to win, and…they want playing time and so all of a sudden it becomes stuff that we are talking about today kind of gets put on the back burner.

Others highlighted that getting on the same page as the parents, athletes, and athletic directors early can be helpful at sharing this responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development.

Throughout the focus group discussions, at no point did a coach share that they felt that it was not a coach's responsibility to fulfill the social mission of high school sport. These qualitative findings, specifically the frequent discussion of *definitive responsibility*, *balance of*

responsibility, and *nuanced responsibility* add depth to the quantitative results previously reported.

Athletic Director Quantitative Perceptions of Responsibility

Descriptive statistics of the imputed data revealed the mean responsibility score for supporting the social mission of high school sport of athletic directors was 4.75 (±.76). The pooled mean responsibility score for promoting athletic success in the athletic director sample was 4.17 (±.83).

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics of Athletic Director Responsibility

	M	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Responsibility for social mission	4.76	±.76	2.67	6.33
Responsibility for athletic success	4.17	±.83	1.83	6.33

Differences in Responsibility. A paired samples T-test was conducted to assess the difference in means for the responsibility subscale score for the social mission and athletic success in athletic director responses. The mean difference was .59 with a small correlation of .32 and a *p*-value of <.001 indicating a significant difference between the AD's mean levels of responsibility for the social mission and promoting athletic success. The Cohen's *d* estimate was .63, indicating a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). A one-way ANOVA indicated that there was no significant effect of MHSAA Class categorization on responsibility for the social mission at the $p < .05$ level [$F(3,106) = .40$, $p = .75$, $\eta^2 = .01$], and for promoting athletic success [$F(3,106) = 1.10$, $p = .35$, $\eta^2 = .03$].

Open-Ended Responses on Priorities. The athletic director sample was also asked to indicate their "ideal" and "actual" time spent developing athletes as people and promoting athletic success. For supporting the social mission of developing athletes as people, athletic

directors (n = 99) indicated a mean of 55.1% (±24.5) of their time would 'ideally' be spent, and a mean of 23.0% (n = 100, SD = ±19.8) of time is spent in 'actuality.' For promoting athletic success of athletes, athletic directors (n = 100) indicated a mean of 39.4% (± 23.8) of time is 'ideally' spent, and a mean of 26.7% (n = 101, SD = ±22.3) of time is spent in 'actuality.'

Paired samples t-tests revealed that the ideal percentage of time spent developing athletes as people is significantly higher than time spent in actuality ($t(97) = 14.96$, $p < .001$). Similarly, athletic directors indicated their ideal time spent on promoting athletic success of athletes was significantly higher than their actual time spent ($t(98) = 5.46$, $p < .001$). As in the coach sample, many athletic directors did not report viable percentages to include in the statistical analyses, however, they did provide written comments that shed context on the variation in responses and challenges with these concepts. One AD responded, "as an athletic director, I don't know that I would say that is a focus of my role. I can affect those things, but percentage-wise, it would be a low priority in my role," when asked about their ideal time spent developing athletes as people. Another participant said, "There are so many other day-to-day tasks, emails, inventories, game prep/operations, meetings that end up taking priority, that sometime the relationship with the kids falls through the cracks and onto the plate of the coaches." Throughout the written comments, it is clear that the separation between the athletic directors and athletes changes what responsibilities must be prioritized in the ADs' time. One athletic director wrote that in an ideal world they, 'would like to have that interaction with the athletes' to help promote their athletic success, and that it would need to be balanced as to, "still not forget about the clerical items that are necessary in this [athletic director] job."

Table 12

Descriptive Values for Open-Ended Responses About Athletic Directors' Time Spent

Percentage of Time	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Developing athletes as people				
Ideally	55.1%	±24.5	10%	100%
Actuality	23.0%	±19.8	1%	90%
Promoting Athletic Success				
Ideally	39.4%	±23.8	5%	100%
Actuality	26.7%	±22.3	1%	90%

Athletic Director Qualitative Description of Responsibility

In the focus groups, athletic directors discussed their perceptions of their responsibility for the psychosocial development, and the athletic success, of the student-athletes in their athletics program. Three main themes were identified in the data. Similar to the coaches, *definitive responsibility, balance of responsibility,* and *nuanced responsibility* were present. *Balance of responsibility* once again includes the subtheme of *inseparable nature of education and athletics*. *Nuanced responsibility* includes the subthemes *individual pursuit of responsibility*, *shared responsibility*, *not a job responsibility*, as well as *accountability and evaluation*. The three themes, and their respective subthemes, are further described from the athletic director data below.

Perceived Definitive Responsibility. When an athletic director described promoting psychosocial development of student-athletes as a clear responsibility in their jobs it was coded as *definitive responsibility*. At points during all three focus groups, the athletic directors would mention that they see fulfilling the social mission of high school sport as a part of their roles, both formally and informally. Rachel shared that she currently feels this responsibility by sharing, "I do feel a major responsibility in my role as far as that goes." In another focus group, Frank even claimed that he would be surprised if other athletic directors did not feel similarly,

stating, “I can’t imagine an AD around the area that would’ve said that’s, you know, that’s not a part of their responsibility.” One participant even mentioned that he felt that it should be a part of the formal job responsibilities outlined for athletic directors. Ryan said, “It might not be on the job description. You know, it might not be on the evaluation, but it should be.” Although not every athletic director supported the notion of adding the responsibility for student-athlete life skills development to the formal job description or in the evaluation measures, nearly every participant emphasized at some point that this is clearly a task that is related to their jobs.

Balance of Responsibility. The athletic directors recognized that student-athlete psychosocial development is one of many responsibilities in their jobs that must be fulfilled. While some ADs more directly discussed balancing the life skills development with athletic success, this theme for the athletic directors also encompasses the other job tasks that may not necessarily fall into either category. Henry explained,

> You know, it’s…I have the responsibility to schedule buses to…I have the responsibility to make sure their officials are at games. I have the responsibility to make sure everybody’s safe, you know. There’s a lot of responsibilities that I have that are very, very important responsibilities. I don’t equate any of those things to really developing the student-athlete.

Jessica echoed a similar stance in her focus group citing that the size of school changes the amount of responsibilities being balanced. She said, “it’s a small division one, but like…it’s a lot more to take care of and a lot more to do.” Much like the coach participants, Mark also highlighted that the balance is outwardly focused on keeping an appropriate focus on student-athlete life skills and academic success as well as recognizing the athletic successes of their teams. He shared,

> One of our philosophies is, it's, you know, student-athletes…you know, I talk about our state championships because that's, you know, it's part of our history. But I also, you know, mention how many academic all-state individuals we have or academic all-state teams we have.

The athletic directors did not explicitly use the word balance in the same way as the coach participants, however, they were more vocal at describing the challenge of finding a balance of accomplishing the multiple other responsibilities within their jobs and fulfilling the social mission of education-based athletics.

***Inseparable Nature of Education & Athletics*.** Often a part of the discussion around the *balance of responsibility* in the athletic director focus groups was the recognition of the *inseparable nature of education and athletics*. In this subtheme, the athletic directors would mention that they hardly saw the overall program of athletics as it's own entity. Frank described this by saying, "you know, sports is an extension of the classroom and everything we…I get kind of the idea of it's a learning environment." Henry also explicitly stated that he sees athletics under the larger education umbrella. He said,

> …just understanding the importance of seeing athletics as part of the overall curriculum or overall program of the school. You know, I mean we aren't…I don't think of it as being an isolated…I mean, it's extracurricular, but it's so important to the overall program of what we do as a district.

In these conversations the athletic directors implicitly emphasized that in many ways the athletic program is meant to align with the mission of the school, which aligns with the scholarly definition of educational athletics (Blanton et al., 2021). Ryan even continued to add that the connection goes both directions, and that promoting the athletics aspect of their jobs

helps the school as well. He stated, “all the data shows that kids that play sports are more interested, are more engaged, are better academically, and they’re better behaviorally.” In this way, it was evident that the athletic directors felt that by providing a quality athletics program they were contributing to the social mission of high school sport, even if it was not in the most direct manner.

Nuanced Responsibility. Athletic directors recognized that although they lean towards the goodness in taking responsibility for the social mission, there is caution is accepting it fully and nervousness around the term ‘responsibility.’ Ryan specifically calls out his concern for the term by saying, “the thing that scares me about the word responsibility is if it doesn’t happen…how am I, you know, responsible for the development of this child?” In her focus group, Jessica also added that she sees her responsibility as more of an indirect approach. She explained, “I think, being administration, that’s not part of my job to make connections with the kids. I would say that my job is to make sure my coaches are doing what they need to do.” She continued to indicate that although she saw it as her responsibility to some degree, her role made it so it was a *nuanced responsibility*. Henry, who had previously express *perceived definitive responsibility* also added in his focus group his hesitation by saying, “we put so much emphasis on testing [in education]…and holding everybody responsible for everything. It just…it took the…the authenticity away in a way.” *Nuance responsibility* was expressed generally as well as in the following subthemes: *individual pursuit of responsibility, shared responsibility, not a job responsibility,* and the connection to *assessment and evaluation*.

Individual Pursuit of Responsibility. This subtheme represents when athletic directors recognized that responsibility is taken on by each individual to their own desired level. In some

ways, this was describing the variety in levels of responsibility amongst the athletic directors. Rachel's quote exemplifies this subtheme. She said,

> You know, there's two types of athletic directors. There's the kind that are gonna schedule buses, the games, the umpires, and, you know, set that kind of thing. And you'll feel like you're caught up if you're that type…the other thing's that is the ones who are trying to positively affect culture. You'll never feel like you're caught up and you're always going to be striving…

Others echoed similar sentiments and acknowledged that although the ADs in the focus groups typically pursued fulfilling the social mission in high school sport, there certainly were ADs who did not consider it a responsibility in their jobs. Some ADs even went a step further beyond recognizing that other athletic directors did not perceive this responsibility, but that they did not necessarily need to. Jessica explained that she often walked the halls to make connections with her student-athletes to support them in their life skills development, and stated, "but that's…I don't think that has to be that way" for other athletic directors. Similar to the coach data, this subtheme emphasizes the *nuanced responsibility* that may be at play in the athletic director job where individuals are able to choose the degree to which they take on the responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development.

Shared Responsibility. Athletic directors recognized, and often really emphasized, that this responsibility to promote psychosocial development was not just theirs to bear. They felt the responsibility should be shared amongst the parents, teachers, coaches, and student-athletes themselves. Frank first acknowledged this by explaining that, "our coaches are the ones that really push that through. You know the interaction that I have with the kids is very limited there. I'm not seeing them on a daily basis as our coaches are…" Henry also mentioned this

shared responsibility and that sometimes he feels it is not dispersed to the student-athletes themselves. He said,

> I guess I always get frustrated when I feel as though the student doesn't have more accountability in the process and take more initiative and responsibility themselves, you know…I mean the goal should be for parents to be able to back off, for coaches to be able to back off, and for the athletic director to back off, and the kid say, 'Hey, I'm gonna be a great athlete and do all the things right.'

This version of *nuanced responsibility* is not always clearly articulated either, and the school setting may change the responsible parties. Luke says, "the first thing I think of is the parent, right? It's the parent's responsibility, but then also inherently after that, when children are at school, you know, teachers need to step up, coaches need to step up." Many of the comments included in the *shared responsibility* subtheme were a part of the athletic directors explanations of their own responsibility, indicating that there may be some caution about investing in student-athlete psychosocial development without the other stakeholders contributing as well.

Not a Job Responsibility. Although this was not mentioned in the coach data, athletic directors had infrequent, but notable, instances in which the AD stated that they did not believe it was their responsibility to fulfill the social mission of high school sport. This was often adjacent to a comment from a participant that highlight the *individual pursuit of responsibility* and in some cases came from a place of fear of repercussions if this responsibility was not fulfilled. Henry was the most vocal in this subtheme, even directly stating, "the word responsibility, I think is a loaded word that I don't really feel is one I would want describing my role." In other instances, the comments were more about the indirect position of athletic directors and attributing success to coaches and others more proximal to the development

process. Frank shared, “I don’t foresee the success of our athletes…is a direct relation to anything that I have ever done. Ever.” This theme was not the most prevalent theme in the data, however, it is important to note that on occasion, the belief that developing student-athlete psychosocial skills was not a job responsibility of athletic directors.

