THE TROUBLE WITH TEAMMATES: A THREE-PART INVESTIGATION OF INTRATEAM CONFLICT IN SPORT

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Athletes are often working with their teammates to accomplish various tasks. In many sports, the outcome of the competition is determined by the collective effort of athletes within that team. Working together and competing well becomes increasingly difficult when there is tension among team members. This tension could be due to work-related issues (i.e., task conflict) or person-related issues (i.e., relationship conflict). Research in non-sport settings, such as the workplace, consistently notes that both types of intragroup conflict are a factor that worsens group performance and reduces positive attitudes among group members. Employees have also noted group conflict as a reason for leaving their organization. However, much less is known about the antecedents and outcomes intragroup conflict in sport teams. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to further explore the concept of intrateam conflict in sport in three parts.

First, a structured review of the literature noted that individual and team-level factors have been connected to intrateam conflict in sport. This review also highlighted key gaps in the intrateam sport conflict research: a lack of theory/model of intrateam conflict in sport and inconsistent measurement tools. Thus, the next study in this dissertation developed a new intrateam conflict instrument that was specific to the sport context. The final survey includes eight items that ask about task and relationship conflict within the athlete's current sport team.

The final study of this dissertation used this new intrateam conflict measure to study the relationship between intrateam conflict and turnover intentions among collegiate athletes. A total of 430 current college athletes completed a survey with items related to intrateam conflict, affective commitment, intent to transfer, and intent to quit. Results showed that task conflict and relationship conflict predicted intent to transfer, though only relationship conflict predicted intent to quit. Also, the relationship between relationship conflict and intent to quit was stronger under

conditions of lower affective commitment. Results also indicated various combinations of conflict within sport teams; athletes were clustered into three groups: low task conflict, low relationship conflict; higher task conflict, moderate relationship conflict; and moderate task conflict, higher relationship conflict. The low conflict cluster reported lower turnover intentions when compared to other clusters.

This dissertation expands on existing intrateam conflict research by exploring the relationship between intrateam conflict and athlete turnover. The findings are beneficial for researchers and practitioners alike who are concerned with retaining collegiate athletes and creating a positive sport experience. Future research should continue to explore the outcomes of intrateam conflict in sport.

ABSTRACT

Group processes are important in sport as teams must routinely work together to compete and achieve goals. Intrateam conflict occurs when group members perceive differences or incompatibilities in team tasks or relationships with teammates. Research with work teams shows intrateam conflict leads to destructive outcomes including decreased performance, commitment, and desire to remain in the group (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995). Sport scholars have studied conflict in the coach-athlete relationship (Wachsmuth et al., 2017), however, knowledge of intrateam conflict in sport remains scattered, potentially being shadowed by other topics in group dynamics (e.g., cohesion, team building). It is important to identify and synthesize the sport-specific research on intrateam conflict as a first step to understanding this complicated phenomenon. Thus, the first component of this dissertation was a scoping review of intrateam conflict literature. The questions for this review were: 1) What are the sources and outcomes of intrateam conflict in sport? and 2) What conflict management strategies are successful in resolving intrateam conflict in sport? Relevant databases and specific journals were searched for peer-reviewed articles that fit strict inclusive criteria. A total of 18 articles were included. Individual and team-level constructs were identified as sources or outcomes of intrateam conflict. Related to conflict management, four intervention studies were identified, and two studies examined coach conflict management styles. Overall, findings from the scoping review reveal a need for more research in sport settings that specifically addresses intrateam conflict. An initial conceptual model of intrateam conflict is provided which follows an input-mediator-output framework. Sport scholars should aim to develop a sport-specific theory of intrateam conflict to better guide future research.

The second component of this dissertation expanded on findings from the scoping review

by exploring the relationship between intrateam conflict and a popular organizational outcome, turnover. Organizations strive to retain their members to decrease financial costs (e.g., hiring and training new employees) and to maintain a stable organizational structure (Ongori, 2007). Members of an organization may choose to leave for a variety of reasons, including intragroup conflict (Jehn, 1995; Medina et al., 2005), though job attitudes (e.g., commitment) may moderate this relationship (Vandenberghe et al., 2011). The concept of turnover is more complex in sport as athletes can choose to leave their team to join another or quit their sport entirely. The collegiate sport context has recently made it easier for athletes to transfer schools and continue their playing careers. Yet, it remains unclear if intrateam conflict is a reason why athletes choose to transfer or quit. Thus, the purpose of the second study in this dissertation was to examine the relationship between intrateam conflict, affective commitment, and turnover among collegiate athletes. A sample of 430 current college athletes were recruited and administered questionnaires related to intrateam conflict, affective commitment, intent to transfer, and intent to quit. Regression analyses revealed that relationship conflict and affective commitment are predictors of intent to transfer and intent to quit. Task conflict was only a predictor of intent to transfer. Affective commitment moderated the relationship between intrateam conflict and intent to quit such that this relationship was weaker in athletes with higher commitment levels. Findings from this study support the negative association between intrateam conflict and key group variables in the sport context. Results from a cluster analysis reveal the presence of groups with varying combinations of conflict. Clusters were not significantly different in scores of affective commitment. The low conflict cluster reported the lowest intent to transfer scores of all clusters, and lower intent to quit scores than the cluster with high relationship, moderate task conflict. The current study contributes foundational data to the intrateam conflict in sport literature.

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CHAPTER 1:

General Introduction

"Conflict is normal, ubiquitous, and unavoidable. It is an inherent feature of human existence. It is even useful on occasion. It is difficult to conceive of a situation which is conflict-free. Indeed, the very presence of conflict is at the heart of all human societies" (Bercovitch et al., 2006; pp. 3). This description of conflict explains its prominence in many societal, political, and cultural domains, making conflict not only practically relevant but also a necessary research topic. In its early years as an academic field, scholars analyzed global and national conflicts that affected entire societies (e.g., World Wars, Civil Rights Protests) throughout the twentieth century, with the ultimate goal of learning how to bring these situations under control and prevent them in the future (Kriesberg, 2009). Research has since extended into smaller domains, including interpersonal relationships (Miller et al., 2007; Sillars et al., 2004; Simpson et al., 1996) and small groups (Folger et al., 2021; Jehn, 1995). Conflict can occur in all relational dynamics ranging from within an individual to between separate groups. An explanation and example of each type of conflict are shown in Table 1.1.

The two types of conflict that receive substantial attention in the psychosocial literature are interpersonal and intragroup, perhaps due to the intrigue and complexity of close relationships. A plethora of research from the domains of social psychology, organizational psychology, communication, and sociology explores the sources, manifestations, and outcomes of conflict within personal and professional relationships. From family members to coworkers, and even within the tight-knit dynamics of sport teams, close relationships are formed and ultimately put to the test when challenges arise. The task becomes navigating conflict in a way such that it is useful for the person(s) and relationship.

Best defined by organizational psychology and management scholars Henri Barki and Jon Hartwick (2004), interpersonal conflict is "a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals" (p. 234). There are a few important aspects of this definition to consider when studying conflict in sport. The first is that conflict occurs between interdependent parties. Interdependence describes a relationship in which both parties rely on the other to accomplish their own goal(s) and each party has the potential to interfere with or support achieving these goals (Thomas, 1992; Wall Jr. & Callister, 1995). In the case of positive interdependence, parties have a positive relationship between their goals meaning they succeed or fail together, while negative interdependence is characterized by one party succeeding and the other failing (Deutsch, 1973). There is also task interdependence which describes the extent to which individuals rely on others to complete required tasks (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Any amount of task interdependence will increase an individual's interaction with another person/people, therefore offering more opportunities for conflict to arise. This collaboration may be effective; those in relationships with positive interdependence, even when experiencing conflict, may offer better solutions that are beneficial to all parties (Janssen et al., 1999). However, increased task interdependence may also be damaging if there are personal differences among parties (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). These mixed findings suggest that interdependence is not a prerequisite to conflict, rather interdependence is a contextual element that influences conflict (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Sport is a context in which interdependence is typical; athletes are commonly working together to win competitions, or they are competing against each other to achieve the same goal (e.g., win, have a starting spot). The fundamental interdependence within sport suggests it is a context in which conflict may occur frequently, and

therefore a worthy area for conflict research.

The second important aspect is that conflict is a *dynamic process*. When looking at conflict as an isolated moment, it can be easy to overlook how each party's thoughts, behaviors, and emotions are interrelated (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; Pondy, 1967). The affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements presented in this definition highlight the processual nature of conflict. Conflict begins when an individual perceives a misalignment between their thoughts, beliefs, values, or opinions, and those of another (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). An individual will evaluate the cause of conflict based on past conflict experiences, the importance of the goal related to the conflict, the level of doubt related to the other person, relationship, and goal, and, finally, feelings toward the other person(s) (Witteman, 1988). The individual's appraisal of the situation, no matter how objectively accurate, will likely bring about certain behaviors and emotions. The behavioral element of conflict is also termed "interference" in that a party's behavior can be interpreted as interfering with or avoiding the other party's goal (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Yet, behaviors during conflict episodes can also be cooperative. Cooperative behaviors include open communication, readiness to be helpful, and emphasizing common goals whereas competitive behaviors include coercion, threats, deception, and poor communication (d'Estrée, 2009). Lastly, negative and unpleasant emotions are consistently associated with conflict episodes and may include emotions such as anger, guilt, jealousy, and hurt (Guerrero & La Valley, 2006). As mentioned, conflict is believed to begin with the cognitive element, though, it is difficult to assign an exact directionality between thoughts, behaviors, and emotions given their interrelatedness. One scholar asserted that individuals might not realize they are experiencing conflict until they have an emotional reaction (Jones, 2000). The interplay between thoughts, feelings, and emotions is not novel to the social sciences, and research has begun to explore this

connection in the sport context. Athlete's cognitive and affective processes can help explain athlete motivation, performance, and behavior (Moran, 2009; Smith, 2006). Research specifically on conflict in sport also confirms that athletes are experiencing the cognitive (e.g., perceived misalignments), behavioral (e.g., yelling), and emotional (e.g., jealousy, anger) elements of conflict in their sport teams (Paradis et al., 2014).

The concepts of interdependence and conflict as a process become highly important when talking about groups. Groups and teams are social environments in which multiple interpersonal relationships coexist and often clash. Wall Jr. and Callister (1995) noted that the causes of interpersonal (i.e., dyadic) conflict can also be causes of intragroup conflict. Differences in individual personalities, values, and commitment, as well as power imbalances and communication styles, are interpersonal factors that also cause group conflict (Wall Jr. & Callister, 1995). Though the specific cause of conflict can vary across situations, group conflict is often rooted in either task or relationship issues. Relationship conflict is rooted in personal issues that do not relate to group tasks, for example, differences in personal values or beliefs. Task conflict centers around what needs to get done in the group and/or how it is getting done (Jehn, 1995). An example of task conflict is a group's disagreement about which strategy is best to solve a problem. Evidence suggests both types of conflict can be damaging to groups in sport (Leo et al., 2015; Paradis et al., 2014) and non-sport settings (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jehn et al., 2008), though more evidence exists outside of sport (e.g., workplace settings). Task and relationship conflict in work groups are negatively related to team performance and member satisfaction (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Relationship conflict may relate to other types of conflicts experienced in a work group. The perception, and actual presence, of relationship conflict at the same time as task conflict led work group members to be more inflexible in their

positional stance during decision-making processes (de Wit et al., 2013). Another study concluded that task conflict in a work group with low trust led to future relationship conflict when compared to groups with high trust (Simons & Peterson, 2000). The empirical evidence surrounding the impact of conflict on teams heavily stems from organizational psychology literature studying work groups and employees. Work groups and sport teams may share certain characteristics (e.g., task interdependence, goal-directed effort), but the environments in which they operate vary drastically. Therefore, there is a need for research conflict in sport settings and within sport populations.

Conflict in Sport

The sport-specific area that receives the most attention is conflict within the coach-athlete relationship. Through interviewing national-level coaches and athletes, Wachsmuth and colleagues (2018) found that there were sport-related (e.g., performance in practice, training schedule, injuries) and lifestyle-related (e.g., poor nutrition, alcohol consumption) topics that caused conflict between coaches and athletes. Regardless of the topic, participants described how their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions related to the conflict situation produced responses that were escalating, uncertain, or problem-oriented (Wachsmuth et al., 2018). For example, a combination of attributing the cause of conflict to an external factor, being yelled at during conversations, and feeling anger toward the situation was described to lead to an escalating response. To reach more positive outcomes, such as a problem-solving response, athletes and coaches agreed that having a good relationship with open communication is helpful in conflict prevention and management (Wachsmuth et al., 2017). Coaches were also seen by athletes as responsible for the conflict management process from start to finish, and this was confirmed by coaches who perceived themselves as experienced and wise problem-solvers (Wachsmuth et al.,

2018). Coach-athlete dyads who experienced conflict reported lower perceived trust in the relationship, and for athletes, a decrease in performance (Wachsmuth et al., 2017).

Conflict also remains a negative aspect of peer relationships in sport. Adolescent athletes noted conflict is a negative dimension of their relationships with teammates in addition to aspects such as discovering unattractive personality traits and feelings of betrayal (Weiss et al., 1996). Another sample of adolescent athletes identified increased competitive anxiety and feelings of sadness, embarrassment, anger, and frustration as a result of conflict with a teammate (Partridge & Knapp, 2016). Research on peer motivation also notes intrateam conflict as a dimension of an ego-oriented motivational climate (i.e., a team environment highly fixated on winning and outperforming others; Vazou et al., 2005). An ego-oriented peer climate can lead to negative outcomes including burnout, negative affect, antisocial attitudes, and perfectionism (Harwood et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2013). Though conflict is present in varying capacities among teammates, positive aspects of peer relationships include effectively resolving conflicts and being a source of emotional support, enhanced self-esteem, and companionship (Weiss et al., 1996).

A resounding implication of these studies is that athletes should develop effective conflict management skills so that they can build positive teammate relationships. Though this concept seems obvious in theory, it is rather absent in practice. Data from Holt and colleagues (2012) reveals that most athletes may be underprepared to manage conflict situations which leaves conflict to fester among teammates, and may ultimately impact the entire team. While research shows strategies for coaches to use when managing coach/athlete conflict, the literature for coaches on managing intrateam conflict in sport is minimal. The limited evidence would suggest that both coaches and athletes are ill-equipped to resolve conflict.

Conflict Management

Research findings from conflict studies can directly inform conflict management practices. The general goal of conflict management is not to make conflict disappear because conflict is inevitable and an important impetus for change. Rather, the goal is to select the most effective methods for reaching positive outcomes to conflict. From a cognitive perspective, working through conflict offers an opportunity for individuals to engage in perspective-taking, problem-solving, and self-reflection (Alper et al., 2000; Baron, 1991). In situations involving task conflict, the same differences between people that could be perceived as a cause of conflict can be viewed as valuable because they provide diversity in thoughts and perspectives. Considering different perspectives when working on a task can improve decision-making and lead to more quality choices (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Tjosvold, 1985). There is also empirical support for task conflict being beneficial for work groups doing nonroutine or innovative tasks (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005; Jehn 1995). Bradley and colleagues (2015) reviewed intragroup conflict literature and noted that positive outcomes to task conflict occurred in groups where the task was appropriately complex, the group had sufficient time to process the problems, and the conflict was explained in a manner that was well received by other group members. Relationship conflict, on the other hand, is not as welcoming to differing perspectives, values, or opinions. This concept is seen consistently in the literature; relationship conflict is negatively associated with group outcomes of performance, productivity, creativity, and member satisfaction (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Wall Jr. & Nolan, 1986). Still, working through relationship conflict challenges individuals to work through similar cognitive processes of perspective-taking, reflecting, and problem-solving that are required for task conflicts.

In sport, positive outcomes of task and relationship conflict at the individual level include

increased task clarity and improved self-efficacy in problem-solving (Mellalieu et al., 2013). Addressing conflict with coaches has led to improved training schedules (Mellalieu et al., 2013) as well as enhanced relationship quality (Wachsmuth et al., 2018). However, it is often unclear exactly how teams learn about conflict management strategies and navigate conflict situations. A common recommendation seen in the literature is for teams to engage in team building activities (Holt et al., 2012; Partridge & Knapp, 2016, Wachsmuth et al., 2017). Researchers have studied the effectiveness of team building interventions, noting that generally, participating in activities and efforts related to team building often leads to improved cohesion among other group processes (Beauchamp et al., 2017; Leo et al., 2021; Paradis & Martin, 2012), but intrateam conflict is not commonly researched as an outcome of team building activities. Also, the details of said interventions are not always provided, and team building activities can include a variety of efforts (e.g., goal setting, social activities). A lack of detail makes it challenging to understand exactly which skills athletes are learning and practicing in team building activities and if these skills translate to conflict situations.

A detailed example of a team intervention that focuses on conflict management can be seen in Vealey's (2017) case study, "Conflict management and cultural reparation: Consulting 'below zero' with a college basketball team." Over the course of the competition year (off-season, pre-season, and in-season), a team participated in a variety of activities and conversations with Vealey, a sport psychology consultant, centered around resolving relationship conflict. This case study does well in illustrating the process of working with a team over an extended period and detailing how activities were introduced and scaffolded. Still, this case study highlights a critical research issue with conflict management in sport: relying on implicit learning of conflict management skills. Again, it is unclear exactly what skills the athletes learned in this

intervention that could help them in future conflict situations. The results indicate improvement in relationships and perception of team culture, but the direct connection of these concepts to conflict and conflict management is missing. To advance conflict management research and practice in sport, the topic of intrateam conflict needs to be further explored.

Purpose and Organization of the Dissertation

Compared to other disciplines, the amount and depth of intrateam conflict literature specific to sport is lacking. Qualitative studies have provided details on athlete experiences with conflict and explored how athletes are managing difficult situations (Holt et al, 2012; Paradis et al., 2014; Partridge & Knapp, 2016). Existing research is missing the empirical support that explains the direct relationship between intrateam conflict and other group processes. The current dissertation aims to expand upon the existing conflict literature in sport by first providing a review of intrateam conflict and conflict management strategies/programs in sport. The second portion of this dissertation aims to explore the relationship between intrateam conflict and turnover intentions among collegiate student-athletes, considering affective organizational commitment as a potential moderator of this relationship. This work began with providing content and factorial validity evidence for a novel intrateam conflict measure.

This introductory chapter serves as a general background to the dissertation and provides a broad overview of conflict literature. Chapter 2 further explores intragroup conflict in sport. In place of a traditional literature review, a scoping review was conducted on sport-specific intrateam conflict and conflict management research. Following the scoping review, Chapter 3 acts as a stand-alone manuscript that presents the development of a new intrateam conflict instrument. Chapter 4 is the final study of my dissertation that investigates intrateam conflict, affective organizational commitment, and athlete turnover intentions. This work is written in a

single chapter for ease of presenting the data, though may develop into two separate manuscripts that outline the person-centered and variable-centered analyses. Chapter 5 discusses the entirety of the project, noting the future directions for research on conflict and conflict management in sport and implications for sport practitioners.

TABLES

Table 1.1
Types of Conflict

	Within	Between
Person	**Intrapersonal:** perceived misalignment of thoughts, feelings, values, etc. within a single person *Example:* An individual struggling to balance the responsibilities of being a student and an athlete.	**Interpersonal:** a perceived disagreement between two interdependent people related to differences in thoughts, feelings, values, goals, etc. *Example:* A head coach and assistant coach disagree about which playing strategy is best.
Group	**Intragroup:** a perceived disagreement between two or more people that belong to the same group related to differences in thoughts, feelings, values, goals, etc. *Example:* The seniors on a sport team are frustrated with the effort and behavior of the first-years and sophomores.	**Intergroup:** a perceived disagreement between two independent groups related to differences in thoughts, feelings, values, goals, etc. *Example:* A match between school rivals gets more intense than other matches

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CHAPTER 2:

Intrateam conflict and conflict management in sport: A scoping review

Conflict is often associated with negative experiences, leading people to hold an unfavorable view of this phenomenon, or to see conflict as something to avoid. To the contrary, conflict is an important feature of high-functioning groups and teams that allows for roles to emerge, opinions to manifest, and disagreements to surface. Scholars have noted that high-functioning groups are often assembled of accomplished, skilled, and experienced performers who have strong opinions and values (Johnson et al., 2000; Tjosvold, 1985). It follows that teams composed of many such performers would be ripe venues for conflict to emerge.

Conflict is studied at three different levels: intrapersonal conflict (internal struggles, e.g., adjusting to a new role as team captain), interpersonal conflict (dyadic interactions between two people, e.g., coach and athlete), and intragroup conflict (within a team or subunit of a team, e.g., offensive line players in American football). Intrapersonal conflict has not been a major subject of study in sport, perhaps owing to myriad subclassifications of intrapersonal conflict that could best be described as psychological phenomena (e.g., anxiety, social identity). There is sport literature exploring role-conflict (i.e., incongruencies in the expectations about a set of behaviors for a specific position; Beauchamp & Bray, 2001) in various sport stakeholders, including specific studies with coaches (Dixon & Briening, 2007) and athletic directors (Conant, 2017).

Interpersonal conflict in dyadic interactions has received the most attention in sport psychology research, owing to the extensive body of research examining the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Nezlek, 2012; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Wachsmuth et al., 2017; Wachsmuth et al., 2018). A review on coach-athlete conflict conducted by Wachsmuth and colleagues (2017) provides a comprehensive definition of conflict:

> "a situation in which relationship partners perceive a disagreement about, for example, values, needs, opinions, or objectives that is manifested through negative cognitive, affective, and behavioural reactions. Moreover, interpersonal conflict is influenced by the social and cultural context within which it occurs, including individuals' characteristics, personality, age, and gender" (pp. 88)

This definition expanded upon a previous definition put forth by organizational psychology and management scholars Henri Barki and Jon Hartwick (2004) and prompts scholars to consider individual, relationship, and contextual factors that shape conflict. At the individual level, examining personality traits as antecedents to conflict and conflict management styles is common in work groups (summarized by Sandy et al., 2000), with attention given to "Big Five" personality traits (Antonioni, 1998; Bono et al., 2002; Bradley et al., 2013). Dyadic factors such as communication and leadership also affect interpersonal conflict. Communication has been assessed in non-sport contexts relating to preferences for communicating during conflict (Cai & Fink, 2002; Canary & Cupach, 1988; Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979). Team leaders who adopted various conflict management approaches and refrained from using a dominating leadership style were able to achieve constructive group outcomes (i.e., satisfaction, continued effort; Holmes & Marra, 2004; Richmond et al., 1983), and similar results were found among sport coaches (Wachsmuth et al., 2017). Lastly, external factors including organizational stressors and culture can influence interpersonal conflict. The organizational stressors (e.g., program structure, team management, administrators) acting on an interpersonal relationship can lead to conflict and influence how the conflict is managed (Fletcher et al., 2012; Hanton et al., 2005). Furthermore, cultural communication patterns (e.g., non-verbal communication meanings) and values (i.e., individualist vs. collectivist) held by individuals will

influence the ways in which they approach conflict (Faure, 2009; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Outcomes of high coach-athlete conflict include lower levels of trust and satisfaction in the relationship as well as a decrease in performance (Wachsmuth et al., 2017), with the shared expectation that coaches should lead the conflict resolution process. Coaches and athletes were more successful in managing conflict when they both regulated their emotions and sought opportunities to collaborate or compromise (Wachsmuth et al., 2018).

