

The coach as a moral influence

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ABSTRACT

The coach as a moral influence

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Elite sport requires a great amount of time deliberately devoted to training and to optimize improvement (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993). Coaches are important social influences for an athlete (e.g., Smith & Smoll, 1996). Elite athletes spend more time with coaches than with other potential sources of influence. Therefore, the main purpose of the present study was to study the coach as a moral influence.

The review of literature indicated that coaches are moral influences for their athletes. However, this evidence has to be considered with caution because of the characteristics of the designs of the studies (e.g., theoretical framework, methodology). Based on the evidence provided by the literature review, two qualitative case studies were conducted in an attempt to address current gaps in literature. For the pilot study, 7 elite coaches that had been athletes themselves were sampled and for the main study 10 coaches with the same characteristics were sampled. Interviews were conducted and data was inductively analyzed using Grounded Theory strategies for analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In addition, the dimension of the Coaching Efficacy Scale evaluating coaches' self-efficacy to instil morality in their athletes was used in the main study (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999).

Evidence from these research efforts generated four major findings. First, coaches are important moral influences. Participants in this study recognized their past coaches had a moral influence over them. Also, these participants acknowledged that as coaches, they had the moral obligation to watch over morality within the team. Second, coaches'

conceptions of morality entail four dimensions: a) “elite sport involvement”; b) “game”; c) “interaction with others”; and d) “self-related”. Third, participants’ past moral influences are reflected in their conceptions of morality, and captured in their current coaching practices. Past coaches are models from which current coaching interventions are built. Finally, a better understanding of moral influences in sport can be attained if different theoretical contributions are considered together. Important factors concerning moral influence are a coach-athlete relationship and culture.

Findings from this thesis have addressed a knowledge gap in the field. This qualitative design has provided valuable information concerning the factors that enable or prevent moral influences, and the environment where moral influences take place. Also, this data has provided insight on potential targets in the design of future educational coaching interventions to sensitize coaches concerning morality. Future research endeavour should continue build upon this thesis by considering other populations (e.g., athletes) and other sport contexts (e.g., recreational). The relationship between coach-athlete relationship and culture needs to be examined in-depth.

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THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis consists of 5 main sections which are detailed below. In chapter 1, the literature addressing the coach as a source of moral influence is reviewed. Within this manuscript, the published work was summarized, the limitations of prior research were identified, and future research paths were suggested. This was done via the examination of previous works where coaches were identified as moral influences.

In chapters 2 and 3 the results from a pilot study are presented. The pilot study was conducted after the review paper. The field was so under-researched that more than one research endeavour was needed to address the topic in a more appropriate way. The pilot study was designed to include variables found to be associated with moral influences such as gender and sport dynamics.

Chapter 4 is the main study. The primary purpose of this study was to confirm evidence from the pilot study. Therefore, the main study has been designed as a replication of the pilot study that attempted to assess in-depth confounded variables whose role has not been clarified in the pilot study. In addition, this study included a scale that served to triangulate results.

Finally, chapter 5 presents a synthesis of results from the four previous manuscripts. This synthesis consists of a comparison and contrast of results as well as the development of a preliminary framework that compiles the results. Final comments, suggestions, and recommendation for future research were provided as well.

DETAILS OF PUBLICATIONS

The bulk of the thesis is made up of four manuscripts which are in various phases of the publication process. For that reason, chapters have been presented following the format required by the selected journal. The status and individual author contributions to these papers are detailed below.

Chapter 1 represents a review paper named “Moral influences in sport. Disentangling the role of the coach.” This paper is currently in revision at the journal *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*. I am the lead author of this manuscript and I selected the topic, did the background literature search, and wrote the paper. Drs. Aulls and Bacon provided input on the concept, read the manuscript, and gave critical commentaries and feedback. Ms. Amanda Rossi helped with the editing of the manuscript.

Chapters 2 and 3 consist of two research papers. Both papers resulted from the pilot study and have been submitted to the journal *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*. I am the lead author of this manuscript. In consultation with Drs. Bacon and Aulls, I designed the study. In addition, I contacted the coaches, did the interviews, checked the accuracy of the transcriptions, analysed the data, and wrote the papers. Drs. Bacon and Aulls reviewed the manuscripts and provided corrections.

Chapter 4 consists of the primary results paper from the main study. I was primarily in charge of the design of the study, the data collection, the accuracy of the transcription, the analysis of data, and the writing of the manuscript. Drs. Bacon and Aulls reviewed the manuscript and provided critical feedback. This paper has not yet

been submitted, but it is in its last steps for submission. It will be submitted to the journal of *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*.

The three journals selected to submit the papers have some format specificities. These special requirements are detailed in the appendix.

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

Sport is a social phenomenon per se where different types of relationships among individuals occur. As a social activity, sport reflects values, norms, structures and processes that are sociocultural-specific (O. Weiss, 2001). The interest in the relationship between sport and morality has significantly increased over the last decades as substantiated by several reviews appearing in recent years (e.g., Bredemeier & Shields, 2006; Kavussanu, 2007; Kavussanu, 2008; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995, 2001, 2007; Solomon, 2004; M.R. Weiss & Bredemeier, 1990; M.R. Weiss & Smith, 2002; M.R. Weiss, Smith, & Stuntz, 2008). However, there is still a lot of work to be done in the field. Some problems associated with studying morality and sport is the fact that there is neither agreement on how to refer to morality, nor on what morality entails. This resulted in research endeavours using *morality*, *character*, *sportsmanship*, *fair play*, and *ethics* as interchangeable concepts (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995; Kavussanu, 2007; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Vallerand, 1991).

This indistinct use of concepts has some associated consequences. First, there is no sense of whether morality, character, sportsmanship, and fair play refer to the same concept or how much they overlap. Second, this lack of agreement leads to imprecise and inconsistent measurement (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2007; Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009; Kaye, 2009; Shields & Bredemeier, 2007). As noted by scholars, the efforts to develop a comprehensive instrument to measure both moral and unmoral behaviours in sport are still at the preliminary stage. Finally, it can be speculated that the reported conflicting

state of the art is probably affecting sport stakeholders understanding of morality as well. For example, previous literature reported coaches uncertainty concerning their responsibility to instil moral values in their athletes (Beller & Stoll, 1993).

Another factor contributing to the difficulty in developing an understanding of moral and immoral behaviour in sport is the lack of efforts trying to understand morality from the participants perspective. The majority of the studies have been conducted from the researchers perspectives. This resulted in valuable information; however, little is know about what the most exemplar sport moral behaviours are, or what the most common immoral behaviours are. Only some isolated studies have tried to understand participants viewpoint concerning morality from a qualitative perspective (e.g., Long, Pantaléon, Bruant, & d'Arripe-Longueville, 2006; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Rudd & Mondello, 2006). These studies, though scarce, have been helpful to make sense of prior quantitative endeavours. However, this is an avenue that still needs more exploration, as noted by Rudd and Mondello (2006).

Due to the fact that sport involvement entails hard work, continuous effort, and respect for rules; sport has been traditionally assumed to be an ideal venue for moral character development (e.g., Arnold, 1984, 1994; Kremer-Sadlik & Kim, 2007; Sage, 1990). As a matter of a fact, the Olympic Games motto *-citius, altius, fortius-* whose meaning has survived the test of the time, has been based on this argument. Despite this idealization of sport involvement, there is evidence that questions the relationship between sport and moral development (e.g., Kavussanu, Roberts, & Ntoumanis, 2002; Long et al., 2006). Both arguments “pro” and “against” sport as a setting for moral development have strong lines of reasoning supporting them (M.R. Weiss et al., 2008). A

comparison between both sides suggests that when physical activity and exercise programs use either educational or recreational sport, moral development can be fostered (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Weinberg & Gould, 2007; M.R. Weiss & Smith, 2002; M.R. Weiss et al., 2008). Even further, sport settings specifically designed to promote moral development not only achieve their goal (e.g., Petitpas, Van Raalte, Cornelius, & Presbrey, 2004; M.R. Weiss, Bolter, Bhalla, & Price, 2007), but also promote personal development as well (Holt, 2008). Conversely, it seems that it is the pressure to “winning-at-all-costs,” mostly found at elite sport, which prevents moral development (Ommundsen, Roberts, Lemyre, & Treasure, 2003).

The ultimate goal of elite sport is winning. Preparation to optimize final outcomes is time consuming and requires deliberate practice, as well as conscious engagement (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993). Consequently, athletes spend long hours working with and under the supervision of their coaches. Elite coaches have been identified as important and strong social influences (e.g., Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996). It can be then hypothesized that coaches are important moral influences for athletes. Given that an individual’s practice is based in an individual’s understanding and conceptualization of a given topic (Dickins, 2004), coaches moral influences on their athletes are intimately related to the coaches understanding of morality. There is literature reporting that a coach’s attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics are associated with athletes moral and unmoral behaviours (Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002). Therefore, from a socialization viewpoint, it is both important to understand what is coaches understanding of morality and how do they moral influence their athletes.

Finally, it can be speculated that the lack of agreement on what morality entails is a consequence of the nature of the topic. The first interest in morality comes from the field of philosophy. Although Kohlberg (1984) tried to disentangle the psychological perspective from the philosophical perspective, in some ways the fields are still intrinsically linked. This dilemma is especially evident when trying to establish what a moral issue is. Probably for that reason, studies conducted both before and after Kohlberg's (1984) contribution focused on "rules" in an attempt to assess morality (e.g., Piaget, 1932/1965; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007). Therefore, issues related to morality deserve to be thoroughly treated. Only by doing an in-depth critique of current limitations in research a more comprehensive viewpoint will emerge.

Purpose of the Studies and Rationale

The overarching objective of this thesis was to study the coach as a moral influence. It was first necessary to examine coaches understanding of morality prior to investigating the coach as a moral influence. It was assumed that coaches would use their past moral influences to conceptualize morality, and therefore, past moral influences would inform their current moral influence in the coaching setting.

Current available research assessing moral influences has focused on how a coach's moral behaviours predict athletes behaviours; however, there is little evidence to explain how the process of influence occurs. Evidence from these studies will entail both theoretical and empirical contributions. Given that frequently immoral behaviours are linked to the need to win-at-all-costs (Long et al., 2006), the study of coaches as moral influences is important because elite athletes spend the majority of their time with their coaches. A better comprehension of the coach as moral influence will be helpful to

design educational interventions tailored for coaches to help them deal with moral issues. In addition, evidence will address the void in the current literature. Therefore, the present work provides a model for studying the coach as a moral influence in sport. Specific aims that led to the final objective were:

Specific Aims. The aims (and the chapters in which they have been addressed) of the current thesis are:

Aim 1: Review the role of the coach as a source of moral influence (Chapter 1).

Aim 2: Explore coaches understanding of morality (Chapter 2).

Aim 3: Investigate how current elite coaches have been morally influenced in their past as athletes, and how the influence these coaches received affects the moral influence they currently have over their athletes (Chapter 3).

Aim 4: To replicate previous pilot findings concerning coaches understanding of morality and coaches as moral influences (Chapter 4).

Aim 5: To develop a preliminary framework to understand a coach's moral influence in sport (Chapter 5)

CHAPTER 1 - THE COACH AS A MORAL INFLUENCE: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

RUNNING HEAD: Moral influence in sport

The coach as a moral influence: A review of literature

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Abstract

Previous literature identified the sport coach as one of the most important social influences for athletes. We aimed to disentangle the coach's responsibility concerning moral influence for athletes. The overarching purpose of the present paper was to interpretively and purposefully review literature addressing the role of the coach as a moral influence. Results indicate that coaches morally influenced their athletes. The majority of the studies focused on the coach as a role model and as a major contributor to the creation and support of a moral atmosphere. Coaches promote positive moral behavior during training; however, sometimes, the need to win may lead coaches to transmit a different message to the athlete. Athletes moral development was the variable most frequently assessed. Based on the reviewed evidence, future research and intervention directions are proposed.

Keywords: socialization – morality – review

The coach as a moral influence: A review of literature

Sport is a social phenomenon where different types of relationships among individuals occur. One of the topics frequently studied concerning sport socialization is social influences. Social influences refer to the outcomes resulting from the interplay that takes place between the individual and the geographical and social environment (Lewin, 1935). Athletes main sources of social influence, also referred to as agents of socialization (Holt, Tamminen, Tink, & Black 2009), have been found in empirical research to be coaches, parents, friends, peers, teammates, and siblings (e.g., Brustad, 1996; Coleman, Cox, & Roker, 2008; Côté, 1999; Holt, Black, Tamminen, Fox, & Mandigo, 2008). Primary sources of influence vary along the lifespan in concert with an individual's changing needs and circumstances. As an example, parents play a crucial role as active influences and supporters of participation in sports during childhood (Côté, 1999). However, later on, other resources such as peers and coaches become more influential than parents (Antshel & Anderman, 2000; A.L. Smith, 2003; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996). One possible type of social influence is moral influence.

The first studies dealing with morality in sport date from 1928 (Hartshorne & May, 1928). From that moment on, four central concepts have been used in applied sport sciences to refer to morality: character, sportsmanship, fair play, and morality. The studies using these concepts followed different theoretical venues. First, character and sportsmanship have been studied within the context of theoretical models. The “game reasoning model” studied *character* and described it as entailing four virtues (i.e., compassion, fairness, sportsmanship, and integrity) (Bredemeier, 1985; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). This model is derived from structural development theory (Kohlberg,

1984) and the moral interaction theory (Haan, 1991). Despite specific differences, both theories understand morality as a result of moral development. On the other hand, Vallerand et al. (Vallerand, Deshaies, Currier, Brière, & Pelletier, 1996), developed the “social-psychological approach,” a model that focused on the study of *sportsmanship*, a core concept in the field of sports. According to the authors, sportsmanship is a construct that has both positive (e.g., respect and concern) and negative (e.g., win at all costs) components. Within this context, sportsmanship is ecologically defined and multidimensional in nature because it reflects the sport participant’s relationship with the environment and the other participants.

Second, by pulling elements from the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1991), Kavussanu et al. (Kavussanu & Spray, 2006; Sage & Kavussanu, 2008) studied *morality* by focusing in moral behavior. Based on the premise that morality is best captured in an individual’s moral behaviors, Bandura (1999) proposed to study both *prosocial* and *antisocial* behavior. In this author’s words “The exercise of moral agency has dual aspects-inhibitive and proactive. The inhibitive form is manifested in the power to refrain from behaving inhumanely. The proactive form of morality is expressed in the power to behave humanely” (Bandura, 1999, pp. 194).

Third, other authors used as well the concept of *fair play* (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995; Boixadós, Cruz, Torregrosa, & Valiente, 2004; Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995; Goodger & Jackson, 1985; Hassandra, Goudas, Hatzigeorgiadis, & Theodorakis, 2007; Solomon, 1997). Although studies dealing with fair play based their research in different theories and models, in general, fair play has been associated with responsibilities

associated to different sport roles, such as recognition and respect towards the rules of the game and correct relationships with the opponent (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

The concept of *ethics* has also been used in the sport context (e.g., Bergmann-Drewe, 2000). However, it should be noted that research using the concept of ethics has been mostly developed in the field of philosophy rather than in applied fields such as sport psychology or sport sociology.

Concerning the role of the coach, several studies demonstrated that coaches play an important role in the life of an athlete and are also important social influences (e.g., R.E. Smith & Smoll, 1996; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996). However, it is notable that no reviews offer insights into the coach as a moral influence. Previous synthesis of literature dealing with sport and morality have instead reviewed theories (e.g., Kavussanu, 2007; Shields & Bredemeier, 2001; Solomon, 2004; Weiss, Smith, & Stuntz, 2008); moral functioning (e.g., Kavussanu, 2008; Shields & Bredemeier, 2001, 2007); individual and social influences affecting morality (e.g., Kavussanu, 2007; Shields & Bredemeier, 2007; Weiss, Smith, & Stuntz, 2008); and different ways of assessing morality (Bredemeier & Shields, 1998).

The increased number of reviews in the last 10 years suggests that morality is a topic of interest in the area of sports¹. This interest in studying morality is indirectly related to the increase of immoral behavior, specifically in elite sport (Stalwick, 2010). The aim of the current purposive (Suri & Clarke, 2009) and interpretative (Eisenhart, 1998) review is to disentangle the role of the coach as a moral influence.

Methods

Searching for relevant evidence

A computer search and a manual search were performed to locate studies. The computer search used ProQuest (Dissertations and Theses - Full Text), PsycINFO, and SportDISCUS. Assuming that we had four variables of interest (i.e., morality, influence, coach, and sport), we first listed our four groups of keywords based on our previous knowledge in the field. Therefore, we used: a) for morality: Moral OR character OR sportsmanship OR ethics OR prosocial OR antisocial OR fair play; b) for influence: influence OR agent; c) for the source of influence: coach; and, d) for setting: sport. All four groups of keywords were connected with “AND” in the search. Limits applied to the search were: English language and published between 1990 and 2010. Specifically for PsycINFO and SportDISCUS, peer reviewed journal articles were searched and dissertations were excluded. It is of interest to note that our focus was in “sport” rather than in “exercise,” or “physical activity,” or “physical education.” As it has been pointed out as early as 40 years ago (M.D. Smith, 1979; Webb, 1969), and still holds (e.g., Kavussanu, 2008) it is the need to win-at-all-costs that is associated with immoral behaviors. Although we were aware that a search on “sport” might retrieve studies conducted at a sport context other than elite, we decided to consider all studies to compare and contrast differences among sport contexts. This initial search described in the above paragraph led to 60 pieces of work where only two were identified as of interest. For that reason, a second search was conducted and the keywords used to represent influence (i.e., influence and agent) were not included. This search yielded 171 articles.

In the second round, the list of located works was cleaned. Duplicated studies among databases were removed. Peer reviewed papers that resulted from the publication

of a dissertation were prioritized over the dissertation. It was assumed that a peer reviewed paper was a more sophisticated version of the original dissertation. This accounted for six pieces of work. Then, as the search did not include the dimension related to influence, many of the located works were not specifically related to the topic. This accounted for 137 pieces of work in total. In addition, two other criteria were used to exclude works because it was assumed that under these situations, it was not possible to evaluate the influence the coach had. These criteria were: a) coaches were evaluated, but athletes were not evaluated so that results could not be compared; and b) the role of the coach was assessed along with other sources of moral influence, but the methodology of the study did not allow discrimination among different sources. This procedure was a common strategy in studies assessing the perceived motivational climate (e.g., Ommundsen, Roberts, Lemyre, & Treasure, 2003). The application of these criteria left out 10 studies and one study, respectively. Finally, no interventions were included. This decision was based in three reasons. First, it was assumed that interventions will not reflect the sport setting, but an environment that has been purposefully manipulated to achieve a certain goal. Second, all interventions have been conducted in non-competitive settings (e.g., educational sport, physical activity, physical education), therefore, “winning-at all-costs,” a major motive for immoral behaviors was not going to be represented. Third, as noted by Weiss et al. (2008), perhaps the most important aspect of the studies is that the teachers embraced the intervention and enthusiastically participated in the program. Leaving interventions out reduced the pool of publications to seventeen.