Accountability and Evaluation. Several athletic directors would discuss the future of education-based athletics, and if it would follow a similar trajectory to education. In doing so, they often tied their discussion of responsibility with their perspectives on accountability and evaluation because of education’s shift toward teacher evaluations in recent decades. Some athletic directors were not in support of increasing accountability and evaluation and felt that if responsibility was something that was explicitly written for athletic directors that evaluation would come next. Ryan asked hesitantly in his focus group, “if the child doesn’t develop, am I gonna be held accountable in some way, shape, or form?” He later continued to share that in education there has been a big push in teaching social-emotional curriculum and how “the next piece is, well, you’re responsible for teaching it. Then the next piece is, you’re gonna be evaluated on it and if you’re not doing it…and now that is starting to trickle into coaching…” Henry echoed a similar hesitation for the accountability that may come with responsibility. He said,

> I think that’s really where we’ve made big mistakes in education, putting so much emphasis on evaluation and responsibilities of this and that. And, you know, testing and numbers. And you know, if everything doesn’t check out like it’s supposed to, then we’re gonna you know, fire people or rank people, or you know, blame people.

It is important to mention that accountability was not specifically asked about in the focus groups, but that the athletic directors mentioned *accountability and evaluation* on their own in

the discussion of responsibility for development the psychosocial skills of student-athletes. This may meaningfully highlight the common connection between responsibility and accountability both conceptually and in practice. Some of these comments also suggest that teachers, ADs, and coaches are overwhelmed with all that they are being asked to do and shy away from having the social mission of athletics being evaluated, not because they do not think it is important, but because it adds to the burden of the job which is overburdened already.

Comparison of Coach & Athletic Director Quantitative Data

To assess whether or not there is a significant difference in responsibility between coaches and athletic directors, a One-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Homogeneity of variances was assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances and the assumption was met ($p > .05$). The analysis showed a statistically significant difference in responsibility for the social mission and athletic success between the coaches and ADs based on the job in athletics [$F(2, 300) = 38.42$, $p < .001$; Wilk's Lambda = .796, $\eta p^2 = .20$]. This indicates a large effect size according to Cohen's standards (1988).

Table 13

MANOVA Results for Differences between Coach and Athletic Director Groups in Responsibility for the Social Mission and Athletic Success Interaction

Variable	Value	*F*	*Df*	*p*-value	Partial Eta Squared
Job in Athletics	.796	38.42	2	< .001	.20

Univariate pair-wise comparisons were used to assess differences between groups on individual dependent variables, with the Bonferroni Correction applied to account for multiple tests. Results indicate that there is a significant difference in the coach and athletic director

means of responsibility for the social mission ($p = .002$) and responsibility for athletic success ($p < .001$). See Table 14 for more information.

Table 14

Pairwise Comparison Results for Differences between Coach and Athletic Director Groups in Responsibility for the Social Mission and Athletic Success Dependent Variables

Dependent Variable	Mean Difference	*SE*	*p*-value	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Responsibility for Social Mission	.264*	.085	.002	.097	.431
Responsibility for Athletic Success	.843*	.096	< .001	.654	1.032

*Note: Bonferroni correction was used to account for multiple comparisons. Values reference coach – athletic director comparisons. *indicates the mean difference is significant at the .05 level.*

Comparisons of Coach & Athletic Director Qualitative Data

In addition to the small differences in the themes described earlier when exploring the perceptions of responsibility in the coach and athletic director focus groups, there were clear distinctions between the strategies and job tasks the coaches and athletic directors used to fulfill the responsibility for the psychosocial development of student-athletes. A brief description of the strategies used by each sample group is written below with Table 15 providing an overview of the primary strategies mentioned. Although the purpose of this study was not to explore coach and athletic director strategies for promoting life skills development, it is worth noting that the coaches and athletic directors shared these components of their jobs without being directly asked about the strategies they use. In this case, the comments from the participants emphasize that coaches and athletic directors may perceive their amount of responsibility for the social mission of education-based athletics differently, as well their roles and methods for

fulfilling that responsibility. Relative to the methods and strategies employed, coaches more often identified direct work with the student-athletes while the athletic directors focused on working with their coaches or developing programming which will be further discussed in the following sections.

Table 15

Coach and Athletic Directors Strategies for Fulfilling Social Mission Responsibility

Coach Strategies & Job Tasks	Athletic Director Strategies & Job Tasks
Role Modelling	Hiring Right Coaches
Building Relationships	Coach Development & Support
Showing Care	Coach Monitoring
Explicit Discussion	Formal Athlete Development Opportunities
Stressing the Big Picture	Setting Program Norms & Values
Academic Prioritization & Eligibility	Academic Prioritization & Eligibility

Coach Strategies & Job Tasks for Fostering Psychosocial Development. Coaches shared a variety of strategies and tasks that are a part of their job that they leverage to fulfill their responsibility for the social mission of high school sport. Many of these strategies include work tasks that directly involve the student-athletes. These strategies mentioned included role modelling, building relationships, showing care, having explicit discussion about life skills, stressing the bigger picture, and prioritizing academics and eligibility. Carter said he purposefully tries to be a role model for his team, and said, “I realize, you know, that they see me. And they mimic, and they watch, and I try to always make sure I that I am doing things that I want them to do.” He also mentioned that the relationships are a unique experience in high school athletics mentioning that the relationships included, “the stuff where we get to know the kids as a student in the building and an athlete after school, but the trips on the buses, the stuff that the teams do, you know, before matches, before games.” Carter even added that he felt this was different than in travel or club sports because the purpose of high school sports was meant

to match the educational mission of the school and was not singularly focused on competitive play (Blanton et al., 2021).

Luke described part of his job as showing care for his athletes to help them develop as people outside of athletics. He mentioned going to his student-athletes' other sporting events and said, "I think the athletes I've noticed love when you get involved in their lives. Some of them might go, 'ah what are you nosing around for,' but you know I think it shows we care…It goes a long way." In his coaching practice, Nate explained how explicit discussions about life skills is important for his players and for supporting their development. He said,

> They'll say, 'I have an important test coming up', and I go, 'You prepare for it just like we prepared to play this team.' I go, 'What kind of defense do they run with? How does the professor prepare his exams?...Are they gonna run an option? Do you know he's gonna have a trick question?

In this case, the explicit discussion was about preparation for big moments and how it can transfer directly into the classroom. Other coaches also talked about stressing the bigger picture of how life skills transfer far beyond the current needs of the student-athletes and in to adulthood. Evan demonstrated this by saying,

> I stress that ,you know, you are letting other people know what type of person you are, what type of schools sports program we run by your behavior out on the course. Whether that's getting upset, or whether that's trying to shave strokes off your scorecard, and things that get them to see the big picture, and [that] these are life-long skills that I hope they take with them.

Evan also gave an example of prioritizing academics and the eligibility of his players. He mentioned that,

> one of the things we try to do, and we've had very little pushback is that if you have a D or lower in any class, I'm not gonna let you play in one of the tournaments that you're missing school because you need to be in school to get caught up. And that's an incentive for some of the players.

Many of these job tasks and strategies showed up throughout each of the three focus groups and provide insight into the methods that coaches use when they aim to fulfill their responsibilities for developing student-athletes as people. Even without prompting, much of what the coaches discussed aligns with previous life skills development literature. Although these strategies may not be new, they serve as a marker for comparison to the athletic director strategies and job tasks mentioned when discussing their role in fostering student-athlete psychosocial development.

Athletic Director Strategies & Job Tasks for Fostering Psychosocial Development. Athletic directors also mentioned specific, and distinct, components of their job that allow them to fulfill their responsibility for promoting student-athlete psychosocial development. Many ADs discussed that they have limited time directly with student-athletes and that their role in the development process is often more indirect. The strategies and tasks they mentioned included hiring the right coaches, coach development and support, monitoring coaches, providing formal athlete development opportunities, setting program norms and values, and academic prioritization and eligibility.

Hiring good coaches was extremely prevalent throughout all of the athletic director focus groups. Ryan explained that it is a primary task in his job by saying, "my job is to hire good coaches when we have an opportunity…" Frank also reiterated this in his focus group saying, "it [the responsibility for life skills development] does tie back to us with as far as

putting the right person in place to get the most out of those kids as you possibly can." After coaches are hired, the athletic directors often discussed the formal and informal ways that develop and support coaches in their programs. Rachel explained the informal mentorship that is constantly a part of their job. She shared that she would consider their role as "coaching the coaches." She said, "…we're on the phone until 9 o'clock at night talking about culture and building culture and getting buy in. And, 'Have you tried this? Have you tried that? Have you tried this?" Henry added that he pushes for coaches to take part in formal development programs. He shared,

> You know I don't get the day-to-day contact like the coaches do the one thing I would say, though, is providing professional development opportunities for coaches. Trying to encourage my coaches to go to camps, and, you know, and stay current, you know, with all the certifications, whether it's CAP training or CPR training, or whatever it is.

Jessica added, "I feel I'm constantly like a helicopter on my coaches," trying to monitor that even after the coaches are hired and mentored, they are fulfilling their own responsibilities as coaches. It is evident in several of these strategies discussed by athletic directors that much of their opportunity to fulfill their perceived responsibility for developing student-athletes as people lies within working through the coaches in their programs.

In some cases, athletic directors mentioned providing formal athlete development opportunities directly to student-athletes. Henry shared that he accomplished this through a student-athlete leadership development club where "all high school athletes were welcome," and by providing "bigger maybe single event type things [e.g., speakers on mental health, motivational speakers, etc.] that I think I can help facilitate." Athletic directors, like Frank, also mentioned the setting of broader program norms and values when discussing their responsibility

for promoting student-athlete psychosocial development. He said, “That’s exactly what we come up with. So we’ve got…four pillars for our student-athletes: academic, citizenship, excellence, and then volunteer work…and we sit down together and create these norms.” This was later compared to setting the “curriculum” for the athletics program that was meant to guide coaches and student-athletes.

The one primary overlapping strategy that coaches identified that also was consistently discussed by the athletic directors was prioritizing academics and eligibility. Lisa explained, “the expectation is I’m going to deal with students with eligibility, which does help create better people because of the accountability and expectations and conversations.” This may be related to the previously mentioned subtheme of *inseparable nature of education and athletics*. However, it is valuable to note that despite this one strategy overlap, there is a distinct separation between the components of the coaching and athletic director job that allow them to fulfill a responsibility for promoting student-athlete psychosocial development.

Research Question 2: What core job dimensions predict perceptions of responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for student athletic success?

Describing the Core Job Dimensions

To assess possible predictors for responsibility of the social mission and athletic success, ADs and coaches completed seven subscales from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) measuring *skill variety, task identity, autonomy, task significance, feedback from the job itself, feedback from agents,* and *working with others*. Before moving on to regression analysis to examine predictors of responsibility it is important to understand how the coaches scored on each of the seven Job Diagnostic Survey dimensions. Table 12 contains the means, standard deviations, and range for each of the Job Diagnostic Survey dimensions for the social

mission as well as athletic success for coaches. An inspection of this table reveals that task significance had the highest mean at 5.84 with feedback from agents having the lowest with 4.10 for the coaches' work in the psychosocial development of athletes, although even the lowest rated characteristic was rated favorably. For promoting athletic success, autonomy had the highest mean of 5.78 with feedback from agents having the lowest of 4.47 in the coach sample.

Table 16

Coach Job Dimensions Descriptive Statistics

Job Dimensions	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Social Mission				
Skill Variety	5.33	±.93	2.67	7.00
Task Identity	4.39	±1.22	1.00	7.00
Autonomy	5.75	±.80	3.33	7.00
Task Significance	5.84	±.80	3.33	7.00
Feedback from the Job	4.77	±.94	1.00	7.00
Feedback from Agents	4.10	±1.55	1.00	7.00
Working with Others	5.55	±1.07	1.67	7.00
Promoting Athletic Success				
Skill Variety	5.37	±.96	2.67	7.00
Task Identity	4.95	±1.04	1.33	7.00
Autonomy	5.78	±.88	3.33	7.00
Task Significance	5.01	±1.15	1.00	7.00
Feedback from the Job	5.05	±.94	2.00	7.00
Feedback from Agents	4.47	±1.39	1.33	7.00
Working with Others	5.57	±1.07	1.33	7.00

The means, standard deviations, and range for the Job Diagnostic Survey variables in the athletic director sample are also listed in Table 13. When asked about these job characteristics in relation to the psychosocial development of athletes, working with others had the highest mean at 6.17 with feedback from agents having the lowest at 4.05 in the AD sample. Working with others continued to have the highest mean (M = 5.8) with feedback from agents being the

lowest (M = 4.38). Again, even the lowest rated items were seen as being more favorable than not in the coaches' jobs.