Methodological challenges to studying interpersonal conflict in organizations, mainly issues of time and measurement, are noted in a review by Barki and Hartwick (2004). Interpersonal conflict is often studied retrospectively and is inconsistently operationalized. They suggest that scholars carefully consider the timing of measurement and include all elements of interpersonal conflict (e.g., cognitive, behavioral, emotional) in their measures. Further, Barki and Hartwick (2004) note that early interpersonal conflict literature lacked a consistent measurement tool; rather, scholars would create a few items for each construct they hoped to address. There has since been improvement in interpersonal conflict and conflict management scale development in workplace settings (Wright et al., 2017). In sport, the interpersonal conflict measurement tools are less obvious, which may be due to interpersonal conflict items being included in larger instruments. For example, interpersonal conflict management is one of seven subscales of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Maintenance Questionnaire (Rhind & Jowett, 2012), and interpersonal conflict is one of the main subscales included in the Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire (Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005) and the sport version of the Quality of Relationships Inventory (Jowett, 2009; Davis & Jowett, 2014). Sport-specific measurement tools such as these allow researchers to produce empirical evidence that assists in the conceptualization of conflict in sport.

Intrateam Conflict in the Sport Psychology Literature

Interpersonal conflict research explains dyadic-level interactions and similarities between interpersonal and group conflict causes have been established (Wall Jr. & Callister, 1995). However, it would be misleading to assume that each finding from interpersonal conflict transfers directly into group settings given the complex features that occur within the social environment of sport (Martin et al., 2014). Group dynamics continue to be a critical topic in sport research, providing consistent evidence that team processes (e.g., goal setting, communication, problem-solving) impact team performance (Eys et al., 2019; Filho et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2014). Aside from overt team processes, there are intangible aspects of a team that scholars have labeled *emergent states*, which are dynamic factors that change depending on the specific team context and functioning (McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014). Intrateam conflict has been identified as an emergent state (Martin et al., 2014), though other emergent states, such as cohesion and collective efficacy, receive more attention in sport psychology research. Cohesion is a group's tendency to remain united and can be oriented toward achieving common objectives (i.e., task cohesion) and/or satisfying the affective needs of group members (i.e., social cohesion; Carron et al., 1998). Past research suggests that the presence of intrateam conflict may decrease the amount of cohesion (Carron et al., 2002; Paradis et al., 2014) though managing conflict constructively can maintain or improve social cohesion (Sullivan & Feltz, 2001). Separating the task and social group elements is also seen in intrateam conflict research. Task conflict refers to disagreements on what or how instrumental goals are being accomplished in a group, while social conflict refers to incompatible personalities or relationship issues (Jehn, 1995; 1997). Studies from organizational psychology have shown both task and social conflict decrease group trust and cohesion in work groups, which can also lead to decreased member satisfaction and

willingness to continue working together (Jehn et al., 2008). A meta-analysis by de Wit and colleagues (2013), with 116 empirical studies that included 8,880 non-sport groups, reported task conflict and social conflict had significant, negative relationships with multiple group outcomes (e.g., trust, satisfaction, commitment, identification). Intragroup conflict has received some recent investigation in sport (Holt et al., 2012; Paradis et al. 2014; Partridge & Knapp, 2016), though more clarification is needed in the conceptualization of conflict and its relationship to outcomes of interest. Perhaps owing to the strong historical connection between sport psychology and positive psychology (Gould, 2002), there is a tendency for sport psychology researchers to emphasize the study of positive and adaptive team characteristics (e.g., resilience, communication, collective efficacy) that help avoid negative affective, behavioral, and cognitive outcomes, rather than explore the negative and perceived maladaptive intrapersonal factors and intrateam processes that produce conflict. Furthermore, this tendency might cause researchers to examine conflict as a residual factor that arises from deleterious team practices, rather than a distinct factor that could play a positive role in team functioning, and this deserves more attention as a research topic. For instance, in the peer relationships in sport literature, conflict is identified as a negative attribute of friendships (Weiss et al., 1996), and conflict may be more present in teams and coaches that create an ego-oriented motivational climate (Vazou et al., 2005), yet these studies do not explore the nature of this conflict. Research has only recently begun to explore peer conflict as a separate entity (Holt et al., 2012; Paradis et al., 2014; Partridge & Knapp, 2016).

Additionally, group dynamics literature adopts an input-mediator-output framework to illustrate the variety of factors that contribute to teamwork and, ultimately, team effectiveness (McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014). This framework acknowledges that groups grow and develop

based on their current context, and therefore can be viewed as dynamic systems. The concept of conflict is included in this model as two separate mediators. The first is as an emergent state, which has been discussed previously. The second is as a teamwork behavior labeled "integrative conflict management." This aspect of the framework refers to how teams solve their problems and consistently address conflicts as they arise. All teams will experience some type of conflict, therefore *how* a team manages conflict becomes just as important as *what* the conflict is. Though the inclusion of conflict management within a group framework specific to sport is helpful for sport literature, more work is needed to advance the research on specific conflict management strategies for athletes and coaches.

Intrateam Conflict Management Strategies

The intragroup conflict literature in the workplace and other high-performing settings has provided insight into conflict management styles and interventions. A widely used heuristic for understanding conflict management styles posits that conflict management styles lie along two axes (assertiveness, cooperation), yielding five styles for managing conflict (avoiding, accommodating, compromising, competing, and collaborating). From this heuristic, multiple conflict management instruments have been developed (Womack, 1988), with the most common being the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI; Kilmann &Thomas, 1977; Thomas, 2008). The TKI has enjoyed widespread use in the organizational consulting realm (Mayer, 2010; Lewicki et al., 1992; Shell, 2001). Conflict management styles have been studied without using the TKI (Folger et al., 2021; Paul et al., 2004; Sullivan & Feltz, 2001), and these studies support the use of a collaborative conflict style, which has been related to improved performance and team cohesion (Paul et al., 2004; Sullivan & Feltz, 2001). An additional model for managing conflict within organizations suggests interventions take a behavioral approach (i.e., teaching

group members behaviors that promote collaboration) or a structural approach (i.e., changing organizational design), with both approaches being equally helpful (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Still, the content and delivery details of conflict management interventions remain unclear, as few studies of conflict management interventions have been published (Bercovitch, 2019; Donohue, 1992; Rahim, 2023).

The limited empirical evidence supports the efficacy of conflict management interventions. Multiple brief conflict management interventions were successful in reducing psychological and interpersonal strain (Haraway & Haraway III, 2005), and a multi-week workshop improved communication and collaboration among healthcare students and employees (Bradley et al., 2021; Hackett et al., 2014). However, conflict management intervention studies in sport contexts are scarce. A single study by Secaras and colleagues (2023) outlines a conflict management workshop specifically for adolescent athletes. After learning about the cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements of conflict, athletes participated in multiple activities that centered around problem-solving and communication. Findings indicated the workshop was effective in increasing skills that promote constructive conflict management (e.g., cognitive flexibility, problem-solving). In focus group interviews following the workshop, athletes shared they felt more confident about managing future conflicts (Secaras et al., 2023). The sport literature has noted beneficial strategies for managing team conflict including team-building experiences (Holt et al., 2012; Paradis et al., 2014; Partridge & Knapp, 2016), though these studies did not detail a specific, conflict-focused intervention. Team building experiences offer an indirect approach to conflict management in that team building activities can facilitate forming relationships with teammates, practicing communication, and developing team goals (Paradis & Martin, 2012). Team building methods may serve a proactive function, but do not

provide guidance on managing conflict when it inevitably emerges, and thus, the lack of specific conflict interventions is a detriment.

Purpose of the Review

The existing literature on conflict in sport largely ignores intrateam conflict. Furthermore, coaches or sport psychology consultants who might engage in conflict management interventions are left to be guided by literature from related fields (e.g., organizational psychology, management). Knowing that conflict management training can be effective, greater knowledge of intragroup conflict in sport would better inform conflict management practices. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to review the current sport literature on intrateam conflict and conflict management. The researchers aimed to investigate: 1) What are the sources and outcomes of intrateam conflict in sport? and 2) What conflict management strategies are successful in resolving intrateam conflict in sport? Given the exploratory nature of these questions, a scoping review was determined to be the most appropriate method to address this purpose. A scoping review is concerned with assessing the breadth of the literature and identifying gaps to inform future research in a specific topic area (Peters et al., 2020). With the current review, the researchers aim to provide a comprehensive summary of intrateam conflict and conflict management practices within the sport context.

Method

The five-stage framework for scoping reviews (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005) guides the current study: identify the research question; identify relevant studies; study selection; charting the data; and collating, summarizing, and reporting results.

Identify the research question

The current review had two research questions: (1) What are the sources and outcomes of intrateam conflict in sport? and (2) What conflict management strategies are successful in resolving intrateam conflict in sport? These questions emerged based on partial knowledge of the existing literature and discussions among the authors. Intrateam conflict was considered to be perceived disagreements between two or more people that belong to the same group related to differences in thoughts, feelings, values, goals, etc.

Identify relevant studies

Electronic databases, key journals in sport psychology, and reference lists of included articles were searched.

Electronic databases

Database searches were conducted in May-June of 2023 in SportDiscus, PsychINFO/Articles, Science Direct, Web of Science, and PubMed. Each database was searched with terms that included general intrateam conflict (e.g., “intrateam conflict” AND sport; “team conflict” AND sport NOT “work group”) and conflict management (e.g., “conflict management” OR “conflict resolution” AND sport NOT “work group”).

Key journals

The topic of conflict has been studied by scholars in a range of academic disciplines, and this is reflected in the range of journals in which conflict articles are published. The authors selected journals that appeared in preliminary searches of electronic databases as well as journals the authors selected *a priori* that were likely to contain articles related to conflict management and sport: *International Journal of Conflict Management, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, Journal of Applied Sport Psychology,* and

Psychology of Sport and Exercise. Search terms for each journal were altered to fit the subject and contents of the journal. For example, journals focused on conflict management were searched using sport terms, and journals focused on sport were searched using conflict and conflict management terms. Table 2.1 shows the searched journals with their specific search terms.

Reference lists

The reference lists for all included articles (n= 19) were searched to ensure that relevant articles were not missed in the electronic database and journal searches.

Study Selection

To be included in this review, articles had to meet four criteria. First, articles needed to specifically discuss intrateam conflict or conflict management as a main variable of interest in the purpose or aim of the article and be conducted in a sport context. Conceptually, interpersonal conflict (e.g., coach-athlete) and intrapersonal conflict (e.g., role conflict) are different from intrateam conflict in that each type of conflict focuses on different relationship dynamics. Therefore, it was necessary for the articles included in the current study to be focused on relationships between members on the same sport team and to exclude research on a single person or dyad. The third criterion was to only include peer-reviewed studies. The exploratory nature of a scoping review and the practical relevance of conflict lend well to including grey literature (e.g., dissertation/theses, book chapters, popular press periodicals); however, the current study sought sources that collected original data and underwent a strict peer-review process in order to advance empirical knowledge on conflict in sport. The fourth criterion was to include The last criterion excluded articles not written in English, due to the first language of all

authors and the time and cost associated with translating services (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Both quantitative and qualitative studies were included.

Charting the Data

Two authors conducted the screening process. To ensure the criteria fit well with the purpose of the scoping review, the authors conducted searches in two electronic databases (e.g., SportDiscus, PsychINFO/Articles) and screened articles by title and abstract based on the inclusion criteria. Then, 10 articles were selected at random, and the authors independently conducted a full-text review and included articles that adhered to the inclusion criteria. The authors had 100% agreement in this initial screening process, with six articles being included and four being excluded. The primary author completed the searches across all remaining databases, key journals, and reference lists and shared the results with the secondary author. After independently screening by title and abstract, the authors met again. The authors had 90% agreement across articles and agreed a full text review would be best for deciding on discrepant articles. Thus, the authors continued to a full text screening and began extracting data from the included articles. Figure 2.1 presents the screening process, with the number of articles present at each stage.

Collating, Summarizing, Reporting Results

A table was created to organize the relevant information from all articles. The following characteristics were extracted from each study: included author(s), year of publication, study location, study purpose/aims, main variables/constructs, population and sample size, sport, study design, measures used, data analysis technique, and outcomes/key findings. The outcomes were divided into general intrateam conflict and conflict management to address each of the questions guiding this review. In addition, studies were coded based on the four concepts mentioned in

Wachsmuth and colleagues' (2017) definition of conflict: (1) values, needs, opinions, or objectives; (2) cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions, (3) social and cultural context, (4) individuals' characteristics.

Results

Across all databases, the initial search for intrateam conflict in sport resulted in 243 total articles. An additional database search for conflict management or conflict resolution within sport teams yielded a total of 317 articles. Searches within specific journals yielded 162 articles after duplicates were removed. After duplicates were removed, total of 669 articles were screened by title and abstract. With the strict inclusion criteria, this initial screening eliminated 581 articles, as most of the articles within the search results were conducted in non-sport settings or did not allude to conflict being a main variable of interest. A total of 88 articles moved forward into full-text review in which an additional 70 articles were removed. The final number of articles meeting inclusion criteria was 18. Table 2.2 contains the study characteristics of the included studies.

Sample Characteristic

The majority of studies (n = 14) included participants with a mean age above 18 years old. The participation levels of athletes in these samples included recreational (n = 1), university (n = 5), professional (n = 2), elite (n = 1), or a combination of levels (n = 3). Included in this number are two studies that had samples of collegiate or national level sport coaches rather than athletes. Of the remaining four studies, three had a focus on adolescent athletes competing, with mean ages between 14 and 17 years old, and one study implemented a conflict management intervention with third to sixth-grade athletes (M_{age} = 11.89 years). In studies with younger

samples, the competition levels were less distinct; two studies included athletes involved in interscholastic athletics, and two studies included athletes from club/elite teams.

Conflict Definition Components

In reviewing the purpose statements for each included study, intrateam conflict terms (e.g., "team conflict," "task and social conflict") appeared more frequently than phrases related to conflict management (e.g., "handle conflict," "conflict management styles"). Table 2.3 contains the purpose statement and coding for all included articles, as well as sample information and main findings. At least one of the four concepts of conflict mentioned in the Wachsmuth and colleagues' (2017) definition (e.g., (1) values, needs, opinions, or objectives; (2) cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions, (3) social and cultural context, (4) individuals' characteristics) appeared in seven of the final articles. One study addressed the cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions to conflict (Concept 2; Holt et al., 2012), two studies addressed the broader social and cultural context (Concept 3; González-Ponce et al., 2018; McEwan & Crawford, 2022), and one study addressed individuals' characteristics (e.g., narcissism; Concept 4; Boulter et al., 2022a). The remaining three studies (Boulter et al., 2022b; Paradis et al., 2014; Partridge & Knapp, 2016) addressed multiple concepts within their purpose statement. Five articles in this sample did not focus on a singular component of conflict, rather, these studies focused more broadly on the presence or amount of conflict and its relation to another outcome of interest (e.g., resilience, collective efficacy, cohesion). In these cases, conflict was still a central aspect of the purpose of the study but was sometimes treated as a mediating factor between two constructs. For example, López-Gajardo and colleagues (2022) found that higher perceptions of intrateam conflict mediated the relationship between commitment to the team and team resilience.

Sources and Outcomes of Intrateam Conflict

The first purpose of this review sought to identify elements related to conflict and the outcomes of team conflict. In general, the sources of conflict were described as being rooted in feelings of jealousy or differences in personal characteristics (Partridge & Knapp, 2016), or situations where athletes reported that they felt conflict on their team when there were disagreements, negative feelings, and negative behaviors (Paradis et al., 2014). Across studies, it was clear that certain personal factors contributed to conflict. Boulter and colleagues (2022a, 2022b) found that teams with a higher number of narcissistic individuals exhibited a dysfunctional team conflict profile (i.e., high amounts of task, process, and relationship conflict; Boulter et al., 2022b). Process conflict, a subtype of task conflict, moderated the relationship between narcissism and team cohesion (Boulter et al., 2022a). Teams with perfectionistic concerns scored higher on task and social conflict (Freire et al., 2022). Lastly, an individual's level of commitment was negatively related to task and social conflict (López-Gajardo et al., 2022).

The exact outcomes or consequences of intrateam conflict were less clear after this review, as intrateam conflict was treated both as a moderator and outcome variable when studying team factors. Findings suggest that higher levels of commitment combined with lower perceptions of task and relationship conflict were associated with more characteristics of resilience (López-Gajardo et al., 2022), and perception of intrateam conflict was predictive of an athlete's confidence in their team (Leo et al., 2015). One study noted that increased team cohesion led to more constructive conflict management strategies (Sullivan & Feltz, 2001). A qualitative study by McEwan & Crawford (2022) noted seven themes that caused teams to break down, three of which included elements of conflict. This study suggests that overconfidence

among players can lead to conflict during competitions and a general lack of social cohesion or cliques within the team led to conflict. This study also notes that the absence of constructive conflict management strategies ultimately led teams to breakdown (McEwan & Crawford, 2022). Connected to coaching, athletes on teams with a coach that led competitions adequately and promoted respect towards players reported low levels of intrateam conflict (Leo et al., 2015).

Conflict Management Strategies

Two studies (Holt et al., 2012; Partridge & Knapp, 2016) referenced both conflict and conflict management in their purpose statements and employed qualitative methods to explore both constructs in more detail. These studies referenced indirect strategies for managing conflict such as team building sessions. Sessions did not have to address current team conflicts, rather, athletes felt these sessions were successful in establishing trust and open communication among teammates which ultimately made athletes more confident in managing conflict in the future. These sessions can be conducted at any point, but athletes noted the benefits of doing these sessions early in the season (Holt et al., 2012; Partridge & Knapp, 2016).

Six articles in this sample exclusively addressed conflict management, including studies of four interventions that were specifically designed to improve conflict management (Afanasieiva et al., 2019; Leo et al., 2021; Ros-Morente et al., 2019; Vealey, 2017). The case study by Vealey (2017) provides the experience of a sport psychology consultant working with a competitive basketball team for one year. The team specifically brought in a consultant to work through relationship conflicts on the team and improve the overall team culture. Players responded well to the culture-building and trust activities in the intervention, and at the end of the year, both coaches and players felt the team culture improved. The other three intervention studies employed a quasi-experimental design. Ros-Morente and colleagues (2019) evaluated an

educational video game specific to youth athletes. Athletes were given over two dozen conflicts that they must resolve, and the program guided them through conflict management strategies that also help with emotional regulation. Athletes who completed the program reported higher satisfaction and decreased levels of bullying compared to athletes who did not complete the program. The details of activities or strategies of this program were not described in detail, but the program instructors went through training to learn about the program before delivering the material (Ros-Morente et al., 2019). Afanasieiva and colleagues (2019) developed an intervention for a competitive volleyball team that aimed to address problems among athletes and develop a system for achieving team goals (i.e., team efficiency). Through a variety of activities including group discussions, role-playing games, and opportunities for reflection, athletes learned how to improve team communication and resolve problems within the group. Results indicated that, among other beneficial outcomes, this intervention program was successful in improving team efficiency and the conflicts that arose were managed productively (Afanasieiva et al., 2019). In their intervention, Leo and colleagues (2021) trained team coaches to deliver a team building intervention to their teams over the course of two months. This intervention included elements that coaches would implement during and outside of practices. Athletes reported a decrease in task and relationship conflict following the intervention (Leo et al., 2021).

The remaining two conflict management articles recruited coach participants. Professional (Laios & Tzetzis, 2007) and elite youth sport coaches (Huseinagić & Hodžić, 2010) completed questionnaires created by the researchers that asked about their conflict management styles. Findings show mixed results for which conflict management style is most effective. Professional coaches noted that the most effective styles for managing conflict are collaborating

(trying to find a solution that works for everyone), compromising (each party makes an equal sacrifice), or avoiding (not addressing the conflict). The least effective styles according to this sample of coaches were competing (putting coach needs first) and accommodating (putting players' needs first; Laios & Tzetzis, 2007). The study with youth sport coaches labeled each style differently but noted that collaborating and accommodating were the most effective styles (Huseinagić & Hodžić, 2010). Though results indicate mixed support, a collaborative conflict management style was identified in both groups as an effective approach. Across both studies related to conflict management styles, the TKI was not used; instruments for measuring conflict management styles were created by the researchers.

Discussion

This scoping review identified 18 articles that had study purposes specifically addressing intrateam conflict or intrateam conflict management in sport populations. The sources and outcomes of conflict studied in these articles included personal and team factors, which supports the aforementioned definition of conflict put forth by sport scholars (see Wachsmuth and colleagues, 2017). Perceptions of the amount or occurrence of team conflict were also studied as a moderating variable, indicating that the type and frequency of conflict may be influential in the relationships between team factors. Related to conflict management, this review suggests that a variety of approaches may be successful in addressing conflict within sport teams. The articles also demonstrate that multiple sport stakeholders (e.g., athletes, team captains, coaches, sport psychology practitioners) are placed in positions to manage team conflict. Few interventions have been tested and even fewer details of the interventions (e.g., conflict management strategies taught, activities used, theoretical backing) were reported. Overall, the articles in this review

offer empirical evidence that intrateam conflict exists in sport as a distinct construct; they also offer insight into the specific sources, outcomes, and management strategies for team conflict.