In the third round of the literature search, a manual search was conducted. The snowball technique was used by visiting references included in the 17 publications

located in the computer search. This last step yielded one additional study. Thus, 18 empirical studies were included in the present review.

Guidelines followed in our research synthesis

We decided to design our review as a *purposive* (Suri & Clarke, 2009) and *interpretive* (Eisenhart, 1998). We aimed to produce a meaningful review by fostering the understanding of the topic of interest, rather than to systematically and critically inform others about the state of the art in the field (Eisenhart, 1998; Suri & Clarke, 2009). Thus, we purposefully select empirical research studies to reflect on the coach as a moral influence in the sport context. By doing so, we hope to illuminate the field concerning a topic that has not been reviewed before (Suri & Clarke, 2009). As the report evolved, we have made explicit the paths and the decisions taken while doing this synthesis (Eisenhart, 1998; Suri & Clarke, 2009).

We first presented the main results. We draw conclusions by inductively deriving them through constant comparison and contrast of different components of the designs of the selected studies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Then, we compared the literature to describe the context in which reviewed studies were conducted. In order to do this, we used criteria to assess internal coherence of selected design features proposed by Butler (2006) and Quivy and Campenhoudt (1995). We decided to follow the standards proposed by these authors because they were applicable to qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method designs. We paid special attention to: a) the research project frame; and b) the design and methods. By doing this, we aimed at: a) a better understanding of the problem in question so that future studies have clearer standards of reference; and b) providing a basis for the planning of future research endeavors.

It should be noted that due to the variability and heterogeneity in the studies found it was not possible to conduct a systematic analysis of the findings. In addition, several of the conclusions drawn from the literature are based on limited data (one or two studies) and, as such, need to be interpreted with caution.

Results and Discussion

To aid in the interpretation of the results obtained, two tables were constructed with elements extracted from each study. Specifically, Table 1 includes: a) the theoretical viewpoint framing morality and studying moral influences; b) variables assessed; c) type of research design; d) participants sampled; e) means of data collection as related to morality and moral influences; and f) the sport context (i.e., the setting where the sport experience took place, such as an educational (e.g., high school) or competitive (e.g., club) context). Results of each study are briefly reported in Table 2. To note, variables assessed have been reported as they were referred to within each study.

(Insert table 1)

The coach as a moral influence

Major findings. To provide a frame for the rest of the paper, the main findings from the review are detailed here and the preceding sections provide the specific information upon which these conclusions are drawn. The main finding suggests a coach is a moral influence for athletes. A coach influence may be positive or negative. Athletes attitudes, behaviors and characteristics mirror those of coaches. Furthermore, a coach influence goes beyond the variables and sport contexts assessed. Due to methodological differences (e.g., the variety of measures used to define dependent variables and the lack

of design integrity among studies), the impact of the influence does not have the same operational meaning. Table 2 presents main results associated with each study.

(Insert table 2)

Coaches attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics associated with moral influences. Coaches immoral attitude and behaviour, based on a “winning-at-all-cost” philosophy, resulted in athletes engaging in poor moral behavior (Buford-May, 2001; Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner, & Bostrom, 1995; Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005; Stornes, 2001; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). In addition, an athlete’s perception that his or her coach approved of immoral behaviors was related to athletes lower levels of moral development (Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). These two findings indicate that the coach has an influence on athletes both via modeling (Bandura, 1986, 1991) and the creation of the moral atmosphere (Higgins, Power, & Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg, Scharf, & Hickey, 1971).

Evidence concerning the association of a coaches self-efficacy on moral factors is conflicting. Athletes perceptions of their coaches character building efficacy was related to an athlete’s positive behavior, but unrelated to an athlete’s negative behavior in one study (Boardley, Kavussanu, & Ring, 2008). Conversely, in another study, coaches self-reported character building efficacy was not related to a lower likelihood of an athlete to aggress, but the coaches own report of game strategy efficacy was (Chow, Murray, & Feltz, 2009). The authors speculated that coaches who perceived themselves as being strong ‘competition coaches’, had athletes who were likely to engage in immoral behaviors if that was what was required to win.

With regards to leadership and morality, results were also equivocal. In Stornes and Bru's (2002) study, autocratic leadership was associated with immoral behavior; whereas the coach's provision of social support and positive feedback was significantly linked to positive moral behavior. Similarly, in Shields and colleagues' (1995) study, athletes' perception of their coach as being autocratic was associated with the team norms of sanctioning immoral behavior. Also, a coach's provision of social support and positive feedback was associated with performance. A coach's self-report of an emphasis on teaching and instruction was also associated with the acceptance of cheating and aggression. Other variables related to leadership have been assessed as well. Coaches providing autonomous support to their athletes fostered the exhibition of more positive moral behaviors and less immoral behaviors (Ntoumanis & Standage, 2009). Finally, when coaches do not assume the responsibility of instilling positive moral behavior on their athletes this may be done by teammates (Lagzdins, 2008). This finding suggests that the athletes need for moral behavior during sport is strong enough to fill the void left by a coach who does not accept responsibility for the athletes moral behaviors.

Athletes recognize that coaches promote moral values (e.g., respect for the rules). In addition, an enriching coach-athlete relationship, based on empathy and opportunity to grow, was associated with the creation of a positive moral atmosphere (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Lagzdins, 2008; Rutten et al., 2007). However, sometimes coaches working at both educational and competitive levels created a certain moral ambiguity by calling for, allowing, or not condemning some poor behaviors (Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Long, Pantaléon, Bruant, & d'Arripe-Longueville, 2006; Stornes, 2001), especially when the achievement of performance results was emphasized (Long et

al., 2006). Given that norms and rules coaches establish within a team environment always have a strong influence on athletes behaviors, athletes not willing to follow coaches instructions reported having conflicts with their coaches (e.g., Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Long et al., 2006). Athletes reported that they did not react when the coach tried to exert their power if the athletes moral conscience was jeopardized. This was because coaches left no space for athletes to express themselves. Therefore, a coach's power (i.e., legitimate power and expert power) may inhibit athletes acts of resistance to a coach's immoral behaviors towards them. The most common coaches behaviors athletes reported to act as inhibitors of athletes rights to express or dissent were: a) reactive abuse (e.g., pushing); b) strategic abuse (e.g., ask an athlete to play with an injury); and, c) emotional abuse (e.g., humiliation) (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996).

In summary, the conclusions drawn from above indicate that coaches foster moral values, but prioritize winning over behaving morally. A coach seeking performance results may exert his or her power over the athletes, inhibiting their capacity of response. Conversely, an enriching coach-athlete relationship seems to be associated with a positive moral atmosphere. In addition, all studies that compared coaches characteristics (e.g., goal orientation) and associated athletes behaviors found a positive correlation. For example, a coach ego-orientation was related to low levels of moral development (Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996). Similarly, coaches sanctioning cheating and aggression is associated with athletes likelihood to behave in the same way (Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002). Collectively, this data supports the findings that coaches are moral influences for athletes and that this influence can be both positive and negative. It should

be noted that none of the studies that assessed the relationship between a coach's characteristics and athletes behaviors used longitudinal or experimental designs, therefore, we cannot conclude that it is only the coach who has an influence on athletes.

The research project frame

Theoretical and philosophical assumptions. We compared and contrasted studies by addressing the following questions: Is there a clear and proper presentation of the selected paradigm and a justification of the reasons for choosing it?; Does the researcher explain how the research problem fits into the research paradigm?; and are the philosophical assumptions in agreement with the requirements of selected worldview represented in the philosophical paradigm within which the research is undertaken? Our review found that only two studies reported the philosophical paradigmatic assumptions on which the study was based. In both cases, the paradigm reported was social constructionism. Although it exceeds the purposes of the present review, the paradigm referred to as social constructionism is concerned with subjective understanding and construction of meanings (Creswell, 2007; Gergen & Gergen, 2003). Only one of those studies clearly presented its philosophical paradigm (Buford-May, 2001). Specifically, this study was interested in understanding social construction of morality in a specific sport context and, to do so, conducted a prolonged observation of the participants. The other study (Shields, LaVoi, Bredemeier, & Power, 2007) confused philosophical paradigm with theoretical framework. The lack of a proper acknowledgment of the paradigm among other studies prevented us from analyzing the other standards of internal coherence.

Theoretical framework. The following guided this section: Are theoretical frameworks explicit?; Can the research question or the purpose of the study be framed within the theoretical framework chosen?; and does the theoretical framework attempt to reduce alternative explanations (i.e., it is a comprehensive theoretical framework)? Theories are constructed to explain and predict phenomena. They represent formal systems based on relationships that are tested and need to be replicated. In contrast, conceptual models represent relationships within a certain phenomena that have not been tested. Finally, concepts are abstract ideas that are used by both theories and models to build their systems (Suppes, 1967).

A common strategy used within all the reviewed studies was to introduce a definition of morality followed by a frame of reference related to moral influences. In the 18 studies reviewed, 14 used morality and four used sportsmanship. None of the studies considered morality in its philosophical sense, nor entertained the possibility that the concept studied may contribute to a theory of sport morality. Two predominant theories were used to theoretically frame the studies, the social cognitive theory and structural development theory.

The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) was used by eight studies to define morality and by six studies to frame moral influences. Initially, Bandura (1977) developed the social learning theory to explain behavior and defined it as a reciprocal relationship among personal factors (i.e., self), environmental influences, and behavior. Due to its early emphasis on behavior, this theory was considered by some researchers as a behavioral theory. Bandura (1986, 1989, 1997) evolved his framework and proposed the social cognitive theory which emphasized cognitive and social components of “moral

action.” Within the context of the social cognitive theory, moral action results from moral learning. Moral learning, which occurs during the process of socialization takes place through the internalization of socially accepted values and behaviors. An individual’s self-abilities (i.e., self-efficacy, self-regulation, self-control) enable a balance between individual and environmental influences. Moral action is dual, being proactive (i.e., prosocial and positive) or inhibitive (i.e., antisocial and negative) (Bandura, 1991). An individual’s engagement in either proactive or inhibitive moral actions depends on the cognitive activation of self-regulatory and perceived efficacy capabilities (Bandura, 1986, 1991; Janssen, Fennis, & Pruyn, 2010). The studies identified as using the social cognitive theory focused on assessing the role of the coach as a role model for both positive (i.e., prosocial, good social behavior) and negative behavior (e.g., antisocial, poor social behavior).

The structural development theory (Kohlberg, 1984) was used by six studies to define morality and eleven studies to frame moral influences. Within this theory, the study of morality focused on positive aspects (e.g., justice, responsibility). The central assumption of the structural developmental theory (Kohlberg, 1984), as well as, some of its derivations (e.g., Haan, 1991; Rest, 1984), is that people progress through orderly stages that reflect a more sophisticated moral development. A crucial notion within this approach is “moral atmosphere.” According to Kohlberg and colleagues (Higgins et al., 1984; Kohlberg et al., 1971; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989), moral development is an individual process influenced by social participation. Exposure to cognitive conflict due to the presence of a moral atmosphere different from an individual’s moral view purportedly promotes changes in both moral viewpoint and moral behavior. Like in

Bandura's theory, context is included as a force of change and moral knowledge continues to change throughout our lives. The reigning moral atmosphere sets the tone for members moral behaviors, even if the created and accepted moral tone does not agree with each individual's level of moral development (Higgins et al., 1984).

Identified studies basing their research in this approach examined the role of the coach as a contributor to the moral atmosphere of the team and assessed how the created environment was related to athletes moral behavior. Based on research evidence comparing athletes and non-athletes moral development, Bredemeier et al. (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a, 1986b; Shields & Bredemeier, 1984 1995) proposed that in sport, morality is "bracketed off" when compared to everyday life. For that reason, the term "bracketed morality" was coined.

Kohlberg's (1984) approach received certain criticism. Based on different critiqued aspects, new contributions were proposed. Three of these theoretical contributions, nested in the structural development theory, were used by studies that were reviewed. First, one study (Goeb, 1997) referred to the *gender based morality theory* proposed by Gilligan (1982). This theoretical framework states that Kohlberg's theory was inappropriate because by focusing on justice, other moral values such as care, relational responsiveness, and responsibility, typically associated with female socialization, were neglected. However, it should be noted that this criticism lacks empirical evidence. Second, the *moral interaction theory* developed by Haan (1991) proposes a model based on the idea of moral interaction and moral balance. Moral balance is about rights, privileges, and responsibilities; therefore, morality was understood to be a dynamic and evolving process of equilibration and based on mutual

interests, compromises of advantages, and compromises of disadvantages. In addition, moral balance is an interpersonal agreement, usually informally stated that could be tacit or explicit. Initially, five levels of moral maturity were defined; later on Haan decided to reframe them and to consider them as a continuum of adequacy and sensitivity toward a moral balance (Haan, 1991). Thus, from Haan's (1991) perspective, morality is seen as social, rather than a cognitive judgmental individual process. Unfortunately, from the six studies that presented moral interaction theory as part of their frameworks (see table 1), none of them tested the ideas proposed by Haan's theory (1991).

The *neo-Kohlbergian approach*, developed by Rest (1984), proposes that moral development is made up of four processes that include: (a) *moral sensitivity*; b) *moral judgement*; c) *moral intention*; and d) *moral behavior*. The first and third process are strongly related to self and the monitoring and regulation of self. This suggests that within the structural development theory, *moral development* depends upon both self and cognitions when referring to moral issues. According to Rest (1984), *moral functioning* is reflected in an individual's moral development that can be captured in the three last components of morality. Conversely, *moral reasoning* is captured in moral judgement, moral thought, and moral intention. From the three studies that used this approach, only one effectively evaluated the four components of morality (Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). Also, the studies that used the theoretical contributions of both the moral interaction theory (Haan, 1991) and neo-Kohlbergian approach (Rest, 1984), presented these contributions as part of the structural development theory and failed to properly identify the theoretical differences corresponding to each approach.

A comparison and contrast among theoretical frameworks show that only five studies clearly presented the frameworks in concert with the purpose of the study (Buford-May, 2001; Chow et al., 2009; Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Long et al., 2006; Ntoumanis & Standage, 2009). In the remaining studies, the frameworks were presented in a way that was not consistent with their original underlying tenants. As an example, the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) states that cognitive processes are regulated via self-mechanisms, such as self-regulation. However, none of the studies that used this theoretical framework referred to these processes; consequently, these processes were not measured or observed. Finally one study did not present a framework (Shields et al., 2005).

Substantive theory. In order to analyze the substantive theory used in the studies the following questions were posed: Have all the variables or units of analysis been theoretically defined and framed? and how validly can the variables or units of analysis be defined and framed within the chosen theory?

With regards to the definition of the variables of the studies, three trends were identified: a) those studies (n=16) that conceptually and operationally defined morality and moral influences (e.g., Boardley et al., 2008); b) a study that defined moral influences, but not morality (Shields et al., 2007); and c) a study that did not define their variables (Shields et al., 2005).

Grounded theories were used to define both morality and moral influences. Concerning morality, a lack of conceptual stability was also found. In addition to the use of different concepts to refer to morality, in one of the reviewed studies, sportsmanship was used in a different way than had originally been proposed (Shields et al., 2007).

Also, in other study, an instrument to measure fair play was used, but the concept of fair play was not referred to (Rutten et al., 2008).

In reference to moral influence, the majority of the studies (n=12) did not approach it as a coach's moral influence on the athlete, but rather as an association between a coach's attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics, and athletes attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics. For example, Chow et al. (2009) studied how a coach's self-efficacy was related to an athletes likelihood to aggress. The fact that moral influence was not studied, but instead an association between variables was used, is even clearer in studies (n=3) that used theories that do not refer to influence, such as the achievement goal theory (Shields et al., 2007; Stornes, 2001) and the social determination theory (Ntoumanis & Standage, 2009).

Only two studies used the same theory to define both morality and moral influences (Boardley et al., 2008; Long et al., 2006); the other studies used a collection of theories. While this is not problematic per se, it requires the researcher to integrate different approaches across different stages of the study, a task at which the majority of the studies (n=13) failed (e.g., Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Rutten et al., 2008; Rutten et al., 2007; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). As an example, Ntoumanis and Standage (2009) stated their position concerning "morality" by referring to "prosocial" and "antisocial behavior" as considered by Shields and Bredemeier (2007), and at the same time, by adhering to Vallerand and colleagues (Vallerand, Deshaies, & Currier, 1997) definition of sportsmanship. Not only did the authors measure sportsmanship and antisocial behavior using instruments that came from different backgrounds (and

therefore measuring different constructs), but also they treated these concepts as antipodes of a same phenomenon. Thus, this resulted in a lack of theoretical consistency.

Although there are several differences between the structural development theory and corresponding theoretical contributions described above, they have a common thread of all referring to the positive side of morality (e.g., justice, care, responsibility). These theories are interested in an individual's moral development, which is evaluated based on an individual's socially evolved viewpoints. However, of those studies using the structural development theory as a core theoretical framework, nine evaluated negative components of morality, such as cheating and aggression (e.g., Shields et al., 2007). Thus, instead of informing about moral development, these studies presented self-reported likelihood to engage in immoral behaviors.

The designs and methods

The defined research purposes of the reviewed studies. We were specifically interested in the following aspects: Are the research purposes clearly defined and in a feasible way?, and are the research purposes coherent with the research frame? The majority of the studies (n=16) presented purposes of research that were consistent with the methodologies reported (e.g., Boardley et al., 2008; Goeb, 1997; Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Lagzdins, 2008; Rutten et al., 2007; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). However, the purpose of two studies did not seem to reflect what they finally did (Rutten et al., 2008; Shields et al., 2005).

The main interest of developmental theories is to explain how development occurs (Lerner, 2006). Although fifteen studies used a framework related to moral development, only four of them actually assessed development (Buford-May, 2001;

Lagzdins, 2008; Long et al., 2006; Stornes, 2001). The other eleven studies were cross-sectioned, and as such, only captured certain stages of development. These studies neither depicted the process of development nor illuminated the reasons for the presence of a certain level of development.