Table 17

Athletic Director Job Dimensions Descriptive Statistics

Job Dimensions	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Social Mission				
Skill Variety	5.53	±.88	3.00	7.00
Task Identity	4.22	±1.29	1.67	7.00
Autonomy	5.23	±1.08	2.00	7.00
Task Significance	6.02	±.75	3.67	7.00
Feedback from the Job	4.48	±.91	2.33	6.33
Feedback from Agents	4.05	±1.35	1.00	7.00
Working with Others	6.17	±.83	3.00	7.00
Promoting Athletic Success				
Skill Variety	5.40	±1.02	3.00	7.00
Task Identity	4.83	±1.03	2.00	7.00
Autonomy	5.49	±1.07	2.33	7.00
Task Significance	5.28	±1.01	3.00	7.00
Feedback from the Job	4.60	±1.04	1.33	7.00
Feedback from Agents	4.38	±1.35	1.00	7.00
Working with Others	5.80	±1.07	1.67	7.00

Multiple Regression Analyses for Coach Data

As described earlier, all assumptions for multiple regression were tested and met for the coach data set. After controlling for age and status as an educator, seven variable from the Job Diagnostic Survey (*skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback from the job, feedback from agents*, and *working with others*) were tested to predict responsibility for the social mission of high school sport, and a significant model emerged [R^2 = .228, F(9, 181) = 5.93, p < .001]. The model accounted for 22.8% of variance in responsibility for the social mission of high school sport. Task identity (β = .31, p < .001) and task significance (β = .18, p =.02) significantly predicted responsibility for the social mission of high school sport in the coach sample. Status as a formally hired educator also significantly predicted responsibility for

developing athletes as people (β = .15, *p* = .03). Although it was not significant in the model, feedback from the job itself had a β of .13 (*p* = .10), indicating it contributed to only a slightly smaller portion of the variance as task significance and status as an educator. Working with others (β = -.07, *p* = .37), feedback from agents (β = .04, *p* = .61), skill variety (β = .03, *p* = .73), and autonomy (β = -.01, *p* = .85) did not significantly predict responsibility for the social mission of high school sport in the model.

Table 18

Coach Multiple Regression Results with Social Mission Responsibility as Dependent Variable

	B	*SE*	β	*p*-value
Control Variables				
Age	.001	.003	.02	.82
Educator Status	.21	.092	.15*	.03
Predictors Variables				
Skill Variety	.02	.055	.03	.73
Task Identity	.18	.040	.31**	< .001
Autonomy	-.01	.064	-.01	.85
Task Significance	.15	.066	.16*	.02
Feedback from the Job	.10	.057	.13	.10
Feedback from Agents	.02	.033	.04	.61
Working with Others	-.05	.050	-.07	.37

*Note: * p < .05, **p < .01*

Relative to predicting responsibility for promoting athletic success, the seven tested predictors were once again entered in the model (*skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback from the job, feedback from agents*, and *working with others*). After controlling for age and status as a formally hired educator, a significant model emerged [R^2 = .181, $F(9, 181) = 4.435$, $p < .001$]. Feedback from the job (β = .25, *p* = .003) and task identity (β = .19, *p* = .01) significantly predicted responsibility for the promotion of athletic success in the coach sample with accounting for the largest percentage of the variance. Skill variety was approaching significance with a β of .16 (*p* = .06). Working with others (β = -.09, *p* = .34),

feedback from agents (β = -.08, *p* = .32), task significance (β = .07, *p* = .32), and autonomy (β = -.006, *p* = .94) did not significantly predict responsibility for promoting athletic success. Interestingly, status as an educator does not significantly contribute to the variance in responsibility for promoting athletic success in the same way as the social mission (β = .11, *p* = .12).

Table 19

Coach Multiple Regression Results with Athletic Success Responsibility as Dependent Variable

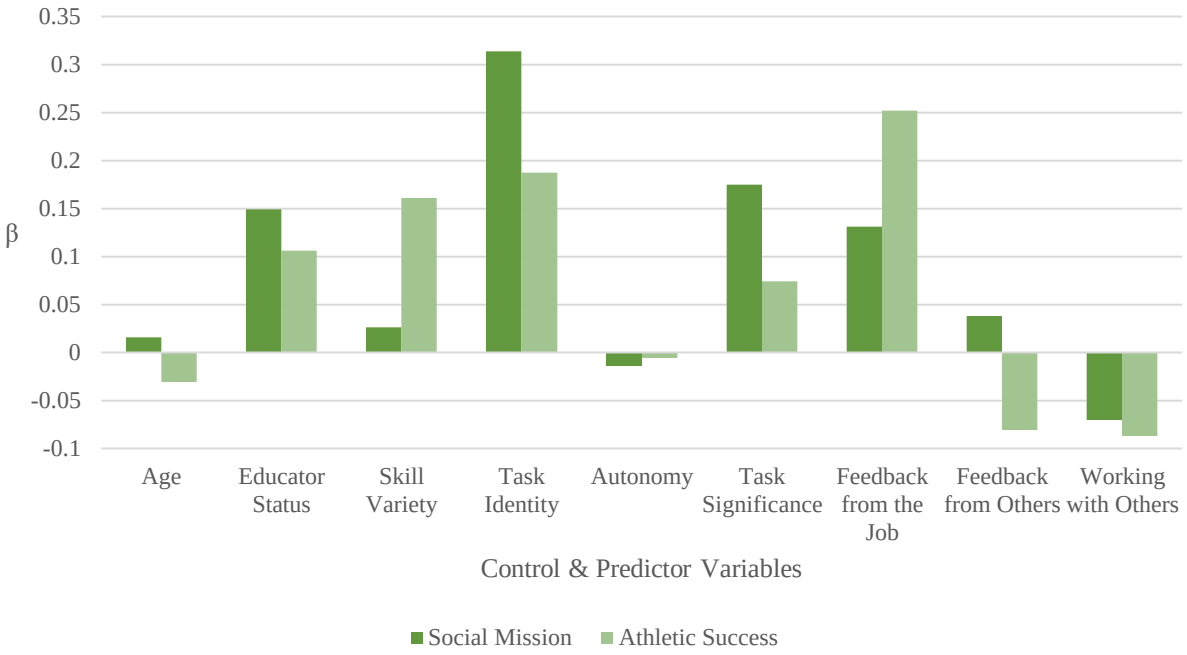
	B	*SE*	β	*p*-value
Control Variables				
Age	-.002	.004	-.03	.66
Educator Status	.17	.109	.11	.12
Predictors Variables				
Skill Variety	.13	.071	.16	.06
Task Identity	.14	.057	.19*	.01
Autonomy	-.005	.070	-.006	.94
Task Significance	.05	.051	.07	.32
Feedback from the Job	.21	.072	.25**	.003
Feedback from Agents	-.05	.046	-.08	.32
Working with Others	-.06	.067	-.09	.34

*Note: * p < .05, **p < .01*

For a visual representation of the standardized Betas for both multiple regressions, see Figure 2 below. This figure demonstrates the differences in the standardized Betas for age, educator status, *skill variety, task identity, autonomy, task significance, feedback from the job, feedback from agents*, and *working with others* when they are regressed on to responsibility for the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for the athletic success of student-athletes in the coach sample. The dark green bars on the left of each variable indicate the standardized Betas for the social mission responsibility, and the light green bars on the right of each variable indicate the standardized Betas for the athletic success responsibility.

Figure 2

Coach Responsibility Multiple Regression Standardized Beta Coefficients



Coach Qualitative Themes for Influences on Responsibility

After sharing the results of the multiple regressions with the coach focus group participants, they shared their thoughts and gave examples of their own interpretations of key variables that caught their attention. In addition, other aspects of the coaching job were mentioned without explicit prompting from the researcher as influential towards perceived responsibility. Overall, five main themes were identified in the data: *task identity, feedback, motivation for joining the profession, time demands of the job, and external support*. *Motivation for joining the profession* also encompasses the two subthemes of *role acceptance* and *educator motivation for coaching*. The first two themes discussed are in alignment with the multiple regression model tested, while the remaining themes described here will emphasize aspects of the coaching job not explored quantitatively in this study that may be used in future research.

Task Identity. The task identity theme is when coaches discussed how they see task identity in their jobs and the potential impact it has on responsibility. This theme was mentioned after the coaches were shown the preliminary results of the multiple regression. If the coaches commented on task identity it was in support of how seeing the beginning and end, or 'whole', of an athlete's development over time made them feel as though their time was not wasted. Carter explained this feeling with one of his athletes on his team. He said,

> …my captain of this year's team, I mean, he's just a handful, and no one really wants to deal with him. And he's a lot. And by his senior year he's still got some stuff to work on…but you know he has mentioned several times really, the impact the team has had on him and coaches, and how we've stuck with him through the highs and lows.

In Carter's case, task identity showed up in the form of seeing an athlete start as a "squirrelly freshman" and continue coaching them all the way through their senior year. Other coaches also explained that in their world, task identity really referred to seeing through the entirety of a student-athlete's high school career or even the season start to finish. Luke described how doing his initial and final evaluation of players contributes to his sense of task identity and responsibility. He shared,

> I think it starts the start of the year when you do your initial evaluations on players. You're not only…not only evaluating their skills, but also their personality…when you do the final evaluation on a player at the end of the year, you see, you look back to the start of the year, and the end you see the development as far as the athletics piece but you also think back to, you know, what were they like when I had that first conversation.

It was clear that coaches recognized the presence of task identity and its relationship to responsibility for both the psychosocial development of student-athletes and the athletic

success. It is worth noting that in many ways, how the coaches described task identity could also be indicative that responsibility leads a coach to seek out higher amounts of task identity in their work.

In addition to the general discussion of task identity, there were specific instances where coaches mentioned that those who were formally hired teachers and staff in the school have different opportunities to see student-athletes at the start and end of their high school careers. Tim even mentioned that he teaches nearly all of the sixth graders in his school even before they join his team when he coaches at the high school. He said, "having that ability to see the beginning to the end…graduation's kind of a really special thing." Isabelle also highlighted this by saying that as a teacher she saw some of her student-athletes as early as fifth grade. She explained,

> when you talk about seeing them from the beginning to the end, specifically with female athletes, so I had them all the way through their maturity. You know, from 9-10 year-old girls to 18-year-olds…so I feel like I did see them from the beginning to the end…

Although not every teacher may see their student-athletes before they are coaching them in athletics, the visibility of the student-athletes out of the playing arena and in school seemed to play a role in the teacher-coaches' feelings of task identity when it came to the development of life skills.

Feedback. After seeing the preliminary multiple regression results, as well as throughout the focus groups while describing their experiences, coaches often mentioned *feedback* from the job and from others as important to their feelings of responsibility. Even though feedback in any form was not a significant predictor of responsibility for the social mission in the model, Josh shared that,

> when you see the players like arrive on time and and are ready to practice right away rather than 15 minutes later, right? You start seeing those things change during the season and you kind of see that, okay, the message is getting through…it becomes a little bit more tangible.

In the same way, despite *feedback from agents* not significantly predicting responsibility in either model, many coaches mentioned getting feedback from players, parents, or teachers that was meaningful to them. Nate described a story of a former student-athlete who had no experience in the sport but made the team as a freshman and by the time she was graduating she had received all-conference honors on varsity. After hearing the parents say, "thank you for that," he shared, "that kind of feedback and the impact on her and her family watching her success like that was something that I'll never forget." It was so important that even Carter explicitly mentioned that he was surprised that feedback in any form was not a significant predictor of responsibility for the social mission. He said, "I would have thought that maybe that would've impacted people a little more, like if you're constantly hearing they're doing great, or you're not, that that would have a bigger effect." The presence of this *feedback* theme indicates that the relationship between responsibility and feedback may need to be explored further, and that perhaps coaches did not interpret "agents" in the survey as also referring to those other than higher administration (e.g., athletes, parents, etc.).

Motivation for Joining the Profession. In the coach focus groups there was a lot of discussion on the driving reason for a coach to take on the coaching job, and how that may impact their responsibility for fostering life skills development. Coaches conversed about their own, as well as others', *motivation for joining the profession*. Nolan described coaching as his "calling" and said that "no one goes into coaching to lose right and winning's important, but the

process is more important." He later discussed other coaches and added that, "I think nobody goes…well, I shouldn't say nobody, but it seems like you wouldn't want to go into coaching for just that reason [winning]." To Nolan, promoting the psychosocial development of student-athletes was a part of his motivation for taking a coaching role in the first place.

Tim explained in his focus group that the people who are in the athletics industry that are "money hungry" are more likely to be working in travel sport contexts. He added, "I've spent 20 years basically doing [it] for free. And it's, you know, maybe it's even cost me a little money to do it, but I just like to do it so we can build those relationships with kids and try to guide them. Evan mentioned that in his district there were some coaches who took the jobs for the money. He said,

> They see how many coaches or teams they can sport or coach just for that extra stipend, and then I've seen other ones that you know…for example, middle school coaches that make even less than the high school that have been doing it for 20-some years because they enjoy what they do, and they enjoy…helping students.