Conceptual Clarity

Intrateam conflict is complex, and like other group processes, can be difficult to conceptualize. The variable of conflict was investigated differently across studies in this review; some studies focused on one component of conflict (e.g., personality traits; Boulter et al., 2022a; sociocultural context, McEwan & Crawford, 2022), while others studied conflict as a global entity (Freire et al., 2022, Partridge et al., 2016). This distinction is useful when considering intrateam conflict as an emergent state and connecting conflict to group processes. Conflict exists within a group at all moments in time; it is dynamic and develops within the context of each specific team. When conflict is studied as a global entity, this research aims to better describe conflict which helps clarify its intangible nature. For example, the qualitative study by Holt and colleagues (2012) is foundational to the sport conflict literature because it explains how athletes perceive, experience, and understand conflict within their teams. Through understanding athlete accounts of conflict, sport researchers and practitioners are able to piece together elements of an intangible element. On the other hand, the work that focuses on specific elements of conflict advances understanding of how conflict connects to observable group processes. More recent studies in this review (Boulter et al., 2022a, 2022b; Freire et al., 2022) focused on personality characteristics that influence intrateam conflict and in turn influence group outcomes, making conflict a potential moderator in relationships between observable group processes. Qualitative studies on conflict were needed in order to provide insight into an intangible entity, and now, researchers are in a better position to study specific connections and work toward theory development.

The strict criteria of this review highlighted research that included intrateam conflict as a primary variable of interest. Conflict can, and should, be studied from a variety of psychological lenses to provide the most comprehensive understanding of not only what this construct is but what it does to sport teams. Mathieu and colleagues (2008) provided the Input-Mediator-Outcome (IMO) framework of team effectiveness which continues to be widely used by group dynamics scholars (Hardy et al., 2020; Harenberg et al., 2021; McEwan, 2020; McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014). The current authors offer an initial conceptual model of intrateam conflict (see Table 2.4) in sport that follows the IMO framework based on findings from this review, other sport psychology research findings, and research findings from industrial organizational psychology. With individual inputs, personality remains a key variable to study. There is some support that negative personality traits of team members can lead to conflict (Boulter et al., 2022a, 2022b; Freire et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2011). The cognitive component of conflict includes self-beliefs, appraisals, and attributions (Barki & Hartwick 2004; Roloff & Miller, 2006). Individual inputs that relate to these elements in the sport context can include self-efficacy. While a vast amount of sport research has explored self-efficacy, little research has specifically examined self-efficacy to resolve intrateam conflict. An individual's belief about their abilities may contribute to their perceptions of conflict and how they engage in conflict situations. Further, the way in which one learns about conflict and their past experiences with conflict is also an input to consider. An individual's sociocultural background is necessary to consider because cultural norms surrounding socialization patterns and power dynamics will influence an individual's choices and actions during the conflict management process (Cai & Fink, 2002; Ting-Toomey, 2009).

Team level inputs are the factors that influence all group members. Research shows intrateam conflict is a characteristic of an ego-oriented motivational climate (Vazou et al., 2005), and athlete perceptions of coaching competency (e.g., competency related to motivation, game strategy, technique competency, and character-building; González-Ponce et al., 2018) can influence perceptions of intrateam conflict. Teams can also be characterized based on the level of task or outcome interdependence (i.e., to what extent all group members are affected by group success). In a sample of university coaches, coaching staffs that perceived high interdependence experienced a positive relationship between task conflict and performance, though the same relationship was negative in coaching staffs with perceived low interdependence (Cunningham & Waltemeyer, 2007). There is less evidence surrounding inputs of team size and gender, but both could be influential factors in a team's environment. Large teams have more individual personalities and competing interests to manage, which will likely influence the presence and manifestation of task and relationship conflict differently than smaller teams. Also, conflict between a small subgroup of athletes may not affect a large team as much as it would a smaller team. Similarly, the majority of sport organizations, especially at elite levels, allow athletes to join men's or women's teams. Same-gendered teams are somewhat unique to sport, and perceived gender norms may influence how conflict occurs and is managed. The evidence surrounding the influence of gender on conflict management is somewhat consistent in non-sport contexts, showing that men tend to use more dominating conflict management styles than women (Brahnam et al., 2005; Brewer et al., 2002; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Rahim & Kataz, 2020). However, it remains unclear if initial perceptions of conflict vary based on gender identity. Sport also offers a unique situation where teams are assigned a gender (e.g., men's sports, women's sports), but the gender identity of athletes within those teams might not fully align with the team

gender. There is potential for research to examine how group gender norms in sport affect conflict perceptions and conflict management processes. Lastly, organizational stressors such as inadequate program structure, team management, and administrators can lead to conflict (Fletcher et al., 2012).

Mediators of the model combine well-studied variables from sport and organizational psychology. Intrateam conflict has shown to negatively correlate with various types of organizational commitment (de Witt et al., 2013; Allen & Meyer, 1996). Sport commitment is a separate construct (Scanlan & Carpenter, 1993), and given the evidence surrounding organizational commitment, has the potential to further develop the sport conflict literature. Higher levels of sport commitment have been associated with quality friendships with teammates, which includes the perceived ability to resolve conflicts (Weiss & Smith, 2002). Similar to commitment, satisfaction shows a consistent, negative relationship to intrateam conflict in the organizational literature (de Wit et al., 2013; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Group identification has been consistently treated as a moderator in organizational studies (Desivilya & Eizen, 2005; Han & Harms, 2009), though has yet to be connected to intrateam conflict in sport. Sport scholars exploring the remaining mediators of conflict management processes (Sullivan & Feltz, 2001), cohesion (Carron, 2002), collective efficacy (Leo et al., 2015, 2021), trust (Holt et al., 2012), communication (McEwan & Crawford, 2022), and resilience (López-Gajardo et al., 2022) suggest that teams with high levels of these constructs tend to perceive less conflict and manage conflict better when it arises.

Group performance is central to sport teams. Literature in this area has generally shown intrateam conflict leading to poorer performance (de Wit et al., 2013; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Partridge & Knapp, 2016), though some evidence suggests certain amounts of task conflict

are healthy for group improvement (Bradley et al., 2015). Additional outcomes to bring into the sport conflict research are turnover, counterproductive behaviors, and organizational citizenship behavior. In organizational settings, employees who perceived more relationship conflict in their work group reported being more likely to leave the work unit (Jehn, 1995; Medina et al., 2005). Turnover in sport is slightly more complicated in that an athlete can choose to leave their current team and join another (i.e., transferring), or they may choose to leave their current team and cease their sport participation (i.e., quitting). In the workforce, it appears less common for employees to quit their entire profession. Thus, this distinction is worth exploring so that sport organizations and sport practitioners can understand if athletes are quitting or transferring due to conflict. Counterproductive behaviors in the workplace include theft, excessive absenteeism, work withdrawal, workplace violence, and bullying, and scholars have noted the connection between conflict and counterproductive work behaviors (Hasanati et al., 2017; Raver, 2013). To the contrary, organizational citizenship behavior refers to workplace behaviors that are not specifically included in a job's description but help facilitate successful functioning of the work group (e.g., altruism, peacemaking, offering encouragement; Podsakoff, 2000). Generally, intragroup conflict and organizational citizenship behavior in workplace settings are negatively related (Kaur, 2014), though some evidence suggests task conflict may increase organizational citizenship behavior (Choi & Sy, 2010). The dynamic nature of teams, as illustrated in the IMO model, suggests that group outcomes influence inputs and mediators, as outcomes do not represent an end-state but occur throughout the season. Thus, clearly defining and measuring variables in conflict research will be essential to advance understanding of this construct in sport.

Measurement Concerns

A lack of conceptual clarity or framework for studying intrateam conflict in sport can also explain the variety of measurement instruments that were used throughout the articles. Though not an original purpose of this review, it is worth mentioning that the majority of articles in this review employed quantitative methods but the instruments used to measure conflict were inconsistent. Some scholars created their own tool to measure conflict by either creating novel items or adapting measures from non-sport settings such as the 6-item Intrateam Conflict Scale (ICS; Jehn, 1995). Authors often reported appropriate psychometric properties to support the use of such measures, but across studies, psychometric reporting varied, and it was unclear exactly how non-sport conflict measures were adapted. This raises concern related to content validity (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997) and construct validity (Thompson & Daniel, 1996) – Are sport-specific conflict questionnaires addressing all aspects of intrateam conflict in sport? and are we simply assuming that conflict in sport and non-sport settings encompass the same elements? There is some support for content validity. A measurement strength seen across studies was the choice of non-sport intrateam conflict measures that differentiated between task and relationship conflict. This conceptual distinction has been well established in sport and non-sport intrateam literature as a key tenant of conflict and should be present in conflict instruments (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit et al., 2013; Jehn, 1995; Jehn et al., 2008). However, there lacks support for construct validity. While work groups and sport teams may share certain qualities (e.g., working toward a shared goal, talent development, measuring performance), there are still unique characteristics of sport that have yet to be connected to conflict. For example, employees typically interact exclusively in a work environment, and there is limited overlap with other social circles. Certain levels of sport, like college and professional teams, have much more

overlap between teammates in different social environments (e.g., class, traveling, university events, public appearances, living arrangements, social activities, romantic relationships), making it hard for a single athlete to distance oneself from their team or teammates. This overlap may be especially relevant in the case of conflict and offers a need for a sport-specific conflict instrument that addresses the unique contextual factors of sport.

One sport-specific intrateam conflict measure exists: the Group Conflict Questionnaire (GCQ; Paradis et al., 2014). The GCQ uses 14 items to assess perceptions of task conflict (7 items) and relationship conflict (7 items) within sport teams. Each item is answered on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree), meaning that a higher score indicates a stronger perception of intrateam conflict. This measure has demonstrated sufficient reliability (Cronbach's α= .90 for task conflict and .92 for relationship conflict) with university athletes (M_{age} = 20.79 years; Paradis et al., 2014). The GCQ exclusively aims to measure intrateam conflict, which is a strength of the instrument. Other sport-specific instruments include conflict as a subscale. For example, The Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire (PMCYSQ; Vazou et al., 2005), has a subscale on intrateam conflict. Similarly, the Attitude Toward Athlete Activism Questionnaire (ATAAQ) includes a subscale "Perceived Conflict With Team" that measures if athletes perceive teammate activism affects team culture or success (Sappington et al., 2019). Studies that used these and other measures with conflict-related subscales were excluded from this review because full-text reviews of articles revealed intrateam conflict was not well integrated into the study purpose and therefore not a main variable of interest. Nonetheless, few studies overall, and none of the studies included in this review, have used the GCQ to measure intrateam conflict in sport. A lack of use indicates potential issue(s) with the measure itself, or indicates that the literature on conflict in sport requires a better

conceptual model with which scholars can study conflict. A closer examination of this questionnaire could prove beneficial for establishing a consistent and psychometrically sound measurement tool for sport scholars.

Conflict Management Practical Implications

This review also explored the literature related to conflict management practices in sport teams. The six conflict management studies included four interventions and two studies of coach conflict management styles. The intervention studies were strong in their study design choices (e.g., case-study; quasi-experimental). Also, all intervention studies included multiple time points of intervention, confirming that resolving conflict is an ongoing, dynamic team process (McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014). Missing from this literature are the specific conflict management strategies that are being taught to athletes. All interventions included some element of team building activities, which are popular in sport psychology literature and applied work (Beauchamp et al., 2017; Paradis et al., 2012). However, if we are working to better understand intrateam conflict and ways to resolve it, it would help to parse strategies that are beneficial specially for conflict situations and strategies that are beneficial for other team emergent states or processes. For example, Secaras and colleagues (2023) designed a conflict management workshop for youth athletes where they practiced communication and problem-solving skills in a variety of activities centered around conflict situations. An outline of the workshop is provided in the published article. Following the intervention, cognitive flexibility and problem-solving, two skills that encourage effective conflict management, were measured, and participants reported improvement in both skills (Secaras et al., 2023). More transparency, details, and empirical support of team building interventions that address conflict management are needed to bolster the theoretical and practical understanding of intrateam conflict in sport.

A separate question arising from the conflict management literature thus far is when and who should be intervening, if at all? In less severe situations, athletes prefer to manage conflicts without the help of a coach (Secaras et al., 2023). Interventions designed for athletes can be beneficial for teaching mental and behavioral skills that may facilitate conflict management without the need of a coach. It would be best to have these interventions early in the season as a way to be more proactive in managing team conflict (Partridge & Knapp, 2016; Wachsmuth et al., 2017). However, it can be the case that teams wanting an immediate resolution to a problem will call in a third-party (e.g., coach, sport psychology consultant) to help manage the situation. Sport psychology consultants shared they have been brought in to work with dyads (Wachsmuth et al., 2022) or teams (Vealey, 2017) that are already in volatile or destructive states. The desire for immediate solutions to conflict will likely remain a part of the sport context, therefore, researchers and practitioners can begin to advance the literature on both proactive team building interventions and crisis-response interventions.

Future Directions

The main goal for future intrateam conflict research should be to establish a theory of intrateam conflict. The conceptual model shown in Table 2.4 offers initial suggestions for concepts to include, though there is potential to explore many more. As researchers work to build a theory of intrateam conflict, empirical connections between intrateam conflict and other key team constructs will be made clear. The studies in this review do not use analyses that improve our understanding of directionality between concepts, thus future work should attempt to explore causation in the area of intrateam conflict. Findings from such studies would provide the needed support to label and study certain psychosocial constructs in sport as inputs, mediators, or outcomes of intrateam conflict.

A theory of intrateam conflict should include characteristics of individuals that may generate or help lessen the presence of conflict within a group. At the individual level, future work should continue to explore personality factors that might influence conflict. Studies in this review highlight that teams with individuals high in narcissism and perfectionistic tendencies may experience more conflict (Boulter et al., 2022b; Freire et al., 2022). Other less favorable personality traits are worth exploring, including individuals that get labeled as "team cancers" (i.e., an athlete that continuously spreads negativity and causes problems in the team, Cope et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2018). An unanswered question that further illustrates this notion is, what are the characteristics of teammates that consistently perceive high or low levels of intrateam conflict? In other words, are there teammates who always see the worst in the team and make small problems larger than they should be? Conversely, are there teammates who are somewhat oblivious to team conflicts or good at minimizing team problems? An underlying element to these questions and to studying perceptions of conflict is an individual's sociocultural background. The environment and culture in which an individual was raised can influence their perceptions of conflict and strategies for conflict management (Cai & Fink, 2002; Oetzel & Tint-Toomey, 2003). Research that explores individual differences in perceptions of intrateam conflict in sport would add much to existing literature, and offer insights to potential inputs of intrateam conflict.

Team-level variables should also be included in an intrateam conflict theory. Youth athletes identified intrateam conflict as one characteristic of an ego-oriented motivational climate (i.e., an environment that focuses more on performance outcomes than mastering skills; Vazou et al., 2005), which portrays intrateam conflict as primarily negative. However, intrateam conflict, particularly task conflict, can be beneficial for groups performing new or complicated tasks

(Bradley et al., 2015; Jehn, 1995), which occurs in sport when teams learn new skills or playing tactics. Thus, there may be an ideal combination of conflict types that allows groups to function well, and possibly improve. Boulter and colleagues (2002b) recently examined the presence of team conflict profiles with varying combinations of task, relationship, and process conflict. Future work can continue to explore the characteristics and functioning of teams with different combinations of conflict. Additionally, the amount and type of conflict may fluctuate over the season, therefore gaining a longitudinal perspective of conflict and its outcomes would strengthen theory development.

Future research on intrateam conflict may eventually aim to include additional stakeholders. The conversation thus far has centered around peer conflict among athletes, though a sports team includes many individuals beyond the players. Expanding the notion of the "team" to include coaches would offer a valuable perspective of this construct. A small number of studies have examined coaches' use of conflict management styles (Huseinagić & Hodžić, 2010), Laios & Tzetzis, 2007), which offers insight to how coaches respond to conflict. However, coaches may be involved in conflict between teammates much earlier than just its resolution. Athletes may perceive conflict with another teammate due to their coach's behavior or decision-making. As a recent example, González-Ponce and colleagues (2018) found that athlete perceptions of coaching competency influenced the amount of team conflict over the course of the season. Including coaches and coach perspectives in research on intrateam conflict would strengthen the knowledge surrounding this phenomenon, and would advance the research in coaching practices.

Developing a theory for intrateam conflict would also strengthen the conflict management literature and intervention work. In taking a preventative approach, an intrateam

conflict theory would allow for conflict management interventions to be designed for specific sources or outcomes of intrateam conflict. The intervention studies included in this review used different theories or models for conflict, which makes it challenging for future intervention work to logically expand on previous findings. As research advances in this area, sport-specific conflict and conflict management interventions should continue to occur. Conflict management is an important life skill that can be taught to youth sport athletes as well as adults. Future intervention research should provide details of the material or activities used so that sport practitioners can implement evidence-based techniques in their work with teams. Overall, scholars should aim to conduct more sport-specific research on conflict to better understand this complex construct and aid in the practical efforts to manage conflict within sport teams.

TABLES

Table 2.1
Manual Search Terms for Specified Journals

Journal	Search Terms
International Journal for Conflict Management, Journal of Conflict Resolution	"sport" OR "athlete" OR "intrateam"
Group Dynamics - Theory, Research, and Practice	"team conflict" AND "sport" NOT "work group" NOT "family"
Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, Psychology of Sport and Exercise	"team conflict"

Table 2.2
Descriptive Results of Articles Included in Scoping Review

Study Characteristic	Result	Top Frequencies
Year Published	2001-2022	
Methodology	12 quantitative 5 qualitative 1 mixed method	
Journals	16 total	International Journal of Sport Psychology (2) Psychology of Sport and Exercise (2)
Countries	11 total 1 study with multiple 2 with unlisted	Canada (4) UK (3) USA (2) Spain (2)
Sports	20 sports represented 9 studies 1 sport 9 studies with multiple sports, some are coactive (swimming, equestrianism, golf, track & field)	Soccer (13) Basketball (8) Volleyball (8) Rugby (7) Ice hockey (5)

Table 2.3
Purpose Statements, Methods, and Results from Articles Included in the Review

Author (Year)	Purpose	Conflict Definition Code	Methods	Results
Afanasieiva et al. (2019)	"The purpose of the article was to present the results of the study of the impact of social and psychological training on the formation of volleyball team efficiency"	N/A	*N* =132 University volleyball athletes Quasi-experimental	- Team climate improved, aggressiveness decreased, and conflict became productive following the intervention.
Boulter et al. (2022a)	"In this research, we offer a highly original examination of the influence of narcissism on task cohesion, via three intragroup conflict types, moderated by team narcissism."	4	*N* = 706 (across 2 studies) Non-professional athletes Self-report surveys	- Narcissism impacted task cohesion via process conflict - No effect for narcissism on task cohesion via relationship conflict or task conflict. - Study 2: Results largely confirmed the findings from Study 1, as narcissism impacted task cohesion via process conflict
Boulter et al. (2022b)	"To derive team conflict profiles and then test team narcissism as an antecedent to the profiles."	1 and 4	*N* = 1107 Non-professional athletes Self-report surveys	- Low-range, dysfunctional, and Task Conflict-dominant conflict profiles exist - Team-level narcissism predicted membership of the dysfunctional conflict profile, with mean and maximum scores also predicting membership of medium TC-dominant and high TC-dominant conflict profiles

Table 2.3 (cont'd)

Freire et al. (2022)	"We aimed to investigate the predictive role of perfectionism traits on players' perceptions of team cohesion and team conflict among Brazilian youth engaged in team sports."	All	*N* =412 Elite youth athletes Self-report surveys	- Youth sport participants showing a perfectionistic concerns profile scored higher on both task and social conflict when compared to participants showing a perfectionistic striving profile
González-Ponce et al. (2018)	"To examine the relationship between coaching competency and team conflict, at individual and team levels, over the season."	3	*N* =344 Professional soccer athletes Self-report surveys	- Coaching competency can predict changes in conflict over the course of a season conflict increased throughout the season - Players belonging to teams with high perceptions of coaching motivational and game strategy competencies in their coaches reported a decrease of task conflicts. - The association between team perceived character-building competency and task and relationship conflict was significant at the midseason and end-season. - No significant predictors were found at the beginning of the season.
Holt et al. (2012)	"The purpose of this study was to examine female varsity athletes' perceptions of teammate conflict."	2	*N* = 19 University athletes Semi-Structured interviews	- Conflict is a regular occurrence - Performance conflict could be beneficial, but relationship conflict is mostly destructive - Team building meetings early in the season could help with conflict resolution

Table 2.3 (cont'd)

Huseinagić & Hodžić (2010)	"1. To determine styles of conflict resolution for chosen basketball coaches using the questionnaire created by Kreitner and Kinicki (1998). 2. To explore the opinion of participants about the correlation between offered styles and team effectiveness. 3. To explore and determine is there a dominating style for resolving team conflicts and reasons that lead to them."	N/A	*N* = 14 Basketball head coaches Self-report surveys	- Coaches used bonding and reconciling conflict management strategies - Coaches think that conflicts should be avoided, and that surroundings full of peace and understanding should be created
Laios & Tzetzis (2007)	"The aim of this study was to examine the methods and ways coaches use to handle conflict in professional teams in Greece."	N/A	*N* =42 Professional coaches Self-reported surveys	- Collaborating, compromising, and avoiding are most effective conflict management styles - Least effective styles are competing and accommodating - Soccer coaches believe competitive style is most effective compared to other coaches - Basketball and volleyball coaches believe more strongly than soccer that collaborating is an effective style
Leo et al. (2021)	"The main aim of the study is to analyze the effect of a team building intervention program on group variables, such as group cohesion, team conflict, transactive memory, and collective efficacy in soccer teams."	N/A	*N* = 53 Club soccer adolescent athletes Quasi-experimental	- Team building intervention was beneficial for team task integration and attraction, social conflict, and collective efficacy - Task and social conflict decreased in the experimental group compared with the control group, though only social conflict showed significant differences

Table 2.3 (cont'd)

Leo et al. (2015)	"The main aim of the study was to examine the predictive capacity of several psychosocial variables - role ambiguity, role conflict, team conflict, and team cohesion - on collective efficacy."	All	*N* =351 Professional soccer athletes Self-report surveys	- Perceptions about the group's task cohesion and team conflict are statistically significant predictors of collective efficacy - Conflict and team cohesion can explain the fluctuations of collective efficacy during a playing season.
López-Gajardo et al. (2022)	"The first aim of this study was to examine the relationship between commitment to the team and team resilience." "The second objective of the study was to analyze whether intra-group conflicts could mediate the relationship between commitment to the team and team resilience."	All	*N* =170 Elite soccer athletes Self-report surveys	- When players perceived less task and social intra-group conflicts, team resilience values were higher - Commitment to the team was negatively related with the task and social intra-group conflict. - Intra-group conflict acts as a mediator between the players' commitment and their ability to cope with adversities in team sports.
McEwan & Crawford (2022)	"The purpose of the present study was to explore why teamwork execution breaks down during team sport competition."	3	*N* =18 University athletes Semi-structured interviews	- Absence of constructive conflict management identified as a reason of teamwork breakdown - Lack of social cohesion identified as a cause for conflict, which can lead to teamwork breakdown - Cliques can lead to relationship conflicts - Overconfidence led to teamwork breakdowns due to increased intrateam conflict when the game ended up being more difficult than anticipated