Overall design. One main question was addressed concerning the overall methodological design: Is the design coherent with the proposed results? The majority of the studies (n=13) reviewed used a quantitative design, only two studies used qualitative designs, and three studies used mixed designs. The relative imbalance in study designs is a cause for concern. Given that the thrust of quantitative research is to test theory, and due to the already reported theoretical weaknesses of the studies, the path of evidence for theory generation or confirmation remains disconnected. As such, for the majority of the studies there was no generation or testing of theory. Also, in quantitative designs the researchers perspective is the one that is represented (i.e., these studies examine criteria pre-established by the researcher). Therefore, an understanding of the phenomenon through the participants perspectives is not captured. On the other hand, qualitative designs promote local an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). As an example, in Long et al.'s (2006) study, the authors clearly demonstrated how athletes processed their coaches messages related to the respect of rules.

A second design issue was the temporal nature of the studies. Sixteen studies were cross-sectional. Cross-sectional studies allow for the demonstration of an association between variables. For example, Goeb (1997) and Stephens and Bredemeier (1996) evaluated coaches level of moral reasoning and compared those results to athletes moral reasoning and levels of aggression. It can be argued, though, that the representation of

moral influence as a process implies longitudinal designs that allow for the understanding of the temporal nature between cause and effect. Therefore, due to the nature of the designs, the reviewed studies have mainly identified specific factors that participate in moral influences, rather than fostering understanding on how and why particular moral influences and moral development occur. On the other hand, the two longitudinal studies (Buford-May, 2001; Stornes, 2001) clearly presented how a coach's moral influence on the athletes take place across a certain period of time and how athletes process a coach's moral influence.

Sampling. The following questions were addressed in order to analyze sampling. Is the sample coherent with the overall design?, Can the research question be answered by the selected informants? All studies used an appropriate sample to address their purpose (i.e., coaches, athletes, or both when triangulation was aimed). Although the majority of the studies did not richly describe coaches, information concerning athletes was appropriate. Athletes were involved in sports in either educational or competitive settings, and their ages ranged from 9 to 34 years (those between 12-19 years were the most sampled group). Concerning the type of sampling, all studies used convenience sampling. While this is appropriate for qualitative and mixed method design studies, it is not ideal for quantitative studies, as it limits generalizability.

Data collection. Studies were analyzed by referring to the following questions: Can data be triangulated from multiple sources to corroborate findings? Do the selected instruments allow for the collection of appropriate data, in terms of the purpose and research question? All instruments used were appropriated for data collection proposed in the studies. Two strategies of data collection were used: a) interviews or observations of

both coaches and athletes, and then comparison of the two (e.g., Buford-May, 2001; Lagzdins, 2008; Shields et al., 2005); or b) interviews with athletes to obtain an appraisal or description of their coaches (e.g., Long et al., 2006; Shields et al., 1995; Shields et al., 2007). In the six studies which used the former strategy, when both ways of data collection were compared, evidence indicated that athletes perceived more negative behavior from their coaches compared to the coaches self-reported behavior (Lagzdins, 2008; Shields et al., 2005). The twelve studies which used the later strategy offered no possibility to compare information among participants. However, seven of these studies triangulated instruments; therefore, collected information was compared within each study. Both strategies of data collection were appropriated for the inquiry process and the overall design of the studies.

Instruments used to collect data also varied from study to study. The JAMBYSQ, the instrument that was most frequently used, was only used in three studies. This variation made it very difficult to compare findings of two or more studies of a similar research topic or question. on the other hand, the validity and reliability of the instruments have not been examined in depth in the context of the reviewed pieces of work, nor have been reported. This could be due to the fact that all instrument used were at a developmental stage.

Conclusion

The overarching purpose of the present paper was to interpretively and purposefully review literature addressing the nature of the coach as a moral influence. We purposefully selected empirical research studies to reflect the topic of interest. By doing that, we aimed to produce a meaningful review to illuminate the field concerning a topic

that has not been reviewed before (Eisenhart, 1998; Suri & Clarke, 2009). The research evidence is highly mixed and sometimes conflicting on this issue. Yet, there is evidence that suggests that the coach's influence can lead athletes to either moral or immoral behavior.

The main findings from this review are that a coach's moral reasoning, is associated to athletes moral reasoning (e.g., Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002). Also, a coach's behavior, measured via observation, self-report, and athletes perceptions, is related to athletes behavior (e.g., Buford-May, 2001; Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Stornes, 2001). Finally, a coach's attitude also has an impact on athletes attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995).

Internal coherence of reviewed studies. In order to assess the quality of reviewed studies, the internal coherence was assessed based on criteria developed by Butler (2006) and Quivy and Campenhoudt (1995). Only one study properly addressed its theoretical and philosophical assumptions (Buford-May, 2001). In relationship to theoretical frameworks used, the majority of the studies have been framed within two cognitive approaches: the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) and the structural development theory (Kohlberg, 1984) and its derivatives (Gilligan, 1982; Haan, 1991; Rest, 1984). Within the frame of the social cognitive theory, researcher's hypothesized that the coach was considered to be a role model; whereas within the structural development theory, the coach has been seen as a contributor to the moral atmosphere of the team, which in turn, influences athletes moral development. In general, neither a careful representation of the relationship between concepts used and existing theories, nor a clear connection between

the proposed definition of morality and the theory used to explain moral influences was presented.

Concerning the overall design, the majority of the studies were focused on moral development. However, the nature of the methodology selected did not facilitate the assessment of this phenomenon. Specifically, moral influence entails a process and the use of cross-sectional studies prevents the examination of this kind of temporal relationship. Instead, these types of designs provide valuable information on associations related to moral reasoning. In addition to design issues, the variation in variables measured complicated the comparison and contrast among studies.

Whilst the main findings reported above are derived from strong trends within the literature, they have to be considered with caution. Moral influence is in essence a process, yet the majority of the studies relied on quantitative designs which cannot measure process as it evolves in the sport setting. This is a serious issue and further understanding has to be provided in order to contribute to existing theory. Due to the nature of prevalent designs pointed out in the previous paragraph, it is difficult to understand the process via which moral influences take place and how influence varies across athletes developmental stages.

According to athletes, coaches foster moral behavior, but under certain circumstances (e.g., the need for performance results) negative behavior (e.g., arguing with referees, yelling at athletes) is accepted (Buford-May, 2001; Long et al., 2006). Coaches set the moral tone within a team and the athletes are likely to accept it; otherwise, conflicts arise and coaches have the power to solve them in the way they believe to be the most appropriate (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996). How team and

individual sports might differ in this respect would seem to be an interesting avenue for future research.

Future research. From the current review there are clearly areas where much work still needs to be done. Concerning the overall design, a first suggestion is to focus on grounded theory development (Cohen & Strauss, 1990) devoted to study moral influences in sport. Findings indicate that the study of moral influences in sport has been largely based on general theories; therefore, there is a lack of knowledge specifically generated in the field (i.e., capturing all aspects that are distinct to sport settings). Arguably, an important issue of concern is that there are no specific theories or models to study moral influences in sport to explain moral influences without referring to existing theory. Second, this review also indicated that a more in-depth theoretical integration needs to be done in order to generate a more comprehensive framework for explaining the nature and function of morality in sport. This can be achieved through more collaborative and concentrated effort on the establishment of the reliability and validity of measures of morality and moral influence. In addition, given methodological differences among studies, it is important to seek for replication what will contribute to valuable information regarding the nature of morality in sport. This will lead to more sustainable measures. Also, the use of different research designs and related methods (e.g., longitudinal, qualitative studies, mixed method design) will strength the evidence by providing support and confirmation to available evidence.

Concerning the topics related to moral influences, future research needs to explore what contributes to the occurrence of them. Beyond coaches attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics, it still needs to be unveiled what facilitates the occurrence of such an

influence. Although it is assumed that morality is context-related, studies have neither explored how moral meanings are negotiated between coaches and athletes, nor the relationship between culture and moral influences. For those reasons, more description of the context in which moral conflicts arise is needed. Finally, when and how a coach's exert a moral influence on the athlete needs to be addressed as well. For example, more evidence on how a coach's characteristics (e.g., work experience, socio-cultural background) affect athletes morality is required.

Practical implications. Evidence suggests that given that coaches are important moral influences for their athletes, they need to be sensitized about the role they play in sport and its relationship to morality. Coaches have to be aware of the associated impact and risk of their attitudes and behaviors, such as, "winning-at-all-costs." The fact that only one coaching model, the Model of Coaching Efficacy (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999) includes morality as one of the components to be assessed indicates that morality has been largely a second order component in the study of coaching and leadership. For that reason, morality needs to be included as a crucial component in the preparation of coaches in terms of the potential costs to the athlete and to the concept of sport itself.

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Footnotes

¹ Ten reviews have been conducted in the field between 2000 and 2010 (Bredemeier and Shields (2005); Kavussanu (2007, 2008); Solomon, (2004); Shields and Bredemeier (2001, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c); Weiss and Smith (2002); Weiss, Smith, and Stuntz, (2008).

Table 1.

Overviewed studies presented in chronological order (n=18)

Study	Theoretical viewpoint		Variables assessed	Research design	Participants	Means of data collection	Sport context
	Morality	Influence					
Ntoumanis & Standage (2009)	SPA ¹	SDT ³	Autonomy support;	QT ⁴	N=314 athletes (age range= 18-25; Mage=19.67; SD=1.59)	MSOS ⁶ and AMDYSQ ⁷	Competition
	SCT ²		motivation; competence; relatedness; sportpersonship; antisocial moral attitudes.	CS ⁵			
Chow et al. (2009)	SDTH ⁸	SDTH	Demographic; judgments	QT	N=258 athletes (age range=12-19); and N=23 coaches	JAMBYSQ ⁹ and CES ¹⁰	Competition
	SCT	SCT	about moral behavior; coaching efficacy.	CS			

(Table continues)

Table 1. (continued)

Boardley et al. (2008)	SCT	SCT	Coaching efficacy; effort; sport commitment; enjoyment; task self-efficacy; prosocial and antisocial behavior.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =166 male athletes (<i>M</i> _{age} =26.5; <i>SD</i> =8.5)	CES and a scale ¹¹	Competition
Rutten et al. (2008)	SCT SDTH	SCT SDTH	Verbal intelligence; social desirability; sociomoral reasoning; attitude toward fair play; relational support; sociomoral team atmosphere.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =311 athletes (age range=9-19; <i>M</i> _{age} =14.0; <i>SD</i> =2.0); and <i>N</i> =54 coaches	RSI ¹² , PSROM-Sport ¹³ , FPQ ¹⁴ , and SBI ¹⁵	Competition
Lagzdins (2008)	MPA ¹⁶	SLT ¹⁷	Coach-athlete relationship; moral consideration; moral agency; values; coaching philosophy.	MD ¹⁸ CS	<i>N</i> =65 female athletes (age range=18-23) and <i>N</i> =4 coaches	Surveys ¹⁹ , FGI ²⁰ , and SSI ²¹	Education

(Table continues)

Table 1. (continued)

Shields et al. (2007)	n.s. ²²	SDTH AGT NKA ²³	Demographic; moral behavior (good and poor); team norms.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =676 students (age range=9-15; <i>M</i> age=12.1, <i>SD</i> =1.14)	Survey ²⁴	Education
Rutten et. al (2007)	SCT SDTH	SCT SDTH	Social desirability; moral behavior (antisocial and social); sociomoral atmosphere and reasoning; coach-athlete relationship.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =260 athletes (age range=12-18; <i>M</i> age=14.8, <i>SD</i> =1.5)	ASBI ²⁵ , PBQ ²⁶ , SROM-SF ²⁷ and PSROM-Sport	Competition
Long et al. (2006)	SDTH	SDTH GRM ²⁸	Perceptions of rules.	QL ²⁹ CS	<i>N</i> =10 athletes (<i>M</i> age=16.5; <i>SD</i> =1.0)	SSI	Competition

(Table continues)

Table 1. (continued)

Shields et al. (2005)	n.s.	n.s.	Moral behavior (good and poor).	QT CS	<i>N</i> =803 students (age range=9-15; <i>M</i> age=12.2, <i>SD</i> =1.15); and <i>N</i> =61 coaches	Survey	Education
Stornes & Bru, (2002)	SPA	MML ³⁰	Sportsmanship; leadership.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =440 athletes (age range=14-16)	EMSOS ³¹ and MML	Competition
Guivernau et al. (2002)	SDTH	SDTH MIT ³²	Demographic; moral functioning; team norm; aggression.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =194 athletes (Males <i>M</i> age=15.41; Females <i>M</i> age=15.32)	JAMBYSQ and TNQ ³³	Education
Buford-May (2001)	MFT ³⁴	SDTH	Coaching philosophy.	QL LG ³⁵	n.s.	Field work ³⁶	Education

(Table continues)

Table 1. (continued)

Stornes, (2001)	SPA	MIT AGT ³⁷	Respect; social expectation; type of interests; goal orientation; moral behavior.	MD LG	<i>N</i> =12 athletes (age range=19- 27)	Field work SSI	Competition
Goeb, (1997)	SDTH	COT ³⁸ SDTH GBMT ³⁹ NKA MIT	Moral reasoning.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =366 athletes and <i>N</i> =56 coaches	HBVCI ⁴⁰	Education
Stephens & Bredemeier (1996)	SLT	SDTH MIT	Moral development; aggression; goal orientation; team norm.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =212 female athletes (age range=9-14; <i>M</i> age= 11.47 years, <i>SD</i> =1.19)	JAMBYSQ	Competition

(Table continues)

Table 1. (continued)

Duquin & S.-Braun, (1996)	SCT	SLT NKA CT ⁴¹	Empathy; power; social support; moral conflict.	MD CS	<i>N</i> =250 students (age range=12- 18), 93% were also athletes	Moral dilemmas and survey	Education
Shields et al. (1995)	GRM	SDTH MIT MML	Demographic; leadership style; team norm.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =106 athletes (age range=13- 19; <i>M</i> age=16.3; <i>SD</i> =1.07); <i>N</i> =192 athletes (age range=18- 33; <i>M</i> age=19.7; <i>SD</i> =1.89); and coaches (n.s.)	TNQ MML	Education

(Table continues)

Table 1. (continued)

Stuart & Ebbeck, (1995)	SLT	SDTH NKA	Moral development; perceived social approval.	QT CS	<i>N</i> =249 students from two schools (<i>M</i> _{age} =10.5; <i>SD</i> =0.27; and <i>M</i> _{age} =12.6; <i>SD</i> =0.24)	Moral dilemmas	Education
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Notes: ¹Social-psychological approach; ²Social cognitive theory; ³Self-determination theory; ⁴Quantitative; ⁵Cross-sectional; ⁶Multidimensional sportspersonship orientation scale (Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997); ⁷Attitudes to moral decision-making in youth sport questionnaire (Lee, Whitehead, & Ntoumanis, 2007); ⁸Structural developmental theory; ⁹Judgments about moral behavior in youth sports questionnaire (Stephens, Bredemeier, & Shields, 1997); ¹⁰Coaching efficacy scale (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999); ¹¹Previously used by Sage, Kavussanu, and Duda (2006); ¹²Relational support inventory (Scholte, Van Lieshout, & Van Aken, 2001); ¹³Practical sociomoral reflection objective measure (Rutten et al., 2007); ¹⁴Fair play questionnaire (Rutten et al., 2008); ¹⁵Behavior inventory (Rutten et al., 2008); ¹⁶Moral philosophical approach; ¹⁷Social Learning Theory; ¹⁸Mixed

design; ¹⁹Survey of values, attitudes, and behavior; survey of beliefs of moral agency and sportsmanship and coaches survey of beliefs of moral agency and sportsmanship (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2006); ²⁰Focus group interviews; ²¹Semi-structured interviews; ²¹Neo-kohlbergian approach; ²²not specified; ²³Neo-Kohlbergian Approach; ²⁴Specifically designed for the study; ²⁵Antisocial behavior inventory (e.g., Tavecchio, Stams, Brugman, & Thomeer-Bouwens, 1999); ²⁶Prosocial behavior questionnaire (Weir & Duveen, 1981); ²⁷Sociomoral reflection objective measure; ²⁸Game reasoning model; ²⁹Qualitative; ³⁰Multidimensional model of leadership; ³¹Extended-MSOS; ³²Moral interactional theory; ³³Team norm questionnaire (Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner, & Bostrom, 1995); ³⁴Moral Foundation Theory; ³⁵Longitudinal design; ³⁶Observation, field notes, and informal conversations; ³⁷Achievement goal theory; ³⁸Constructivist theory; ³⁹Gender based morality theory; ⁴⁰Hahm-Beller values choice inventory (Hahm, Beller, & Stoll,

Table 2.

Results reported by studies related to the coach as a moral influence

Study	Results
Ntoumanis & Standage (2009)	Athletes perceptions of coach autonomy support were positively associated with athletes satisfaction of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. These three needs positively predicted autonomous motivation that was positively associated with sportspersonship and negatively associated with antisocial moral attitudes in sport.
Chow et al. (2009)	Athletes self-described likelihood to aggress was related to coaches game strategy efficacy, but unrelated to coaches character building efficacy.
Rutten et al. (2008)	Part of the variance in off-field antisocial behavior, and in on-field antisocial and prosocial behavior, was attributed to characteristics of the sporting environment, including relational support from the coach, exposure to high levels of sociomoral reasoning about sports dilemmas, and positive team attitude toward fair play. Relational support was the only factor related to both antisocial and prosocial behavior.

(Table continues)

Table 2. (continued)

Boardley et al. (2008)	Perception of coaches self-efficacy to build character predicted athletes prosocial behavior.
Lagzdins (2008)	Coaches perceived themselves as moral agents, but they were unsure on how they promote morality. Team captains were unanimously perceived as influential moral agents by both coaches and athletes. Athletes mentioned that it was ok if coaches taught any type of unsportsmanlike behavior.
Shields et al. (2007)	Self-reported poor sport behaviors were best predicted by perceived coach behaviors, followed by the perceived norms of coaches.
Rutten et. al (2007)	Coaches who maintain good relationships with their athletes reduce antisocial behavior. Exposure to relatively high levels of sociomoral reasoning promotes prosocial behavior. Female athletes reported higher levels of moral functioning, lower approval of unsportsmanlike behaviors, and were less likely to judge injurious acts as legitimate when compared to male athletes.
Long et al. (2006)	Coach lead athletes to respect the rules; however, the coach's pressure to win may lead to rule transgression as well.