There is likely to be a multitude of reasons that a coach might join the profession, however, the coaches clearly connected this motivation with how a coach may perceive their responsibility for fulfilling the social mission of high school sport. Future researchers should explore this issue.

Role Acceptance. A subtheme of *motivation for joining the profession* is *role acceptance*, which is where coaches recognized that even if someone takes a coaching job without the originally intention of supporting the life skills development of student-athletes, they may learn and accept that this is a part of the job. Josh said,

> I think most people, even if they didn't get into it with that frame of mind they quickly realize, 'oh, there's another component here that I didn't even plan on', right? And that's okay, right? I think that's part of coaches learning too

The conversation continued that those who do not want to accept the role may have the option to leave coaching in education-based athletics. Isabelle mentioned in her focus group that fostering life skills development in high school sport is not an option regardless of the *motivation for joining the profession* and indicated that role acceptance was a necessity. She shared, "If, you know, you didn't necessarily get into coaching to…to teach kids responsibility, in a roundabout way, you're always going to be doing that when you're coaching." The coach participants highlighted that someone's motivation for coaching may influence the degree to which they accept the responsibility for the social mission, although some *role acceptance* may be necessary to continue in the profession no matter what.

Educator Motivation for Coaching. A second subtheme of the *motivation for joining the profession* them is *educator motivation for coaching*. Similar to the discussion on how status as formally hired educator may influence task identity, coaches explained that a teacher's motivation for coaching may be different than non-teachers. Tim, who is a teacher, explained that he went into the teaching profession because seeing "that light bulb go off in their eyes, man, that's the best feeing there is." He added that he gets a similar feeling between "a student who learns a concept in class or learns a concept on the field" and said, "that's why we [teacher-coaches] do what we do." He also described coaching as a way be involved outside of the classroom "to help build the community" and make an impact. In his mind, a teacher already has the perception of responsibility for student psychosocial development, which may make them more inclined to take this responsibility in to athletics. Carter echoed this sentiment and

added that at his school they aim to hire more "in-house" coaches, "just because it's so clear the difference it makes." This description from the coaches possibly helps explain why status as a formally hired educator was a significant predictor in the perceived responsibility for the social mission of high school sport. Additionally, the coaches did not discuss how being a formally hired educator relates to responsibility for athletic success, which potentially aligns with the results indicating that it does not play a significant role in responsibility for athletic success.

Time Demands of Job. Coaches occasionally discussed that the challenge in their job is sometimes balancing the time restrictions and other demands of the job for what the job provides in return. *Time demands of the job* was often discussed juxtaposed to the pay or rewards for coaching. Luke explained that some coaches may not take on the responsibility for promoting life skills development because it would take extra time. He shared that others may feel this tension and said, "it's like they almost feel like they're coming off…well, you know, punch the clock because I've already done enough work for what I get paid." Carter shared that he cares about it so much that he is willing to do it in spite of the time demands to do it. He said, "I read the contracts, but I think I would do it, even if they didn't have a job description, and don't tell anyone, but probably if they didn't have a salary, I'd probably keep doing it too." Others implicitly mentioned this willingness to go above and beyond the already demanding role of the job as a coach despite little compensation for the work that they do, and indicated that these demands may be barriers to get others to join them in taking responsibility for the social mission of high school sport.

External Support. The final theme from the coach focus groups that was discussed as influential in the perceived responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development is *external support*. Working with others was tested in the multiple regression model, however

external support more directly references the degree to which the coaches felt support from others in their pursuit of promoting life skills development, as opposed to how frequently they collaborated with others. This need for support came up throughout the interviews even prior to sharing the multiple regression results. Isabelle shared that it has been difficult for her to coach life skills because of parents in the district. She said,

> I don't always feel very supported when it comes to holding the girls accountable and doing things we think is best because, you know, there's some animosity with who got the position…when we do hold the girls accountable, sometimes we get ridiculed for it.

Nolan expressed the opposite, and shared that he feels *external support* for what he prioritizes in his job. He said, "I'm glad that after so many years I feel like our…my colleagues, you know, teachers and staff, administrators and the parents have come to the agreement that my number one role is to teach these, you know, these life skills." As coaches shared, they recognized that sometimes gaining this support was something they had to pursue on their own through building connections with administration and setting consistent messaging about how they coach with their parents.

Not every predictor tested in the multiple regression models was discussed in the focus group interviews to allow for the coaches to focus on aspects of their jobs that they felt was most important in the pursuit of the social mission of high school sport. In future research, considering task identity, feedback, motivation for joining the profession, time demands of the job, and external support (as well as their subthemes) would be valuable for starting to build further theory on coach responsibility in sport.

Multiple Regression Analyses for Athletic Director Data

As mentioned in the methods section previously, all assumptions for multiple regression were met in the athletic director sample as well (i.e. normality of residuals, multicollinearity, homoskedasticity, and linearity). After controlling for age and involvement in sport outside of the AD role, seven variables from the Job Diagnostic Survey were tested as predictors for the responsibility for the social mission of high school sport, and a significant model emerged [R^2 = .217, $F(9, 102) = 3.14$, $p = .002$]. The model accounted for 21.7% of variance in responsibility for the social mission of high school sport. Task identity (β = .25, $p = .01$) and feedback from the job (β = .25, $p = .03$) significantly predicted responsibility for the social mission of high school sport in the pooled athletic director sample. Feedback from agents (β = -.15, $p = .16$), autonomy (β = .12, $p = .28$), task significance (β = .09, $p = .40$), skill variety (β = .02, $p = .82$), and working with others (β = .004, $p = .97$) did not significantly predict responsibility for the social mission of high school sport in the model.

Table 20

Athletic Director Multiple Regression Results with Social Mission Responsibility as Dependent Variable

	B	*SE*	β	*p*-value
Control Variables				
Age	.004	.007	.05	.59
Other Involvement in Sport	.06	.149	.03	.71
Predictors Variables				
Skill Variety	.02	.089	.02	.82
Task Identity	.15	.060	.25*	.01
Autonomy	.08	.078	.12	.28
Task Significance	.09	.105	.09	.40
Feedback from the Job	.20	.095	.25*	.03
Feedback from Agents	-.09	.061	-.15	.16
Working with Others	.004	.099	.004	.97

*Note: * $p < .05$*

The second linear regression tested seven predictors from the Job Diagnostic Survey after controlling for age and involvement in sport outside of the AD role as well. A significant model emerged [R^2 = .226, F(9, 102) = 3.30, p = .001]. with feedback from the job (β = .35, p = .004) significantly predicting responsibility for the promotion of athletic success in the athletic director sample. Working with others approached significance in the model (p = .06) with a β of -.21. Task identity (β = .15, p = .18), autonomy (β = -.14, p = .23), skill variety (β = .12, p = .36), task significance (β = .07, p = .48), and feedback from agents (β = .06, p = .58) did not significantly predict responsibility for promoting athletic success.

Table 21

Athletic Director Multiple Regression with Athletic Success Responsibility as Dependent Variable

	B	*SE*	β	*p*-value
Control Variables				
Age	-.003	.007	-.04	.65
Other Involvement in Sport	-.12	.161	-.07	.47
Predictors Variables				
Skill Variety	.09	.099	.12	.35
Task Identity	.12	.087	.15	.17
Autonomy	-.11	.087	-.14	.23
Task Significance	.06	.083	.07	.48
Feedback from the Job	.28	.093	.35**	.004
Feedback from Agents	.04	.069	.06	.58
Working with Others	-.16	.085	-.21	.06

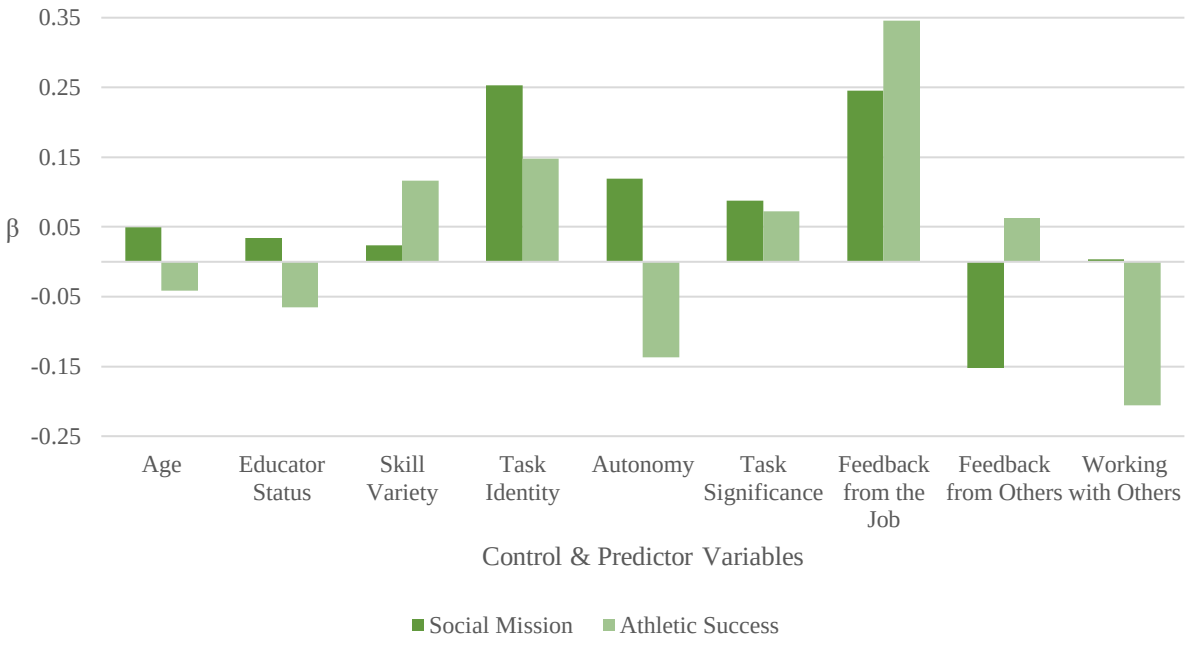
*Note: **p < .01*

For a visual representation of the standardized Betas for both multiple regressions, see Figure 2 below. This figure demonstrates the differences in the standardized Betas for age, educator status, skills variety, task identity, autonomy, task significance, feedback from the job, feedback from agents, and working with others when they are regressed on to responsibility for

the social mission of high school sport and responsibility for the athletic success of student-athletes in the athletic director sample.

Figure 3

Athletic Director Responsibility Multiple Regression Standardized Beta Coefficients



Athletic Director Qualitative Themes for Influences on Responsibility

As with the coaches, athletic director focus group participants were provided a brief visual of the preliminary multiple regression results and asked to share their thoughts and perspectives. Some of the influences on responsibility the athletic directors shared were informed by the previously tested multiple regression variables and others were from the athletic directors' own perspectives. Overall, there were five themes that arose following the discussion of these results including *task identity, feedback, administrator responsibility for perception of school, motivation for joining the profession* and *demands of the job*.

Task Identity. After explaining task identity in the multiple regression model, several athletic directors recognized that in some cases they do get to see the "beginning and end" of the student-athletes' development through education-based athletics. Lisa mentioned,

> I have a group of those right now who are parents, who I had the advantage of working with as students, and I have told many of them now that they've become very good adult parents, in spite of what they were like as students, and we've all laughed about that. But I think that's one of the advantages we have in athletics.

For others who are working in a district long-term they also mentioned being able see the growth of student-athletes into adults in their community. However, Lisa added that sometimes it is not about seeing the end result but trusting that impact is being made long-term even if those effects are not visible to athletic directors. She said, "You never know what a conversation will bring down the road…We don't know what our long-term effects are, but as long as we're working with kids there will be an effect long-term." This distinction is perhaps a new starting point for conceptualizing *task identity* when it comes to student-athlete psychosocial development – believing that there are long-term contributions to development without always seeing the outcome.

Feedback. The athletic directors also recognized that *feedback* is an ever-present aspect of their jobs and were not surprised that it was related to both types of responsibility. However, a unique distinction that the athletic directors made was that they also tend to receive negative feedback in their jobs and that this can also be impactful, albeit disheartening. Frank explained,

> We get the positive feedback, but unfortunately it's the opposite. It's the ones that bring things to our attention that didn't go so smooth and you know that's… 'I was

> disappointed when I visited your facility and I noticed your student section did this,' or 'you had one of your kids from the crowd did this.'