Table 2.3 (cont'd)

Paradis et al. (2014a)	"The purpose of the study was to develop and validate a conceptually and psychometrically sound conflict questionnaire for sport."	All	*N* =743 (across two studies) Competitive and recreational athletes Self-report survey	- 25-item measure did not have good model data fit, but 14 items had factor loadings above the acceptable threshold and were kept - Sufficient model data fit with the 14-item measure, negative relationships to both cohesion and passion which were expected and show good convergent validity; significant inverse relationship with intragroup conflict and harmonious passion but not with obsessive
Paradis et al. (2014b)	"The purpose of the present study was to improve our understanding of the nature of intra-group conflict in sport through the perceptions of competitive level athletes."	1 and 2	*N* =10 Intercollegiate athletes Semi-structured interviews	- Several examples of athletes' experiences with conflict supported the Barki and Hartwick (2004) suggestion that conflict contains cognitive, behavioral, and affective components. - The term 'disagreement' was mentioned several times with conflict being described as a disagreement, a difference of opinion, or differing viewpoints - Athletes also highlighted the affective component of conflict through references to negative emotional states, feelings of resentment, jealousy, anger, frustration, and irritation - Some behaviors mentioned included interference with attainment of goals, the presence of negative body language, avoidance behavior, silent treatment, and verbal and physical fighting

Table 2.3 (cont'd)

Partridge et al. (2016)	"The purpose of this study was to expand the existing sport peer conflict literature by exploring older adolescent female athletes' experiences with peer conflict."	All	*N* =15 Recreational adolescent athletes Semi-structured interviews	- Causes of sport peer conflict: jealousy, personal characteristics, significant others' influence, - Manifestations of sport peer conflict: general indirect, sport-specific, and direct victimization - Outcomes of sport peer conflict: negative communication and performance, poorer team cohesion, competitive anxiety, negative emotions - Attempts to reduce conflict: coaching strategies, team-building experiences
Ros-Morente et al. (2022)	This paper aims to compare the levels of the variables satisfaction, emotion management, and bullying, in a group of sports students that have been trained with Happy Sport and another group that has not received any treatment.	N/A	*N* = 196 Recreational soccer youth athletes Quasi-experimental	- Athletes who followed the program reported significantly higher satisfaction levels and a significant decrease in the levels of bullying compared to the baseline and to the control group
Sullivan & Feltz (2001)	"This study will examine the relationships between intrateam conflict (both constructive and destructive) and a four-factor model of team cohesion."	All	*N* =62 Recreational ice hockey athletes Self-report surveys	- No significant differences among teams for any of the conflict scores, but there were significant differences among teams on the GEQ - Increased cohesion was related to increased use of constructive conflict styles and less use of negative conflict strategies

Table 2.3 (cont'd)

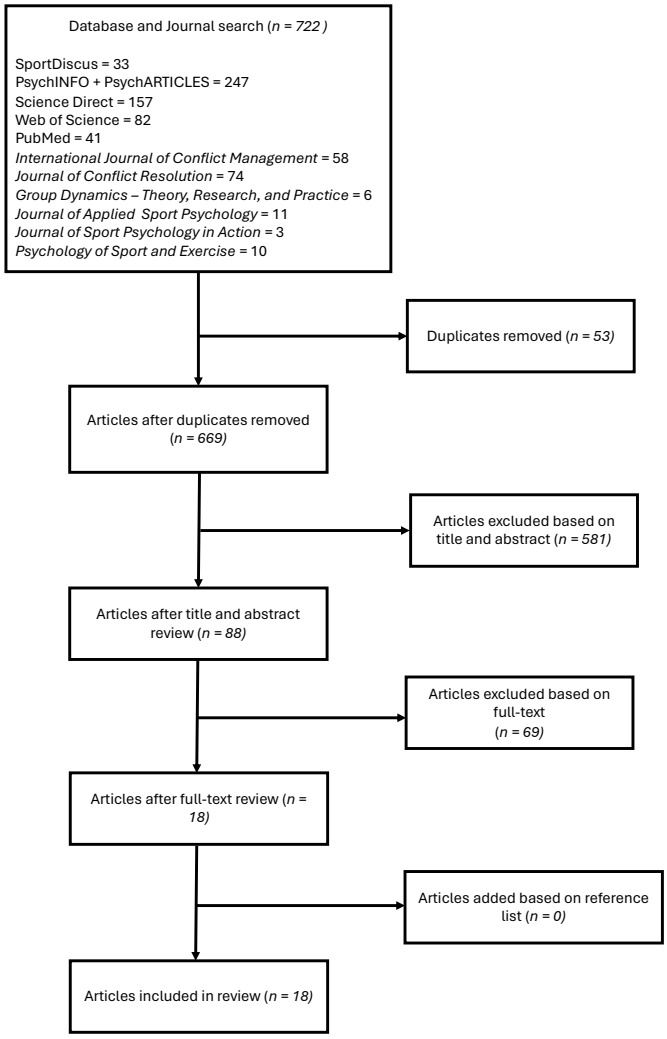
Vealey (2017)	"The purpose of this case study is to describe a mental skills intervention program with a college basketball team that was experiencing multiple relationship conflicts and an extremely dysfunctional team culture.	N/A	*N* =13 University basketball athletes Case Study	- Both players and coaches felt the team culture was improved during the year-long intervention - Athletes responded positively to culture building and trust activities

Table 2.4
A Conceptual Model for Intrateam Conflict

Input	Mediator	Outcome
Individual: • personality • self-efficacy • sociocultural background Team: • motivational climate • size • gender • leadership • task/outcome interdependence • political influences/organizational stressors	• commitment • satisfaction • group identification • conflict management processes • cohesion • collective efficacy • trust • communication • resilience	• performance • turnover (quitting and transferring) • counterproductive behaviors • organizational citizenship

FIGURES

Figure 2.1
Flow Diagram of Search Results



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*indicates reference included in the review

CHAPTER 3:

Content and factorial validity for an intrateam conflict in sport instrument

There is no simple answer to the overarching question that piques the attention of many sport scholars and practitioners – What makes teams perform well? Researchers in group dynamics have contributed much to the sport literature on this topic, noting the importance of emergent states and group processes to group performance (Eys et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2014; McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014). Emergent states refer to the intangible elements of group functioning (e.g., cohesion), while group processes are often more observable and tactical (e.g., problem solving; McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014). Both concepts are essential for understanding group effectiveness, however, it can be challenging to examine emergent states given their dynamic nature. Cohesion literature excels in critically examining an emergent state and explaining its relationship to team outcomes (e.g., performance, Carron et al., 2002; Eys et al., 2015; Filho et al., 2014). More research is needed regarding other emergent states.

Intrateam conflict is a relatively understudied emergent state that is relevant to group performance and functioning. Most knowledge regarding intrateam conflict comes from research in organizational settings outside of sport. Organizational psychology scholars define conflict as a dynamic process that occurs when an individual perceives a misalignment or difference between their thoughts, goals, values, or opinions. and those of another party (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Conflict can be rooted in differences related to group objectives (i.e., task conflict) or related to persons within the group (i.e., relationship conflict; Jehn, 1995). Both types of conflict have demonstrated negative relationships to individual and group outcomes in organizational literature. Relationship conflict more consistently shows a negative association with individual outcomes of member satisfaction, identification, and commitment, and group outcomes of

productivity, cohesion, and trust (de Wit et al., 2013; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn et al., 2008). Findings on task conflict are more complicated. There is evidence that task conflict has negative effects on group members including decreased member satisfaction, commitment, and trust (de Wit et al., 2013). However, looking beyond individual factors, there may be an ideal amount of task conflict that supports group productivity, creativity, and overall functioning. Bradley and colleagues (2015) found three conditions under which groups experienced positive outcomes from task conflict: the task was appropriately complex, groups had processes in place that allowed for effective processing of task information (i.e., open communication, collaborative problem solving), and group members expressed conflict appropriately if it emerged (i.e., individuals regulated their emotions). Thus, distinguishing between task and relationship conflict in groups proves beneficial in understanding individual and group outcomes.

Though the evidence surrounding intrateam conflict in sport is more limited than in organizational settings, intrateam conflict has demonstrated an overall negative influence in sport. Interviews with individual athletes across multiple studies confirm that team conflict decreases performance and strains relationships with teammates (Holt et al., 2012; Partridge & Knapp, 2016), and that athletes experienced negative emotions such as resentment, anger, and frustration when there was conflict (Paradis et al., 2014). This description of intrateam conflict in sport is an essential foundation off which to build for future research. In recent years, scholars have begun to explore the specific relationships between intrateam conflict and various outcome variables using quantitative approaches. There is evidence supporting that the amount of team conflict relates to perceptions of collective efficacy throughout a season (Leo et al, 2015), athletes with higher levels of commitment and resilience report lower levels of team conflict (Lopez-Gajardo et al., 2022), and individuals with higher levels of narcissism and perfectionism

tend to perceive higher amounts of task and relationship conflict (Boulter et al., 2022; Freire et al., 2022). As research on intrateam conflict continues to progress, it is important to assess how this construct is being measured.

Measurement of Intrateam Conflict

The two-factor model of conflict is often the structure used in intrateam conflict measurement tools. One common intrateam conflict measure stems from Jehn's research (1995) in organizational settings. The Intrateam Conflict Scale (ICS; Jehn, 1995) includes eight items (four for task conflict and four for relationship conflict) that attempt to measure the amount and type of conflict within a work unit (e.g., "How much friction is there among members in your work unit?"). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*None*) to 5 (*A lot*). The original ICS has demonstrated sufficient reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha_{\text{task conflict}}$ =.87, $\alpha_{\text{relationship conflict}}$ = .92) and factorial validity; factor loadings for task conflict items ranged from .43 to .88, and loadings for relationship conflict items ranged from .64 to .72 (Jehn, 1995). Since this initial study, many studies have cited the ICS as the main intrateam conflict instrument, though a deeper look reveals the ICS is not being used in the same way every time. Likert scales have differed in their range (e.g., 1 to 7; Lee & Wong, 2017; Tekleab et al., 2009) and anchoring (e.g., 1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly agree; Curşeu & Schruijer, 2010). Additionally, Pearson and colleagues (2002) reexamined the ICS to provide additional psychometric support and concluded a 6-item version demonstrated better factorial validity. This study started with a 9-item version of the ICS, which does not align with the 8-item version from the initial study, and the wording of the items was different. These inconsistencies in measurement are concerning. Scholars have cited the ICS as the measure on which they based their new items or used just the task or relationship conflict items as part of their testing battery (Behfar et al., 2011; Dimas & Lourenço, 2015; Todorova et

al., 2022). Nonetheless, the original ICS developed by Jehn (1995) and the shortened version from Pearson and colleagues (2002) continue to be a popular choice for measuring intrateam conflict (Jehn et al., 2010; Pazos et al., 2022; Thiel et al., 2017). In sport, there has been use of Jehn's (1995) ICS. The 6-item version of the ICS has shown sufficient factorial validity in a sample of athletic trainers and coaches (Gnacinski et al., 2019), and Boulter and colleagues (2022) modified an extended version of the ICS (see Behfar et al., 2011) to have sport-specific language. Still, measuring intrateam conflict within sport settings is equally inconsistent as it is in organizational literature.

A sport-specific measure for intrateam conflict, the Group Conflict Questionnaire (GCQ; Paradis et al., 2014), measures athlete perceptions of task conflict and relationship conflict within a sport team. Items were generated based on interviews with current intercollegiate athletes from different sports, and subject matter experts reviewed items before administering the final survey. Athlete interviews confirmed a two-dimensional nature of conflict in that athletes clearly described moments where they could not work well with their teammates (i.e., task conflict) and did not get along with their teammates (i.e., relationship conflict; Paradis et al., 2014a). All items are rated on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating higher perceptions of intrateam conflict. A confirmatory factor analysis with the original 25 items did not provide good fit indices, thus researchers removed items with factor loadings less than .70. This resulted in the final version of the GCQ with 14 items (seven task conflict and seven relationship conflict items). The final GCQ demonstrated sufficient factorial validity with factor loadings for task conflict items ranging from .64 to .85 and relationship conflict factor loadings ranging from .67 to .84 (Paradis et al., 2014b). This questionnaire differs from existing questionnaires in organizational literature in that it asks more about individual

perceptions of the manifestations of conflict within a group. Past measures are more concerned with the amount or frequency of conflict whereas the GCQ examines how conflict infiltrates certain team functions (e.g., practices, games, social gatherings). Yet, despite the existence of a sport-specific intrateam conflict questionnaire, few studies on conflict within sport teams have used the GCQ (Lüdemann & Kleinert, 2023; Secaras et al., in preparation). Further review of the GCQ reveals some items with potentially confusing (e.g., "Emotions run high in social situations about personal differences brought to light") and double-barreled language (e.g., "Personal friction among members of our team leads to angry confrontations at social gatherings"). To advance research on intrateam conflict in sport, the measurement of this construct must be revisited.

The Current Study

Overall, existing measurement tools for intrateam conflict caused concern due to the limited number of items, double-barreled items, confusing item language, and the lack of sport-specific language. Intrateam conflict remains a practically relevant construct for sport practitioners, and with better measurement tools, sport scholars can begin to analyze the complicated nature of conflict. The purpose of this study was to develop a new, sport-specific intrateam conflict instrument. The current study addresses content validity and factorial validity for this new instrument.

Method

Participants

The sample included a total of 563 college athletes currently competing at an institution in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA is comprised of three division levels: Division I (DI), Division II (DII), and Division III (DIII). Teams competing at

the DI level are viewed as the most elite and often have the largest athletic budgets compared to DII and DIII. Athletes at the DI and DII level can receive athletic scholarships, while athletic financial aid does not exist for DIII athletes. The competition and training schedules for each division level also vary, with DI athletes often having the highest training loads and busiest competition schedules (Next College Student Athlete, n.d.). Athletes competing at each NCAA Division were represented (n_{DI} = 87. n_{DII} = 262, n_{DIII} = 214). All sports recognized by the NCAA at each institution were eligible to participate in this study. This sample included 27 women's teams (n = 310 athletes) and 15 men's teams (n = 253 athletes) from baseball, basketball, cross country, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming & diving, tennis, track & field, wrestling, and volleyball. All class years were represented in this sample ($n_{freshman}$ = 166, $n_{sophomore}$ = 132, n_{junior} = 92, n_{senior} = 62, $n_{fifth\text{-}year}$ = 8, $n_{graduate\ student}$ = 15), with 39 athletes reporting being in their final year of NCAA playing eligibility. No other demographic data was collected. This current validation process is part of a larger study that examines the relationship between intrateam conflict, commitment, and turnover intentions among collegiate athletes. Due to the potential sensitivity of these topics, limited demographic variables were collected to protect the confidentiality of participants.

Content Validity Procedure

The intrateam conflict measure was developed by the current research team after reviewing existing intrateam conflict scales in the organizational psychology and sport psychology literature. It included adapted from existing scales (Jehn, 1995; Rahim, 1983; Paradis, 2014) along with novel items. In line with past measures, items asked about task conflict and relational conflict, and revised and novel items were written anticipating this two-factor structure. Following recommendations outlined by Kline (2006), prior to administering this

survey to the sample, content validation testing was completed with a sample of subject matter experts, including current collegiate athletes and sport support personnel (e.g., sport psychology consultants, coaches).

The study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. The lead researcher contacted subject matter experts to solicit their participation in validating the conflict instrument. Subject matter experts completed the validation survey electronically or in person. The validation survey included 43 items: 18 task conflict items, 18 relationship items, and 7 "dummy" items related to other group emergent states (e.g., communication, collective efficacy) or individual psychosocial constructs (e.g., motivation). Participants were first asked to categorize each item based on type of conflict; participants could select task conflict (e.g., "This question is about how this team plays together."), relationship conflict (e.g., "This question is about relationships with teammates."), or unsure (e.g., "I'm not sure what category this question fits into.") Next, participants were asked to rank the utility of each item (e.g., essential, useful but not essential, not necessary). Finally, participants were asked to leave any questions, comments, or thoughts on each item.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each item in the validation survey. Responses for item utility were coded numerically (e.g., 1 = essential, 2 = useful, but not essential, 3 = not necessary). Lower mean rating scores for utility meant that participants ranked the item as essential, meaning that according to their perspective, it represented the essence of intrateam conflict. There was not a low mean score that offered a clear cut-point between items, nor was there a cut-point that provided a somewhat equal number of task conflict and relationship conflict items. Thus, items that had mean rating scores below two (i.e., considered to be between essential and useful) and were correctly classified by the majority of participants were kept in the

final survey. This process left 24 items for the final measure: 11 task conflict items, 11 relationship conflict items, and 2 "dummy" items related to communication (e.g., "Other players on this team communicate well with me.") and cohesion (e.g., "Players on this team like spending time together outside of practices or games."). These specific "dummy" items were included because of their low ratings (m = 1.65, m = 1.68) and the majority of subject matter experts (60% and 90%) categorized these items as relationship conflict. All items on the final instrument are rated on a 5-point Likert scale of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree*).

Factorial Validity Procedure

After content validation work, coaches of collegiate sport teams were contacted via email and asked if their team would be interested in participating in a brief survey of intrateam conflict, commitment, and turnover intention. All data collection occurred in person, with the lead researcher traveling to all universities and distributing printed surveys to consenting participants. Before distributing the survey, the lead researcher explained the purpose of the study, as well as the content and instructions of the survey. Participants were assured their responses would be kept confidential, and that this research opportunity was completely voluntary. Surveys were completed in approximately ten minutes. Participants who completed the survey received a five-dollar gift card.

Data Analysis

First, descriptive statistics were computed for all variables. Data was checked for normality, and missing data was analyzed using Little's (1988) test of missing completely at random. The data was considered normal for all variables (Hahs-Vaughn & Lomax, 2020), and the percentage of missing data was .17%. The number of missing responses for task items ranged

from one to five across five items, and from one to four across five relationship items. Missing data was considered missing at random (Little's (1988) MCAR test $p < .001$) and was handled using the maximum likelihood estimation in exploratory analyses (Patel et al., 2021).

Given the novelty of this instrument, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using M*plus*, version 8.10 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017). Past measures of intrateam conflict have varied in their structure and number of items (Cox, 2003; Paradis et al., 2014; Pearson et al., 2002), and while task items and relationship items were anticipated to load onto similar factors in the current instrument, the authors sought to test if other factors were present. The "dummy" items that were categorized as relationship conflict by subject matter experts could, and in theory should, load onto a separate factor. An EFA would allow for all possibilities to emerge.

Given the item type and design of this instrument, the best output of the EFA underwent further modeling using specific estimation and rotation specifications. The final model was estimated using weight weighted least square mean and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimator because of the categorical nature of the data. Target rotation was used (i.e., each relationship conflict item was targeted to have a factor loading of .00 on the task conflict factor) because simulation research suggests that EFA factors may be defined more consistent with a well-developed a priori theory with an increasing number of targets (Myers et al., 2013). The indices of model-data fit used were $\chi 2$, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR. Model- data fit was consistent with classification heuristics from Hu and Bentler (1999; e.g., RMSEA $\leq .06$, CFI $\geq .95$, TLI $\geq .95$ and SRMR $\leq .08$). Standardized factor loadings were considered strong if above the value of .60 (Hair, 2009). Interitem correlations and item to total correlations were also calculated.

Results

Descriptive statistics for each item are shown in Table 3.1. All answer choices on the Likert-scale were used with every item. The first EFA, which estimated one to five factors, revealed that the dummy items were not distinct from other relationship items and did not have consistently strong loadings onto a single factor. Thus, the two items related to team cohesion and communication were removed from the questionnaire. The EFA with 22 items terminated normally, and used the WLSMV estimator with geomin oblique rotation. The first four factors had eigenvalues above one: 1- (8.039), 2- (2.238), 3- (1.553), and 4- (1.014). The scree plot for these values also beings to level off at four factors (See Figure 3.1). Table 3.2 summarizes model data fit indices for each model that was written into the code, with most models presenting adequate to good model data fit.

Although better fit indices were indicated with the 3-, 4-, and 5-factor models, the factor loadings across models presented multiple cases of significant cross-loadings with similar values. For example, multiple items had significant loadings ranging from .204 - .367 on all factors in the 3-, 4-, and/or 5-factor models. Also, the 3-, 4-, and 5-factor iterations each included a factor with two or fewer significant, strong factor loadings, and factors in these models included both task conflict and relationship conflict items. This made it challenging to determine what each factor represented. The 2-factor model was best in factor loadings, and had adequate model data fit (RMSEA = .61; CFI = .93; TLI = .92; SRMR = .61; see Table 3.3). Seven out of 11 relationship conflict items had the highest, significant factor loadings on the first factor (range = .494 - .809), and 10 task conflict items and two relationship items had the highest, significant factor loadings on the second factor (range = .444 - .772). Three items did not load significantly onto either factor. The correlation between Factor 1 and Factor 2 in the model was $r = .482$. The

combination of parsimonious factor loadings and adequate to good model data fit indices led to retaining a 2-factor structure for further modeling analyses.

With support for a task conflict and relationship conflict factor, additional exploratory modeling was conducted to examine item loading patterns with their expected factor using WLSMV and target orthogonal rotation. Using target rotation increased the factor loadings on the majority of the items, though did not affect the items that did not have strong loadings in the initial EFA. Table 3.4 shows the new factor loadings in the model. Six items had high factor loadings on Factor 1 (relationship conflict; range = .68 - .81), and six items had high factor loadings on Factor 2 (task conflict; range = .64 = .77). The correlation between the two factors in this final model was .542. Factor 1 explains 50.16% of the common variance among all 22 items.

Interitem correlations revealed high correlations among multiple items (Table 3.5), and only nine items had high item to total correlations (above .50). Thus, items were reexamined based on interitem correlations, item to total correlations, standardized factor loadings, and item words/meaning. An additional EFA using target orthogonal rotation with eight well-performing items supported the two-factor structure and had good model data fit (CFI = .99, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .01). The eight-item measure also demonstrated good reliability (Factor 1 Cronbach's α = .81; Factor 2 Cronbach's α = .73). The final items and standardized factor loadings are shown in Table 3.6.