(Table continues)

Table 2. (continued)

Shields et al. (2005)	Athletes reported a low level of poor behavior which was associated with coach's poor behavior.
Stornes & Bru, (2002)	Athletes perceived themselves to behave pro-socially, but they also reported instrumental aggressive behavior and low respect for opponents. Associations of perceived leadership with sportpersonship were found primarily for individual perceptions.
Guivernau et al. (2002)	Athletes perceptions of their coach norms for cheating and aggression influenced their decision to engage in these inappropriate acts. The coach seemed to be the only individual that athletes perceived as being most influential when faced with a moral decision. The coach was perceived by young players as one predominant figure. Gender differences appeared in males reporting higher perceptions of peer acceptance of cheating as compared to females.
Buford-May (2001)	Coaching philosophy emphasizing winning-at-all-costs pushed athletes to shift their definition and application of sportsmanship.

(Table continues)

Table 2. (continued)

Stornes, (2001)	Athletes behavior and ego-oriented goal perspectives were related to unsportsmanship. Social expectations significantly influenced players attitudes as well. The coach proved to be a major source of influence, especially on the less experienced younger players. Sportsmanship was primarily dependent on the subjective measurements of utility, which predisposed the players to act out of self-interest and the interests of their team.
Goeb, (1997)	Coaches and athletes had similar levels of cognitive moral reasoning. Female athletes, especially those in individual sports, had a higher level of cognitive moral reasoning on justice and honesty.
Stephens & Bredemeier (1996)	A coach's ego orientation was moderately related to athletes own perception of likelihood to aggress.
Duquin & S.- Braun, (1996)	Females perceived more coaches moral violations and seek for more social support when a coach's power abuse was perceived. Although athletes searched social support concerning moral conflict, the situation did not change, they did not protest, but they either quit, or sabotaged the situation.

(Table continues)

Table 2. (continued)

Shields et al. (1995)	Coaches were expected to sanction cheating and aggression. This perception was stronger in older males with higher level of education, participating in a winning environment, and that perceived and preferred autocratic behavior and perceived social support from their coaches.
Stuart & Ebbeck, (1995)	Athletes perceived social approval was associated with moral development. Coaches had a medium canonical loading when compared to other sources.

CHAPTER 2 - MORALITY IN SPORT. THE COACH'S PERSPECTIVE

RUNNING HEAD: Morality in sport

Morality in sport. The coach's perspective

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Abstract

Coaches are important moral influences for their athletes. The majority of the theoretical models proposed to study morality in the field of sports are based on the researchers perspective. Therefore, the coaches perspectives concerning morality are underrepresented. The consideration of coaches perception and conceptualization of morality is important because coaching practices are based on them. Thus, the main purpose of the present study was to explore coaches understanding of morality. We designed a qualitative collective case study to best capture coaches voices. Participants were seven elite coaches currently coaching in Canada ($M_{age}= 46.3$; $SD=7.6$). Data was analyzed using open coding, a strategy of analysis proposed within the frame of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As reported in previous literature, these coaches mentioned that morality was hard to define because it was an unspecific, broad, and abstract concept. Coaches understood morality as having three dimensions: a) “elite sport involvement” (e.g., discipline); b) “interaction with others” (e.g., respect); and c) “self-related” (e.g., “being one-self in harmony,” “being happy”). In addition, coaches identified a series of individual factors (e.g., personal motivation, sport status, and evaluation of consequences) responsible for moral viewpoint that represent an original finding. For these coaches, morality entails three types of values: social, moral, and self-related. This means that it is highly probable that coaches promote values in their training sessions that are not just moral values.

Keywords: coach - sport - values - morality - culture

Morality in sport: The coaches perspective

The study of the relationship between morality and sport has increased in recent years (e.g., Boardley, Kavussanu, & Ring, 2008; Bredemeier, 1985; Vallerand, Deshaies, Currier, Brière, & Pelletier, 1996). However, there is still no agreement on what comprises a moral issue. Previous literature has identified the coach as an important moral influence for the athletes (Peláez, Aulls, Rossi, & Bacon, 2010). However, only a few studies have assessed morality from the coaches perspective (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Rudd & Mondello, 2006). The consideration of coaches perception and conceptualization of morality is important because coaching practices are based on them. Thus, the main purpose of the present study was to explore coaches understanding of morality. In order to achieve our purpose, we designed a qualitative case study.

Psychosocial theories addressing morality

There is no consensus in social sciences concerning what comprises a moral issue (Barrow, 2007). In the field of psychology, morality has been studied from a broad perspective, including approaches that understood morality as being biologically rooted (Eysenck, 1976) and those representing its cultural relativism (Bronfenbrenner, 1962). However, it is within the frame of two cognitive theories that morality has been most deeply studied. These theories are: social cognitive theory and structural moral development theory.

The *social cognitive theory* supports the idea that moral learning occur as a part of the socialization process, specifically through the internalization of socially accepted behaviours. Within this framework, moral behaviour is socially defined, overt and

observable, and depends on a person's learning history. Individuals learn moral standards by observing, analyzing, and reproducing behaviours (Bandura, 1991). Self-regulation (i.e., the translation of rewards and punishments into internal affective mechanisms) and perceived efficacy (i.e., belief in one's capability of achieving personal control) are the mechanisms mediating moral cognition and moral action (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Individual self-regulatory capabilities operate if activated; therefore, if not activated, individuals may engage in morally disengaged behaviours.

The *structural moral development theory* is based on the following fundamental points: a) the constructivist approach (i.e., the context and the person are irreducible because both participate in building meanings); b) cognitive structures are based upon actions; c) there is a coherent, hierarchical, and culturally universal mental structure developed through an invariant sequence of stages that reveals an individual's thoughts and behaviours (pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional); d) development is always towards a greater equilibrium and a greater balance that, in turn, reflects stability of cognitive acts; and e) moral stages presuppose cognitive stages (Kohlberg, 1984). This theory assumes that there is an universal development of justice reasoning underlying moral behaviour.

According to Kohlberg (1976), the discussion of morality from a social perspective requires the differentiation between an individual's perception of a given fact and the universal prescription of the right or good. A crucial concept developed by Kohlberg and colleagues (Higgins, Power, & Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg, Scharf, & Hickey, 1971) is moral atmosphere. The authors noted that moral development is an individual process highly influenced by social participation. Thus, exposure to cognitive

moral conflict different to an individual's own moral view promotes either moral development, or moral regression (Kohlberg et al., 1971).

Based on the legacy left by Kohlberg, some advances in the study of morality have been proposed. These advances enhanced the study of an individual's cognitions concerning morality with consideration to specific social variables and situational factors. For example, Gilligan's (1982) central thesis was that by focusing on justice, Kohlberg neglected other values such as care, relational responsiveness, and responsibility. Gilligan pointed out that as a result of separate socialization experiences, girls were more prone to experience care, whereas boys were more prone to be driven by justice.

Haan (1991) based her model on the idea of moral balance (i.e., interpersonal agreement, usually informally stated that could be tacit or explicit). Moral balance is about rights, privileges, and responsibilities; and is principally based on mutual interests, compromises based on advantages, and compromises based on disadvantages. The consideration of balance denotes the assumption that fairness is not universal. However, when dialogues are fair, reasoned conclusions are accurate. Thus, objective equality itself is not important, but the reciprocal recognition of balance and commitment to the relationship and the moral exchange is important. Moral dialogues are crucial to attain moral balance. For Haan, the idea of moral context was crucial to the understanding of moral reasoning because it brought cognitive function onto the scene.

Another important referent that advanced on Kohlberg's ideas was Rest (1983, 1984). Rest (1984) supported the idea that behaviour, as well as, affect, emotion, and cognition should be studied together. Also, this author stated that the main focus of

study of morality should be understanding and explaining moral action. For that reason, he proposed that four major inner processes were implicated in each moral action. The first component was the interpretation of the situation by recognizing the possible courses of action and how different actions would influence the welfare of all parties involved. The second component was the formation of a judgement about the right thing to do, which involved both moral judgment and moral reasoning. The third component was deciding what one intended to do by selecting among competing values. This has been also referred to as moral intention. The last component entailed executing and implementing what one intended to do (i.e., enacting the actual moral behaviour, Rest, 1984). The last three dimensions of morality have been used to refer to both moral development and moral functioning (Kavussanu, 2008).

Finally, Geertz (1973) noted that cultural systems shape the concept of “man” by societal rules, language, religion, and ideology, to mention but a few. It is culture that gives sense to human behaviour because it represents the context wherein human behaviour takes place. Turiel (1989) stated that “culture is *the* context that organizes psychological acquisition” (p. 92). People may be part of the same culture; however, due to personal choices and moral judgements, they may stay apart from some culturally established standards (Turiel, 1998, 2002). Thus, this author proposed the *social domain theory* that understood morality as not universal, but heterogeneous. According to Turiel (1983), morality referred to prescriptive and universal “rules” (e.g., rights, justice, welfare), whereas “social conventions” were described as arbitrary and regulated based on social consensus. In an attempt to delimit the boundaries of morality, Turiel (1983) stated that moral behaviours are those that have consequences for others rights and

wellbeing.

The state of the art in the field of sports

Following Blasi's (1987) understanding of morality as an intentional and ideal response to an obligation and by pulling elements from the structural moral development theories, Shields and Bredemeier (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995, 2001) put forward the *game reasoning model*. The four dimensions of morality (interpretation, judgement, choice, and implementation) described by Rest (1984) were dimensionalized into three influences (context, personal competencies, and ego-processes). These authors referred to morality as *character*. Character has been used in the literature in different ways (Turiel, 2002) and Shields and Bredemeier (1995) used it as a synonym of personality.

Throughout their research endeavours, the authors studied the following descriptors of morality: injurious acts (i.e., aggression, causation of injuries, or intimidation); good sport attitude and behaviour (i.e., honesty, cooperation, justice, or loyalty); and poor sport attitude and behaviour (i.e., angry critiques, cheating, encourage bad behaviour, gender stratification, "getting back" at the opponent's dirty play, making fun of others, lack of responsibility, unfairness, violation of rules, or yelling) (e.g., Bredemeier, 1985, 1994; Bredemeier & Shields, 1986b; Miller, Bredemeier, & Shields, 1997; Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005; Shields, LaVoi, Bredemeier, & Power, 2007; Solomon & Bredemeier, 1999; Stephens, Bredemeier, & Shields, 1997). A major research strategy within this model was to compare moral reasoning and moral intentions in sport and non-sport situations, and in athletes and non-athletes. The authors concluded that sport promotes and allows a differential way of moral functioning that

was referred to as “bracketed morality” (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

Rudd (2005) noted that “character” has been used in two senses in the field of sports. “Moral character,” which is based upon moral values such as respect and cooperation, is related to modes of behaviour between people (Rokeach, 1973); therefore, it is critical to human relationships (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Belier, 1999). On the other hand, “social character” is based upon social values that are held by a society or culture and that are considered vital in reaching a desired end state. Rudd’s understanding of “social character” is in line with Turiel’s (1983) description of “social conventions.”

Vallerand and colleagues (Vallerand, 1991; Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997; Vallerand, Deshaies, & Currier, 1997; Vallerand, Deshaies, Currier, Brière, & Pelletier, 1996; Vallerand & Losier, 1994) built their *social-psychological* model on Keating’s (2003) understanding of *sportsmanship*: “the attitude that honours the winning during competition (referred to as athletics) and has a generous and enjoyable spirit while doing recreational activities (referred to as sports)” (p. 26). The authors attempted to capture athletes viewpoints of sportsmanship by both providing items describing sportsmanship, as well as, asking them to define sportsmanship. Findings indicated that sportsmanship was understood as respect and concern for: a) one’s full commitment to sport participation; b) rules and officials; c) social conventions; and d) the opponent. A negative approach to sport participation, such as the desire to win at all costs, was the fifth factor. Sportsmanship was ecologically understood and multi-dimensionally conceived in nature because it reflected the sport participant’s relationship with the environment and the other participants (Vallerand et

al., 1996).

Boixadós and colleagues (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995; Boixadós, Cruz, Torregrosa, & Valiente, 2004) used the concept of *fair play*. Fair play, broadly understood as the responsibilities associated to different sport roles (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995), implied: a) a recognition and respect towards the rules of the game; b) correct relationships with the opponent; c) the maintenance of the same opportunities and conditions for everybody; d) avoiding “winning-at-all-cost;” e) an honourable attitude in winning and in defeat; and f) a commitment to giving as much as possible (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995). These researchers studied the role of sporting values in relationship to sport participation and moral development (Lee, 1991; Lee & James, 1986).

Based on the fact that what finally counts is overt behaviour (Bandura, 1991), Kavussanu and colleagues (e.g., Boardley & Kavussanu, 2007; Kavussanu, 2006; Kavussanu, Seal, & Phillips, 2006) studied *moral behaviour*. *Prosocial behaviours* entails actions intended to benefit others than oneself (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Within this approach, examples of prosocial behaviours studied are: helping; respecting; congratulating; honouring the winning; altruism; and equality (Kavussanu, 2006; Sage & Kavussanu, 2007). Conversely, examples of *antisocial behaviour* are those behaviours intended to harm or disadvantage others (Kavussanu, 2006; Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006), such as conduct reconstrual; advantageous comparison; non-responsibility; distortion of consequences; dehumanization; attribution of blame; sport moral disengagement; “booking an opponent;” “winding up;” fooling others; elbowing; hand-balling; pretending to be injured; retaliating; “body-checking;” rivalry; and displaying superiority (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2007; Kavussanu, 2006; Kavussanu

& Ntoumanis, 2003; Sage & Kavussanu, 2007). As noted by some scholars, the study of overt behaviour considers neither the reasons nor the intentions behind it (Kavussanu, 2008), nor the cognitive process that underlies it (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

Finally, there is a distinction at a practical level between moral and *ethics* (Barrow, 2007). Ethics is associated with a code of conduct. For that reason, the term “ethics” has been mostly used in philosophy, rather than in applied fields such as for example sport psychology.

While these four approaches to morality differ, they share some limitations. First, the majority of the topics that have been used within the described models have not been clearly defined. As an example, Boixadós and Cruz (1995) proposed that fair play implied “real commitment ... that each one has to contribute as much as possible,” but it is unclear the exact meaning of this. Second, the studies have mostly used the researcher’s perspective to study morality. This means that researchers have arbitrarily chosen some of the constructs associated to morality, such as respect and aggression, and used them to study morality as a whole. A limitation of using this approach is that the researcher’s moral standards are used, meaning that individual processes and socio-cultural differences are not taken into account. Third, the research methods used have been predominantly quantitative; therefore, they have provided crucial information concerning trends, but they have not enlightened the understanding of the situation. Finally, these approaches have based their research endeavour in same order research questions. According to Dillon (1984), research questions can be classified into five orders depending on the type of knowledge the question attempts to produce. All the approaches herein described have used first-order questions that promote the

illumination of properties (e.g., identification, definition, description, function, and simple explication). This means previous research has advanced in the exploration of morality; however, an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon is still needed. Specifically, elements that have been previously identified need to be connected, generating a higher level of understanding.

Some studies to capture participants perspectives using qualitative methods have been carried out. For example, children and youth (Bovyer, 1963; Cruz et al., 1991; Lee & James, 1986; Stuart, 2003), athletes (Long, Pantaléon, Bruant, & d'Arripe-Longueville, 2006), and coaches (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Rudd & Mondello, 2006) have all been qualitatively assessed. Bovyer studied children's knowledge of sportsmanship. Content analysis of the interviews revealed that for these children "sportsmanship" was associated with: a) playing by the rules and exhibit fair play; b) playing many kinds of games and playing for the fun of it; c) respect (decisions, requests, opinions, ideas, emotional and physical feelings of other people, efforts and abilities of others, and property); d) being a good loser, a good winner, a good team player, being even-tempered; a skilful player; e) minding his own business; f) sharing things; g) taking turns and letting the others play; and h) do the best one can. Lee and James study, a replication of Cruz and colleagues study, explored youth perceived values associated to sport participation. These two studied found that some values were associated to morality (i.e., accepting, caring, conformity, conscientious, contract maintenance, equity/fairness, good game, obedience, and sportsmanship); whereas others were not (i.e., achievement, companionship, health and fitness, self-actualization, showing skills, team cohesion, winning, social approval, and

joy). Instead, Stuart explored moral issues children experienced in sport. This author found children perceived favouritism, special treatment, not providing choice, wrong decisions, and pressure to play and win, as unfair actions. Also, disrespect, physical harm, intimidation, misbehaviour, selfishness, losing control, and dishonesty were perceived as negative behaviours.

In a different vein, Long and colleagues (2006) found that athletes reasons for respecting or transgressing rules in competitive settings were perceived to depend upon individual characteristics (e.g., desire to win); the influence of the social environment (e.g., team norms); sports values and virtues (e.g., fair play); and sports rewards (e.g., media recognition).

Concerning coaches, Duquin and colleagues (Duquin, 1984; Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996) found that females used the ethic of care as compared to males who used the self-interest rationale. Romand and Pantaléon (2007), who focused on coaches understanding of rules, found that although coaches imparted general values, they sometimes struggled in balancing these values and the necessity to win. Finally, Rudd (2005) noted that coaches tended to overemphasize social character over moral character. Rudd suggested that this was probably because these values were effective for winning.

In summary, the consideration of morality varies from study to study. Moreover, most of the aforementioned literature has studied morality from the researcher's viewpoint. In addition, some of the categories that have been proposed by the researchers have not been clearly defined. Only a few qualitative studies have examined participants understanding of morality, and only four of them interviewed coaches

(Duquin, 1984; Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Rudd & Mondello, 2006). Participants understanding of morality enhanced information previously reported by quantitative studies. For example, qualitative endeavours showed that moral behaviours are not dichotomized into positive behaviours and negative behaviours, but dimensionalized based on certain rationale (e.g., the need to win) (Long et al., 2006; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007). Whilst there have been some advance in the field, research is needed to illuminate not only the participants understanding of morality, but also the dynamic of morality, its dimensions, and its characteristics from the participants viewpoint. Hence, the purpose of the present study was to explore coaches understanding of morality. Evidence from this study will be useful to address the void in the current literature and may aid in the design of coaches educational interventions to addressed athletes moral guidance.

Method

Methodological approach

We used a social constructionism approach (K.J. Gergen, 2009; M.M. Gergen & Gergen, 2003) which is a perspective that reflects social negotiations people do and processes people go through within a cultural and historical context. Theoretical approaches based on social construction are interested in meanings and significances that contribute to an individual's building of knowledge which is reflected in their actions (Shotter, 1995). For these reason, we assumed this perspective was appropriate to understand coaches meanings of morality.