As Frank described, the athletic directors considered a part of their job to make sure that students even beyond the athletes are demonstrating appropriate behavior and showing respect during athletic events. Mark described feedback on athletic performance as "measured" inherently since scores and winning records are visible and informative. In both scenarios, the athletic director feedback was mostly directed at feedback on student-athlete outcomes that they then related to their own jobs and performance, as opposed to feedback directly about their own performance as athletic directors. This aligns with the previously mentioned strategies by ADs that are primarily indirect in the effect that they have on student-athlete psychosocial and athletic development.

Administrator Responsibility for Perception of School. A unique aspect of the athletic director job that was discussed as related to the social mission of high school sport in the focus groups was the *administrator's responsibility for perception of the school*. Comments from the athletic directors highlighted that by promoting life skills development they are also ensuring that they were managing the visibility of the athletics program in a way that reflected well on the school district. Lisa explained this by comparing the athletic program to the front porch of a school She said,

> How you run your athletic program, what it looks like from anybody who drives up, really, that's their impression of your school. And these kids are those people on the front porch, and if they're respectful of their coaches, if they're respectful of their school, if you walk into the school and you see kids bending over to pick up trash, there's something going on that's really good about that school.

Keeping track of how the overall program represented the school was not something that coaches mentioned as components of their jobs yet was very present with the athletic directors. Mark also emphasized this by saying, "When your football team walks into the stadium or basketball teams walking into the stadium, or you know, how kids are acting sitting around waiting for the rest of the tennis matches to finish up others take notice to that." Through the comments of the athletic directors it seems as though this is tied to the ADs being situated as school administration and should not be overlooked as a possible influence on AD feelings of responsibility.

Motivation for Joining the Profession. Similar to the coaches, many athletic directors felt as though the reason an individual joined the athletic director profession would play a role in how responsible they feel for promoting student-athlete psychosocial development or athletic success. Frank very directly explains that,

> you go into education because you care about kids, the development of kids. You know, and it's it's nice to be around sports with it. But again, at the end of the day we're looking for turning a male or female into a just, a phenomenal person that, you know, too as a citizen.

Rachel added that her reason for being an athletic director also leads her to continue to push for program and student-athlete improvement. She said,

> I don't want to sit back and think like, 'Oh, we've arrived.'…That's not who I am as a person, you know, so to me it's, why am I *not* going to continually strive to push my coaches, my kids, in that same direction…where we are constantly striving for excellence, to get better, have better conversations, have better grades, be better people.

In the focus groups it appeared as though the athletic directors felt that their jobs were viable options for people who cared about helping young adults continue to develop as people, and that this motivation for being an athletic director would influence the perceived responsibility that one may take on.

Demands of the Job. The final theme in the athletic director data that was discussed as having a possible influence on the responsibility felt for the social mission of high school sport encompassed the other *demands of the job* that athletic directors balance. Henry said this best when he stated, "I have a responsibility as an educator to do a lot of things." These other responsibilities and *demands of the job* were noted as taking significant time in the athletic directors' days. Rachel brought this up in her focus group saying,

> I have almost 1,100 kids in my building, and a middle school. So I have seven sports and 20 levels this spring. So it's it's it's a lot to manage all the time, and I think that that's where what you think you can take on, and what you actually can take on [are different].

Some athletic directors mentioned that this may be different in different school sizes and contexts as well, noting that every AD may have their own demands of the job that get in the way of them pursuing and feeling responsible for the psychosocial development of student-athletes directly.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to, first, measure and report coach and athletic director perceptions of their responsibility to fulfill the social mission of education-based athletics, and second, to test possible predictors of said responsibility in the high school sport context. In an effort to further understand how the social mission of athletics responsibility was situated with other responsibilities, the respondents were also asked to rate their responsibility for promoting athletic success in their positions. Predictors of participant ratings of their responsibility for athletic success were also examined. In accomplishing these objectives, this study has provided a beginning to the systematic understanding of coach and athletic directors' personal assessments of their obligations to focus on student-athlete psychosocial development.

General Summary of Results

Overall, the results of this study suggest that coaches have a higher perceived responsibility for promoting the psychosocial development of student-athletes than athletic directors in the state of Michigan. Additionally, coaches also perceive a higher level of responsibility for promoting athletic success than athletic directors, and the responsibility levels for both psychosocial development and athletic success are nearly identical in coaches. Athletic directors had a significantly higher perception of their responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development than athletic success of the student-athletes. In describing this responsibility in focus groups, coaches more often mentioned *perceived definitive responsibility* indicating that they felt it was surely within their job responsibilities to develop student-athlete life skills. They also discussed a *balance of responsibility* between fulfilling both the needs for sport skills development and success and fostering life skills development. Occasionally, coaches also discussed a *nuanced responsibility* by recognizing that the responsibility for

student-athlete life skills development may be shared amongst all of the high school sport stakeholders.

Athletic directors also felt the *perceived definitive responsibility* for student-athlete psychosocial development, however, they were more inclined than coaches to describe *nuanced responsibility*. In many ways, the athletic directors wanted to pursue this social mission of high school athletics in their roles, but worried about how *accountability and evaluation* would be handled. They mentioned that being held responsible for the student-athletes' actions outside of their control was worrisome, and like the coaches, recognized that the student-athletes' development is a *shared responsibility*. Some athletic directors even discussed that they felt it was *not a job responsibility* of theirs to be supporting psychosocial development and that they have other more clearly defined job tasks (e.g., scheduling buses, organizing officials, hiring coaches, etc.) that they may be held accountable for.

This study also tested possible predictors of responsibility for both the social mission of high school sport and the athletic success of student-athletes. As a starting point, the variables in the Job Diagnostic Survey were tested as a previous established model. These variables included *skill variety, task identity, autonomy, task significance, feedback from the job, feedback from agents,* and *working with others*. In the coach sample, *task identity* was found to be a significant predictor of the responsibility for the social mission and athletic success. *Task significance* was found to be a significant predictor of responsibility for the social mission in the coaches, but it was not significant in predicting any other types of responsibility in the coach or athletic director samples. *Feedback from the job* was found to be a significant predictor of responsibility for athletic success in the coach sample, responsibility for the social mission in the athletic director sample, and responsibility for athletic success in the athletic director

sample. There were no other variables tested that were found to be significant for predicting responsibility for athletic success in the athletic director sample. It is also worth noting that in the coach sample, age and status and a formally hired educator were controlled for in the multiple regression analyses, and status as an educator accounted for a significant portion of the variance in coach responsibility for the social mission of high school sport. In the athletic director sample, age and involvement in sport outside of education-based athletics was controlled for in the multiple regressions as well.

In addition to the statistical testing of possible predictors, coaches and athletic directors indicated that they agreed that *task identity* and *feedback from the job* were relevant to their jobs and their feelings of responsibility. They also discussed several other aspects of their work that they described in relation to their responsibility. For coaches, these included *motivation for joining the profession*, *role acceptance*, *educator motivation for coaching*, *time demands of the job*, and *external support*. For athletic directors, these included *administrator responsibility for the perception of the school*, *motivation for joining the profession*, and *demands of the job*. These quantitative and qualitative results provide preliminary data to guide future research to understand what aspects of coach and athletic director jobs influence their levels of responsibility for the social mission of high school sport.

Perceptions of Responsibility

The results of this study are important as there are currently no other studies that assess high school coach and athletic director perceived responsibility in their jobs. Specifically, the results for research question one will allow for a set of normative data to be used in future research as a comparison tool. However, there is also value in discussing these responsibility values in relation to responsibility values in teacher populations. The coach mean for both

responsibility levels (M = 5.1) was found to be relatively comparable to that found in teachers by Winter and colleagues (2006: M = 5.2) using a modified version of the Job Diagnostic Survey. In the original testing of the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), the mean score for experienced responsibility of the general working population was 5.46, which is higher than both the coach and athletic director sample. This may be because in this study the specific responsibilities (i.e., for fulfilling the social mission and for promoting athletic success) were isolated as opposed to measuring a global level of responsibility for the entirety of the job. Responsibility was also previously measured with athletic administrators specifically (Cleave, 1993), although no means were provided from that data, and explorations of school administrator responsibility have primarily been through qualitative work (Reid, 2020; West et al., 2010) and time-logging (Sebastian et al., 2017). However, these qualitative investigations do also indicate that school administrators have differing responsibilities than those of teachers, in the same way that the athletic directors' responsibility levels for each area differed from that of coaches.

This difference, and the identical values for both responsibilities in the coach sample, may be a result of the nuances in coaching responsibilities. This was previously explained by Lynn and Lyle (2010) that coaching should more likely be considered a 'family of *related* roles' (responsibilities) that are connected and yet are fulfilled to varying degrees throughout the coaching process. It is clear from the data that both coaches and athletic directors perceive some level of responsibility for both student-athlete psychosocial development and athletic success, however this relatedness of the roles may be visible in the mirrored levels of responsibility. The coach participants in the study identified this as finding 'balance' between their multiple goals and responsibilities in their jobs, and that while they may complement each other in some ways,

there are certainly moments when those responsibilities conflict. It could be that external pressure from others, such as parents and broader sport culture, adds to the prioritization and focus on the responsibility for athletic success. A small amount of literature has been shared highlighting the presence of role conflict with teacher-coaches specifically (Richards & Templin, 2012; i.e., an individual who serves as a formally hired educator and a coach simultaneously). However, the results reveal that it is highly possible that intra-role conflict is as relevant as the more commonly studied inter-role conflict. In this case, the intra-role conflict encompasses when fostering life skills development potentially impedes the athletic success of the teams. Additionally, this intra-role conflict is likely present for many coaches and athletic directors in education-based athletics, although coaches were more likely to recognize the synergy in responsibilities, where ADs were more likely to acknowledge competing responsibilities.

The coaches' discussion of 'balance' of responsibilities aligns with Gano-Overway and colleagues' (2020) revisions to the United States National Standards for Sport Coaches. The revisions include seven core responsibilities of coaches including (1) set vision, goals, and standards for the sport program, (2) engage in and support ethical practices, (3) build relationships, (4) develop a safe sport environment, (5) create a positive and inclusive sport environment, (6) conduct practices and prepare for competition, and (7) strive for continuous improvement (Gano-Overway et al., 2020). Although this is not explicitly outlined in the standards, the core responsibilities require the fulfillment of *both* the provision of psychosocial components to the sport experience and the focus on athletic development and competition. Arguably, the standards highlight the same inseparable nature of psychosocial development and athletic success that the coaches recognized in this study, and some of the specific strategies

used by coaches to foster psychosocial development (i.e., building relationships). However, it is vital to acknowledge that no coaches or administrators mentioned or discussed the national coaching standards, and it is viable to assume that the coaching job descriptions or contracts did not include explicit outlining of these standards. In this sense, the expectations and responsibilities for coaches that are used in practice would still be considered as a 'gray area' and certainly not consistent throughout education-based athletics. This also highlights the gap that exists between coaching science and coaching practice; a gap that needs to be further bridged.

If coach responsibilities and standards are considered still in 'gray area' of conceptualization in practice, then athletic director roles and responsibilities is certainly a 'black box.' At the present, there is minimal literature at best exploring high school athletic directors' job responsibilities and characteristics, with only a few studies examining ADs at primarily the collegiate level (Copeland & Kirsch, 1995; Wong et al., 2015). However, Sturges and colleagues (2020) recognized that there may be power in the athletic director role specifically for the promotion of leadership in high school student-athletes and found there to be a lack of standardization in the prioritization of leadership and life skills development between schools. Similarly, athletic directors in this study recognized that a variety of contextual factors influence their ability to focus on the psychosocial development of the student-athletes in their care.

In this same vein, it makes sense that the coaches had a statistically significantly higher perception of their responsibility for both the psychosocial development of athletes and athletic success. Athletic directors are situated at the more distal layer in the high school sport ecosystem, which may result in more indirect and less obvious ways to promote either of these goal student-athlete outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). So much so that athletic directors are not

explicitly included in the heuristic model of the youth sport system created by Dorsch and colleagues (2020). In this model, organizations are considered influential on the missions, standards, and demands that set the design and the delivery of the program, which may be where the athletic directors would be considered to be housed. According to Dorsch and colleagues (2020), the organization (or athletic directors in this case) do have some direct impacts on the athletes as well as impact through indirect influence on coaches. From this study, it is clear that the athletic directors perceive their responsibilities and job tasks to primarily rely on working *through* the coaches and could potentially be a high school sport-specific amendment to the model.