Discussion

Measuring intangible group processes and emergent states remains a challenge for sport scholars. This study provides content and initial factorial validity evidence for a novel measure of intrateam conflict for sport teams. First, feedback from subject matter experts in group dynamics in sport helped reduce the number of items, supporting the content validity of this

scale. Exploratory factor analyses revealed multiple solutions with acceptable model data fit. In the end, a two-factor structure was supported based on factor structure, factor loadings, and conceptual clarity. A two-factor structure for intrateam conflict measures has been supported in past literature. Intrateam conflict questionnaires from Paradis and colleagues (2014) and Pearson and colleagues (2002) follow a two-factor structure where one factor includes task-conflict items and the other relationship-conflict items, and each factor has an equal number of items (e.g., 3, Pearson et al., 2002); or 7, Paradis et al., 2014). In the current measure, Factor 1 includes four relationship conflict items and Factor 2 includes four task conflict items.

When considering the original 24-item questionnaire, there was not a solution that cleanly separated task conflict and relationship conflict items. Across models, a group of relationship items consistently loaded onto a single factor, while four items varied in their factor loadings, with some items loading significantly onto the second factor of mainly task conflict items. This could be due to the wording of these relationship items: "I worry that personal differences between teammates hurt this team's performance," clearly references performance like other task items; "Personal disagreements between teammates escalate quickly" is somewhat general, and it is unclear to what the personal disagreements are related. The two relationship items that did not load onto either factor (e.g., "It negatively affects me when other players argue on this team." and "Players on this team trust each other.") are also somewhat vague and could have been interpreted in multiple ways. An athlete may be negatively affected when teammates argue about personal matters but not with matters related to team tasks. Similarly, athletes may feel they can trust their teammates to perform well but not trust them with non-sport related issues.

The overall process for validating this instrument and creating an intrateam conflict

measure specific to the sport context was riddled with certain contextual challenges. As mentioned, a large body of literature exists on intragroup conflict in workplace settings. The basic characteristics of work teams include a clear purpose, specified tasks, and member coordination (Mickan & Rodgers, 2000). All of these characteristics generally apply to sport teams, though the specific context of college sport in the United States poses unique considerations. Athletes competing at institutions in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) spend a substantial amount of time in the presence of their teammates. NCAA regulations limit an athlete's participation in activities to 20 hours per week during their official season of play (National Collegiate Athletic Association, n.d.). Unfortunately, there are cases where additional hours are added to athlete schedules each week, some of which are included in NCAA bylaws. For example, NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5.3.2 reads, "All competition and any associated athletically related activities on the day of competition shall count as three hours regardless of the actual duration of these activities" (NCAA, n.d.). This regulation allows for situations like a double-header for baseball or softball, a long bus ride to an away game, or a game that is delayed due to weather conditions to count for only three hours of an athlete's day (Ayers et al., 2012; Lever, 2024). Time with teammates can also include "voluntary" team events where attendance is not mandatory (i.e., this time is not counted in the weekly hours), but the group norm is that everyone attends and there could be unspoken consequences for not attending (Brown, 2023). When excluding moments of training and competition, athletes are still around their teammates for a large amount of time such as when getting treatment from an athletic trainer, at service or community events, receiving academic assistance, and sometimes in their own living spaces (e.g., roommates). These examples highlight the extensive time demands and consistent interactions within the collegiate sport environment that do not occur in traditional

workplace settings. Additionally, employees often have multiple days off (e.g., weekends), or paid days off, where they do not have to interact with coworkers. At NCAA institutions, coaches are required to provide only one off-day per week (i.e., no team events can be formally required; NCAA, n.d.). Employees also have an opportunity to distance themselves from their work environment when they leave their work environment and commute home. The distinction between home and work is much more overlapping for student-athletes all living on the same campus. Routine interactions with teammates could facilitate more relationship conflict; extended time with the same people may expose certain aspects about a teammate (e.g., personal characteristics, beliefs, values, opinions) that spark conflict.

Related to task conflict, the collegiate context also offers a unique circumstance. Task conflict refers to differences in opinions about what work is being done in the group. At elite sport levels, coaches tend to make a lot of decisions related to game play and group tasks (Kaya, 2014). A coach making executive decisions lessens the opportunity for athletes to deliberate, which may lead athletes to have less task conflict amongst themselves. Research on coach-athlete conflict reveals that task conflicts were more prevalent than relationship conflicts (Wachsmuth et al., 2018). A focus on performance is also commonly seen in coach-athlete relationships (Jowett & Carpenter, 2015; Jowett, 2017), which likely accounts for the increased presence of task conflict. Therefore, task conflict alone may be more relevant to situations in which tasks are discussed as a collective unit (e.g., work teams with members of equal status) or within dyadic relationships. When discussing intrateam task conflict, it is important to note how relationship conflict can emerge from task conflict. A disagreement may arise from the work being done, but an inability to resolve the issue can allow for the task conflict to become relationship conflict (Huang, 2010; Kerwin & Doherty, 2012). In cases where team members

consistently interact face-to-face and emotions are visible, the shift from task conflict to relationship conflict can be more common (Martínez et al., 2012).

The contextual elements of task and relationship conflict in intrateam sport settings could explain the inconsistency of the item loadings and the potential for a more complex factor structure. First, across models in the exploratory factor analysis, there were few task conflict items with strong, significant loadings on a factor. Multiple items had somewhat strong loadings (.200- .300) on multiple factors, which is perhaps explained by the connection between task and relationship conflict. This overlap between factors could not be avoided completely, as one of the final items selected (Task8) still had a cross-loading value above .4 on the relationship factor. Additionally, the task conflict items themselves may be able to be further categorized based on different aspects of the sport environment. For example, a few items included specific wording about performance while others specifically referenced practice/training. Athletes may have separate thoughts about competitions compared to practice settings, and there may be conflict surrounding one area and not the other. The workplace literature has explored the concept of process conflict, a sub-type of task conflict that specifically refers to disagreements about *how* work in the group is being conducted (Jehn, 1995; Jehn et al., 2008). In sport, process conflict would describe a scenario in which all teammates agree that team captains are needed, but there are disagreements about how captains are selected (e.g., team vote, coaches pick). The separate constructs of task and process conflict could explain the existence of more than two factors in this measure, and the presence of both types of conflict in sport settings could be explored in future research. Similarly, an additional factor could be attributed to the items mentioned earlier that appeared to address both task and relationship conflict (e.g., Disagreements between teammates affect the way this team plays.)

Limitations and Future Directions

This study is not without limitations. First, the sample may be biased towards athletes who are not experiencing much intrateam conflict. The athletes in this sample were recruited primarily through contacting coaches. Some coaches declined to participate stating that the subject matter (e.g., conflict) was not something they wanted to bring to their athletes' attention, or the team was experiencing some challenges and the coach did not want this survey to exacerbate existing team issues. The coaches who allowed the lead researcher to distribute surveys to consenting participants may have felt their team was not experiencing much conflict at the moment and therefore were not concerned if athletes participated. This process may have indirectly recruited a sample of athletes who were experiencing less conflict within their team. Still, a strength of this study lies in the sample characteristics. Athletes competing at each NCAA Division participated in this study, and this sample includes athletes competing on men's and women's sport teams.

Results support the use of this questionnaire in research, though additional validity evidence is needed. Future work should conduct confirmatory analyses in new samples of athletes. The current findings may be unique to the collegiate context, thus samples of youth athletes or other adult athletes (e.g., semi-professional, professional) would strengthen the validity of this measure. Additional analyses should be mindful of items that do not perform well or are highly correlated and possibly eliminate items from the questionnaire. The item correlations in the current study were not concerning, though revisiting items in future studies may reveal that certain items are too similar. To support eliminating redundant items, cognitive interviews could be conducted with athletes in order to understand how items are being interpreted. Cognitive interviewing is a process used by researchers to identify problems with

survey instruments by gathering information on participants' thought processes and evaluating response patterns with intended participants (Beatty & Willis, 2007). Finally, sport research should continue to explore intrateam conflict as an emergent state. The limited research in this area could be improved through investigation of intrateam conflict's relationship to other group states as well as individual group member experiences.

TABLES

Table 3.1
Descriptive Statistics for Intrateam Conflict Items

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Rship1	3.31	1.02	-0.43	-0.61
Rship2	2.3	1.22	0.69	-0.62
Rship3	2.95	1.32	-0.04	-1.29
Rship4	2.96	1.16	-0.09	-1.03
Rship5	2.84	1.14	0.20	-0.96
Rship6	2.48	0.93	0.59	-0.07
Rship7	2.21	0.84	0.62	0.34
Rship8	2.56	1.07	0.40	-0.70
Rship9	2.44	1.17	0.55	-0.65
Rship10	3.14	1.22	-0.13	-1.09
Rship11	2.93	1.15	-0.02	-1.05
Task1	2.87	1.13	-0.02	-1.08
Task2	2.49	1.14	0.39	-0.82
Task3	2.94	1.15	-0.001	-1.07
Task4	3.27	1.15	-0.35	-0.88
Task5	2.47	1.02	0.33	-0.68
Task6	2.28	0.89	0.75	0.44
Task7	2.83	1.21	0.20	-1.10
Task8	2.59	1.09	0.38	-0.87
Task9	2.81	1.02	-0.01	-0.91
Task10	2.98	1.26	-0.02	-1.24
Task11	2.48	1.17	0.48	-0.77

Table 3.2
Model Data Fit Indices

# factors	χ2 (*p*)	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
1	992.77 (<.001)	.082	.864	.849	.101
2	577.97 (<.001)	.061	.932	.917	.061
3	360.12 (<.001)	.045	.967	.954	.042
4	292.19 (<.001)	.041	.975	.961	.035
5	230.67 (<.001)	.037	.983	.969	.028

Table 3.3
Standardized Factor Loadings for EFA 2-factor Model

Item	Text	Factors	
		1	2
Rship2	I struggle to get along with a teammate (or teammates) on this team.	**0.809***	-0.126
Rship3	I have been upset by interactions I have had with a player on this team outside of practices or competition.	**0.773***	-0.127*
Rship4	There is friction between players on this team.	**0.749***	0.176*
Rship5	All players on this team get along.	**0.787***	-0.004
Rship9	Players on this team stop speaking to each other because of something that happened outside of practices or games.	**0.494***	0.206*
Rship10	There are clear personality clashes between players on this team.	**0.683***	0.148*
Rship11	There is tension between players on this team.	**0.792***	0.192*
Task1	Team potential is jeopardized because of disagreements about the way this team plays.	0.035	**0.519***
Task2	There are disagreements between players on this team about team goals.	0.178*	**0.500***
Task3	There is tension between players on this team about the way this team trains and practices.	0.318*	**0.504***
Task4	Disagreements between teammates affect the way this team plays.	-0.076	**0.680***
Task5	There are disagreements when a teammate suggests a new playing or training strategy to the entire team.	0.167*	**0.498***
Task7	There are disagreements between players on this team about roles (captain, starter, leader, etc.).	0.202*	**0.444***
Task8	There is tension between players on this team about the way this team competes.	-0.007	**0.772***
Task9	This team performs poorly when there are disagreements between players about game strategy and tactics.	-0.150*	**0.649***
Task10	There are disagreements between players on this team about how much effort this team should give in practice.	0.038	**0.635***
Task11	There are disagreements between players on this team about how much effort this team should give in games.	-0.087	**0.693***
Rship6	Personal disagreements between teammates escalate quickly.	0.146*	**0.467***
Rship8	I worry that personal differences between teammates hurt this team's performance.	0.096	**0.671***
Rship1	It negatively affects me when other players argue on this team.	0.058	0.203*

Table 3.3 (cont'd)

Rship7	Players on this team trust each other.	0.373*	0.190*
Task6	Players on this team listen to different opinions about game strategy and tactics.	0.216*	0.162*

Note. *indicates significance at .05 level.

Table 3.4
Standardized Factor Loadings for 2-factor Solution with Target Rotation

Item	Text	Factors	
		1	2
Rship2	I struggle to get along with a teammate (or teammates) on this team.	**0.840***	-0.183*
Rship3	I have been upset by interactions I have had with a player on this team outside of practices or competition.	**0.802 ***	-0.182*
Rship4	There is friction between players on this team.	**0.774***	0.126*
Rship5	All players on this team get along.	**0.815***	-0.059
Rship9	Players on this team stop speaking to each other because of something that happened outside of practices or games.	**0.509***	0.173*
Rship10	There are clear personality clashes between players on this team.	**0.706***	0.101*
Rship11	There is tension between players on this team.	**0.818***	0.138*
Task1	Team potential is jeopardized because of disagreements about the way this team plays.	0.030	**0.520***
Task2	There are disagreements between players on this team about team goals.	0.178*	**0.491***
Task3	There is tension between players on this team about the way this team trains and practices.	0.323*	**0.485***
Task4	Disagreements between teammates affect the way this team plays.	-0.088	**0.690***
Task5	There are disagreements when a teammate suggests a new playing or training strategy to the entire team.	0.166*	**0.489***
Task7	There are disagreements between players on this team about roles (captain, starter, leader, etc.).	0.203*	**0.433***
Task8	There is tension between players on this team about the way this team competes.	-0.017	**0.778***
Task9	This team performs poorly when there are disagreements between players about game strategy and tactics.	-0.164*	**0.664***
Task10	There are disagreements between players on this team about how much effort this team should give in practice.	0.032	**0.637***
Task11	There are disagreements between players on this team about how much effort this team should give in games.	-0.099	**0.703***
Rship6	Personal disagreements between teammates escalate quickly.	0.145*	**0.460***
Rship8	I worry that personal differences between teammates hurt this team's performance.	0.090	**0.669***

Table 3.4 (cont'd)

Rship1	It negatively affects me when other players argue on this team.	0.058	0.201*
Rship7	Players on this team trust each other.	0.384*	0.166*
Task6	Players on this team listen to different opinions about game strategy and tactics.	0.222*	0.148*
PCVE		50.16%	49.84%

Note. * indicates significance at .05 level

Table 3.5
Interitem Correlations for Intrateam Conflict Items

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Task1	--								
2. Rship1	.23	--							
3. Rship2	.25	.23	--						
4. Rship3	.21	.25	.67	--					
5. Task2	.32	.10	.30	.31	--				
6. Task3	.41	.20	.40	.36	.49	--			
7. Task4	.52	.33	.16	.16	.33	.41	--		
8. Rship4	.30	.15	.55	.51	.39	.55	.30	--	
9. Task5	.31	.04	.30	.27.	.48	.48	.36	.37	--
10. Task6	.03	-.05	.23	.15	.19	.22	.09	.21	.27
11. Rship5	.23	.05	.56	.51	.30	.44	.20	.66	.28
12. Rship6	.29	.11	.17	.20	.30	.39	.37	.38	.31
13. Rship7	.17	.05	.34	.22	.29	.32	.11	.41	.29
14. Task7	.27	.12	.16	.26	.33	.41	.32	.41	.39
15. Rship8	.39	.29	.27	.24	.44	.42	.52	.42	.39
16. Task8	.40	.11	.17	.13	.49	.52	.40	.44	.47
17. Rship9	.18	.13	.40	.47	.29	.32	.22	.51	.22
18. Task9	.31	.17	.06	.07	.22	.30	.49	.23	.31
19. Rship10	.25	.13	.53	.49	.35	.49	.28	.63	.40
20. Task10	.20	.04	.24	.18	.37	.46	.21	.34	.37.
21. Rship11	.32	.15	.58	.52	.39	.51	.31	.81	.37
22. Task11	.20	.06	.14	.11	.40	.36	.24	.25	.31

Table 3.5 (cont'd)

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9. Task5	--								
10. Task6	.27	--							
11. Rship5	.28	.22	--						
12. Rship6	.31	.08	.31	--					
13. Rship7	.29	.32	.41	.18	--				
14. Task7	.39	.19	.37	.28	.33	--			
15. Rship8	.39	.21	.29	.40	.34	.49	--		
16. Task8	.47	.22	.25	.45	.24	.40	.56	--	
17. Rship9	.22	.24	.43	.39	.33	.30	.43	.33	--
18. Task9	.31	.11	.13	.30	.17	.31	.46	.41	.24
19. Rship10	.40	.24	.62	.32	.33	.37	.41	.34	.48
20. Task10	.37.	.25	.27	.31	.25	.33	.35	.49	.31
21. Rship11	.37	.28	.71	.43	.43	.44	.43	.45	.57
22. Task11	.31	.21	.18	.33	.26	.27	.41	.55	.31

Table 3.5 (cont'd)

	18	19	20	21
18. Task9	--			
19. Rship10	.22	--		
20. Task10	.20	.37	--	
21. Rship11	.22	.70	.40	--
22. Task11	.29	.21	.66	.33

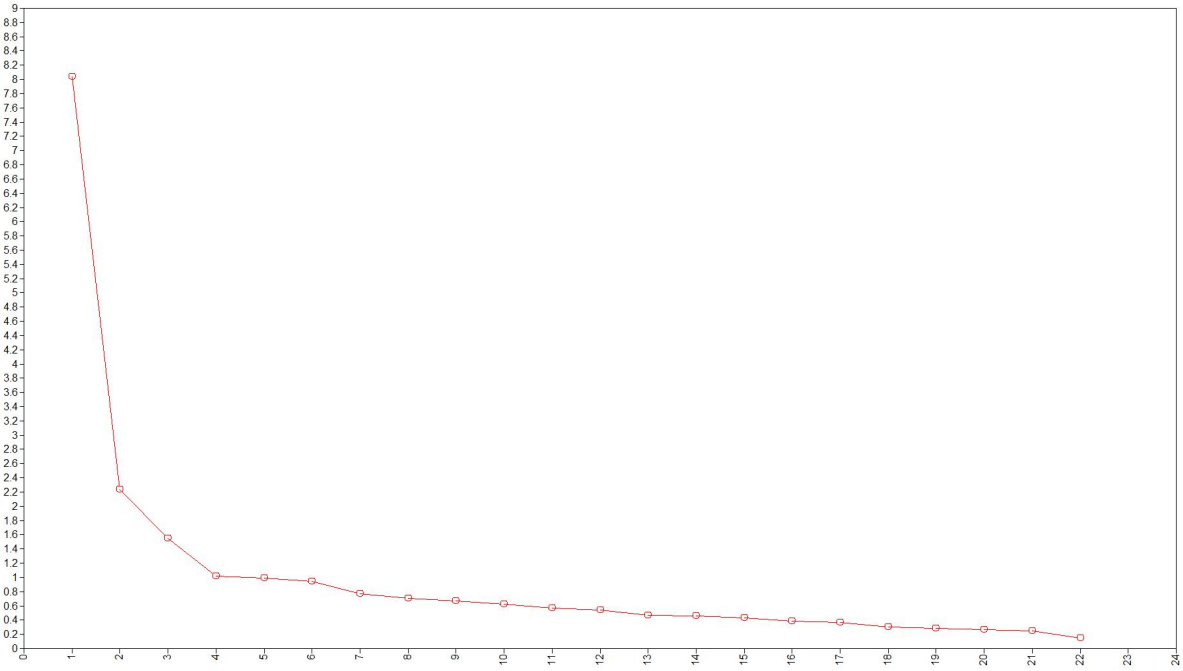
Table 3.6
Standardized Factor Loadings for Eight Item Measure

Item	Text	F1	F2
Rship4	There is friction between players on this team.	**.76***	.35*
Rship5	All players on this team get along.	**.81***	.12*
Rship9	Players on this team stop speaking to each other because of something that happened outside of practices or games.	**.53***	.25*
Rship10	There are clear personality clashes between players on this team.	**.74***	.25*
Task2	There are disagreements between players on this team about team goals.	.27*	**.59***
Task3	There is tension between players on this team about the way this team trains and practices.	.44*	**.61***
Task4	Disagreements between teammates affect the way this team plays.	.18*	**.51***
Task8	There is tension between players on this team about the way this team competes.	.24*	**.71***

Note. * indicates significance at .05 level

FIGURES

Figure 3.1
Scree Plot for EFA



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CHAPTER 4:

The relationship between intrateam conflict and turnover intentions among collegiate athletes

The inherently competitive nature of sport promotes an environment where athletes are susceptible to conflict not only with opponents but with members of their own team as well. Competing for playing time, creating team strategies, and developing friendships on teams are common team occurrences that may lead to intragroup conflict (Holt et al., 2012). Research in non-sport settings has demonstrated a consistent relationship between intragroup conflict and destructive team outcomes including worsened performance, lower levels of trust and commitment, and decreased member satisfaction and enjoyment (de Wit et al., 2013; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). High levels of conflict within a team make for a less enjoyable and less productive team environment, which may leave athletes questioning if they want to remain on the team. Further investigation in this area is needed to better understand the relationship between intrateam conflict and athlete turnover in sport as well as the individual factors that may prevent an athlete from wanting to leave the team.

Intragroup Conflict

Conflict arises when there is a perceived misalignment between two or more parties in values, goals, or needs (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Ample research in workplace settings has suggested that group conflict will be connected to either group tasks (i.e., task conflict) or personal differences (i.e., relationship conflict). Task conflict includes disagreements about the task itself or the process through which the task is being completed (Jehn, 1995). Examples of task conflict in sport include disagreements about team goals or game strategies, different perceptions of the effectiveness of training programs, and different ideas for how to select team

captains. Relationship conflicts extend into personal matters and are not connected to team tasks (Jehn, 1995). Examples include disagreements about behavior at social events, differences in political opinions, or disliking certain personality traits in teammates.

In general, both types of conflict have been associated with a variety of negative outcomes. There has been some interest in understanding how intragroup conflict affects team productivity and performance (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; Jehn et al., 2008), though the research presents mixed findings when task and relational conflict are differentiated. Initial studies related to task conflict show evidence of a negative relationship between task conflict (r= -.23), relational conflict (r= -.22*),* and team performance (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). However, two meta-analyses note that intragroup task conflict when performing non-routine or complex tasks can be beneficial (de Wit et al., 2013), and task conflict can lead to increased performance in groups with low relationship conflict and effective conflict management processes (Bradley et al., 2015). Groups with more relationship conflict are less effective and perform worse (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; Jehn, 1995; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jehn et al., 2008; Manata, 2016).