A qualitative collective case study design was used. Case studies are bounded systems that allow an in-depth description, analysis, and understanding of an issue

(Stake, 1995, 1998; Yin, 2003, 2006). Systems are bounded by characteristics. In the present study these characteristics were: a) participant's gender; b) physical contact required in the sport; c) type of sport dynamic; d) sport context; e) elite level of competition; f) extended sport involvement; and g) culture. Case studies are recommended when accurate, but limited local understanding is the goal, and when the researcher aims for an emphasis on interpretation (Stake, 1998). Collective case studies sample more than one unique case to achieve better understanding through comparing multiple cases (Stake).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), "qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (pp. 3). The researcher has to make sense and reconstruct participants meanings. In order to do so, the researcher, as a maker of quilt does, deploys whatever strategies, methods, tools, and techniques are at hand to interpret meanings people bring (Becker, 1998).

In the present study, criterion-based sampling was used (Patton, 2002). Selected criteria reflected issues that have been related to morality in previous literature: a) extent of sport involvement; b) level of competition; c) amount of physical contact required by the sport; and, d) gender. Broadly understood, the literature indicates that lower moral functioning is related to: males (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Cooper, 1987); an extended sport involvement (e.g., Silva, 1983); competing at elite level (e.g., Smith, 1979); and participating in medium to high physical contact sports (e.g., Conroy, Silva, Newcomer, Walker, & Johnson, 2001).

In addition, three additional criteria were included: a) type of sport dynamic; b) sport context; and c) culture. Different sport dynamics were included because it has been

previously suggested that the team sports dynamic, when compared to the individual sport dynamic, may foster the creation and development of a moral atmosphere. This, in turn, may lead athletes to behave in accordance to the dynamic, irrespective of their personal moral standards (Vallerand, Brière et al., 1997). On the other hand, sport context and culture are two criteria that have not been previously studied in relationship to morality. Sport context refers to the frame where the sport is taking part (i.e., clubs or educational institutions, such as high school, colleges, or universities). For example, in Quebec, sport practices conducted at educational institutions are under the guidance of *Sport Etudiant*, an organization that controls sport practices and provides a specific ethical frame. It can be speculated that participants involved in educational sport context may behave in agreement with different ways concerning morality because they are guided by settings with different ethical frames. Finally, Vergeer (2000) noted that it was important to address the role of culture when studying coach-athlete relationship. Given that moral influences suppose interpersonal relationships, the present study attempted to address cultural differences as well.

Participants

Participants constituted a purposive sample selected in a deliberative fashion to address certain issues that have been previously related to morality; therefore, enhancing the sensitivity of the topic. Participants were seven elite coaches currently coaching in Canada. Two separated bounded cases were defined. Two main criteria were considered: a) those that were shared by both case studies; and b) those selected for the purposes of comparison. All participants had prolonged elite sport involvement as athletes ($M=7$; $SD=2$; $range=4$ to 10 years); as coaches ($M=29$; $SD=10$; $range=20$ to 41 years); and as

elite coaches ($M=14$; $SD=7$; $range=6$ to 22 years). Previous literature indicated that a minimum of 10 years of coaching experience, athletic background, experience in coaching at national or international competitions, and having performance outcomes as coaches were criteria of coaching expertise (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995).

On the other hand, amount of physical contact required by the sport, gender, type of sport dynamic, sport context, and culture were used for comparison purposes. Thus, one case was female coaches that were born, socialized, and competed as athletes in Eastern Europe, and that were coaching Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG), an individual, amateur, non-contact sport. The other case was male coaches that were born, socialized, and competed as athletes in North American, that were coaching Basketball (BB), a medium-contact team sport. In addition, one participant was used as a negative case. This coach was a female born, raised, and competed as an athlete for a Canadian team, but was a second generation migrant from Eastern Europe. She was coaching a male BB team. The last four coaches described were working with teams enrolled at an educational institution. The negative case study was used for comparison and contrast purposes. A negative case is a case that does not fit the pattern and therefore, leads to potential alternative explanations (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

To maintain confidentiality, coaches were identified using numbers (1 to 7) and an acronym corresponding to the sport they were coaching (e.g., BB3 for basketball coach 3). Further information about the participants is provided in table 1.

(Insert table 1)

Procedures

Interview guide and procedures. Research ethics board approval from Concordia University was obtained. First, a pilot interview was conducted to evaluate the adequacy of the instrument (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Then, coaches were contacted to participate in the study. They were interviewed at a time and place of the participants convenience. The semi-structured interview was designed to allow participants to deeply describe their understanding of morality (Kvale & Brinkmann). The purpose was to discuss gaps in the literature and to seek a further understanding of evidence. The interview guide was divided into five interrelated sections: a) introductory comments and instructions; b) conceptualization of morality (e.g., What is morality for you? What are concrete examples of morality you have experienced?); c) characterization of morality (e.g., Why would you say the situation you mentioned is related to morality?); d) discussion about moral issues that may arise in sport (e.g., What are typical moral issues you deal with as a coach? What type of sport situations enables or inhibit moral development?); and e) final and additional comments and the interviewee's perception of the interview. Alternative probes were developed to clarify, confirm, or exemplify when needed (Patton, 2002). Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was conducted on an individual basis.

Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim (the first two interviews by the first author and the followings ones by a third party), and the quality of all transcriptions was reviewed in its wholeness by a research associate (Poland, 2001). Each participant received his or her interview and was allowed to make changes or additions that they perceived to be critical to understanding their views. As suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008), data collection was rigorous because participants within each

case were interviewed until data saturation (i.e., no new data emerged, Corbin & Strauss) was achieved.

Data analysis. Given that case study designs are eclectic, the use of different strategies of data analysis is allowed (Creswell, 2007). In this case, open coding was used (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Transcripts of the interviews were inductively analyzed by following the procedures for doing open coding (breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data as proposed by Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss). Coding was conducted by analyzing segments of the transcripts (e.g., words, sentences, paragraphs) that made sense by themselves. These procedures were used because their primary purpose was to produce theory from data, in the absence of a theory or in the presence of conflicts or disagreement within the available theory.

The first author read the transcriptions of the first two interviews (one from each case, i.e., a RG coach and a BB coach). Open coding was conducted. Based on this initial sense of data, minor adjustments to the interview guide were done and the researcher continued with data collection. This interaction between data collection and data analysis has been referred to as an iterative process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and serves to sample on the basis of concepts that emerge from participants (i.e., theoretical sampling). Therefore, the first author continued interviewing participants up to the moment where no new information arose and theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss) was achieved.

The subsequent interviews were analyzed by referring to the primary framework developed within the analysis of the first two interviews. Throughout these stages of the

analysis, the constant comparative technique (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used. This technique consists of constantly comparing categories and properties to ensure that each of them is unique, self-contained, and meaningful. Also, specifically concerning the definition of morality, a comparison with available literature was done. In addition, a verification of the statements against data was conducted. Furthermore, by asking questions of the raw data as well as to the newly organized categories, new categories were generated and the old ones were redefined. Within this process, memos generated from researcher's field notes (i.e., mainly represented by comments participants added after the interview and therefore not recorded), impressions, interpretations, and preliminary interpretations were integrated into the coding. Also, memos were used to explain relationships among emergent concepts, or to question both the raw data and the analyzed data. Finally, pattern analysis (Yin, 2003) was conducted to compare the two bounded cases.

A graduate student trained in qualitative techniques, not related to the research team, coded two interviews. Once all the analyses were completed, the first author met with the graduate student and codes were compared. In the first round, 70% of agreement was found by using an internal attribution of values (4 points to agreements categories; 2 points to agreements properties; and 1 point for agreements dimensions). The majority of the agreements corresponded to dimensions and categories; whereas the disagreements corresponded to properties. Coders discussed their viewpoints until agreement was achieved. In a second round, the first author gave the graduate student material where all categories, properties, and dimensions were defined using participants words. The researcher tried to maintain the *in vivo* codes (i.e., words which were used

by interviewees, Corbin & Strauss, 2008), as much as possible across different stages of analysis. In general, dimensions were labelled using participants words; however, when similar ideas were put together (i.e., properties and categories), the theme that served to group elements was used to create labels. As suggested by Stake (1995, 1998) naturalistic generalization was attempted, meaning that description is a partially intuitive process arrived at by recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of the context of the present study.

Assuming that our personal experiences would have implications concerning the analysis, as it was going, we incorporate certain strategies that we considered important to represent participants viewpoints. First, the combination of an insider (i.e., the first author) with three outsiders (neither the two researchers involved in the process accounting for expertise in the field of sports, nor the graduate student), helped control the first author's biases¹ (Holt & Sparkes, 2001). Second, we engaged in several rounds of debriefing sessions, comparing data until consensus was reached. Finally, all participants were invited to a meeting where results were presented and discussed.

Results and Discussion

Two main categories arose in the exploration of coaches understanding of morality: definition of morality and characteristics of morality. Corresponding properties and dimensions are presented and explained in the following paragraphs.

Definition of morality

Previous theoretical background concerning morality. When demographic information from these participants was collected coaches were asked the highest level of National Coaching Certification Program¹ they achieved. Three indicated that they

completed level 3; three coaches completed level 4; and one coach partially completed level 5. All coaches mentioned that they did not remember having received any specific information related to morality as a part of their certification. This leads the researcher to assume that coaches understanding of morality is the result of their practical experience rather than a specific structured education stimuli.

Terms used to refer to morality. These coaches used the term “morality” proposed by the first author during the interview. In addition, three coaches used the word “ethics,” two coaches used the word “character,” and one used the word “sportsmanship” to refer to morality when being asked what was morality for them. Properties and dimensions of moral and immoral attitudes and behaviours are detailed in table 2.

Morality as a dichotomized phenomenon. Coaches mentioned that morality entailed positive and righteous attitudes and behaviours (i.e., those that are constructive towards one-self and others, such as being a good person). On the other extreme, and in contrast to moral behaviours, coaches identified negative and wrong attitudes and behaviours (i.e., destructive behaviours towards others such as hurting, harming or disrespecting), referred to as “morally improper” by BB2 coach. Previous quantitative literature also dichotomized moral behaviour into positive (good, prosocial behaviour, sportsmanship, fair play) and negative (poor, antisocial behaviour, unsportsmanship) (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995; Kavussanu et al., 2006; Kaye, 2009; Shields et al., 2007; Vallerand et al., 1996).

(Insert table 2)

The relationship between coaches definition of morality and previous literature.

A comparison between findings from this study and findings from previous studies shows that there are commonalities, as well as differences, in this understanding of morality. The following factors were associated with morality by these coaches and have been discussed in previous studies: “respect;” “good behaviour;” “integrity;” “help;” “cooperation;” “responsibility;” “loyalty;” “engagement” (referred by these coaches as commitment); “sportsmanship;” “values;” “open and understanding attitude;” and “honesty” (e.g., Boixadós & Cruz, 1995; Bredemeier, 1994; Kavussanu, 2006; Miller et al., 1997; Vallerand et al., 1996). However, there were factors that have been associated with morality by these coaches, but have not been reported by previous research. These factors were: “being disciplined;” “being gentle and polite” (also referred by these coaches as “being nice”); “being humble;” “being one-self in harmony;” “having clear agreement among involved parts;” “effort;” “promotion of personal growth and development;” “reliability and trustworthiness;” and “work ethic.” Overall, the factors that coaches emphasized were respect of rules, discipline, and the importance of being punctual.

Similarly, these coaches identified some factors related to immoral attitudes and behaviours, such as: “aggression;” “cheating;” “dishonesty;” “disrespect;” “gender discrimination;” “lying;” “negative reaction;” “power exertion;” “retaliating;” “turning someone down” (in literature referred to as “making fun of others” and “displaying superiority”); “unfairness;” and “violence” which have all been previously reported in the literature (Bredemeier, 1985, 1994; Duquin, 1984; Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Kavussanu et al., 2006; Shields et al., 2005; Solomon & Bredemeier, 1999; Stephens et al., 1997; Vallerand et al., 1996). Conversely, others factors identified by the

coaches in the study that have not been reported in the sport settings included: “not getting along well with others;” “prioritizing monologues as a way of communication;” “stealing;” “being lazy;” “not allowing the group grow up;” “manipulating;” “swearing;” and “doing things with an ulterior motive” (e.g., such as placing an athlete in a well-known institution to have credits about that and not for the benefit of the athlete).

Dimensions of morality as described by coaches. All in vivo codes mentioned by coaches to refer to morality were grouped by the researchers into three dimensions: a) “elite sport involvement” (e.g., “effort,” “work ethic”); b) “interaction with others” (e.g., “respect,” “honesty”); and c) “self-related” (e.g., “being one-self in harmony,” “being happy”). The “self-related” dimension, with few exceptions (Barrow, 2007), has been neglected in previous literature. It is the “interaction with others” dimension that has been largely described in literature (e.g., Barrow, 2007; Turiel, 2002). In addition, these coaches considered social values to be dimensions of morality as well. This finding was previously reported by Rudd and Mondello (2006) who suggested that coaches understood social values as moral values because they denoted devotion and engagement to the sport, which in turn lead to winning.

Characteristics of morality

Conceptualizing morality: a complicated endeavour. A common question all coaches asked both during the interview and after commenting on morality was: “Is ‘it’ (referring to the topic they were discussing) related to morality?” This means that participants approached the conceptualization of morality with uncertainty. In this vein, five participants mentioned that morality was hard to define because it was an

unspecific, broad, and abstract concept.

Morality, a social phenomenon. Besides initial difficulties to define morality, a reconstruction of coaches' interviews revealed that all coaches agreed that it is best captured in "behaviours," reflected in "attitudes," and based on "values," a finding that is in concert with previous literature (Kohlberg, 1984; Turiel, 2002). Morality was described as an "ongoing process." It starts at younger ages in the individual's close environment, with parents providing a moral foundation. Then, social interaction in different settings takes place. Therefore, moral behaviours are based in values that individuals build through a process of social interaction and that finally account for an individual's moral development. BB2 said: "In my case I know my parents instilled that, I mean, those morals, to me; it was their values, and I was able to bring them to the team," and BB3 noted: "it's not something you do in one lesson; it something you do over a period of time."

These coaches mentioned that morality affects everyone in the same environment, meaning that attitudes and behaviours enacted towards others come back to the one who enacted them as a result of a mutual and reciprocal interchange. Enacted moral behaviours have associated consequences. Morally speaking, enacted behaviour has either a positive effect (e.g., moral growth) or a negative effect (e.g., someone not feeling respected). The consequences of enacted moral behaviours affect either the same individuals or others in the environment and set the basis for future social interchanges. Previously, Turiel (1983) acknowledged that moral behaviours are those that have consequences for others rights and wellbeing. For these participants, consequences of moral behaviours also affect those who enact the behaviours. Quotations exemplifying

participants viewpoints of the characteristics of morality are displayed in table 3.

Based on the fact that morality affects everyone in the same environment and that moral behaviour has associated consequences, the RG coaches justification that morality entailed not only positive attitudes and behaviours but also avoiding any negative attitude or behaviour. All RG coaches mentioned that within the context of their sport, it was morally important to learn to “be friends” besides being competitive. RG coaches explained that generally athletes within this sport train every day, at the same place, and with peers that eventually become opponents during competition. Also, an enacted moral attitude and behaviour affected different factors of human functioning. At a psychological level, an individual’s emotional state may be affected after facing either a moral or a immoral situation. Similarly, an individual’s identity may be affected as a result of either supporting or turning someone down (e.g., discrimination). Finally, moral behaviours can physically affect others. Examples, given by the participants, of a immoral situation that can physically affect others were violence and aggression.

Cognitive component of morality. Coaches confirmed Rest’s (1984) components of morality. For these coaches, morality entailed the perception of a situation within a given context, the evaluation of its parameters, a decision concerning the action to be implemented, the performance of an action-response, and the correspondent adjustments. This was best captured when specific moral situations that coaches brought up during the interview were discussed. Coaches first described a situation they experienced or witness; then they presented a decision and an associated argument for potential reactions to the situation; finally, coaches expressed that adjustments are always needed. As an example of this process, let’s consider what coach BB4 said:

I went with my (name of the team)... to a winter tournament in (name of the city)... eighteen, nineteen years old... the guys say we're going down to the sports store to get something, I say cool, I'm gonna stay in the hotel. About half hour later I get a call from the store: "We need to speak to you, eh... some of your players have stolen goods... my players stole goods?"... I pulled all the guys into my room.... I said: "Ok, guys, eh... this is what happens, store just called me, said you got a lot of goods with you, I want you to produce them in my room in the next five minutes".... We went back to the store, called the manager ... and I told the guys this is what they're gonna do, individually, all the guys that were implicated, there were seven of them... I said: "You're gonna go up to the manager, you're gonna introduce yourself, you're gonna shake his hand, you're gonna say: "I'm sorry, what I did was wrong, and I will try to never do it again"... hopefully we've learned our lesson that that's not the thing to do....

(Insert table 3)

Factors associated with the adoption of moral viewpoints. Following Geertz'(1973) understanding of culture as the context wherein human behaviour takes place, the data suggest that: a) culture plays an important role concerning morality; and b) sport represents a sub-culture, and at the same time, any particular sport is a sub-culture within sports. Concerning the first point, a clear example is that RG coaches based their arguments in concrete comparisons between their country of birth and Canada; whereas North American coaches agreed they have to deal with cultural differences captured in their athletes moral behaviours in their everyday work. In

addition, it is not only the culture in which a nation is based what affects morality. Moral “lessons” provided by parents, schools, and the sport environment may or may not be in agreement with each individual’s moral standards. The heterogeneity of morality, as well as, the interaction between societal rules and individual’s characteristics and viewpoints has been previously acknowledged (Turiel, 1983). Furthermore, as a result of the psychosocial interaction between each individual and the society, there is a potential degree of conflict that may arise. This means that individuals internalize, accept, or reject moral values proposed by the social environment. This is further complicated when individuals move from one society to another or have to deal with individuals from different cultures. In these instances norms and rules have to be established or in certain cases, negotiated, as noted by all coaches and emphasized by the three RG coaches.

In addition to culture and the individual, and morality-related contextual variables presented in the methods section (e.g., extended sport involvement), these coaches elaborated on other factors. Individual factors described by these coaches were: a) personal motivation; b) sport status; and c) evaluation of consequences. Personal motivation had to do with personal engagement with an activity (“I never missed a practice.... I was mostly self-disciplined.... I knew I had to work hard for that” RG2). Following these coaches understanding of morality, personal motivation led to behaviours related to “elite sport involvement” such as “discipline” and “work ethic.”