This distal position from student-athletes may pose an additional challenge to recognizing potential for promoting life skills development and fulfilling the social mission specifically. Ault and colleagues (2023) found that student-athletes could engage in more optimal forms of development through anchored learning experiences that were fostered by close others. The participants in this study clearly indicated that close relationships directly with a student-athlete may be the exception for athletic directors. Due to the nature of the other job tasks required of athletic directors, much of their time is not reserved for building direct relationships with the student-athletes. However, it is worth noting that the athletic directors were able to provide specific and tangible strategies and job tasks that they used to contribute to the psychosocial development of student-athletes from their positions, despite the lack of close relationships with student-athletes. Some of these strategies, such as providing formal athlete development opportunities and setting program norms and values, overlap with strategies identified by Sturges and colleagues (2020) for promoting leadership development specifically. Others, like the hiring of qualified coaches, are mentioned in the section addressing athletic

administrators in the revised National Coaching Standards (Gano-Overway, 2020) and suggest a key to success in promoting the social mission of athletics is for athletic directors to foster strong relationships with their coaches versus the student-athletes themselves.

The indirect nature of the athletic director role may also be contributing to the hesitance of some of the athletic directors in the sample for accepting *perceived definitive responsibility*. Lee and colleagues (2022) identified this indirect relationship as a component of occupational stress for athletic directors because of the unpredictable nature and limited control over athletic outcomes. In the same way, the athletic directors in this study acknowledged that they may similarly have limited control over student-athlete psychosocial development in a way that limits their perceived responsibility. Schlenker and colleagues (1994) would consider this indirect perception of athletic directors as a possible break in the 'linkages' of the Triangle Model of Responsibility. The model posits that responsibility is the glue when an actor (e.g., athletic directors) is connected to an event (e.g., high school sport) and prescriptions for that event (e.g., student-athlete life skills development). Schlenker et al. (1994) says that if responsibility is not present, then the linkages are broken. The results from this study indicate that the linkage between the athletic directors and the prescription of student-athlete life skills development may be weakened because the ADs are connected to the *event* of high school sport as opposed to the 'ultimate stakeholders' of high school sport (i.e., the student-athletes). Some could argue that the prescriptions for student-athlete life skills development are unclear or unwritten, however, Blanton and colleagues (2021) found it to be so present in administrator perceptions of high school sport that it was included in the *definition* of education-based athletics. Considering responsibility as the 'glue' that connects actors to the events and prescriptions also aligns with the coach and athletic director discussions of *individual pursuit of*

responsibility where it was felt that an individual is only attached to the social mission of high school sport to the degree that they choose to accept the responsibility.

As mentioned previously, it is also possible that the responsibility for promoting student-athlete psychosocial development gets lost amongst the already highly demanding responsibilities of athletic directors. Judge and Judge (2009) explored the occupational stress of athletic directors and found that task-based stress (e.g., heavy workload, high expectations, meetings and paperwork tasks, etc.) was the highest perceived stress from the job. This aligns with some of the athletic director participants stating that they have many things for which they are responsible and could be contributing to the hesitance for adding another formal responsibility to that list. Additionally, in the education literature, Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) include role overload as a contextual influence on a teacher's sense of responsibility. Some focus group participants also indicated that role overload may be increasing as several athletic directors in smaller schools have dual roles, such as athletic director and assistant principal simultaneously. In these cases, athletic directors are put in a situation where it is highly unlikely that they can fulfill all their roles and responsibilities at high level, if at all.

Measurement of Responsibility

The Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) is a general measure of responsibility that was adapted to assess two specific goal outcomes of high school sport – student-athlete psychosocial development and student-athlete athletic success. In this study there was varying degrees of responsibility between the specific goal outcomes and between the two groups of samples (i.e., coaches and athletic directors). The results of this study provide preliminary evidence that the responsibility subscale in the Job Diagnostic Survey may be useful and further adaptable to the high school sport context. However, if the aim is to move the

literature forward to the depth of other domains, then an approach similar to that of Lauermann and Karabenick (2013) in designing a teacher-specific responsibility scale would be valuable. The Teacher Responsibility Scale encompasses the variety of responsibilities of a teacher in one measurement tool, which was driven by perspectives of teachers and previous literature (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2013). In the context of education-based athletics, a new scale encompassing both the fostering of life skills, athletic success, and other components of the National Coaching Standards in the USA would be an appropriate starting place (Gano-Overway, 2020). It may also be beneficial to consider an adaption of the Coach Efficacy Scale II – High School Teams (CES II-HST: Myers et al., 2008), which recognizes five domains of coaching efficacy including motivation, game strategy, technique, character building, and physical conditioning. A lack of general consensus of job responsibilities of coaches and athletic directors warrants more work to be done to provide clarity in the conceptualization and measurement of those responsibilities.

Exploration of Predictors of Responsibility

This study preliminarily assessed possible predictors of coach and athletic director responsibility using the job characteristic variables in Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Diagnostic Survey. This was meant to provide a beginning understanding of possibly influential variables to carry forward into future studies. Unsurprisingly, some of the variables, including *task identity, task significance,* and *feedback from the job* contributed significantly to the model's prediction of responsibility in some cases (i.e., not every variable contributed significantly in every model run), while others did not. In addition, the focus group discussions with coaches and athletic directors revealed several other job and personal characteristics that

may influence responsibility for the social mission. While not all possible predictors will be discussed here, the following concepts may provide a meaningful addition to the literature.

Task Identity

Task identity or "the degree to which the job requires completion of a 'whole' and identifiable piece of work" consistently showed up as a significant predictor of responsibility in three of the four models tested between the coach and athletic director samples. In other words, does the coach or athletic director see the beginning and the end of a student-athletes' development – a relatively vague concept for the tasks in this study. Despite having relatively lower means for task identity in both samples compared to the other job dimensions, the follow-up focus group data supported the importance and presence of both psychosocial development and athletic success as being a 'whole' piece of work for coaches and athletic directors. This finding aligns with Cleave's (1993) results with athletic administrators where task identity also contributed significantly to predicting experienced responsibility. In addition to their support for the importance of task identity, coaches and athletic directors clarified that to them, task identity meant seeing the development from the start to end of a season or a student-athletes high school career. Since life skills development does not have a clearly defined 'end' point, this conceptualization from the coaches and athletic directors adds to the literature on the meaning of task identity in this context and for future research. Further, the coaches discussed that those in a teacher-coach role may have an advantage of seeing the life skills learned and transferred into non-sport settings during the school day. This transfer and the outcomes of transfer are often considered the 'end result' of the development process in the literature (see Pierce et al., 2017), and appear to be included in the defining of task identity for coaches as well.

Task Significance

Logically and empirically, it is not a large surprise that *task significance* (e.g., the perception that the job has a substantial impact on the lives of others) contributed significantly to the prediction of responsibility for the social mission in the coach sample. As mentioned previously, task significance has been theorized to contribute to responsibility (Helker & Wosnitza, 2014), and found to be related to motivation for engaging in social responsibility (Ong et al., 2018), outside of its inclusion in Hackman and Oldham's (1975) model. Task significance also was a significant predictor of responsibility specifically in a sample of athletic administrators as well (Cleave, 1993). What is noteworthy, however, is that task significance *only* significantly predicted responsibility in the coach sample and for the social mission. There is little evidence in the literature to explain why this might be the case, and this relationship should be further explored.

Feedback

Using the Job Diagnostic Survey variables, *feedback* was distinguished between *feedback from the job* (e.g., feedback from seeing results occur as a result of doing the job) and *feedback from agents* (e.g., feedback shared by significant others in the system; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). As indicated in the multiple regression analyses, *feedback from the job* was the only version of feedback to contribute significantly to predicting responsibility in the coach or athletic director samples for either the social mission or athletic success. However, in the focus groups, the source of the feedback to coaches and athletic directors was more challenging to distinguish, with many coaches or ADs combining feedback from the job with feedback from others. This may be due to a lack of practical distinction for the participants in their jobs, or that both versions of feedback tend to coincide in their jobs. Nash and colleagues (2016) explored

sources of feedback for coaches and identified four main sources including professional networks, players and participants, critical thinking skills, and support systems. In these sources of feedback, it is clear that most of the feedback received by coaches, and presumably by ADs as well, is from other people (Nash et al., 2016). This could be one reason contributing to the coach and ADs' lack of distinction between the two forms, despite the distinction being articulated by the researcher during the focus groups. This confusion of terms may also have impacted the multiple regression results if the participants interpreted the *feedback from agents* questions as only meaning administration as opposed to all others in the sport system.

It also may be relevant to explore the nature of the feedback that is being received, which was not distinguished in this study. Firestone and Pennell (1993) pose the idea that when feedback becomes evaluative as opposed to informational it can lower perceptions of responsibility in teachers. Should coaches and athletic directors associate feedback from agents other than their superior administration (e.g., athletes, other coaches, parents, etc.) as feedback from the job, then perhaps the lack of significance in the feedback from agents in this study (e.g., athletic directors or school administration) is a result of the feedback being perceived as evaluative. This is supported by the conversation in the athletic director focus groups where the participants indicated hesitation for adding evaluation of their fulfillment of the social mission. In addition to this distinction, more research should explore the types of feedback that is commonly received by coaches and athletic directors specifically related to the psychosocial development of their student-athletes.

Motivation for Joining the Profession & Role Acceptance

A largely present theme in the coach and athletic director focus groups was their *motivation for joining the profession* and how it relates to the responsibility that one takes on.

This has not been studied in conjunction with life skills development specifically, however, McLean and Mallett (2012), identified that coaches are motivated to join the profession for a variety of reasons including external and internal forces, connections with sport, and coach and athlete development. Of course, components of the coaches' motivation include the drive for athletic success, but the presence of coach and athlete development in their findings support what coach and athletic directors mentioned in focus groups. Specifically, they discussed that some coaches pursue their roles in sport because of the opportunity to focus on holistic athlete development, and that this motivation is different than coaching for the love of the sport (McLean & Mallett, 202). In this study, the results indicate that a presence of this motivation to coach for athlete development may result in higher levels of responsibility than other motivations for joining the profession. This finding may suggest that athletic directors should specifically seek to hire coaches who share in this motivation, although currently there are no known tools for assisting ADs in assessing this in the selection process.

Beginning the job as a coach or athletic director because of the motivation for supporting athlete development was not the only way in which coaches in this study felt that responsibility could be high. They also discussed *role acceptance* and the opportunity for a coach to recognize the role they play in the social mission of high school sports after they are hired and take responsibility then. Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) also considered role ambiguity and conflict in their theorizing of influences on responsibility, however, they did not include role acceptance among the influential contextual factors. Role acceptance has been studied in the sport literature, and is commonly defined as, "a dynamic process that reflects the degree to which an athlete is willing to fulfill the role responsibilities expected of him/her" (Benson et al., 2013, p. 273). As demonstrated by this definition, role acceptance has primarily

been studied in athletes with little to no research on coaches' role acceptance. This is likely because of role acceptance being a component of group dynamics literature, in which we often may not think of coaches or athletic directors as members of a clearly defined 'group' as we do with athletic teams. However, this may be an important approach to extending the literature on coach and athletic director responsibility moving forward with recognition that role acceptance, and its related concept role commitment (Eys et al., 2020), may be related to perceptions of responsibility. Although it could be argued that more work in understanding the specific roles and responsibilities of coaches and athletic directors in high school sport should be done prior to the exploration of the acceptance of those roles and responsibilities.

Educators and Responsibility

The presence of teacher-coaches in this study, and its influence on perceptions of responsibility for student-athlete psychosocial development, is worth noting. Within the coach data, employment as a formally hired educator (e.g., a teacher-coach) significantly predicted responsibility for the social mission of high school sport, while it did not significantly predict feelings of responsibility for the athletic success of student-athletes. As mentioned earlier, the dual role of the teacher-coach has long been recognized as a unique position in education. Some research has studied teacher-coaches in relation to their non-coaching teacher counterparts, including finding that there is more similarity than difference in role stress between the two groups (Richards et al., 2014). Often, the literature highlights the possibility of role conflict for those in teacher-coach positions, however Richards and colleagues (2014) emphasize that role balance is certainly possible and more likely than the literature describes. Even more recently, in the sport psychology literature, teacher-coaches have been acknowledged as unique contributor to student-athletes life skills development in North American high school sport

(Camiré, 2015; Pierce et al., 2018). Pierce and colleagues (2018) posit that the dual-role of teacher-coaches allows for those individuals to witness and facilitate life skills transfer in a way that may not be possible for coaches who are not fully time school employees. Selection bias may also be present in that those who choose to become teachers are likely already interested in, and receive training in, child development to some degree. This interest and education may increase the perception of responsibility for the social mission in teachers who then take on additional roles as a coach outside of their classroom. The results from this study, therefore, provide further evidence that this formally hired role in education beyond the sport setting may indicate a greater sense of responsibility for the holistic development of the student-athletes, and should continue to be studied.