The research is more consistent when measuring conflict's relationship to specific attitudes of team members. The same meta-analysis referenced above revealed that task and relationship conflict was negatively correlated with team member satisfaction (r= -.32, r= -.54 respectively; (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). A separate, more recent meta-analysis reveals that relationship conflict was negatively correlated with positive affect (r = -.40), and supports the previously established relationship between relationship conflict and team member satisfaction (r = -.41). From these findings, it is clear that the presence of relationship conflict within a team can lead to less positive attitudes and feelings among team members. Interestingly, relationship conflict can also negate the potential for task conflict to lead to positive outcomes by influencing

cognitive and social processes. The perception, and actual presence, of relationship conflict during task conflict led group members to be more inflexible in decision making processes (de Wit et al., 2013). Task conflict in groups with low trust also led to future relationship conflict when compared to groups with high trust (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Overall, the negative outcomes of conflict are more salient than positive outcomes in the industrial/organizational literature, especially when referencing relational conflict.

In sport, qualitative research findings support the negative relationship between intrateam conflict and group outcomes. Athletes described intrateam conflict as containing mostly negative elements (e.g., thoughts, feelings, behaviors), and reported task and relationship conflict were common in their sport experience (Paradis et al., 2014). In a separate study, athletes identified relational conflicts (e.g., personality clashes, interpersonal disputes) as more damaging to team performance than task conflicts (Holt et al., 2012). A separate study found that causes of peer conflict were rooted in personal characteristics or emotions (Partridge & Knapp, 2016). Relational conflict within a team may cause athletes to isolate or exclude the individuals perceived to be causing the conflict, which ultimately leads to challenges in interpersonal relationships with teammates (Paradis et al., 2014; Partridge & Knapp, 2016). At the team level, instances of team conflict explained the fluctuation of collective efficacy across a sport season (Leo et al., 2015). Across these cases, task and relational conflict are described as precedents to negative sport experiences at the individual level (i.e., negative thoughts, feelings emotions) and group level (i.e., clashes with teammates, poor performance). This is important to highlight given that negative intrapersonal and group experiences can also lead an athlete to drop out of sport (Crane & Temple, 2015; Back et al., 2022). Still, the direct relationship between conflict and sport drop-out (i.e., turnover) remains unclear.

Turnover

Turnover has been a longstanding interest for organizations because the process of losing and hiring/training new employees can be expensive, and employee retention can signify organizational stability (Ongori, 2007). An organization has full control over involuntary turnover (i.e., managers firing employees) and therefore pays more attention to instances of voluntary turnover (i.e., an employee quitting). An early model of voluntary turnover identified *job satisfaction* and *organizational commitment* as the key antecedents to understanding an employee's intention to quit, which ultimately led to employee turnover (Michaels & Spector, 1982). A series of review articles have since confirmed job attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, identification) as an antecedent to voluntary turnover, and also noted demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, marital status) and perceived job characteristics (e.g., performance, security, tenure, available alternatives) as additional antecedents (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Ongori, 2007; Steel and Ovalle, 1984; Zimmerman & Darnold, 2009).

Though not listed as a direct antecedent, intragroup conflict has been studied in relation to employee turnover. A mixed-methods study by Jehn (1995) suggests that employees who perceived more relationship conflict in their work group reported being more likely to leave the work unit. This finding was later supported in a sample of hotel employees (Medina et al., 2005). Other evidence demonstrates intragroup conflict's connection to decreased attitudes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Porter, 1996; Cox, 2003; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit et al., 2013), and these same job attitudes have been consistently inversely related with turnover intentions (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Vandenberghe et al., 2011). As demonstrated above, the separate relationships between intragroup conflict and job attitudes, and job attitudes

and turnover are present throughout organizational literature. Yet, both independent relationships are relatively absent in the sport literature as pertaining to athletes.

In sport, turnover literature centers around sport personnel (e.g., coaches, administrators, officials), with minimal studies addressing athlete turnover. The highly demanding, fast-paced, and dynamic work environment for sport personnel often produces a variety of organizational stressors that can negatively affect an employee's experience (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009; Wagstaff, 2016). An early review by Doherty (1988) synthesized studies of organizational behavior in sport organizations. This review concluded that job satisfaction was negatively associated with turnover intentions, while burnout and stress were positively associated with turnover intentions. These relationships have been further supported in more recent studies (Larner et al., 2017; Lee & Chelladurai, 2018). Though sport has been established as a potentially stressful environment, it appears that few studies have examined intragroup conflict as a specific stressor related to turnover. There is evidence for the indirect effect of interpersonal conflict on turnover intentions (mediated by burnout) among sport officials (Taylor et al., 1990). Beyond this study, it remains unclear how intragroup conflict influences turnover intentions among sport employees, though this relationship is seen in non-sport settings.

Athlete Turnover and Dropout

Athlete turnover is more complicated than employee or sport personnel turnover mainly due to the potential for athletes to drop out of sport. The athlete-focused literature in sport psychology does not fully separate sport dropout and turnover (Crane & Temple, 2015), and most of the research attention is given to youth sport dropout (see Back et al., 2022; Balish et al., 2014; Crane & Temple, 2015; Moulds et al., 2022 for reviews). This is problematic in a sport setting because turnover and dropout describe distinct processes; turnover implies switching

organizations and continuing to play (i.e., transferring) whereas dropout implies ceasing sport participation entirely (i.e., quitting). Each process would hold separate consequences for an athlete. For example, switching sport organizations can lead to better training and a healthier psychosocial environment (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008) while sport dropout prevents athletes from reaping the physical and psychosocial benefits of sport participating (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Further, the reasons behind turnover and dropout may differ considerably. At the youth sport level, parents noted they chose to switch soccer clubs when dissatisfied with the coaching but withdrew from sport completely when dissatisfied with club management or costs (Ferreira & Armstrong, 2002). At the professional level, a single study found that providing non-monetary incentives (e.g., integration of family, second career support, and private problem support) lowered an athlete's turnover intention (Ströbel et al., 2018). A more comprehensive understanding of athlete turnover can benefit sport organizations by differentiating between the factors that lead athletes to quit their sport or switch teams.

Organizational Commitment

The organizational literature outside of sport has consistently identified job attitudes as a predictor of turnover intentions. The attitude of commitment has received significant attention from organizational and sport scholars alike. Organizations are concerned with commitment given its potential to positively influence member performance and decrease a member's withdrawal from the organization (Levy, 2007). Organizational commitment is defined as one's "psychological attachment to an organization" (Levy, 2007, p. 338), and has been categorized into three distinct types: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Most relevant to the present study is affective organizational commitment, or an emotional attachment and identification with the organization (Meyer et al., 2002). Continuance organizational

commitment (i.e., commitment to an organization based out of need/lack of alternatives) and normative organizational commitment (i.e., feelings of obligation) do not provide the individual with much agency, whereas affective commitment reflects a strong desire to voluntarily stay within the same organization. Higher levels of affective commitment are proposed to alleviate work-related stress and conflict (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Also, affective organizational commitment is considered to be the strongest predictor of employees leaving an organization (Meyer et al., 2002; Pinder, 2008). A recent study with sport employees notes that role-related and interpersonal relationship stress had a negative influence on affective commitment and turnover intention (Cho & Lee, 2022), though other literature on organizational commitment specific to the sport context remains limited. It is worth noting that all types of organizational commitment differ from general sport commitment; an athlete can remain committed to their sport by choosing to continue participation in different organizations, which would demonstrate lower levels of organizational commitment. Therefore, specific examination of organizational commitment in the sport context will separate the factors that keep an athlete involved with a specific organization compared to their general sport.

Many meta-analyses have reviewed the construct of organizational commitment, and findings support the general, negative relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions (Cohen, 1991; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Guzeller & Celiker, 2019; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Within these studies, it is also clear that organizational commitment has been studied as a mediator or moderator in relationships with a wide range of group outcomes. The meta-analysis by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) discusses that forms of commitment can serve as a moderating variable and encourages researchers to develop models with organizational commitment as mediators and moderators to further theory development in this area. Since this

review, studies have identified forms of organizational commitment to moderate the relationships between stress and job displeasure (Begley & Czajka, 1993), role stressors and burnout (King & Sethi, 1997), work-family conflict and job satisfaction (Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007), and workplace incivility and burnout (Liu et al., 2019). These findings from organizational settings provide methodological support to analyze affective commitment as a moderating variable in relationships related to a variety of organizational antecedents and outcomes.

The Collegiate Sport Context and Current Study

It is worth exploring athlete turnover in settings in which turnover occurs annually and is easily facilitated. In the United States, sports programs sponsored by institutions of higher education are the primary context for sub-elite to elite sport competition for young adults aged 18-25, and in many cases form a pipeline to professional athletic careers. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the main organization that oversees collegiate athletics in the United States. NCAA Institutions are divided into three division levels: Division I (DI), Division II (DII), and Division III (DIII). Divisions differ in the overall size of the student body, athletic budget, and number of athletic scholarships, with DI schools typically having the largest in each category (National Collegiate Athletic Association, n.d.). Additionally, DIII schools do not provide athletic scholarships (Next College Student Athlete, n.d.) making roster spots at DI and DII institutions more coveted by athletes looking for financial assistance.

At NCAA institutions, student-athletes are given a finite amount of eligibility and, nowadays, are less constrained to play at a single institution. In 2018, the creation of the transfer portal in college athletics has made changing teams and transferring to a new institution more achievable for athletes; previously, athletes that transferred were penalized by losing up to 1 year of eligibility, and institutions retained the right to permit communication between an athlete and

the personnel from another institution. The NCAA shared data from the transfer portal during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years (Johnson, 2023). At the Division I level, considered the most competitive and financially lucrative, 20,911 student-athletes entered the transfer portal in 2022. This number represents 13%, though only 7% successfully transferred (Johnson, 2023). The majority of DI athletes in the 2022 portal for both men's (65%) and women's (78%) sports were on athletics aid (i.e., scholarships) at their former institution. Graduate students accounted for 30% of the athletes that entered the portal in 2022, which was one percent lower than in 2021 (Johnson, 2023). It is also probable that the transfer portal numbers between 2020 and 2022 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NCAA provided blanket approval of an additional year of eligibility for students because of the loss of competitive seasons during the pandemic. This resulted in many students finishing their undergraduate degrees but still retaining 1-3 years of NCAA competition eligibility, and thus needed to seek out opportunities to compete while enrolled in graduate programs. Transfer numbers from the 2022-23 season onwards are likely to reflect a more accurate baseline of transfer intentions amongst NCAA athletes.

The NCAA also conducts its own research. In their 2022 Student-Athlete Well-Being Study, mental health was a main reason for transferring in both men's (40%) and women's (61%) sports. Women's sports identified conflict with coaches or teammates (56%) as an additional main reason for transferring (NCAA, 2022). With this data, it is worth examining the specific relationship between intrateam conflict and intentions to transfer among collegiate athletes. The constantly changing team dynamics, due to athletes transferring, quitting, or graduating, mean that student-athletes are consistently forming and losing relationships with teammates, which may foster intrateam conflict. Regardless of the reason for voluntarily leaving a sport team, it remains unclear if team dynamics or affective commitment levels contribute to an

athlete's decision to leave. Therefore, this study has three aims 1) to understand the relationship between intrateam conflict (task and relational), intent to quit, and intent to transfer, 2) to understand how affective commitment moderates the relationship between conflict and turnover variables, and 3) to understand how athletes classified into team conflict profiles (e.g., high relational conflict, low task conflict) differ on mean scores of affective commitment, intent to transfer, and intent to quit.

The first two aims will be addressed using a variable-centered analysis, as the purpose is to establish relationships among intrateam conflict (task and relational), affective commitment, and turnover intentions (quit and transfer). Related to the second aim, affective commitment is hypothesized to moderate the relationship between intrateam conflict and turnover intentions. More specifically, it is hypothesized:

- Hypothesis 1.1: Task and relationship conflict will have a strong, positive association with intent to transfer.
- Hypothesis 1.2: Task and relationship conflict will have a stronger, positive association with intent to transfer when affective commitment is low.
- Hypothesis 1.3: Task and relationship conflict will have a strong, positive association with intent to quit.
- Hypothesis 1.4: Task and relationship conflict will have a stronger, positive association with intent to quit under conditions of lower affective commitment.

The third aim will be addressed using a person-centered analysis to explore the existence of different conflict profiles experienced by athletes. The concept of conflict profiles extends from conflict research that demonstrates the connection and coexistence of task and relationship conflict within teams (de Wit et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2018). Past research supports four

potential conflict profiles for teams: high task, low relationship; high relationship, low task; consistent fluctuations in both task and relationship; and low task, low relationship (O'Neill et al., 2018). Identifying team conflict profiles can help explain group member behavior related to certain constructs. Specific to this study, clustering athletes based on their perceptions of team conflict will produce distinct groups, with mixed amounts of task and relational conflict, and demonstrate how athletes in different mixes experience affective commitment, intent to transfer, and intent to quit. Related to the second aim, it is hypothesized:

- Hypothesis 2.1: Four profiles will emerge: 1) high task, low relationship, 2) high task, high relationship, 3) low task, high relationship, and 4) low task, low relationship.
- Hypothesis 2.2: Athletes in the high relationship, low task conflict profile will have the lowest affective commitment and highest intentions to transfer and quit.
- Hypothesis 2.3: Athletes in the high relationship, high task conflict profile will have high affective commitment scores and high intentions to transfer and quit.
- Hypothesis 2.4: Athletes in the low relationship, low task conflict profile will not have a significant difference on any outcome variable.
- Hypothesis 2.5: Athletes in the low relationship, high task conflict profile will have the highest affective commitment and lowest intentions to transfer and quit.

Methods

Participants

Participants in this sample included 430 current collegiate athletes from 42 sport teams at 10 different schools. All NCAA Division levels (n_{DI} = *72.* n_{DII} =160*,* n_{DIII} = 198) were represented in this sample. The total number of athletes participating on women's teams was 278, and 152 for men's teams; individual athlete gender identity was not collected. Athletes in

this sample participated in basketball, baseball, cross country, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming & diving, track & field, wrestling, and volleyball. This sample included 161 first-years, 128 sophomores, 85 juniors, 50 seniors, three fifth-years, and three graduate students, all of whom still had at least one year of NCAA eligibility remaining in their collegiate careers. No other demographic data was collected to protect participant confidentiality on potentially sensitive topics.

Instruments

The testing battery included instruments for intrateam conflict, affective commitment, intention to quit, and intention to transfer. The intrateam conflict questionnaire was developed by the current research team. The content validation process and factorial validity evidence for this survey are presented in a separate manuscript (see Secaras, in preparation). Results from this validation work support a two-factor structure that has 12 items related to task conflict ($\alpha = .85$) and seven items for relationship conflict ($\alpha = .88$). All items are scored on a Likert-scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating more intrateam conflict. The average scores for relationship conflict and task conflict were used in analyses.

Affective commitment was measured using the Affective Commitment Scale (Allen & Meyer, 1996). This scale was developed with other measures of organizational commitment (e.g., continuance, normative). There are seven items in this scale, and each is rated on a Likert-scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). This scale was developed for employees in non-sport workplaces, therefore minor word changes were made to each item to be more relevant to the sport context (e.g., changing “organization” to “team”). The average scores were calculated and used in analyses.

A strong predictor of actual turnover is an individual's intent to turnover (Steel & Ovalle, 1984). Therefore, this research conceptualized turnover as intent to transfer and intent to quit. The construct of turnover was separated due to the unique characteristics of the sport environment. Sport offers different circumstances in that athletes can either leave their team to continue playing elsewhere (e.g., transferring) or leave their team and stop playing their sport entirely (e.g., quitting). Items for intent to transfer and quit were adapted from prior research on employee turnover intentions (Michaels & Spector, 1982). Intent to transfer was measured with three items asking how often the athlete has thought about transferring in the current academic year, if they have already started looking to play elsewhere, and if they plan to enter the transfer portal before the end of the current academic year. Intent to quit was measured with three items asking how often the athlete has thought about quitting in the current academic year, if they want to quit, and if they plan to quit at the end of the year. Average scores were calculated and used in analyses.

Procedure

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained in January 2024. Soon after, the primary researcher began emailing NCAA collegiate coaches using contact information found on each university's athletics website. Given the sensitivity of the study topics, data collection occurred in-person. This ensured that the primary researcher could explain the purpose of the research, ensure participant confidentiality, and answer any questions. Upon receiving permission from coaches to meet with teams, the primary researcher traveled to universities and distributed the survey to consenting participants. Participants signed an informed consent document before beginning the survey. Participants received a $5 gift card after returning the survey to the lead researcher.

There were several elements to data collection to ensure participant confidentiality was kept. Each participant received a consent form, survey, and demographic questionnaire on separate sheets of paper that were labeled with the same alphanumeric code. After the athlete completed the survey, the consent form and demographic questionnaire were separated from the survey document, and each was stored in a separate envelope from the survey responses. Only the researcher had access to the overall code and was able to connect the consent form, survey response, and demographic information of each participant. These steps ensured participant confidentiality, though did not keep survey responses completely anonymous.

Data Analysis

First, participants in their final year of NCAA eligibility were removed from the dataset. Athletes in their final year of NCAA eligibility are moving on from collegiate sport, thus the concepts of transferring or quitting are not applicable in the same way they are for athletes with eligibility remaining. The data was then checked for normality. Data was considered normal, aside from the intent to quit variable having a kurtosis value slightly greater than the accepted range (2.29; Hahs-Vaughn & Lomax, 2020). Missing data was analyzed using Little's (1988) test of missing completely at random. The data did not pass this assumption and was further reviewed. Seven participants were missing at least one item for intent to transfer. The researchers decided that any method of imputation for this data would be inappropriate because of the individual nature of the questions, thus mean scores would not be an accurate representation of the construct. Cases missing any intent to transfer item were also deleted. The remaining data had only 15 responses missing across participants and items. This missing data was treated using mean imputation, as the percentage of missing data was minimal (< 1% of total data), and data was determined missing completely at random (Little's (1988) MCAR test $p = 1.00$)

Descriptive statistics were computed for all variables. To address the first two research aims, regression analyses were run in M*plus*, version 8.10 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017). In separate models, task conflict and relationship conflict were included as independent predictors of one type of turnover intention (transfer or quit; Figure 4.1). Affective commitment was included in each separate model as a moderator on one of two different pathways: the pathway between task conflict and turnover intention and the pathway between relational conflict and turnover intention (Figure 4.2). To test moderation, the affective commitment factor and the interaction term (e.g., centered task/relational conflict X centered affective commitment) were added as predictors of turnover intentions in each model. Simple slopes were investigated in cases with significant interaction terms ($p < .01$).

To address the second research aim, a cluster analysis was conducted to create conflict profiles that represent the conflict landscapes experienced by the participants in this sample. The sample was clustered based on average scores of the task conflict items and relationship conflict items on the intrateam conflict survey. A two-step clustering approach where clusters were determined automatically was conducted in SPSS (28.0.1; IBM Corp.) to determine the number of clusters that best fit the data. Then, k-means clustering was used to test the specific cluster solutions produced by the two-step approach. Once clusters were identified, a MANOVA was used to determine the difference in affective organizational commitment, intent to quit, and intent to transfer across clusters. In the instances of significant main effects ($p < .01$), a follow-up univariate analysis of variance was executed. To further explore differences between conflict clusters, factorial ANOVAs were conducted to determine if NCAA Division level or team gender interacted with cluster membership to have an effect on affective commitment, intent to transfer, or intent to quit.

Results

For the overall sample, descriptive statistics for the intrateam conflict, affective commitment, and turnover scales are shown in Table 4.1. Athletes in this sample reported moderate levels of relationship conflict (m = 2.91, sd = .95), task conflict (m = 2.85, sd = .85), and affective commitment (m = 3.33, sd = .40), while intentions to transfer (m = 1.95, sd = 1.04) and quit (m = 1.65, sd = .91) were low. To examine differences between NCAA division levels (e.g., DI, DII, DIII), a one-way MANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference between average scores on affective commitment ($F(2) = 6.59$, p =.002, $\eta^2 = .03$), intentions to transfer ($F(2) = 14.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$), and intentions to quit ($F(2) = 6.92$, p =.001, $\eta^2 = .03$). Affective commitment scores were highest in DIII athletes (m = 3.41, sd = .40), followed by DII (m = 3.28, sd = .40) and DI athletes (m = 3.24, sd = .37). Significant differences were shown in post-hoc tests between DI and DIII (p = .01) and DII and DIII (p = .01). DI athletes had the highest intentions to transfer (m = 2.38, sd =1.13), with DII (m = 2.06, sd = 1.12) and DIII (m =1.70, sd = .85) following in order. Lastly, intentions to quit were also significantly highest in DI (m =1.89, sd = 1.18) followed by DII (m = 1.74, sd =.94) and DIII (m = 1.48, sd =.74). Significant differences were found between DI and DIII athletes (p = .003), and DII and DIII athletes (p = .019). Independent samples t-tests do not show a significant difference in affective commitment or transferring scores among athletes on men's and women's teams ($p > .01$). However, there was a significant difference with quitting scores ($t(428) = 4.31$, $p < .001$, d = .90); athletes competing on women's sport teams had higher quitting intentions (m = 1.78, sd =1.01) than athletes on men's teams (m = 1.39, sd =.64). Table 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics for all variables categorized by division level and team gender.

Affective Commitment as a Moderator

Intent to Transfer

Relationship conflict had weak, positive correlations with intent to transfer (r = .32) and intent to quit (r = .28), as did task conflict (r = .32, .15 respectively). Affective commitment had a moderate, negative correlation with intent to transfer (r = -.54) and a weaker, negative correlation with intent to quit (r = -.35). A full correlation table is shown in Table 4.3.

In Model 1 (Table 4.4; Figure 4.2a), relationship conflict (ß= .16, p=.004) and task conflict (ß= .11, p = .005) were positive indicators of intent to transfer, supporting Hypothesis 1.1. Affective commitment was also a significant, negative indicator (ß= -.49, p < .001). There was not a significant interaction term for affective commitment and relationship conflict (p = .09), suggesting that the pathway between relationship conflict on intent to transfer is not moderated by affective commitment. Thus, Hypothesis 1.2 was not supported. Model 1 accounted for 34.8% of the variance in intent to transfer. Similar findings were found in Model 2 (Table 4.5; Figure 4.2b); relationship conflict (ß= .16, p = .004) and task conflict (ß= .11, p = .01) still had a positive association with intent to transfer, providing additional support for Hypothesis 1.1. Affective commitment also had a stronger association with intent to transfer (ß= -.49, p < .001. The interaction term for task conflict and affective commitment was not significant (p = .55) and therefore does not suggest a moderation. Model 1 accounted for 34.3% of the variance in intent to transfer. Overall, each variable independently predicted intent to transfer, though there was no evidence to suggest a moderation effect.