Sport status resulted from the socialization processes. The three RG coaches associated the sport status of a person with morality, revealing the hierarchical organization of their culture. Specifically, while being asked about the meaning and

definition of morality, these coaches asked whether morality had to be defined from the coach's or the athlete's perspective. This indicates that for RG coaches, expected moral behaviours are different for coaches and athletes. A third personal criterion was an individual's evaluation of consequences of potential enacted behaviours. Coach BB2 said: "... one of the kids was swearing at us.... He did it in front of other players, (so) I will lose their respect.... I think something is lacking when a player is being morally disrespectful". This coach assumed that punishment would act as a reminder of both moral values held in the group and possible consequences associated with rule violation. The social cognitive theory states that moral learning occurs as a part of the socialization process. Specifically, individuals internalize socially accepted behaviours via self-regulation and perceived efficacy (Bandura, 1986, 1991).

The social factors that contributed to moral viewpoints were sport dynamic, (i.e., individual sports vs. team sports), sociocultural values, and group standard values. Coaches mentioned that in individual sports, athletes depended on the coach alone, whereas in team sports, athletes attitudes and behaviours influenced other peers. For this reason, team sports fostered the exercise and the sharing of common values. Sport dynamic has been associated with morality in previous sport literature (Vallerand, Brière et al., 1997). Sociocultural values refer to the fact that each social environment promotes and preserves its own moral values. One way to do it is by rewarding and sanctioning individual's behaviours. Coach RG1 described the place sport had in Eastern Europe countries and how coaches and athletes responded to this situation:

They work hard for the country because it is in their blood. They want to prove they are part of the country by contributing with medals for the country...

Coaches spend hours and hours in the gym. They almost live there. And this is not because they have to do it, but because they want to contribute to sport development; they want to win. Coaches and athletes are aligned on the same side... Head coaches do whatever necessary to take care of coaches and athletes... it's like a high level prison... You do not leave the place, but you will have there whatever you need.

This means that there is a reciprocal engagement resulting in a feedback loop where sport participants work hard and dedicate their lives to represent their countries, but as an exchange they receive different forms of support from the government (e.g., “money,” “facilities to train,” “support for the athlete’s family”). This support later on acts as an “encouragement to sport participants” that fosters a sense of “patriotism,” i.e., “willingness to prove that he or she is able to represent the country,” as described by RG1.

Four coaches mentioned that moral viewpoints may change due to group standard values as well. Specifically, in seeking individual and team mutual interests, shared compromises take place on behalf of the group. This entails an individual moral balance about rights, privileges, and responsibilities (Haan, 1991). Moral dialogues aimed at members understanding of their peers are crucial to attain moral balance. This shared understanding may lead to changes in viewpoints. Interestingly, none of these four coaches referred to this process negatively; conversely, all changes in moral viewpoints resulting from sharing group standard values either led to, or aim to create positive change. For example, consider what BB3 says:

So you know, you try to bring the group together, which is my job as team builder, What we try to do here (the institution was mentioned) is to make each group understand the other group. So when we had Ramadan, we had the Muslims speak... the two Muslim guys speak about Ramadan and what it is, and why they do it... And when we had, eh... Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipur we had a Jewish guy speak about that... just so people understand other people, you know... And... if there's a certain... individual, mutual respect for each individual in the group, the group is allowed to grow... If you don't have that, the group doesn't grow.

Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to explore coaches understanding of morality. We designed a qualitative collective case study in which two cases were defined based on criteria that have been previously related to morality in sport. These criteria were gender, extended sport involvement, amount of physical contact, and level of competition. In addition, culture, sport context, and type of sport dynamic were considered. The major finding is that morality, for these coaches, has three dimensions: a) "elite sport involvement" (e.g., discipline); b) "interaction with others" (e.g., respect); and c) "self-related" (e.g., "being one-self in harmony"). Previous literature in the field focused in the study of "interaction with others" dimension (e.g., Barrow, 2007; Turiel, 2002); whereas the self-related dimension was considered by few scholars (Barrow, 2007). To note, the dimension "elite sport involvement", the dimension that was most emphasized by these coaches, has been described in previous literature as related to social, but not moral values (Rudd, 2005). One possible explanation for this is that the

type of engagement required within the “elite sport involvement” dimension are crucial for success.

Coaches agreed that morality was hard to define because of the unspecific, broad, and abstract nature of it. Besides the initial difficulty that represented defining morality, these coaches were able to expand, elaborate, and reflect on it as well. In their description of morality, all coaches agreed that morality is best captured in “behaviours” reflected in “attitudes” and based on “values.”

The coaches understanding of morality was dichotomized. On one hand, positive and righteous attitudes and behaviours, i.e., those that are constructive towards one-self and others, such as being a good person were described and emphasized by these coaches. On the other hand, and negative and wrong attitudes and behaviours (i.e., destructive behaviours towards others such as hurting, harming or disrespecting) were identified as well. This evidence was previously found in quantitative studies. Conversely, qualitative studies found that between positive and negative behaviours there are behaviours, that although they were negative in nature, are justified and rationalized by participants (e.g., Long et al., 2006). This finding may have been due to the nature of the interview, which was more focused on the understanding of morality rather than in the use and application of it.

The fact that coaches approached morality with uncertainty in conjunction with the description of positive aspects of morality may suggest that morality may be a second order issue for these coaches, as compared, for example, to work for performance results. If the need to “win-at-all-costs” is a major contributor for engaging in immoral behaviours, it is probably that these coaches engage in these types of

behaviours because they do not seriously consider what they are doing. Another explanation is, as suggested by the literature, that sport promotes and allows a differential way of moral functioning referred to as “bracketed morality” (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

These coaches agreed that morality entailed an ongoing process as proposed by both cognitive theories (Bandura, 1986, 1991; Kohlberg, 1984). Morality is context-based and via internal moral dialogues (Haan, 1991) individuals choose moral standards (Turiel, 1983). Morality comprises behaviour, but exceeded it. The perception of a situation, the evaluation of it, the decision concerning what has to be done, and the adjustments associated to the enacted behaviour (Rest, 1984) supported personal self-regulation (Bandura, 1986).

This study identified both personal (e.g., personal goals, sport status, sport dynamic, and evaluation of consequences) and social (sociocultural values and group standard values) factors contributing to the existence and evolution of viewpoints concerning morality. Some of these factors have been previously discussed in the literature; however, this study explained how they operate from the participants viewpoint. Previous research has highlighted the role of the environment, and specially the need to “win-at-all-costs,” as a major responsible for negative behaviour (Long et al., 2006; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Stuart, 2003; Vallerand, Brière et al., 1997). Instead, these coaches referred to other criteria, but associated with the stimulation of a positive moral atmosphere.

All coaches acknowledged the existence of cultural differences and the way they deal with them. Furthermore, coaches coming from Eastern European countries

mentioned that they themselves make efforts to fit North American cultural criteria. Of note, this study did not find gender differences as reported by previous literature (Duquin, 1984; Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Gilligan, 1982).

Finally, to make theoretical sense of coaches understanding of morality, a combination of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1991) and structural developmental theory (Kohlberg, 1984), including the advances in Kohlberg's theory and its derivations (e.g., Haan, 1991; Rest, 1983, 1984; Turiel, 1983, 2002) is needed. This means that a better understanding of morality in sport is attained when multiple theoretical perspectives are included.

This study has some limitations. This study sampled coaches who had an extended sport involvement and that compete at elite levels. For that reason, participants viewpoints may be only representative of those having these characteristics. Another limitation is that the case comparison was based on gender, type of sport dynamic, amount of physical contact, sport context, and culture. Considering that the negative case study used was a female North American BB coach, it would seem that gender was not responsible for the differences. However, these differences may be due to the other factors as well. Future research needs to address these issues. The study also has some strengths. The specific characteristics of the bounded cases, as well as, the specificities of the proposed methodology, allowed us to draw important and reliable conclusions. Finally, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study exploring coaches understanding of morality. Three previous studies have done an enriching endeavour (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Rudd & Mondello, 2006) by focusing on coaches perspectives concerning the use of power, rule abidance,

and character but have not directly assessed the coaches understanding of morality.

Some issues that have been considered in the current study require further attention. Future research should clarify the relationship between culture and morality. For example, what specific cultural aspect affects morality in sport given that all sport activities have universal rules. Also, it is unclear what factor plays a greater role concerning sport context and morality.

In conclusion, if coaches are uncertain about what the concept of morals entails, then teaching and transmitting moral values to their athletes becomes a complicated endeavour. This is probably due to the fact that the knowledge they have concerning morality is experiential, rather than academic; therefore, coaches may not be giving the right moral message or may not be guiding their athletes in desired moral direction. While this situation has been reported before (Beller & Stoll, 1993), it is surprising that the situation has not changed in almost 20 years. This is of great importance and suggests that future coaching educational endeavours should address this void. Interventions aiming to foster moral behaviours in sport should primarily target coaches, by offering a space for discussing in order to reach an agreement. Also, sport counsellors, such as psychologists, should address moral issues by promoting active coach-athlete interchanges. If coaches benefit from moral education, then this will be transmitted to their athletes, and thus, undesired consequences associated with immoral behaviours may be reduced and may be prevented. Additionally, future research should replicate and extend this study in order to find more evidence to support these findings, specifically around the roles of culture, sport dynamic, and sport setting.

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Footnotes

¹ The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is a coach training and certification program. It has five level program required to coach. Each level has two components: a) a sport specific component (e.g., basic skills), and b) a general component (e.g., sport psychology). Different coaching positions require different NCCP levels. For example, a level 3 is required to coach at university level.

Table 1.

Characteristics of the Coaches

Participant	Age	Experience as a player (in years)	Experience as a elite coaches (in years)	Current level of coaching
RG1	38	7	18	National Athletes
RG2	40	10	12	Provincial Athletes
RG3	53	6	25	National Athletes
BB1	47	6	7	College
BB2	44	9	6	College
BB3	57	4	20	University
BB4	61	6	22	University

Table 2.

Definition of morality

Properties	Dimensions (Number of participants referring to it)
Moral attitudes and behaviours	Effort, work ethics (7); respect (7); good behaviour, integrity (7); help, cooperation (7); clear agreement (6); be open, listen, understanding (6); nice, gentle, (5); responsibility (5); discipline (5); engagement, loyalty (4); care about others, compassionate, friendship (4); encouragement, support (3); foster growth and development (3); honesty (3); values (3); reliability, trustworthy (2); in harmony with yourself (2); sportsmanship (1); humble (1).
Immoral attitudes and behaviours	Abuse, aggression, violence, negative reaction (4); disrespect (3); unfairness (3); didn't get along well with others, monologues (3); discrimination (2); swearing (2); turn someone down (2); cheat (2); dishonest (2); manipulation (1); power exertion (1); lie (1); steal (1); being lazy (1); didn't allow the group grow (1); retaliate (1); do things with an ulterior motive (1).

Table 3.

Characteristics of morality

Properties	Dimensions	Number of participants	Selected quotations
Conceptualization	Hard to define	5	“... morality is extremely broad for me” (RG1) “... morality? That can be broad as an answer” (BB1)
Dynamic of functioning	Affects everyone in the same environment	5	“I respect you as a person... but you have to respect me” (RG1) “(The situation)... was affecting the whole group” (RG2)
	Affects different aspects of functioning	7	“Do whatever you want, but don't hurt, don't put the person down either mentally, morally, or physically” (RG3)

(Table continues)

Table 3. (continued)

Ongoing process	5	“My parents instilled me those morals... and I was able to bring to my team (because)... my coaches reinforced that as well” (BB2).
Psycho-social degree of conflict	6	“They might not accept it, but at least they heard what you said” (BB2) “I withdrew the situation... because I didn’t think people were treated fairly” (BB3)
Context-related	7	“... morality is probably not the same here (name of the place) as compared to Argentina, Mexico or in Yugoslavia” (BB1)
Has associated consequences	6	“... you got caught in a lie... you broke the honesty part... I am not trusting you anymore” (BB2)

CHAPTER 3 - PAST MORAL INFLUENCE AND COACHES CURRENT MORAL PRACTICES

RUNNING HEAD: Moral influences

Past moral influence and coaches current moral practices

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Abstract

Previous research indicated that social context plays a role in promoting moral behaviours. The ultimate goal of elite sport is winning and elite athletes spend more time with coaches than with other possible sources of social influence. Thus, the main purpose of this study was to investigate how current elite coaches have been morally influenced in their past as athletes, and how the influence these coaches received affects the moral influence they currently have over their athletes. Participants were 7 elite coaches (3 coaching Rhythmic Gymnastics and 4 coaching Basketball) that had been athletes themselves. Interviews were conducted and data was inductively analyzed using modified grounded theory strategies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A collective case study was designed for this purpose. Past coaches were identified as important moral influences for these participants. The coach-athlete relationship enables or prevents a moral influence taking place. All participants referred to past moral influences by a previous coach as informing their current coaching methods. Between-case comparisons revealed that the meaning of morality was context-specific and that considering culture was crucial in the understanding of moral influences. Based on their past and current experiences, participants agreed that sport is an ideal place to develop morality. No gender differences were identified. Future research in this area should compare coaches from different types of sport, those coaching at different competitive levels, and those working in different sport contexts (i.e., educational, professional, amateur).

Keywords: coach - sport - moral influence – coach-athlete relationship - culture

Past moral influence and coaches current moral practices

Lawton-Fort Sill head coach Michael Ray Richardson has been fined an undisclosed amount for both abusive and vulgar language used during a PBL game, and not leaving the court in a timely manner after receiving his second technical foul... Lawton-Fort Sill Cavalry player Oliver Miller has been suspended for the remainder of the PBL Playoffs due to his actions... Several other members of the Cavalry team have been fined an undisclosed amount for leaving the bench and entering the stands” (Premier Basketball League, 2010).

The ultimate goal of elite sport is winning. In order to attain that purpose, elite sport requires a great amount of time deliberately devoted to training (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993). This suggests that elite athletes spend more time with coaches than with other potential sources of moral influence. As the above vignette suggest, coaches are likely to be important moral influence for athletes (c.f. Peláez, Aulls, Rossi, & Bacon, 2010 for a review). Despite research endeavours there are some unclear issues concerning the role of the coach as a moral influence. For example, whether coaches past moral influences affect their current coaching practices and whether the dynamic underlying coach-athlete interactions favour the occurrence of coaches moral influences on an athlete. The main purpose of the present study was to study the coach as a moral influence.

Moral influences in sport

While living with others, people develop ways of acting, feeling, and thinking. This process has been referred to as socialization. Socialization entails both an end product and a context-specific process of social interaction. This process entails

interactions within different domains that are organized around distinctive tasks, perceptual sensibilities, social clues, and regulatory processes. Specifically, an interchange between multiple sources and directions of influence occur, creating interconnected systems. Individuals start thinking of themselves in social identity terms due to the fact that repeated ways of acting foster the link between actions and identity (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998).

Through the process of socialization, athletes interact with parents, coaches, friends, peers, team-mates, and siblings (e.g., Brustad, 1996; Coleman, Cox, & Roker, 2008; Côté, 1999; Holt, Black, Tamminen, Fox, & Mandigo, 2008; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995; M.R. Weiss & Knoppers, 1982). Primary sources of influence on the athlete's life vary in concert with his or her changes and needs. For example, parents (Côté, 1999) play a crucial role as active influences and supporters during childhood. However, later on, other sources such as siblings (Côté), peers (A.L. Smith, 2003), and coaches (Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996) may become more influential than parents. At an elite level of sport, coaches are such an important referent that sometimes they even represent a parental figure to young athletes (Balague, 1999). In a similar vein, types of influences needed by the athlete change within the process of socialization. For example, young athletes prefer to have a coach's emotional support during the initial years of sport involvement, but a coach's specific technical support when competing at an elite sport level (Duffy, Lyons, Moran, Warrington, & MacManus, 2006).

In the field of sports, two main theoretical approaches nested in the cognitive tradition have been used to study moral influences. One is the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). The other is the structural developmental theory (Kohlberg, 1984). The

social cognitive theory (Bandura) explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. Moral learning occurs as a part of the socialization process. Moral behaviour is assumed to be socially defined, overt and observable, and dependent upon a person's learning history. Individuals learn moral standards by observing and analyzing, retaining, and reproducing socially accepted model behaviours. Finally, as a result of both vicarious learning (i.e., external) and the athletic self-efficacy of being able to do something (i.e., internal), the enacting of a given moral behaviour brings motivation to the individual. In order to be internalized, moral behaviours require self-regulation (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Self-regulation enables a balance between an individual's cognitive and environmental influences (i.e., internalized rewards and punishments are translated into self-control, Bandura, 1991). In addition, perceived efficacy to accomplish a situation mediates moral cognition and moral action (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Thus, individual engagement in moral behaviours also largely depends on the activation of self-regulatory and perceived athletic efficacy capabilities (Bandura, 1986, 1991; Janssen, Fennis, & Pruyn, 2010).

The *structural moral development theory* (Kohlberg, 1984) assumes morality to be culturally universal and organized in an invariant sequence of stages that reveals an individual's thought and behaviour. Kohlberg and colleagues (Higgins, Power, & Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg, Scharf, & Hickey, 1971), as well as, Bandura (1986, 1991) claimed that moral development is an individual process influenced by social participation. Although moral viewpoints are specific to an individual, an individual's exposure to a conflicting moral environment results in changes that fit the reigning moral environment. This moral environment has been referred to as "moral atmosphere"

(Kohlberg et al., 1971). The moral atmosphere reigning within a group sets the tone for the members moral behaviours, even if the created and accepted moral tone does not agree with each individual's level of moral development (Higgins et al., 1984).

The coach as a moral influence

It has been shown that the coach is an important moral influence for athletes (Peláez, Aulls, Rossi et al., 2010). The majority of literature studying moral influence of a coach has based its research design on the social cognitive theory and the structural development theory. Scholars using social cognitive theory focus on coaches characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours (e.g., coaches self-efficacy) and used them to predict athletes moral behaviours (e.g., Boardley, Kavussanu, & Ring, 2008). On the other hand, scholars using structural moral development theory assess how coaches contribute to the creation and development of the reigning moral atmosphere and how moral atmosphere affects athletes (e.g., Long, Pantaléon, Bruant, & d'Arripe-Longueville, 2006). Therefore, the coach has been assumed to be a major contributor to the reigning moral atmosphere during training and actual sport events. Besides theoretical approach, athletes reported that observation of their coaches in first place, and coach-athlete interaction in second place, were the most meaningful ways to learning moral behaviour.

Coach characteristics that have been identified to be associated with moral influences are: gender; coaching efficacy; level of moral reasoning; and goal orientation. Concerning gender, female athletes having female coaches, as compared to those having male coaches, believe their teammates are less likely to aggress and cheat, and that their coach is less likely to accept those behaviours (Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner, &

Bostrom, 1995). Also, females athletes, as compared to male athletes, are more likely to identify ethically questionable coaching behaviours when analyzing sport situations (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002).