External Support

Despite *working with others* being found to contribute very little to the prediction of responsibility in all multiple regression analyses, the coaches in this study identified that the perception of *external support* from others made a difference to them in how responsible they felt for the psychosocial development of student-athletes. This could be a result of the conceptual distinction that *working with others* encompasses the degree to which the job requires working closely with other people to complete the task, where the coaches' discussion of external support typically focused on the perception that their work towards developing student-athlete life skills was valued and encouraged. This idea of *external support* is not entirely new in the literature. Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) consider perceived organizational support as a person-level influence of teacher responsibility. In their discussion they mention that organizational support may be related to organizational commitment and internal obligation. Donohoo and colleagues (2020) also include supportive leadership in their

exploration of collective efficacy, which they argue is a precursor to collective responsibility. In the future, researchers should consider that although the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) concept of working with others did not strongly predictor responsibility in this study, another, more appropriate measure of external support is worth continuing to explore in relation to responsibility.

Connection of Responsibility & Accountability

As described in chapter two, there is often conceptual confusion between responsibility and accountability, and the results of the athletic director data in this study emphasize that the two concepts may be inseparable in practice. When the athletic director sample was uncertain of accepting responsibility for the psychosocial development of student-athletes it was often out of fear that evaluation for this responsibility would be next. According to Schlenker and colleagues (1994), this fear of being answerable to the student-athlete outcomes is a fear of accountability. As Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) highlight, one can be responsible for something without being answerable to and held accountable for that same responsibility. This component of *accountability and evaluation* was not explicitly asked about in the focus group interviews, and therefore, its presence in the data should notable moving forward. At least for the athletic directors in this sample, the theoretical understanding that responsibility does not automatically mean accountability may not be the case in practice. Future research should continue to explore this distinction, particularly due to high school sport's connection with the education system, which has recently undergone dramatic accountability changes in the last several decades (Lee, 2010).

The Social Mission of Education-Based Athletics

As discussed throughout this dissertation, currently the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) and many of its member organizations, including the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA), claim that the social mission of education-based athletics is to promote the psychosocial development of student-athletes via life skills to produce productive members of society (Blanton et al., 2021; MHSAA, n.d.-a; NFHS, n.d.-a). This study suggests that although many coaches and athletic directors recognize this social mission generally as their responsibility to a moderate degree, there is lack of clarity in the specifics of this social mission and their roles in the process. This is partially in alignment with the findings of Camiré and colleagues (2009) who found that many athletic administrators were unsure of their institutions mission or were unaware of the details of those missions. Moving forward, these governing organizations should consider to what extent they should outline a more specific social mission and provide clarity in the roles of coaches, athletic directors, parents, student-athletes, and others involved in the high school sport system. In outlining the roles of significant sport stakeholders, it is necessary to identify the degree to which this social mission must be fulfilled as well as how it is prioritized relative to other responsibilities and objectives especially in moments of conflict with other goals of education-based athletics. It is evident that high school sport has space for promoting student-athlete psychosocial development (Camiré et al., 2013; Forneris et al., 2015; Pierce et al., 2018), however, without clarity of the social mission, scholars and practitioners must continue to be cautious of falling victim to the evangelical perspective of education-based athletics, and should continue to ask, who is responsible, for what, and to what extent? It would also be important to equip coaches and athletic directors with specific strategies for meeting the social mission

Study Limitations

In conjunction with recognizing the value of the findings from the present study, it is important to note that there are limitations to use of the data. First, this study restricted sampling to coaches and athletic directors in the state of Michigan, which impacts the transferability of the results to all states in the United States of America. Although the results of this study can be informative for high school athletics in general, readers should be cautioned against direct application for other high school sport contexts throughout the country. In addition, despite purposeful recruitment attempts for accessing a diverse sample, the majority of the sample identified as White/Caucasian in both the coach and athletic director samples. Due to limited normative data on the state of Michigan, it is difficult to assess whether the sample demographics are representative of the population of coaches and athletic directors throughout the state, however, it should be noted regardless that this sample may not be representative of all areas throughout the state and country. Related to this point there were no non-white participants in the athletic director focus groups despite researcher recruitment efforts. This is in part due to the nested purposive sampling method used for the study, which allowed for representation from the original sample to help explain their own data. However, this sampling method did restrict the pool of participants able to be recruited for the focus groups and severely limited the number of non-white participants able to be contacted.

Social desirability should also be considered when interpreting and applying the results from this study. Actions were taken to assist in eliminating as much social desirability as possible (e.g., non-threatening acknowledgement at the beginning of the survey, anonymity of the survey, and questions acknowledging challenges with responsibility in the focus groups), however, there may still be some social desirability influencing the responses in both the survey

and the focus group interviews. Coaches and athletic directors may not want to disclose that they do not feel that the social mission of athletics is a component of their jobs. Despite using appropriate methods to curb social desirability, it should not be ignored in this study, and future research should seek to find further strategies for accounting for its presence.

An additional limitation to this study is the handling of missing data. Overall the study has quite low levels of missing data (less than 1%), however, the athletic director sample required adjustments to keep all cases with missing data to reach appropriate power for the statistical analyses. Due to the use of SPSS 28.0, and the need for pooled results of standardized coefficients in the multiple regression analyses, mean imputation was used for all missing values. Mean imputation has the possibility of lowering variability in the data, which may slightly impact the final results. Although multiple imputation was tested despite not producing pooled results for the statistical analyses in SPSS, and the unstandardized coefficients for the multiple regression analyses were marginally different between the two sets of data. Given this information, the researcher for this study is led to believe that mean imputation was an appropriate decision in this case, yet multiple imputation procedures would be considered a higher standard for handling missing data (Pituch & Stevens, 2016).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is also important to highlight that the instrument used for the quantitative portion of the study, the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), was modified from its original form to best address the sport context. These modifications were necessary for the study however, they have not been empirically tested for quality and appropriateness for measuring responsibility long-term in the literature. In the future, a more robust measure of responsibility that is specific to sport should be created and used to ensure that the instrument is accurately measuring the constructs in the study.

Finally, in the qualitative portion of the study, some of the athletic directors seem to identify the social mission of scholastic sport as only being fulfilled by working directly with the student-athletes. This may explain why in the quantitative portion of the study they would rate their responsibility in this area lower. Other ADs viewed meeting this responsibility as facilitating programs for student athletes and coaches as well as mentoring and coaching their coaches in this area. Future research should be conducted to better understand how ADs define and view their role in fulfilling the social mission of high school sport,

Future Directions

This study provides the foundation for a future line of research on responsibility of coaches and athletic directors in education-based athletics, specifically for fulfilling the social mission of high school sport. Moving forward, data should be collected on coach and AD job responsibility in other states throughout the United States to provide comparative data as high school sports are governed uniquely at the state level. Further exploration within the state of Michigan would also be beneficial. Specifically, a multiple case study of coaches and athletic directors who perceive their responsibility for the social mission as high, should be compared to those who had relatively average levels of responsibility, and low responsibility. This work would provide more nuance in the differences between varying degrees of responsibility in coaches and athletic directors.

Focus group interviews with the coaches in this study also revealed that the responsibility of psychosocial development and athletic success enhancement are often intertwined. This is consistent with the finding that coaches often view life skills development as an asset to performance enhancement (Flett et al., 2010; Gould et al., 2007). Hence, studying how coaches juggle and infuse these two responsibilities is important, especially in situations

where they may come into conflict with one another (e.g., bench a star player for rule breaking will likely lead to losing). Exploring the balance of responsibilities will also be considered in future research assessing similarities and differences between public and private schools throughout the state which may vary in terms of their goals, values and priorities. As this research line continues, it is critical that unique contexts are considered, and there are several differences surrounding the public and private school settings, such as funding support, possible religious affiliation, socioeconomic status of students, and whether or not the school is an all-gender school to name a few. These aspects of some private school systems in the state may have an influential role in the definition and enactment of the social mission of high school sport. Mixed methods studies would be suitable to quantitatively compare responsibility values as well as qualitatively describe unique influential aspects of the context on coach and athletic director responsibility.

Additionally, grounded theory development should be conducted to begin to create a more robust understanding of responsibility and its components specific to the high school sport context. This could be done with coaches, athletic directors, and even other stakeholders such as parents, student-athletes, and school administration. Establishing a refined theory of responsibility would also support the creation of a more robust instrument to measure responsibility in these populations. However, in conjunction with grounded theory work, there is value in reassessing responsibility and the key job characteristics noted here through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT: Bandura, 1986). Social Cognitive Theory posits that behavior learning and reinforcements, cognitive and personal factors, and environmental components dynamically and reciprocally interact. This concept of reciprocal determinism is central to SCT and further categorizes several of the job characteristics found to be important in this study. For

example, task identity and feedback from the job could be considered aspects of the behavioral component of SCT as they are related to the reinforcement and outcome of the behavior itself. Tasks significance could be considered a cognitive component of the model as it relates to attitudes about the behavior and expectations for the outcome. As mentioned in the focus group interviews, external support and athletic directors setting of norms and values in their programs align with the environmental component of SCT.

Of course, SCT proposes that these three components of the model determine human behavior, however, it is worth noting that responsibility may also be a result of the combination of these three components as well given predictors found in this study in each of the three SCT components. In addition, the education literature supports that self-efficacy may be a critical predictor of responsibility, which was not tested in this study, and is a core concept in the SCT (Bandura, 1986). Future research will test the fit of this theory as a predictor of responsibility as well as responsibility's role as a possible mediator or moderator of SCT and a coach or ADs behavior for fulfilling the social mission as well. Further testing of key variables that predict responsibility in coaches and athletic directors should also include other concepts from the education literature that were supported by this data, including external support, role acceptance, goal consensus, and collective efficacy. Finally, future research should continue to study the empirical and practical distinction between responsibility and accountability, and how this distinction may impact policy decisions in the future.

Practical Implications

Results from this study indicate that although coaches and athletic directors perceive some degree of responsibility for the social mission, further clarity on this responsibility for both groups and how to fulfill this responsibility is important. As mentioned previously, the

National Coaching Standards (Gano-Overway et al., 2020) could be used as guide for those hiring coaches and athletic directors to assess awareness and readiness to accept this responsibility. School districts or high school state associations could also create their own list of job responsibilities for coaches and athletic directors to clearly articulate who plays a role in ensuring the social mission for high school sport is met. This specificity of the social mission as a responsibility would be valuable to add to job descriptions for coaches to provide further clarity on the role of coaches.

Further discussions around coach and athletic director accountability and evaluation should also follow. Recognizing that athletic directors were hesitant about adding evaluation for this responsibility to their jobs, the need for and format of accountability systems should be decided and clearly articulated. These expectations may also need to be discussed for those in dual roles, such as a teacher-coaches. Further, education on the responsibility for promoting student-athlete development should be considered a valuable addition to any coach and athletic director educational programs to create a common language and clarity of roles for all stakeholders in the high school sport system.

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APPENDIX A: COACH SURVEY MEASURE

General Demographic Questions
What is your age?
What is your gender?
What is your race and ethnicity?
What sport(s) do you coach? (please indicate if it is boys or girls teams and the level)
How many years have you coached high school sports?
What school/district do you coach for?
Do you also coach for a travel/club team?
Are you an educator (formally hired teacher, administrator, or staff in K-12)?
If so, do you coach in the district you teach?
What Coach Advancement Program (CAP) level have you completed?

Survey Instructions
Coaches are asked to do a lot today - often more than time allows. Stakeholders have different priorities and views of what is important in high school sports. For some coaches it's winning, for others it is teaching sport skills, and still others developing athletes as people. We are interested in what you value in working with your student athletes and what you are actually able to do given limited time and resources. They are no right or wrong answers to these questions - just indicate what you feel and what you really do.

General Questions on Promoting Athlete Development as People

1. What are your top priorities as a coach?
2. What does your school/district prioritize in your role as a coach?
3. In an ideal world, what percentage of your job as a coach would be focused on promoting the **development of athletes as people** (e.g. teaching life skills, using teachable moments, not talent development)?
4. In reality, what percentage of your job as a coach is focused on promoting the development of athletes as people?
5. In an ideal world, what percentage of your job as a coach would be focused on promoting the **athletic success of your athletes**?
6. In reality, what percentage of your job as a coach is focused on promoting the **athletic success of your athletes**?