Intent to Quit

In Model 3 (Table 4.6; Figure 4.2c) relationship conflict (ß= .25, p < .001) and affective commitment (ß= -.32, p < .001) were significant indicators of intent to quit, with relationship

conflict having a positive association and a negative association with affective commitment. Task conflict was not a significant predictor (p = .15); therefore, Hypothesis 1.3 was not supported. The interaction term for relationship conflict and affective commitment was significant (ß= -.09, p =.003), suggesting the pathway between relationship conflict and intent to quit is moderated by affective commitment. The interaction was further examined by analyzing the slopes of relationship conflict and three levels: one standard deviation below the mean (i.e., low commitment), at the mean (i.e., average commitment), and one standard deviation above the mean (i.e., high commitment). The slope for relationship conflict was significant at low affective commitment (b = .10, p = < .001) and at average affective commitment (b = .06, p = < .001), though not at high affective commitment (b = .03, p = .04). This suggests that higher levels of affective commitment reduce the strength of the relationship between relationship conflict and intent to quit, and provides evidence to support Hypothesis 1.4 which indicates that the relationship between relationship conflict and intent to quit is moderated by affective commitment. Tables 4.8 and Table 4.9 include a summary of simple slope analyses.

In Model 4 (Table 4.7; Figure 4.2d), relationship conflict (β = .06, p = < .001) and affective commitment (β = -.76, p = < .001) remained significant predictors. Task conflict (p = .05) and the interaction term (p = .22) were not significant. Overall, regression analyses reveal that relationship conflict exerts a positive effect on both types of turnover intentions, though task conflict only predicts intent to transfer. In all models, affective commitment remained the strongest indicator for turnover intentions.

Cluster Analysis

Related to the third aim, a two-step cluster analysis was conducted based on average scores on each factor of the intrateam conflict measure (e.g., Factor 1 = relationship conflict

items, Factor 2 = task conflict items). Results suggested that a cluster solution with three to five clusters would best represent the data. A k-means cluster analysis was conducted for each potential solution. The five-cluster solution resulted in clusters of largely unequal sizes, and an ANOVA revealed that two of the clusters were not significantly different on the second factor (i.e., task conflict) in the measure. Analyses with the four-cluster solution also revealed that two of the clusters were not significantly different in their scores on the second factor (i.e., task conflict) in the measure. A three-cluster solution proved best for the current sample, which does not support Hypothesis 2.1. This cluster solution produced three clusters that were all significantly different in scores for each conflict factor in the measure. Using the sample average and standard deviation as well as the 5-point Likert-scale on which items were rated, clusters were labeled in a manner that described the combination of relationship and task conflict within each cluster. Cluster 1 was low in both relationship conflict (m = 1.97, sd = .51) and task conflict (m = 2.21, sd = .60), and labeled "low conflict." Cluster 2 was moderate in relationship conflict (m =3.40, sd = .64) and higher in task conflict (m = 3.77, sd = .38), and labeled "higher task." Lastly, Cluster 3, labeled "higher relationship", was higher in relationship conflict (m = 3.69, sd = .54) and moderate in task conflict (m = 2.59, sd = .49). It should be noted that no clusters emerged with considerably high amounts of intrateam conflict (i.e., an average above 4). Each cluster had representation from each NCAA Division level and team gender. Descriptive statistics for each cluster can be found in Table 4.10. Figure 4.3 shows cluster membership within a scatter plot of relationship conflict and task conflict scores for the entire sample.

Differences between clusters

A MANOVA was run to determine differences between clusters on the outcome variables of affective commitment, intention to transfer, and intention to quit. Results show that there were

no significant differences between clusters on affective commitment, though F tests for intent to transfer and intent to quit were significant ($p < .01$) with effect sizes of .07 for intent to transfer and .03 for intent to quit. Post-hoc tests revealed that Cluster 1 (low conflict) had the lowest intentions to transfer ($m = 1.64$, $sd = .77$) compared to Cluster 2 (higher task; $m = 2.24$, $sd = 1.17$ and Cluster 3 (higher relationship; $m = 2.02$, $sd = 1.07$), with no significant difference between Clusters 2 and 3. Intent to quit scores were significantly lower in Cluster 1 (low conflict; $m = 1.48$, $sd = .74$) compared to Cluster 3 (higher relationship; $m = 1.90$, $sd = 1.10$), with no other significant differences between clusters. As the four cluster solution did not emerge, the remaining hypotheses cannot be fully supported.

Factorial ANOVAs were conducted to examine differences between NCAA Division within each cluster (See Table 4.11). For affective commitment, only the main effect for division level was significant (p = .003). These results supported earlier ANOVA findings that DIII athletes had the highest affective commitment compared to DI and DII athletes. For intent to transfer, there were significant main effects for cluster membership ($p < .001$) and division level ($p < 001$). Consistent with earlier results, DI athletes had the highest intentions to transfer, and athletes in 1 (low conflict) had the lowest intentions to transfer, and interaction effect was not significant (.16). Finally, results for intent to quit also revealed significant main effects for cluster membership (p = .004) and division level (p = .003), and the interaction effect was not significant (p = .65). DIII athletes had the lowest intentions to quit. Cluster 1 (low conflict) had lower intentions to quit compared to Cluster 3 (higher relationship), but there were no other significant differences between clusters on intention to quit.

Separate factorial ANOVAs were run to understand the combined effect of team gender and intrateam conflict on all outcome variables of interest. There were no significant main

effects or an interaction effect of team gender or cluster membership on affective commitment ($p > .01$). Main effect findings from factorial ANOVAs support earlier results of significant differences across clusters on intent to transfer, with the lowest intentions to transfer found in the low conflict cluster. However, there was no main effect of team gender on intent to transfer. For intent to quit, there was no main effect for cluster membership or interaction effect ($p > .01$). There was a significant main effect for team gender; athletes on women's teams reported higher intentions to quit than athletes on men's teams.

Discussion

The current study examined intrateam conflict in sport through variable-centered and person-centered analyses. Results provide evidence for intrateam conflict being a challenging aspect of the team environment and that intrateam conflict is positively associated with turnover intentions. More specifically, related to the first study aim, athletes who perceived more intrateam task conflict and relationship conflict had higher intentions of transferring from their current team or quitting their sport. Affective commitment only moderated this relationship for the pathway between relationship conflict and intent to quit, and affective commitment was a significant indicator of both turnover intentions across models. The second aim used a person-centered analysis to explore differences in affective commitment, intent to transfer, and intent to quit based on individual perceptions of intrateam conflict. Cluster analyses divided the sample into three clusters that represented various combinations of perceptions of intrateam conflict: low task and low relationship, higher task and moderate relationship, and higher relationship and moderate task. Athletes in the low conflict cluster had lower turnover intentions when compared to the other clusters. This study contributes novel findings of the relationship between intrateam conflict and turnover intentions among collegiate athletes.

Relationship conflict and task conflict were predictors of intent to transfer. Athletes have cited conflict with their coaches as a reason for wanting to transfer (NCAA, 2022; Richards et al., 2015), and it is likely that conflict with peers may also be a reason for transferring. Relationship conflict also predicted intent to quit, but task conflict did not. This finding illustrates the importance of distinguishing between task and relationship conflict in research and practical settings. Relationship conflict centers around personal differences whereas task conflict centers around the work being done by the group (Jehn, 1995). Teammate relationships are important for athlete motivation and well-being, even for elite athletes (Evans et al., 2013; Keegan et al., 2014). The current study offers evidence that when relationships are strained (i.e., relationship conflict) an athlete may be more inclined to continue their playing career elsewhere. In the collegiate context, an elite level of sport, it could also be that there are less disagreements surrounding group tasks (i.e., how the team competes) because coaches are more responsible for task-related and playing decisions (Kaya, 2014). Task conflict was an independent predictor for intent to transfer, but not intent to quit. Reasons why athletes choose to quit college sport is less prevalent in the literature, though youth athletes report ceasing sport participation due to reasons unrelated to team conflict (e.g., perceptions of competence, social pressures, competing priorities and physical factors; Crane & Temple, 2014). Overall, findings from regression analyses in the present study support past research that relationship conflict has consistently demonstrated a stronger negative relationship with group and individual outcomes than task conflict in sport and non-sport literature (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995; Holt et al., 2012; Paradis et al., 2014).

Affective commitment moderated the relationship between relationship conflict and intent to quit. The analyses revealed that relationship conflict did not have as much influence on

intent to quit in athletes with higher affective commitment This finding supports research from non-sport contexts that employees with higher commitment are more likely to remain in their organizations (Guzeller & Celiker, 2020). It also should be noted that across models, affective commitment was a stronger, independent indicator of both turnover intentions when compared to relationship conflict and task conflict. This supports research from workplace settings which identifies commitment as an antecedent to understanding employee turnover (Michaels & Spector, 1982).

The current sample was clustered into three groups with different combinations of intrateam conflict. A four cluster solution was hypothesized based on prior research and the expectancy for task and relationship conflict to operate in a high-low quadrant format. The current solution somewhat supports three of the anticipated quadrants: low task and low relationship, higher task and moderate relationship, and higher relationship and moderate task. The low conflict cluster had lower turnover intentions compared to other clusters, but overall, the higher conflict clusters still had low average turnover scores. This finding, combined with the regression findings that intrateam conflict is not a strong predictor of turnover, further supports the notion that high conflict does not necessarily indicate trouble for a group. Past studies have found task conflict can lead to outcomes that improve a group's functioning (Bradley et al., 2015; O'Neill et al., 2015), and high conflict profiles have been found in past research in work (O'Neill et al., 2015) and in sport teams (Boulter et al., 2022). Findings from these studies indicate that high task conflict groups can still function well and that the combination of other conflict types with the high amount of task conflict must be considered in all analyses. The studies with higher task conflict groups also included more than three conflict groupings (e.g., four, O'Neill et al., 2011; five, Boulter et al., 2022), suggesting that clustering based on conflict

type could provide more complex structures than the one found in the current study. Nonetheless, the extant research and present study justifies the continued use of clustering groups based on types of conflict and supports that manifestations of conflict will rely heavily on the people and context in which it occurs (Janssen et al., 1999). Additionally, the conflict scores used for clustering will depend on the measurement tool selected by the researchers. The present study uses a novel intrateam conflict measure that was designed to consider the sport context. The measure includes four task items and four relationship items. Other clustering studies have used aggregated scores of a different intrateam conflict measure to conduct a latent profile analysis (Boulter et al., 2022; O'Neill et al., 2011). This difference in measurement and analytic approach could explain the difference in cluster solutions. To move forward in studying intrateam conflict in sport, it will be important to consistently use a sport-specific and psychometrically valid instrument.

Limitations

One limitation of the current study was the recruitment process and the gatekeeping effect of college coaches. The lead researcher chose to contact coaches due to the easily available contact information on university websites. However, some coaches expressed concern with the subject matter of the survey items (e.g., conflict, transferring), explaining that they did not want to offer an opportunity to their team that would expose them to unfavorable topics. Despite gatekeeping, the descriptive statistics for intrateam conflict, intent to quit, and intent to transfer show that all item response choices were used for each question, and intrateam conflict scores closely follow a normal distribution. A second potential limitation is in the unequal sizes of the participants at each division level and within each team gender. This resulted in violating the assumption of homogeneity of variance for ANOVA testing, which reduces the power of the

study findings. It is possible that the findings would differ if there was a larger representation of DI athletes and athletes competing on men's teams in the current sample.

Future Directions

To further understand intrateam conflict in the collegiate sport context, researchers should acknowledge that the role of the student-athlete, especially at DI and DII levels, is becoming even more job-like. Recent changes to the college sport landscape, including the transfer portal, offer the potential to include more organizational variables in sport research. Organizational psychology research includes a variety of job attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, identification, engagement) and organizational factors (e.g., organizational citizenship behavior, counterproductive behaviors, organizational justice) that could apply to the collegiate sport context. In recent years, organizational sport psychology has emerged as an area to research athletic staff and leaders within an organization (Wagstaff, 2019). Applying this lens to college athletes could offer insight to this unique environment that combines academics, sport, and business.

More specific to the current study, future research can seek to explore the connection between intrateam conflict and transferring. This is a sensitive topic, and gathering data in this area may prove challenging. However, in order to better understand the experiences of college athletes and provide support, additional research is needed. The quantitative evidence provided in this study would be strengthened by qualitative data that provides details on how the presence of intrateam relationship conflict led an athlete to transfer schools. Interviewing current athletes who recently transferred or former college athletes who successfully transferred could provide this perspective. There is likely a combination of factors that lead to the ultimate decision to transfer, thus research that takes an exploratory and qualitative approach can uncover if conflict

alone is reason enough to transfer and what other factors contribute to an athlete's decision. This topic could also expand to include a coach's perspective. Part of this research could examine the managerial role of a coach in their college program and explore how coaches navigate the transfer portal. A second aspect of this research, given that the present study shows conflict is associated with transfer intentions, could be examining the conflict management strategies coaches use within their team and if their strategies limit turnover.

Scholars should further explore how relationship conflict and task conflict interact in the sport environment. The current study provides evidence that both types exist within the sport context, with some athletes having high, moderate, and low perceptions of relationship conflict within their team. The three conflict clusters that emerged can be reexamined in future studies, and testing for additional conflict clusters should be conducted in new samples. Also, the concept of task conflict within sport teams deserves more attention. Relationship conflict is fairly universal in that there will likely be personalities in all groups that do not always work well together. Task conflict in sport may be different than workplace settings due to the extent to which athletes are able to provide input to team processes. Coaches, especially at the elite level, may make tactical and logistic decisions for the team without consulting the athletes (Kaya, 2014). Athletes may perceive less task conflict in their environment because they do not have as much decision making power when it comes to the work the team does. It would be interesting to explore athlete decision-making power, and potentially compare the perception of task conflict among college athletes and young adult employees.

Different combinations of conflict are also worth exploring because of the potential benefits associated with working through conflict. Conflict has earned an overall negative reputation, though conflict is also a catalyst for change and growth. The positive, cognitive

benefits of conflict include considering multiple perspectives during problem solving, thinking of creative solutions, and learning about oneself (Alper et al., 2000; Baron, 1991). Individuals can also experience positive social or team benefits of conflict such as building trust with teammates and overall improved team performance (Jehn, 2008). However, achieving positive outcomes to conflict relies heavily on how it is managed. Research in sport teams show that constructive conflict management processes increased team cohesion (Sullivan & Feltz, 2001), and that athletes felt more positively toward addressing conflict in their team after participating in a conflict management workshop (Secaras et al., 2023). Therefore, working toward constructive conflict outcomes requires devoting attention to conflict management within sport. Future research should identify the conflict management strategies and interventions that are helpful to sport teams. With this research, sport practitioners would be equipped to implement evidence-based conflict management strategies within their teams.

TABLES

Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics for Each Variable

Measure	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Relationship Conflict	2.91	.95	-.05	-.77
Task Conflict	2.85	.85	-.07	-.73
Affective Commitment	3.33	.40	-.27	-.61
Intent to Transfer	1.95	1.04	1.16	.70
Intent to Quit	1.65	.92	1.61	2.29

Note. The range for mean scores was 1 – 5 for all variables.

Table 4.2
Mean Scores for Variables Based on Division Level and Gender

	Affective Commitment M(SD)	Intent to Transfer M(SD)	Intent to Quit M(SD)
NCAA Division			
DI	3.24(.37)	2.38(1.13)	1.89(1.18)
DII	3.28(.40)	2.06(1.11)	1.74(.94)
DIII	3.41(.40)	1.69(.85)	1.48(.74)
Team Gender			
Men's	3.34(.42)	1.84(.90)	1.39(.64)
Women's	3.33(.39)	2.00(1.10)	1.78(1.01)

Note. The range for mean scores was 1 – 5.

Table 4.3
Correlations between Main Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Relationship Conflict	--			
2. Task Conflict	.51**	--		
3. Affective Commitment	-.17**	-.16**	--	
4. Intent to Transfer	.29**	.27**	-.54**	--
5. Intent to Quit	.25**	.09	-.35**	.46**

Note. **indicates significance at $p < .001$.

Table 4.4
Moderation Results for Model 1

	Intent to Transfer	
	ß	*p*
Variable		
Relationship Conflict	.16	.004
Task Conflict	.11	.005
Affective Commitment	-.49	.000
Relationship Conflict*Affective Commitment	-.076	.091

Table 4.5
Moderation Results for Model 2

	Intent to Transfer	
	ß	*p*
Variable		
Relationship Conflict	.16	.003
Task Conflict	.12	.01
Affective Commitment	-.50	.000
Task Conflict*Affective Commitment	-.031	.55

Table 4.6
Moderation Results for Model 3

	Intent to Quit	
	ß	*p*
Variable		
Relationship Conflict	.25	.000
Task Conflict	.07	.15
Affective Commitment	-.32	.000
Relationship Conflict*Affective Commitment	-.15	.002

Table 4.7
Moderation Results for Model 4

	Intent to Quit	
	ß	*p*
Variable		
Relationship Conflict	.24	.000
Task Conflict	-.09	.05
Affective Commitment	-.33	.000
Task Conflict*Affective Commitment	.06	.22

Table 4.8
Simple Slopes Analysis for Affective Commitment as a Moderator of Relationship Conflict and Turnover Variables

	Intent to Transfer			Intent to Quit		
Affective Commitment	*b*	*p*	95% CI	*b*	*p*	95% CI
One *SD* below mean	.07	.01	[.003, .13]	.10	< .001	[.04, .15]
At the mean	.05	.004	[.01, .08]	.06	< .001	[.03, .09]
One *SD* above mean	.02	.09	[-.01, .06]	.03	.04	[-.01, .06]

Table 4.9
Simple Slopes Analysis for Affective Commitment as a Moderator of Task Conflict and Turnover Variables

	Intent to Transfer			Intent to Quit		
Affective Commitment	*b*	*p*	95% CI	*b*	*p*	95% CI
One *SD* below mean	.05	.10	[.000, .11]	.04	.02	[-.005, .09]
At the mean	.04	.003	[.01, .08]	.06	<.001	[.02, .90]
One *SD* above mean	.03	.14	[-.03, .09]	.07	<.001	[.03, .11]

Table 4.10
Descriptive Statistics for Clusters

Cluster	**1**	**2**	**3**
Name	Low Relationship, Low Task	Moderate Relationship, Higher Task	Higher Relationship, Moderate Task
N			
Total	170	150	110
DI	32	18	22
DII	45	63	53
DIII	93	70	35
Women's	100	84	94
Men'	70	66	16
Mean Scores (SD)			
Relationship Conflict	1.97(.51)	3.40 (.64)	3.69 (.54)
Task Conflict	2.21(.60)	3.77(.38)	2.59(.49)
Affective Commitment	3.38(.39)	3.29(.40)	3.32(.42)
Intent to Transfer	1.64(.77)	2.24(1.17)	2.02(1.08)
Intent to Quit	1.48(.74)	1.65(.90)	1.90(1.12)

Note. The range for mean scores was 1 – 5.

Table 4.11
Factorial ANOVA Results

	Outcome Variable					
	Affective Commitment		**Intent to Transfer**		**Intent to Quit**	
Independent Variables						
Conflict and NCAA Division	F (*p*)	η^2	F (*p*)	η^2	F (*p*)	η^2
Intrateam Conflict (Cluster Membership)	1.07(.343)	.005	13.75(<.001)	.06	5.72(.004)	.03
Division Level	5.92(.003	.03	15.68 (<.001)	.07	5.86(.003)	.03
Interaction	.59(.67)	.006	1.65(.61)	.02	.65(.63)	.01
Conflict and Team Gender	F (*p*)	η^2	F (*p*)	η^2	F (*p*)	η^2
Intrateam Conflict (Cluster Membership)	2.37(.10)	.01	14.65(<.001)	.07	2.21(.1)1	.01
Team Gender	.08(.78)	.00	1.86(.17)	.004	14.71(<.001)(	.03
Interaction	.83(.44)	.004	.16(.86)	.001	.91(.40)	.004

FIGURES

Figure 4.1
Base Path Models to Explore Conflict and Turnover Variables

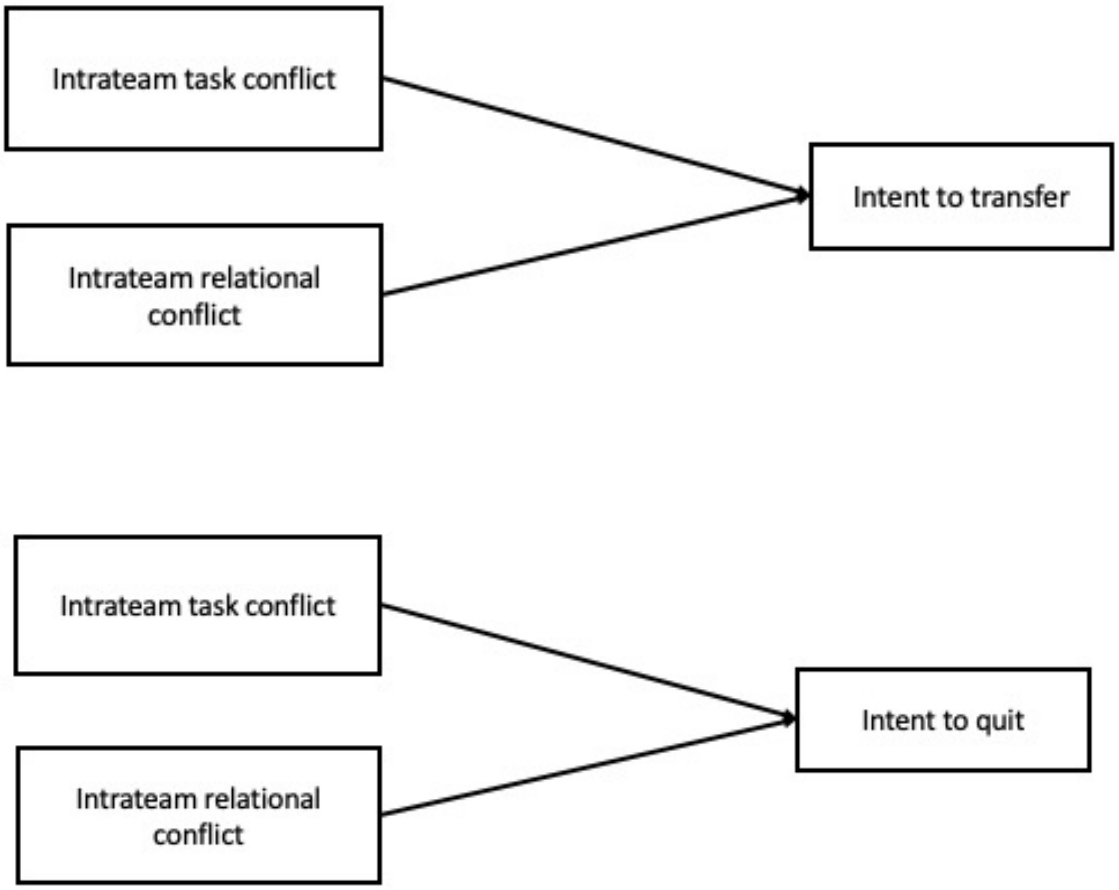
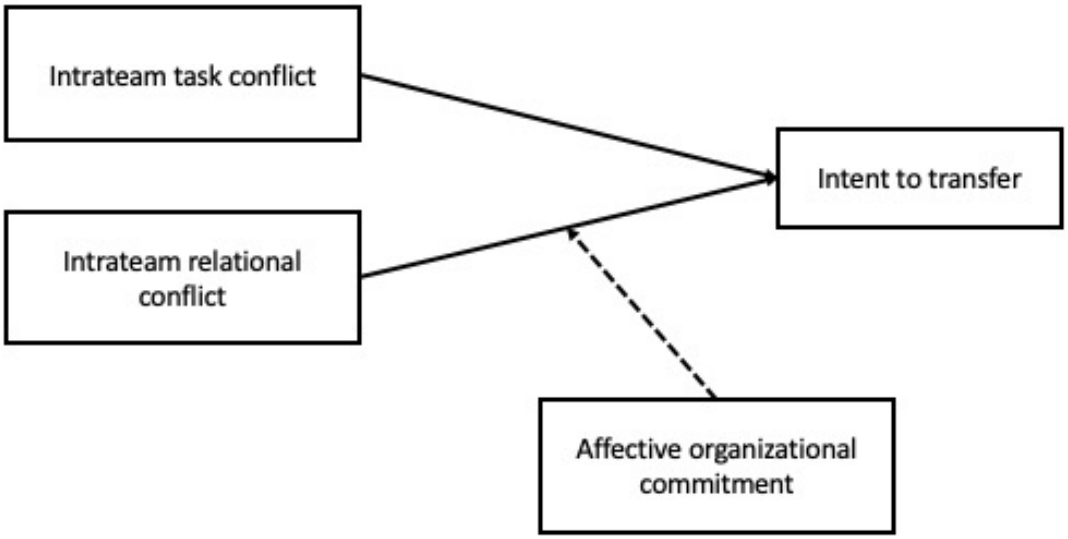