Perceptions of coaches motivational efficacy has been empirically related to athletes hard work; whereas an athlete's perception of their coaches character building efficacy is related to athlete's positive behaviour, but unrelated to negative behaviour (Boardley et al., 2008). On the other hand, the coaches own reports of game strategy efficacy are associated with an athlete's likelihood of aggression. However, there is no association between a coach's self-reported character building efficacy and a lower likelihood of athlete's aggression (Chow, Murray, & Feltz, 2009). Also, a coach's level of moral reasoning is also significantly related to an athlete's moral reasoning. Coaches that justify unmoral behaviour have athletes that justify these behaviours as well (e.g., Goeb, 1997; Long et al., 2006).

A coach's goal orientation is also related to his or her morality. Goal orientation theories assume that individuals strive to demonstrate ability or competence in the presence of achievement situations (Ames, 1992; Nicholls, 1989). Two types of goal orientations have been described to evaluate success. The first is the tendency to use other-referenced criteria, referred to as ego-orientation. The second one is task-orientation, (i.e., use of self-referenced criteria) (Nicholls, 1989). However, what affects athletes morality is not their coach goal orientation, but the athletes perceived performance motivational climate. Perceived motivational climate refers to athletes perceptions of how the learning environment is structured, what behaviours are valued, and how success in their team is evaluated. A mastery motivational climate uses a self-

reference criteria; whereas in a performance climate other-referenced criteria are emphasized (Ames, 1992). Mastery motivational climate is related to low levels of moral functioning in young athletes (Kavussanu & Spray, 2006; Miller, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2005; Ommundsen, Roberts, Lemyre, & Treasure, 2003). It should be noted that the instrument designed to assess sport motivational climate evaluates a coach's contribution to reigning moral atmosphere along with other sources of moral influence; therefore, it is not possible to isolate a coach's contribution to the reigning motivational climate.

In addition, the following coaching behaviours are associated with the coach role as moral influence: a) enacted behaviour; b) attitudes towards moral behaviour; and c) norms and philosophy. Specifically, a coach's immoral attitude and behaviour based on a "winning-at-all-cost" philosophy, results in athletes having negative behaviour (Buford-May, 2001; Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Shields et al., 1995; Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005; Stornes, 2001; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). Similarly, when coaches abuse an athlete in the exertion of the power associated to their status, moral conflicts with their athletes arise (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Stornes, 2001). The norms and rules coaches establish and allow within a team environment have a strong influence on athletes behaviours. Athletes not willing to follow coaches instructions reported conflicts with them (e.g., Long et al., 2006). The two sources most likely to inhibit athletes acts of resistance are the coach's legitimate power (i.e., the coach is the appointed leader of the team) and expert power (i.e., the coach is assumed to be the most knowledgeable person in the field within a team). Under the exertion of power, athletes moral conscience may be jeopardized because the coach leaves no space

for them to express themselves. The most frequent abusing coaching behaviour athletes report are: a) reactive abuse (e.g., pushing); b) strategic abuse (e.g., play with an injury); and c) emotional abuse (e.g., humiliation) (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996).

Athletes do acknowledge that coaches promote moral values (e.g., respect for the rules). Still, sometimes coaches create an ambiguous situation by calling for, allowing, not condemning, or congratulating some negative behaviour from their athletes (Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Long et al., 2006; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Stornes, 2001; Trudel, Dionne, & Bernard, 1992). Social values were also reported to be stimulated by coaches (Rudd, 2005; Rudd & Mondello, 2006). Reasons for breaking game rules, as reported by coaches, were from the pressure and need for performance results (Long et al., 2006). The fact that coaches have good intentions concerning morality, but do not effectively enact them under certain circumstances, leaves a vacant leadership space that is sometimes occupied by teammates (Lagzdins, 2008).

A final way in which the coach can influence athletes moral development is by purposefully attempting to directly instruct athletes. Specifically, there is a trend in the literature indicating that sport interventions intentionally designed with the purpose of fostering moral development achieve their goal (e.g., Petitpas, Van Raalte, Cornelius, & Presbrey, 2004; M.R. Weiss, Bolter, Bhalla, & Price, 2007).

The coach-athlete relationship. The consideration of the relationship between moral influence and a coach-athlete interaction is scarce in previous research (Wylleman, 2000). Leadership is “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Barrow, 1977, p.232). Coaches are sport appointed leaders that interact with athletes (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978). All the

leadership and coaching literature acknowledges the fact that a coach influences his or her athletes in different ways. For example, Chelladurai and Carron (1978) proposed that antecedents of leadership (i.e., situational characteristics, leader's characteristics, athletes characteristics) affect a leader's behaviour (i.e., actual leader behaviour, preferred leader behaviour, required leader behaviour), and are related to consequences such as athlete's performance and satisfaction. According to the congruence hypothesis proposed by this model, the greater the consistency among the three leadership behaviours, the greater the likelihood athletes experience performance achievement and satisfaction (Chelladurai, 2007). Similarly, Smoll and colleagues (1978) proposed that athletes also respond and react to perceived coaching behaviours.

On the other hand, a coach-athlete relationship approach emphasizes the interactions between the two parties involved. Based on the fact that the coach-athlete relationship is one of the most important factors associated with an athlete's motivation and performance, Mageau and Vallerand (2003) proposed a model that emphasizes coaches autonomous supportative behaviour towards their athletes. Following Deci and Ryan's (1985) motivational theory, the person in the position of authority (e.g., the coach) is autonomy supportative if he or she acknowledge the others needs (e.g., the athlete) and provides necessary information and autonomy to promote choice, responsibility, and independent problem solving. Examples of a coach's autonomous supportative behaviours are: a) provision of choice within specific rules and limits; b) provision of a rationale for tasks and limits; c) acknowledging the other person's feelings and perspectives; d) provision of opportunities for initiative taking and independent work; e) provision of non-controlling competence feedback; f) avoidance of

controlling behaviours; and g) prevention of ego-involvement in athletes (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

Jowett and colleagues (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000) studied the coach-athlete relationship. Their research design incorporated the consideration of behaviours, emotions, and cognitions, as suggested by Kelley and colleagues (1983). As described within this framework, the coach-athlete relationship may be healthy (i.e., successful and effective) or unhealthy (i.e., unsuccessful, ineffective). Healthy coach-athletes relationships are characterized by closeness, co-orientation, commitment, and being complementary. Closeness refers to the emotional tone of the relationship and reflects the degree to which the coach and the athlete are connected, as well as, the depth of their emotional attachment. Liking, trust, valuing, helping, and respect are examples that reflect closeness within a relationship. Co-orientation refers to coaches and athletes perceptions about each other from two perspectives: direct perspective (i.e., athlete's self-assessment); and meta-perspective (i.e., athlete's ability to infer his or her coach's position). Commitment reflects the intention or desire to maintain the athletic partnership over time and so it is viewed as a cognitive representation of the connection between the coach and the athlete. Complementarity reflects the extent to which the coach and athlete work together, cooperate, and contribute from their own sides to improve the relationship. In this context, communication is important for both athletes and coaches to share their experiences and concerns.

Conversely, Carron (1978) found that coaches were the initiators of control and athletes the recipients. Both coaches and athletes were perceived as being relatively

passive in regards to initiating interactions (inclusion behaviour) and developing warm personal relations (affection behaviour). These latter two characteristics could contribute naturally to an incompatibility in the coach-athlete interaction.

The little available research studying the coach as a moral influence from a relationship approach indicates that an enriching coach-athlete relationship resulted in the creation of a positive moral atmosphere (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Lagzdins, 2008; Rutten et al., 2007). Conversely, an impoverished coach-athlete relationship prevented coaches from having any moral influence on their athletes (Lagzdins, 2008). The research relating leadership style and morality found equivocal results. For example, Stornes and Bru (2002) found that autocratic leadership was associated with immoral behaviour; whereas coach's provision of social support and positive feedback were significantly linked to positive moral behaviour. Positive feedback also showed a positive association with aggression. Conversely, in Shields and colleagues study (1995), team norms sanctioning immoral behaviour was associated with autocratic leadership and a coach providing social support.

Culture. Balague (1999) proposed that considering individual athletes differences, such as cultural background, and religion and spirituality stance, was important when implementing sport psychology interventions. Geertz (1973) noted that human behaviour is a complex phenomenon that can only be captured in its wholeness if studied in its cultural environment. The cultural systems shape the concept of man by societal rules, language, religion, and ideology, and gives sense to human behaviour by considering the context where human behaviour takes place. Turiel (1989) stated that "culture is *the* context that organizes psychological acquisition" (p. 92). The author

pointed out that it is not an individual model that people follow, but all possible varieties that are included in a given culture. He argued, as well, that people did not mirror culture by stating that social construction was a construction, not a copy of it. Sport is a social phenomenon per se where different types of relationships among individuals occur. As a social activity, sport reflects values, norms, structures, and processes that are sociocultural-specific (O. Weiss, 2001).

In addition, from a social-ecological viewpoint, Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed that interactions with peers and within the environment were essential to the explanation of human development. Bronfenbrenner described five different types of nested social systems that were in constant interaction. Each system contained roles, norms, rules, and relationships that could powerfully shape development. The immediate environment was called the microsystem (e.g., family, classroom) and the interaction of two or more microsystems, was referred to as the mesosystem. The external environments which indirectly influence development were referred to as exosystems (e.g., parental workplace, political and economical decisions). The macrosystem was concerned with the larger socio-cultural context. Finally, the chronosystem, referred to the evolution of the external systems over time.

The present study

The study of moral behaviours is especially important because they are behaviours that have consequences for others rights and wellbeing (Turiel, 1983). Due to training demands, elite athletes spend a great amount of their time training with their coaches (Ericsson et al., 1993), who are important moral influences (Peláez, Aulls, Rossi et al., 2010). Given that it has been suggested that both the coach-athlete interaction and

culture are of a great importance concerning morality, the present study attempts to assess these two issues, though solely from the coaches perspective. Hence, the main purpose of the present study was to explore the question: how participants, who are current coaches, have been morally influenced by their coaches when they were athletes?; and whether this influence affects their current coaching practices concerning morality?

Specifically, we wanted to investigate: a) participants past moral influences (i.e., how participants have been morally influenced when they were athletes; who was a source of moral influence; and the impact and the consequences of past moral influences); and b) current coaching practices associated with moral influences (i.e., what are current coaching practices associated with morality; how participants proceed now as coaches in order to morally influence their athletes; how past moral influences received affect participants current moral influences practices). In addition, we wanted to know whether participants, based on their experience, consider sport as an ideal place to develop morality.

In order to achieve our purpose, we drew from a social constructionism perspective. Social constructionism is concerned with the understanding of subjective and unique perceptions that result from social interactions and negotiations (K.J. Gergen, 2009; M.M. Gergen & Gergen, 2003). This perspective was appropriate for the present study because we aimed to reflect the occurrence of moral influences is mainly based on interactions and negotiations.

We designed a qualitative collective case study. A case study involves the study of an issue explored through multiple cases within a bounded system (Stake, 1995,

1998; Yin, 2003, 2006). All case study designs attempt to develop an in-depth description, analysis, and understanding of one case or multiple cases. Case studies are used when: a) accurate but limited local understanding is aimed; b) the researcher tries to preserve multiple realities while seeking for uniqueness; and c) when an emphasis on interpretation is aimed (Stake, 1998). More than one unique case was sampled to achieve better understanding through comparing each case to each other (Stake, 1998). Case study designs are eclectic in the sense that they contemplate the use of different strategies of data analysis (Creswell, 2007). The present study used open coding and axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and pattern analysis (Yin, 2003) for data analysis purposes. In the present study, participant's gender; physical contact required in the sport; type of sport dynamic; sport context; elite level of competition; extended sport involvement; and culture were the factors used to delimit the cases.

The need for more qualitative studies informing our understanding of both the coaches experiences and the process underlying social influences has been previously suggested because of its possibilities for capturing participants voices (e.g., Bergmann-Drewe, 2000; Lyle, 1999). The present study is a secondary-analysis of a previous study designed to examine coaches understanding of morality (Peláez, Aulls, & Bacon, 2010). An important finding of this previous study was that the participating coaches reported that they did not receive any training or education concerning morality while they were preparing themselves to become coaches. Understanding how previous coach's moral influence affects current coaching practices of their former athletes is important to the design of tailored interventions for coaches aiming to sensitize them to their moral responsibilities.

Finally, pattern analysis (Yin, 2003) was conducted to compare bounded cases. Yin (2003) pointed out that multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern-matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory. Pattern-matching is a technique that compares an empirically based pattern with a theoretical proposition. This procedure reinforces the internal validity of the case study.

Methods

Participants and procedures

Seven elite coaches, currently coaching in Canada, participated in the present study. Previous literature defined coaching expertise by using the following indicators: a) a minimum of 10 years of coaching experience; b) athletic background; c) national or international coaching experience; and d) having performance outcomes (results) as coaches (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995).

Three of the seven coaches were women, born and socialized in Eastern Europe. They competed at a high level, representing their countries. At the time of this study, each of them was coaching Canadian individual female Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG) athletes. Three of the coaches were men who were born and socialized in North America. They competed as athletes for a North American team as well, and were coaching male Basketball (BB) teams. An additional coach was used as a negative case study. A negative case study involves searching for and discussing elements of the data that do not support or appear to contradict patterns or explanations emerging from data analysis. This coach was a female who was born, socialized in North America, and competed as an athlete for a North America team. She was raised up by a family coming from Eastern Europe, and was coaching a male BB team at the time of this study. The

four BB coaches were working with teams enrolled at an educational institution. All coaches ($M= 46.3$; $SD=7.6$), had been involved in national and international competition as athletes ($M= 6.9$; $SD=2.0$) and coaches ($M= 14.2$; $SD=6.8$).

The participants constitute a purposive sample. They were selected in a deliberative fashion to address certain issues that have been previously related to morality. Specifically, these issues were: a) gender; b) culture; c) amount of physical contact; d) type of sport dynamic; e) sport context; f) elite level of competition; and g) extended sport involvement. The first five issues are compared across cases, so that two cases were defined: a) the RG female coaches, socialized in Eastern Europe, coaching a female individual, non-contact competitive sport; and b) the BB coaches, socialized in North America, coaching a male team, medium-contact sport held within an educational frame. Each of these cases reflects certain properties that have been referred to as being related in previous literature to morality.

All participants accounted for extended sport involvement at elite level of competition. Broadly understood, males (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Cooper, 1987), having an extended involvement in sport (e.g., Silva, 1983), being involved in a sport that requires medium to high physical contact (e.g., Conroy, Silva, Newcomer, Walker, & Johnson, 2001), and competing at an elite level (e.g., M.D. Smith, 1979) have been associated with lower moral functioning in the literature. A team sports dynamic may foster the creation and development of a given moral atmosphere that influences athletes to act in accordance to the team created moral environment, irrespective of their personal moral standards (Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997). Studies have acknowledged the importance of these social dimensions; however, no study has

previously studied the relationship of culture and morality in sport, a variable included in the present work.

For confidentiality purposes, coaches were identified by numbers from 1 to 7 with the acronym corresponding to the sport they were coaching (e.g., BB3 for basketball coach 3). Further information about the participants is provided in table 1.

Upon receiving approval from the human subjects ethics board at the lead author's institution, coaches were contacted. Before each interview, coaches signed an informed consent form.

Data collection

A pilot interview was conducted to evaluate the friendliness of the introduction to the interview, the clarity of the interview questions, the ordering of questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Then, coaches were contacted and the interview was held at a time and place of participants convenience. The semi-structured interview allowed participants to describe their understanding of moral influences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The purpose was to discuss gaps in literature and to seek deeper understanding. The interview guide was divided into four interrelated sections: a) introductory comments and instructions; b) description of past moral influences; c) description of current responsibilities concerning morality; and d) final and additional comments and interviewee's perception of the interview. Each interview was conducted on an individual basis and lasted approximately one hour. Planned probes were used to clarify, confirm, or exemplify responses to open-ended questions (Patton, 2002).

Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim (the first two interviews by the first author and the followings ones by a third party), and transcription quality was

reviewed by a research associate (Poland, 2001). Each participant received his or her interview and was given the opportunity to make changes or additions to questions. We perceived this to be critical because some of the participants mentioned at the end of the interview that felt that this process would generate new ideas. Data collection was conducted up to the moment where data saturation was achieved, meaning that no new data was emerging (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Data analysis

The strategy of analysis followed procedures proposed by Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This procedure consists of open coding (breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data, pp. 195) and axial coding (data is put back together and new connections are established, pp. 195) (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The first author holistically read the first two interviews (RG1 and BB1). Three actions followed. First, open coding was conducted. Second, minor adjustments to the interview schedule were done before continuing data collection. Corbin and Strauss (2008; 1998) refer to this procedure as “iterative process,” a requirement to achieve theoretical sampling. Third, an initial framework was developed.

Consecutive interviews were analyzed by referring to this preliminary framework developed within the analysis of the first interviews. Therefore, constant comparison and contrast procedures were used (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Analytic memos (i.e., field notes, impressions, speculations concerning data, explanation of relationships) were integrated to the preliminary framework. Finally, the two bounded cases were compared so that the strength of the results was increased. This technique has

been referred to as pattern analysis (Yin, 2003). The dimensions generated during analysis were named by using in vivo codes (i.e., words used by interviewees, Corbin & Strauss, 2008); however, when similar ideas were put together (i.e., properties and categories), the theme that served to group elements was used to create labels.

Knowing that our personal background would affect our work, we combined an insider (i.e., the first author that has previous athletic involvement and current sport involvement working in the field of sport psychology), one outsider, and two insiders-outsiders. The outsider was a research student trained in qualitative research but having no involvement in the field; the two insiders-outsiders were the second and third researchers who had no research experience in the field of sports (Holt & Sparkes, 2001). The graduate student independently coded 29% of data and compared it with the data generated by the first author. More specifically, both the primary researcher and the graduate student compared the categories, properties, and dimensions they created.

In addition, the second and third researcher acted as debriefers of generated data. Finally, participants were invited to participate in a focus group where results were presented and they were allowed to give their opinions concerning results. This follows the procedure recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). After conducting the interviews, we agreed that it was necessary to give participants a second chance to consider the information they provided. This was due to the fact that the majority of participants mentioned during the interview that they were articulating ideas that they had never thought about before. Therefore, we assumed that this meeting could be a space for participants to reconsider what they discussed during the interview.

Results and discussion

The main purpose of the present study was to study the coach as a moral influence. Interviews yielded 113 pages of 12-point, times new roman, single-spaced text. Results were grouped into three main categories: participants past moral influences; participants current moral practices; and opinions concerning the relationship between morality and sport based on the participants own experience.