Modified Job Diagnostic Survey – Development as People

Responsibility
1. I feel a very high degree of personal responsibility for developing my athletes as people.
2. I feel I should personally take the credit or blame for if my athletes develop as people.
3. Whether or not my athletes develop as people through sport is clearly my responsibility.
4. Because of all that is asked of me as a coach, it is hard as coach for me to focus very much on whether or not athletes develop as people.
5. Most coaches feel a great deal of personal responsibility for developing their athletes as people.
6. Most coaches feel that whether or not athletes develop as people is clearly their own responsibility.

Skill Variety
1. How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extend does developing athletes as people require you to do many different tasks, using a variety of your skills?
2. Developing athletes as people requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.
3. Developing athletes as people is simple and repetitive.

Task Identity
1. To what extent does your job involve doing the 'whole' piece of work? That is, does your job see the beginning and end of developing athletes as people? Or is it only a small part of the overall development of athletes as people which is continued by others?
2. The job is arranged so that I do not have the chance to see the beginning and end of development of my athletes as people.
3. The job provides me the chance to completely see the end of developing athletes as people.

Autonomy
1. To what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about developing athletes as people?
2. This job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in developing athletes as people.
3. The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I develop athletes as people

Task Significance
1. In general, how significant and important is developing athletes as people? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people?
2. This job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well I do.
3. Purposefully developing athletes as people is not very significant or important in the broader scheme of things.

Feedback from the Job Itself
1. To what extent does developing athletes as people provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the actual development of athletes as people provide clues about how well you are doing, aside from any "feedback" co-workers or administrators may provide?
2. Just doing the work to develop athletes as people provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing.
3. The job itself provides very few clues about whether or not I am performing well at developing athletes as people.

Feedback from Agents
1. To what extent do administrators or co-workers let you know how well you are doing at developing your athletes as people?
2. The administrators and co-workers on this job almost never give me any 'feedback' about how well I am doing at developing athletes as people.

3. Administrators often let me know how well they think I am performing at developing athletes as people.

Dealing with Others
1. To what extent does developing athletes as people require you to work closely with other people?
2. Developing athletes as people requires a lot of cooperative work with other people.
3. Developing athletes as people can be done adequately by a person working alone, without talking or checking with other people.

Modified Job Diagnostic Survey – Promoting Athletic Success

Responsibility
1. I feel a very high degree of personal responsibility for my athletes' athletic success.
2. I feel I should personally take the credit or blame for if my athletes' athletic success.
3. Whether or not my athletes have athletic success is clearly my responsibility.
4. Because of all that is asked of me as a coach, it is hard as coach for me to focus very much on whether or not athletes have athletic success.
5. Most coaches feel a great deal of personal responsibility for the athletic success of their athletes.
6. Most coaches feel that whether or not athletes have athletic success is clearly their own responsibility.

Skill Variety
1. How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extend does promoting athletic success require you to do many different tasks, using a variety of your skills?
2. Promoting athletic success requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.
3. Promoting athletic success is simple and repetitive.

Task Identity
1. To what extent does your job involve doing the 'whole' piece of work? That is, does your job see the beginning and end of promoting athletic success? Or is it only a small part of the overall athletic success which is continued by others?
2. The job is arranged so that I do not have the chance to see the beginning and end of promoting athletic success.
3. The job provides me the chance to completely see the end of my promoting athletic success.

Autonomy
1. To what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about promoting athletic success of your teams?
2. This job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in promoting athletic success of my teams.
3. The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I promote athletic success of my teams.

Task Significance

1. In general, how significant and important is promoting athletic success of your teams? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people?
2. This job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well I do at promoting athletic success.
3. Purposefully promoting athletic success of my athletes is not very significant or important in the broader scheme of things.

Feedback from the Job Itself
1. To what extent does promoting athletic success provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the athletic success of your athletes provide clues about how well you are doing, aside from any "feedback" co-workers or administrators may provide?
2. Just doing the work to promote athletic success provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing.
3. The job itself provides very few clues about whether or not I am performing well at promoting athletic success.

Feedback from Agents
1. To what extent do administrators or co-workers let you know how well you are doing at promoting athletic success?
2. The administrators and co-workers on this job almost never give me any 'feedback' about how well I am doing at promoting athletic success.
3. Administrators often let me know how well they think I am performing at promoting athletic success.

Dealing with Others
1. To what extent does promoting athletic success require you to work closely with other people?
2. Promoting athletic success requires a lot of cooperative work with other people.
3. Promoting athletic success can be done adequately by a person working alone, without talking or checking with other people.

APPENDIX B: ATHLETIC DIRECTOR SURVEY MEASURE

General Demographic Questions
What is your age?
What is your gender?
What is your race and ethnicity?
What is your job title?
How many years have you worked in high school sports?
What school/district do you work for?
Are you involved in sport outside of your role as an administrator?

Survey Instructions
Athletic directors are asked to do a lot today - often more than time allows. Stakeholders have different priorities and views of what is important in high school sports. For some it's winning, for others it is teaching sport skills, and still others developing athletes as people. We are interested in what you value most in working with your student athletes and what you are actually able to do given limited time and resources. They are no right or wrong answers to these questions - just indicate what you feel and and what you really do.

General Questions on Promoting Development

1. What are your top priorities as an athletic director?
2. What does your school/district prioritize in your role as an athletic director?
3. In an ideal world, what percentage of your job as an athletic director would be focused on promoting the **development of athletes as people** (e.g. teaching life skills, using teachable moments, not talent development)?
4. In reality, what percentage of your job as an athletic director is focused on promoting the **development of athletes as people**?
5. In an ideal world, what percentage of your job as an athletic director would be focused on promoting the **athletic success of your athletes and teams**?
6. In reality, what percentage of your job as an athletic director would be focused on promoting the **athletic success of your athletes and teams**?

Modified Job Diagnostic Survey – Development as People

Responsibility
1. I feel a very high degree of personal responsibility for developing my athletes as people.
2. I feel I should personally take the credit or blame for if my athletes develop as people.
3. Whether or not my athletes develop as people through sport is clearly my responsibility.
4. Because of all that is asked of me as an athletic director, it is hard as an administrator for me to focus very much on whether or not athletes develop as people.
5. Most ADs feel a great deal of personal responsibility for developing their athletes as people.
6. Most ADs feel that whether or not athletes develop as people is clearly their own responsibility.

Skill Variety

1. How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extend does developing athletes as people require you to do many different tasks, using a variety of your skills?
2. Developing athletes as people requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.
3. Developing athletes as people is simple and repetitive.

Task Identity
1. To what extent does your job involve doing the 'whole' piece of work? That is, does your job see the beginning and end of developing athletes as people? Or is it only a small part of the overall development of athletes as people which is continued by others?
2. The job is arranged so that I do not have the chance to see the beginning and end of development of my athletes as people.
3. The job provides me the chance to completely see the end of developing athletes as people.

Autonomy
1. To what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about developing athletes as people?
2. This job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in developing athletes as people.
3. The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I develop athletes as people

Task Significance
1. In general, how significant and important is developing athletes as people? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people?
2. This job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well I do.
3. Purposefully developing athletes as people is not very significant or important in the broader scheme of things.

Feedback from the Job Itself
1. To what extent does developing athletes as people provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the actual development of athletes as people provide clues about how well you are doing, aside from any "feedback" co-workers or administrators may provide?
2. Just doing the work to develop athletes as people provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing.
3. The job itself provides very few clues about whether or not I am performing well at developing athletes as people.

Feedback from Agents
1. To what extent do administrators or co-workers let you know how well you are doing at developing athletes as people?
2. The administrators and co-workers on this job almost never give me any 'feedback' about how well I am doing at developing athletes as people.
3. Administrators often let me know how well they think I am performing at developing athletes as people.

Working with Others
1. To what extent does developing athletes as people require you to work closely with other people?
2. Developing athletes as people requires a lot of cooperative work with other people.
3. Developing athletes as people can be done adequately by a person working alone, without talking or checking with other people.

Modified Job Diagnostic Survey – Promoting Athletic Success

Responsibility
1. I feel a very high degree of personal responsibility for my athletes' athletic success.
2. I feel I should personally take the credit or blame for if my athletes' athletic success.
3. Whether or not my athletes have athletic success is clearly my responsibility.
4. Because of all that is asked of me as a coach, it is hard as an administrator for me to focus very much on whether or not athletes have athletic success.
5. Most ADs feel a great deal of personal responsibility for the athletic success of their athletes.
6. Most ADs feel that whether or not athletes have athletic success is clearly their own responsibility.

Skill Variety
1. How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extend does promoting athletic success require you to do many different tasks, using a variety of your skills?
2. Promoting athletic success requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.
3. Promoting athletic success is simple and repetitive.

Task Identity
1. To what extent does your job involve doing the 'whole' piece of work? That is, does your job see the beginning and end of promoting athletic success? Or is it only a small part of the overall athletic success which is continued by others?
2. The job is arranged so that I do not have the chance to see the beginning and end of promoting athletic success.
3. The job provides me the chance to completely see the end of my promoting athletic success.

Autonomy
1. To what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about promoting athletic success of your teams?
2. This job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in promoting athletic success of my teams.
3. The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I promote athletic success of my teams.

Task Significance
1. In general, how significant and important is promoting athletic success of your teams? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people?

2. This job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well I do at promoting athletic success.
3. Purposefully promoting athletic success of my athletes is not very significant or important in the broader scheme of things.

Feedback from the Job Itself
1. To what extent does promoting athletic success provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the athletic success of your athletes provide clues about how well you are doing, aside from any "feedback" co-workers or administrators may provide?
2. Just doing the work to promote athletic success provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing.
3. The job itself provides very few clues about whether or not I am performing well at promoting athletic success.

Feedback from Agents
1. To what extent do administrators or co-workers let you know how well you are doing at promoting athletic success?
2. The administrators and co-workers on this job almost never give me any 'feedback' about how well I am doing at promoting athletic success.
3. Administrators often let me know how well they think I am performing at promoting athletic success.

Working with Others
1. To what extent does promoting athletic success require you to work closely with other people?
2. Promoting athletic success requires a lot of cooperative work with other people.
3. Promoting athletic success can be done adequately by a person working alone, without talking or checking with other people.

APPENDIX C: COACH FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What sport(s) do you coach and how long have you been involved in coaching?

2. High school sports are often thought of as a great way for students to learn life skills that they may not get in the classroom or elsewhere. What are your thoughts on your athletes growing as people through high school sports? How often are you successful at doing so? What percent of your athletes do you think in influence in this regard?

3. What role do you think coaches play in athletes' development of life skills?
   - Do you have any specific examples of how you intentionally develop life skills with athletes?

4. Do you think it is or is not coaches' responsibility to foster this development of athletes as people? Why or why not?

5. We learned that 191 of coaches on average felt that they were a 5 on a scale of 1 to 7 about it being their responsibility to develop athletes as people. Does this surprise you? (Minimum 3.33, Maximum 6.67)

6. We also learned that the coaches felt nearly the exact same amount of responsibility for promoting athletic success of their athletes. Do you think this makes sense with your own experience?

7. I am going to show you a picture demontrationg of what we found that predicts how responsible a coach might be. I am curious to see if you think this makes sense or is different from what you would expect. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have about thi picture as well. (*image showing task identity & task significance for social mission responsibility – with explanation of each variable; image showing task identity and feedback from the job predicted athletic success – with explanation of each variable*).

8. Is there anything else you think I need to know about coaches and their responsibilities for developing athletes as people?

APPENDIX D: ATHLETIC DIRECTOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How long have you been an athletic director and what got you started working in sports?

2. High school sports are often thought of as a great way for students to learn life skills that they may not get in the classroom or elsewhere. What are your thoughts on your athletes growing as people through high school sports?

3. What role do you think athletic directors play in athletes' development of life skills?

4. Do you think it is or is not athletic directors' responsibility to foster this development of athletes as people? Why or why not?

5. We learned that 112 athletic directors on average felt that on a scale of 1 to 7 they were about a 4.75 about it being their responsibility to develop athletes as people. Does this surprise you? (Minimum 2.67, Maximum 6.33)

6. We also learned that the ADs felt a significantly less amount of responsibility for the athletic success of the athletes (4.17 on average for the 1 to 7 scale). Do you think this makes sense with your own experience? (Minimum 1.83, Maximum 6.33)

7. I am going to show you a picture demonstration of what we found that predicts responsibility in ADs. I am curious to see if you think this makes sense or is different from what you would expect. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have about this picture as well. (*image showing task identity and feedback from the job predict social mission responsibility – with explanation of variables; image showing just feedback from the job predicted athletic success responsibility – with explanation of variables and others included in the model*).

8. Is there anything else you think I need to know about ADs and their responsibilities for developing athletes as people?