Figure 4.2
Path Models to Explore Affective Organizational Commitment as a Moderating Variable

a)



b)

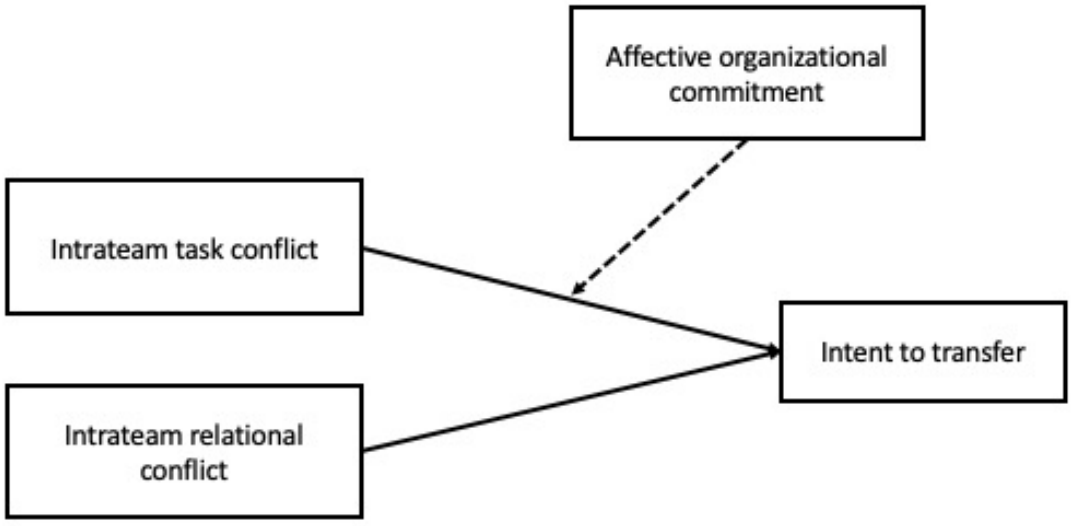
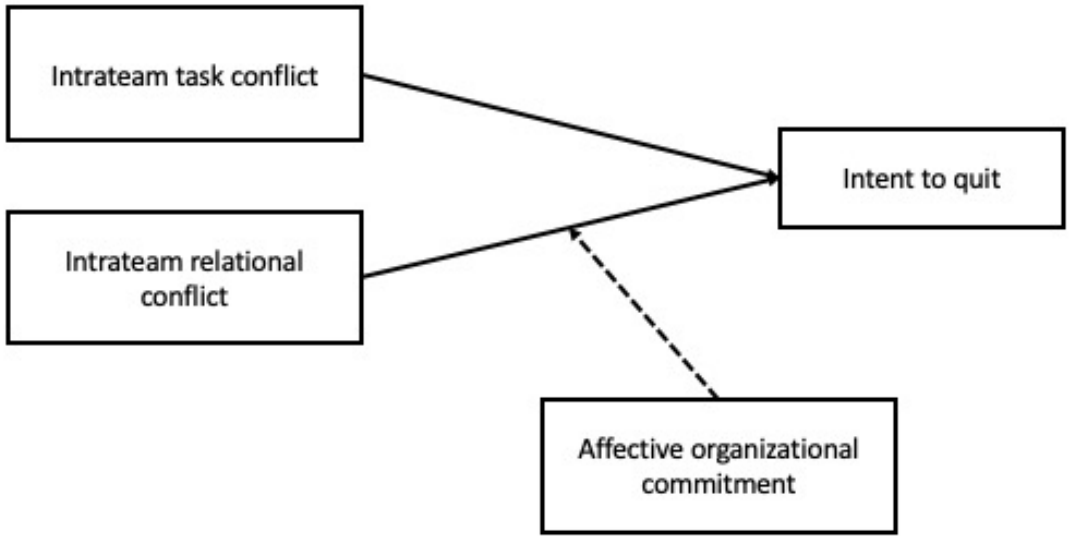


Figure 4.2 (cont'd)

c)



d)

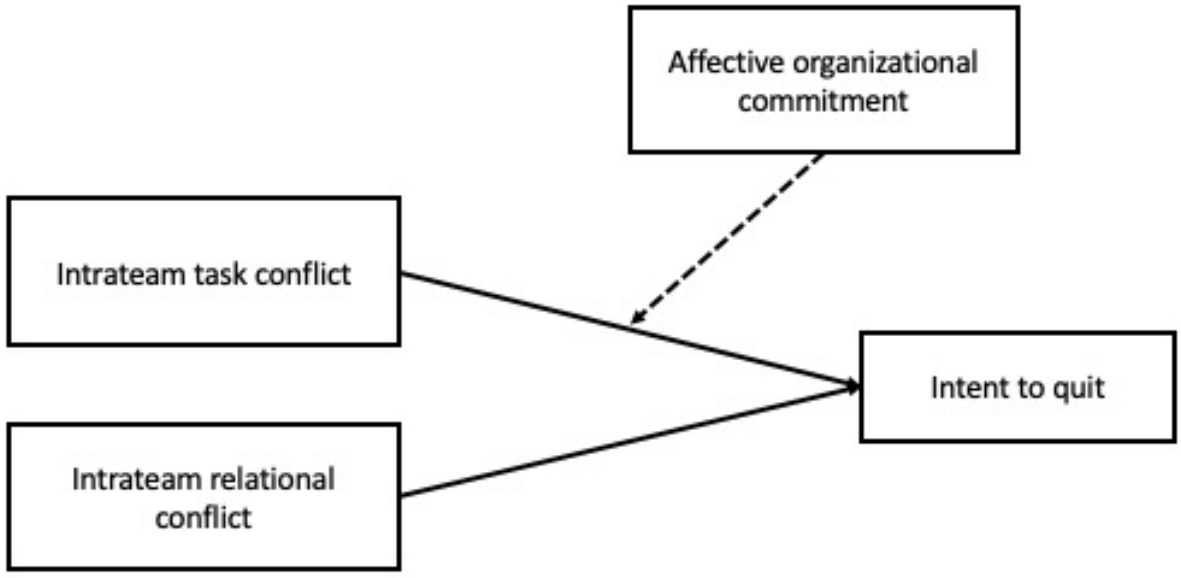


Figure 4.3
Scatter Plot of Clusters

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CHAPTER 5:

General Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate intrateam conflict in sport. Intrateam conflict remains an understudied area in sport research despite its frequent occurrence. Personally, my interest in this topic stemmed from my past sport experiences in which I was on teams with problematic teammates. Even if I was not directly involved in the conflict situation, I was still affected by it because it was happening within my team. In working as a sport psychology consultant, I began to notice just how often disagreements and distrust between teammates led to larger team problems. I was placed in situations where I had to be the mediator of conflict situations even though I was not around the team full-time. This made me wonder exactly what information is available on this topic and how it connects to sport. When I started researching intrateam conflict, I immediately wanted to address a practical need for teaching athletes how to navigate these challenging situations. I designed and evaluated a conflict management intervention designed specifically for high school student-athletes (Secaras et al., 2023). The results of this intervention show that athletes who participated in this workshop perceived an increase in their cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills. However, following this intervention, it was clear that more knowledge is needed in this area overall and additional research would strengthen future intervention work.

The first study in this dissertation reviewed the existing intrateam conflict literature. Questions guiding this review asked about the sources and outcomes of intrateam conflict, as well as the current conflict management strategies. Given the broad scope of the review and the novelty of the topic, a scoping review was deemed most appropriate. Overall, results confirmed that the literature specifically on intrateam conflict is relatively minimal in the sport context.

Only 18 studies met the inclusion criteria, with six of these studies being focused exclusively on conflict management. All studies in the review were coded based if they addressed one of the components of the conflict definition put forth by Wachsmuth and colleagues (2017): (1) values, needs, opinions, or objectives; (2) cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions, (3) social and cultural context, (4) individuals' characteristics. This coding process revealed that most of the articles did address at least one of the elements included in the definition, though there were studies that treated conflict as a global entity and did not address any specific component. Both types of studies help advance the existing literature on intrateam conflict. Of the included studies, the majority occurred in an adult population (18+) and used quantitative methods. Related to conflict management, it was challenging to find specific suggestions for conflict management strategies in the existing literature. The intervention studies offered some detail, but more often than not, there was not enough detail to replicate the intervention or share the information with interested athletes or coaches.

From this review, it is clear that a theory of intrateam conflict in sport is needed to guide future research endeavors. As of now, scholars continue to use various models or theories of intrateam conflict, and these models are not always specific to sport. To advance the research in this area, it would be helpful to establish a theory that outlines antecedents and outcomes of intrateam conflict. Like many other topics in sport psychology, intrateam conflict can be approached from multiple disciplines and psychological lenses. A theory for intrateam conflict in sport can incorporate aspects from different theories that best apply to the sport context. We have seen some of this already in sport research. Sport scholars have studied the personality traits that lead to more conflict within teams (e.g., narcissism, Boulter et al., 2022a; Boulter et al., 2022b; perfectionism, Friere et al., 2022). Coaching research can also be applied to intrateam conflict, as

coaches are closely connected to athletes and considered part of the team unit. Athlete perceptions of coaching competency have shown to influence the amount of conflict throughout a season (González-Ponce et al., 2018). Coach leadership can also be a factor that influences intrateam conflict, and the coaches themselves may experience conflict among their peers (e.g., other coaches, staff members). Task conflict among coaches on the same staff was related to decreased performance (Cunningham & Waltemeyer, 2007). A theory of intrateam conflict would align well with the input-mediator-output framework that is commonly used in group dynamics research (McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014), and some conflict research has already begun to adopt this framework (Boulter et al., 2022). This dissertation contributes to theory development by first examining the measurement of intrateam conflict in sport teams and then offering insight into variables that have been studied in organizational psychology.

The second study performed initial validity testing on a novel intrateam conflict instrument. Past measurements of intrateam conflict in both sport and non-sport settings raised concern primarily due to their confusing language. To create a new measure, 43 items were generated that represented task conflict, relationship conflict, and other constructs relevant to groups or sport (e.g., cohesion, communication, motivation, collective efficacy). College athletes, coaches, and sport psychology experts served as subject matter experts in providing content validity for this new scale. They reviewed each of the 43 items and rated the item's utility (i.e., how well does the item represent intrateam conflict) as well as which type of conflict it best represented (e.g., task or relationship). This process allowed the researchers to eliminate 21 items from the pool. Also, most subject matter experts were able to differentiate between the conflict items and items related to other group/sport processes, which provides support that intrateam conflict is a separate group construct. The new survey was distributed to 563 current

collegiate athletes at all division levels and across a variety of sport teams. Results from exploratory factor analyses indicated that a range of solutions (e.g., 2-5 factors) would be possible. However, a two factor structure was determined as the best fit due to strong factor loadings, adequate model data fit, and interpretability of the factors that aligned with theoretical constructs from existing work. The two factors of the measure were labeled relationship conflict and task conflict. Seven relationship items loaded onto the first factor, while twelve items (e.g., ten task and two relationship) loaded onto the second. While this measure would benefit from further psychometric testing, the content validity and factorial validity evidence were sufficient to move forward with the last dissertation study.

The third study of the dissertation examined the relationship between intrateam conflict and turnover intentions among collegiate athletes. This sample included over 400 current collegiate student-athletes competing at the Division I, II, and III levels. Findings show that both turnover intentions (e.g., transfer, quit) are predicted by intrateam relationship conflict, though task conflict only predicted intent to transfer. Additionally, the relationship between relationship conflict and intentions to quit was stronger when affective commitment was lower. When clustered based on perceptions of task and relationship conflict, the sample was divided into 3 separate groups. The clusters differed in their amount and type of conflict (e.g., Cluster 1: low relationship, ,ow task; Cluster 3: moderate relationship, high task; Cluster 3: high relationship, moderate task). Clusters were not significantly different on scores of affective commitment. Intent to transfer scores were lowest in Cluster 1 when compared to Clusters 2 and 3, while intent to quit scores were lower in Cluster 1 only compared to Cluster 3. To my knowledge, this study is the first to examine the association between intrateam conflict and transferring. The continued use of the transfer portal makes these findings highly practical and timely.

Practical Implications

Within the last decade, research on intrateam conflict in sport has become increasingly popular. Studies on intrateam conflict from Holt and colleagues (2012), Paradis and colleagues (2014), and Partridge and Knapp (2016) explored athletes' experiences with conflict and provided a strong foundation off which to build our knowledge. Athletes in these studies reported that their conflict experiences were often accompanied by unpleasant emotions (e.g., anger, jealousy) and behaviors (e.g., yelling), which made the overall experience very negative. Nowadays, when college athletes are having a negative sport experience, they can use the transfer portal to leave their current team. This dissertation supports relationship conflict to be a factor that increases turnover intentions, and that high affective commitment reduces this relationship. Coaches are now working harder to retain their athletes, and this finding suggests they should aim to reduce the relationship conflict within their team. Also, coaches should be mindful of how team dynamics change each year now that transferring is more accessible. In a given year, coaches may need to manage incoming first-years who are experiencing college sports for the first time while also managing fifth-year and sophomore transfers who are new to the university but have experience playing at the collegiate level. The changing team dynamic each year means that athletes are constantly forming and breaking relationships with teammates. All of these factors make college sport teams a ripe venue for relationship conflict to occur if coaches do not take preventative measures.

Also noted in the foundational intrateam conflict studies is the perceived lack of conflict management skills among athletes (Holt et al., 2012). Coaches and sport psychology consultants are sometimes expected to manage conflict among athletes due to their seniority and expertise (Wachsmuth et al., 2018, Wachsmuth et al., 2022). However, high school athletes report there are

certain conflicts in which they do not want to involve their coach (Secaras et al., 2023). Explicitly teaching athletes conflict management skills could prove beneficial for their sport experience and eventually translate into other areas of their lives. Coaches can be role models for effective conflict management, though this assumes that coaches themselves feel efficacious in their ability to manage conflicts. An additional practical implication of this dissertation work would be to develop conflict management workshops specifically for coaches in addition to workshops specifically for athletes. Coach conflict management workshops can highlight the different types of conflict and provide explicit strategies for them to use and for them to teach to their players. Conflict management workshops that have been conducted in business and medical settings offer evidence for successful interventions. Employees and organizational leaders who attended workshops designed to increase knowledge of conflict management strategies reported lower perceptions of psychological and interpersonal stress (Hackett et al., 2014; Haraway & Haraway III, 2005).

Another option would be to have a sport psychology consultants work with teams to teach conflict management skills. In sport settings, a review on coach-athlete conflict from Wachsmuth and colleagues (2017) suggests that teams engage in activities that directly or indirectly address conflict or conflict management skills (i.e., building a sense of togetherness, improving communication) as a means to building cohesion and improving other important psychosocial outcomes (e.g., trust, communication, relationship quality). Researchers have delivered successful psychosocial interventions that improved group cohesion, collective efficacy, communication, and climate in addition to conflict (Afanasieiva et al., 2019; Leo et al., 2021). However, the details of these interventions are unclear. In a recent case study, Vealey (2017), a sport psychology consultant, reflects on the mental skills intervention delivered to a

collegiate basketball team that was struggling with relationship conflict among players. This intervention was described in good detail, and was successful in improving team culture while reducing team conflict. Sport psychology practitioners should continue to document their experiences in managing team conflict specifically. Team building activities can be helpful for overall team functioning, but it should not be assumed that all team building work automatically applies to conflict management. The team activities led by sport psychology practitioners likely include elements of conflict management, but those activities need to be further researched and evaluated in direct connection to intrateam conflict. Developing a theory for intrateam conflict in sport would also help practitioners develop and test their workshops. Evidence-based conflict management workshops would provide athletes with an opportunity to learn and practice a valuable life skill that could also improve their sport experience.

Future Directions

I envision multiple future studies that could be completed within the first few years of my career. I first want to conduct additional validation work on the intrateam conflict measure that was developed for this dissertation. The next step would be to reexamine the items and gain more feedback on their utility and content. I would conduct cognitive interviews with athletes that ask about their understanding of each item on the survey. Only college athletes were recruited for the dissertation as a delimitation of the sample, though for this measure to be representative of the overall construct of intrateam conflict, athletes from other populations should be interviewed. In the current version of the measure, there are 19 items, with 12 task conflict and 7 relationship conflict items. The cognitive interviews could determine confusing or unnecessary items and assist in creating a survey with a more even number of items for both conflict types. Additionally, the current measure has not been tested against any other instrument. There are

existing intrateam conflict measures that were not chosen for this dissertation due to their confusing or double-barreled language. Administering multiple intrateam conflict questionnaires to a new sample of athletes would provide convergent validity. This study would offer additional empirical support for the use of certain intrateam conflict questionnaires which could give confidence to scholars wanting to study this topic. Lastly, a future validation study for the intrateam conflict measure should add a new sample of college athletes and athletes in another population (e.g., recreational, youth, professional) to confirm the factor structure of the measure.

An additional study to complete in the near future would be to better understand how task and relationship conflict manifest in the sport context. The organizational psychology literature provides clearer examples of task conflict, though groups in that research often have more autonomy over their work tasks than a group of athletes. The task conflict items on the current measure performed inconsistently in factor analyses. Also, the athletes in the second study, on average, perceived moderate amounts of task conflict, suggesting that it is somewhat present in their team. As noted throughout this research, a variety of contextual factors could contribute to the lack of clarity and lesser amount of task conflict in sport (e.g., coaches, elite sport). Future research should explore the specific types of conflict within sport teams from the athlete perspective. The current research did not separate process conflict from task conflict, which may be the cause for the complicated findings with this variable and factor loadings. Additional research on the types of conflict would ease measurement concerns and provide stronger evidence for conflict profiles. I would like to revisit the idea of conflict clusters in future research, particularly if there is an ideal combination of conflict that leads to positive experiences for athletes and teams. Examples of positive experiences to explore would be increased performance, high retention of athletes, and overall positive wellbeing.

Future research on intrateam conflict instruments and conflict types would allow for research to examine the individual factors that potentially influence an individual's perception of the amount of team conflict. For example, are there traits of individuals who consistently perceive a lot of conflict within the team while others perceive a lesser amount? From anecdotal experience, there are teammates who tend to make issues larger than they need to be just because that is their kind of personality, and these teammates were usually labeled as dramatic, negative, or disruptive. Related to the current study, these may be the athletes who want to leave their current team due to intrateam conflict, but they still perceive high intrateam conflict on their new team. The underlying construct surrounding this research topic is conflict asymmetry, defined as "the degree to which a group's members differ in their perception of how much conflict there is in the group" (Jehn et al., 2010; p. 596). This construct arose from the perspective that additional factors influence group processes other than the amount of conflict within the group (Jehn et al., 2010). Groups in which some members perceive high amounts of conflict while other members perceive a lesser amount would have a high level of conflict asymmetry and are at a disadvantage in that conflict asymmetry can prevent groups from generating new ideas and being creative, both of which are necessary for high performance (Amiable, 1988). Interestingly, groups with negative shared perceptions are still capable of producing high-quality work (Mason & Griffin, 2003). To explore if individuals consistently perceive the same amount of conflict based on personality traits, and to recruit enough athletes within the same team for strong analyses, it may be beneficial to conduct a case study and collect data from a single team throughout the school year. Completing a study of conflict asymmetry in sport teams, to my knowledge, would be the first of its kind and add valuable insight to the literature.

In a few years, I would like to return to the area that first intrigued me: conflict management strategies. I may have the opportunity in upcoming years to conduct conflict management workshops with teams or develop conflict management resources, and I plan to apply my ongoing research to those opportunities. However, I also want to conduct studies that specifically explore athlete conflict management styles in young athletes. The non-sport research on conflict management styles offers mixed findings, and the sport research on conflict management styles has only included coaches (Huseinagić & Hodžić, 2010; Laios & Tzetzis, 2007). It would be important to understand what strategies athletes are using and also how they learned their current strategies. I believe that additional research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of intrateam conflict in sport, and with an improved understanding, sport practitioners would be more equipped to teach and develop conflict management skills in athletes.

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