Participants past moral influences received

With regards to past moral influences, we identified the following sub-categories in the coaches discourse: a) sources of moral influence; b) the process of moral influence; c) the coach-athlete relationship and moral influence; and d) the retrospective evaluation of past moral influences. Cultural differences between groups were analyzed across sub-categories.

Sources of moral influence. The initial question of the interview was designed to elicit participants to identify past moral influences. The interview guide anticipated a series of questions to invite participants to discuss about moral influences they received from their coaches, in case participants did not mention them. This was not necessary because all participants acknowledged spontaneously that they have been morally influenced by their past coaches. The importance of coaches as moral influences has been already reported (c.f. Peláez, Aulls, Rossi et al., 2010 for a review).

All participants mentioned a same gender coach as having a moral influence on them. More specifically, women identified female coaches and men identified male coaches as having a moral influence on them. Six participants mentioned obtaining moral influence from someone older than them. Four coaches identified two different coaches who were important influences in their lives. Three participants referred to the

coach they had when they started the sport they currently coach (i.e., RG coaches were between 6 and 10 years old, whereas BB coaches were between 12 and 16 years old), and the coach they had at the end of their career as an athlete (i.e., participants were in their late adolescence). One participant, BB3, identified his first coach and a coach he admired, but he had never been coached by. Three participants identified only one moral mentor. RG1 and BB4 referred to the same coach they had throughout their athletic lives. BB2 only referred to the coach he had when he started his athletic career.

The second source of moral influence was parents. Parental moral influence in the life of an athlete has been previously reported (Côté, 1999). The five coaches that identified their parents as moral influences, referred to a same gender parent, or generically referred to “parents” rather than father or mother. Two of the three RG coaches did not mention parents as moral influences at all. In fact, the RG coach that referred to her mother, said the following: “my mother ... worked a lot, and a lot, and a lot up to the moment I was 21 years old and we did not see each other at all.” The fact that coaches, at elite level, may sometimes represent a parental figure for youth athletes has been already acknowledged (Balague, 1999). This was especially evident in the RG coaches because they expanded on the description of their coaches as influences compared to other sources.

In addition to coaches and parental moral influences, RG3 coach mentioned her boyfriend and her peer athletes, BB3 mentioned that he learned values at school as well; and BB4, who identified herself as a “Christian Catholic,” mentioned her church and her pastor were important moral influences as well. The fact that socialization entails interaction with different sources has already been acknowledged in the field of sports

(e.g., Brustad, 1996; Coleman et al., 2008; Côté, 1999; Holt et al., 2008; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995; M.R. Weiss & Knoppers, 1982).

The process of the moral influence. All participants agreed that they learned morality throughout a process of social interaction as acknowledged by previous literature (Bandura, 1991; Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; Kohlberg, 1984). Also, participants mentioned they experienced moral relevant issues all through their athletic life; however, they were not able to make sense of them until later in their careers. This is probably due to the fact that morality entails not only a process, but certain individual maturity. Let's consider what participant BB3 said: "... it was later on when I think ... sort of... maybe I matured late... It was later on when you sort of developed more of a... a moral conscience or a social conscience...." In addition, BB3 said what follows:

Yeah, morals I think... I learned over a period of time as I said.... but then you develop your own conscience over a period of time and... you decide... you know, what are your values, what are your principles, what's important, what's not, what's worth fighting about, what's not. And... you make those decisions and... you know, it's an ongoing process I think, 'cause you're constantly re-evaluating.

As well, all participants acknowledged the importance of the social interaction between social nested systems as proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). These coaches reported a major interaction between moral influences provided by coaches and parents. Six participants reported no conflict between moral influences they received from different sources. Only one participant referred to a negative and conflicting moral influence from her coach; however, all along the interview she mainly referred to her

coach. The RG1 said the following in relationship to her coach:

I do not think she taught me moral issues; instead, she taught me how to stand up for myself and to look for my own way. She was definitively not a moral referent for me.

Instead, RG1 referred to her mother as follows:

... I think it was my mother who was a moral person for me... (she) taught me that if I wanted to succeed, I had to work hard. I learned from her that there are sacrifices to do, even if we don't want to do them. At that time, I saw her working for the government, helping people that needed to be helped, and she did that without asking for anything.

The most important way to receive moral influence, as reported by these coaches, was observation of their coaches attitudes and behaviours. However, while RG participants mentioned observation as the only way to receive moral influence, BB coaches reported oral interchange and discussion as well. Some exemplars follow: "it is not only that I did not have the chance to ask... (but also) that the coach had no answer or simply did not want to answer" RG1; "I learned (morality) from the way she (her coach) treated us" RG2; and "My coach was kind of: "we are friends, we are going to grow together, we are going to interchange, we are going to talk" BB1.

Six coaches also mentioned they experienced or they witnessed immoral situations. BB1 shared an anecdote that exemplifies what he experienced during his childhood when he was training for baseball. At that time he learned that taking decisions by himself and then hiding information from the coach was something his coach would punish him for not respecting the rules.

I remember a match we played while it was raining. At a given moment, it was impossible to keep on playing due to the rain; thus, the match was cancelled. So me and my friends, went to the match by bus.... When the match was cancelled, the coach asked us if it was ok for us to come back home by bus, by ourselves and me and my friends said: "Yes." But we came back home walking.... All that to say that, when I arrived home I was completely wet and very dirty.... So my mother called my coach.... The coach told my mother: "Next practice, I want him to be there half an hour before, I will fix things with him".... So I met him an before the practice and he asked me to come into the field. He hit me balls (and) he asked me to stop them all, with no pause. He threw me that many balls that I ended up falling, and then, having my face on the floor (the participant meant that by hitting him balls up to the moment he fell down was his coach's way to punish him).

Culture impacted participants either in a direct or indirect fashion. This was especially obvious for RG participants who were comparing situations experienced in their original countries and their current experience in Canada. For example, RG2 explained that what she understands as a moral issue is seen in a different way in Canada as compared to her country:

"Discipline, because there is a big difference actually between Canada and (the name of her country of birth).... I would say that in (the name of the country), especially and particularly in a school of sports context, students know they are there to learn; whereas here, they mostly come mostly to have fun.... Right now they (referring to the government) are trying to do something about the sport, but

it mostly because of health issues.... But in (the name of the country), sport is mostly like one kind of education and discipline, hard work, and engagement is part of what a student gives back.”

All participants agreed that the reigning moral atmosphere did not affect them in a negative way. Specifically, participants explained that they neither followed immoral examples, nor engaged in immoral atmosphere. Instead, these participants either quit the situation, or they stayed there, but did not participate in it. The BB3 said the following:

I withdrew from the situation, I left the team, because I didn't think that people were being treated fairly.... and it was my principle that... made me leave that situation... there were different penalties based on who was more valuable to the team... so I chose not to... be involved with that... 'cause I didn't think it was right.

As detailed above, the previous literature has reported that under certain circumstances coaches have called for, allowed, or congratulated athletes for enacting morally negative behaviours (Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Long et al., 2006; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Stornes, 2001; Trudel et al., 1992). However, this was not mentioned by these participants. Furthermore, no participants reported having seen or experienced a lack of coherence between the message their coaches delivered to them and what those coaches finally did.

Coach-athlete relationship and moral influence. Besides individual differences, all participants referred to the relationship they had with their coaches, supporting previous evidence indicating that a coach-athlete relationship is one of the most important factors in the sport dynamics (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Furthermore,

except for one participant (RG1), six of them reported a healthy coach-athlete relationship with the coach they identified as a moral influence. The common elements to all coach-athlete relationships mentioned by participant were “closeness” and “committed” as described by Jowett and colleagues (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000). For example, in relationship to “closeness,” participants said: “I was very connected with him” (BB2); “She was very nice and gentle; I had a strong relationship with her.... Her family was like my own” (RG3); and “we were friends” (BB1). Concerning “commitment,” five participants mentioned the intention and desire to “maintain a partnership with their coaches,” despite the existence of differences. As an example, BB1 quoted what his coach always said: “...we will grow together, and we will grow, and we will interchange, and we will talk....” In addition, BB4 explained the long-term commitment she had with her coach in this way:

I was playing basketball in high school, and then I followed my high school coach because she was there teaching at the (name of the university), and I followed her... only to play there.... And then, ah... she brought me back to coach in the school, the high school where she was, so I was still under her influence.

Two main relationship patterns were identified depending on the moment these participants received a moral influence from their coaches. First, participants described the coaches they had at the beginning of their careers as playing a parental role. For example, participant BB1 referred to his first coach by using these words: “he was my father’s age... his athletes were his kids.” Similarly, participant RG3 commented that she once said to her mother: “... I found my coach, at some point, very similar to you”

and she added: “Maybe I found this similarity because I liked my mother.” In parallel with parents, who support initial children sport steps (Côté, 1999), participants acknowledged the fact that first coaches were those who formally introduced them into sport. For example, RG2, when asked why she considered her first coach as a moral influence, she said: “Well, you know, she was the first one who taught me gymnastics, who taught me the sport, who introduced me in this world.” Participant BB3 gave a similar response: “He taught me more than anybody.... More than any other coach I ever had.” This has been previously referred to in the literature (Balague, 1999). It should be noted that although RG participants reported a lower sense of “closeness” between the coach and the athlete, as compared to the BB coaches, a similar emphasis was given to the coach as a parent, a guide, and a supporting person. As mentioned before, these participants described parental influences were minimally referred.

Second, participants reported having moral influence from their coaches at the last phase of their sport careers. Participants described their coaches as more knowledgeable, respectable, and recognized people in the field of sports. Participants expressed this with the following words: “... he was a very known individual in the sporting world” (BB3); “(she)... started the whole department of gymnastics at the university” (RG2); “... he was a young man, very sport oriented, that had succeeded in sport, both as an athlete and as a coach” (BB1). In addition, participants mentioned that once they grew, they became more independent, either because their coaches support their growing or because the situation forced them to be by themselves. An example follows: “... he fostered my development.... As an athlete, you have to go further.... You have to become autonomous. And he took me there, up to that point!” (BB1). The

importance of the provision of room to grow in the life of an athlete has already been acknowledged (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). RG1 mentioned as well that she had the opportunity to grow; however, this space was not naturally given by the coach, but by the circumstances. More specifically, RG1 explained that she was in charge of her routines, but only because her coach did not pay attention to her. However, and besides the underlying reason, this opportunity to have control over her routine was a valuable experience:

When I was 13, I was doing my own routines because my coach did not want to do them anymore. I ended up by doing everyone's routines at the club (meaning tailoring routines depending on each peers characteristics). The routines were done (referring to the fact that she was receiving at that moment a general script for her routines), ... but in rhythmic, that is like giving someone a big coat that does not fit her because she is smaller in size (a metaphor illustrating that she was actually receiving her routines, but they were designed in a general fashion and not at all adapted to her characteristics). For whatever reason, my coach was not able to do that.... It's interesting because today I have to recognize I learned a lot from that (situation).”

The between-case comparisons showed that there were notable differences in the coach-athlete relationship. RG participants had full-time coaches that were first of all, devoted to training participants. RG participants started their training at an early age and dedicated long daily hours to their athletic improvement. These two factors had an important impact in their coach-athlete relationship. Specifically, RG participants reported having a clearer sense of co-orientation (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett &

Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000). On the other hand, besides the relationship the three RG participants had with their coaches, and even though they were able to articulate some moral influences they had, the first reaction of these participants was that they did not learn moral issues. Instead, the RG coaches emphasized they learned sport techniques and that was what they expected from their coaches.

Of note, two RG participants mentioned their coach and the head coach had a special way of interaction. Specifically, they reported that one of them (either their coach or the head coach) was tough and distant, whereas the other was tender and close. As well, the three RG participants acknowledged the hierarchy reigning in the structure they were immersed. RG1 said:

It was the head coach the one that was strong, not my coach; she was weak. She could not resist the head coach's power. In our system the head coach of the country has the right to choose who is going to compete.... My coach saw that the head coach was being unfair to me, but she was never able to say "No" to the head coach.

RG participants were in a place where none to scarce questioning was allowed. RG3 described a peer that, compared to the rest of the group, had the "courage" to talk to her coach: "she had the courage to discuss her routine, to give suggestions, and not only to listen and repeat." This seemed to be as well the position participants coaches had in relationship to the head coaches.

BB participants had a closer relationship with their coaches when compared to RG participants. Their past coaches emphasized the social side of the relationship, instead of just the athletic performance side. In addition, BB participants shared more

positive past experiences, a more clear sense of team, and less feelings of isolation as compared to their RG counterparts. Participant BB4 said the following referring to her coach:

“She used our talents to the best of our ability, and even when we were in university, I mean, we didn’t win any games.... We used to get creamed.... (but) we always had, there always was a social side after the game.... ‘cause we were there at least for a weekend, and ... every team would have to do something to say who they are, and.... we always made songs, and... through music people got to appreciate us much and had nothing to do with sport.”

Retrospective evaluation of past moral influences. All participants mentioned that the consequences of the described moral influences had been positive in their lives. At a personal level, four participants mentioned that their coaches helped them reinforce the moral standards they brought from their parents. Five participants mentioned that they learned from their coaches moral values related to sport, but that could also be applied in everyday life. Examples given by participants were: “camaraderie” (BB4) and “the respect for the rules and the hierarchy” (BB1).

Participants current moral practices

We wanted to investigate current coaching practices associated with moral influences. Specifically, we wanted to know: a) the place participants ascribe to morality in their current coaching practices; b) how participants proceed now as coaches in order to morally influence their athletes; and c) the impact of past moral influence in participants current moral influences practices.

The place participants ascribe to morality in their current practices. All

participants agreed that moral issues barely arise so they do not need to deal with them on daily basis. BB participants agreed that they set the moral tone at the beginning of the season, by clarifying their expectations concerning athletes moral behaviours. Conversely, RG participants expressed that they expected their athletes to behave in agreement to moral standards. It was unclear though, what these moral standard were and how they were established.

All participants agreed they reinforced their positions by reminding athletes what they expect from them, or intervening if necessary. The values that were more frequently mentioned by these participants were: a) discipline and rules (e.g., “respect for the time” and for “the rest of the team members” (BB2); “to listen and learn how to work... I deserve respect” (RG2); b) work ethics (e.g., “You do not have to be cheap, you have to be someone serious, everything you touch has to be done based on knowledge”, RG3); and c) factors related to interpersonal relationships (e.g., “be clear.... transparent.... give reasons.... clarify the limits.... take care of them (athletes)... avoid negative situations”, RG1). Previous studies acknowledged the fact that coaches promoted these moral values (Long et al., 2006; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007) as well as social values (Rudd, 2005; Rudd & Stoll, 2004). In addition, all participants agreed that if morally negative issue or situation unexpectedly arose, depending on the gravity of the situation, they could either talk to the athlete, or remove him or her from the team without any space for discussion.

The way participants morally influence their athletes in their current practices.

All participants agreed they are important moral influences, and therefore, they take on that responsibility. Setting the moral tone within the group was part of their commitment

to maintain a moral atmosphere. Although all participants affirmed their moral values were already in place (e.g., “My moral principles are established; they are already in place”, BB1; “... it is my inner voice”, RG2; “My moral standards are there; I do not even think about them”, RG3), they all expressed that they were also open to negotiation. BB1 explained this as follows:

I am a very disciplined person, but at the same time, I am very open. I leave room for mistakes.... What I will do is let them go through their process, let them learn from their mistakes, and then, I will... guide them.... I leave them (athletes) some room to try, to make mistakes.

Between-case comparisons also showed that while all participants acknowledged the need for negotiation and adaptation, the underlying dynamic between RG coaches and BB coaches was different. BB participants focused on their adaptation to what their athletes bring. For example, BB4 mentioned that in her team there were male athletes from all around the world and having different backgrounds. Therefore, adapting herself to them was a crucial part of his work. More precisely, this coach said the following: “Wow, how I am gonna handle these guys?” and I’m still learning how to handle them, because.... you know, you have to deal with the personalities or you lose them.”

RG participants reported a different bidirectional moral process. The RG coaches process was related to trying to understand and to adapt to Canadian context. As noted before, these participants had a different athletic and cultural experience, so their challenge, as explained by them, was to balance their own and their athletes work related values. RG3 explained that “sometimes it is hard for athletes to work hard and to concentrate in their work because the Canadian system is more demanding (e.g., school,

leisure time activities) so athletes have other responsibilities than just training.”

Besides differences, all participants indicated a clear sense of their internal limits concerning morality. This is of special interest considering that all participants acknowledged the role culture plays concerning moral standards (e.g., “if you live in one society you will have one moral... and if you live in another place, your morality will be different.... The countries, they can give some different basis for your morality”, RG3). Specifically, they agreed that they were open to negotiate, but under certain limits, and this included being attentive under potential risky situations. BB4 said:

I had a (origin) player, and he wouldn't listen to me; I mean, he did his own thing, and it got to a point where I had to let him go, and so I just recently received another (same origin) player and I was very hesitant, you know, so, I said: “Ok, we'll try it out and see what happens,” and... you know, there's a lot of give and take there, and that's give and take understanding of his situation, his culture, which has certain morals, and my culture that has certain morals, and it's a little bit the Muslim ah... faith versus the Christian faith, or the Catholic faith, and... you know, I have to respect what that person has, but I expect you to respect what I have.

Concerning participants relationships with their athletes, this time it was described from their leadership position as compared to the coach-athlete relationship they described having with their past coaches. For these coaches, the creation and development of shared goals between them and their athletes was their major task. This has been defined as co-orientation (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000). Then, participants efforts are pointed towards the development

and maintenance of feelings of closeness (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000) (e.g., “My social side, my human side, always take place”, BB1) and personal care towards athletes (see examples in the above section).

The impact of past moral influence in participants current moral influence practices. By extrapolating the information participants shared, we can infer that current participants practices have been influenced by their past coaches. Participants indicated that they used past coaches as models to be either reproduced, or adapted. For example, the only participant that reported having a immoral influence from her coaches was RG1. This participant said: “I became a coach because I wanted to prove to myself that a different way of doing the things was possible.” Therefore, she used that model as a referent of what is negative and does not have to be reproduced. However, RG1 recognized this model was harmful for her teammates. She said: “This is what they (her teammates) learned: The person that has power is the person that always has reason. You see? They took the same message!” This suggests that self-regulation (Bandura, 1991) plays an important role in deciding what to take from each experience. Finally, it would seem that participants learned moral issues while being athletes by observation and experience, and they indicated that they proceed now in the same way. Given that these participants previously reported that they did not receive any background on morality while they were studying to become coaches (Peláez, Aulls, & Bacon, 2010), it would seem that past coaches were the only sport specific reference concerning morality.

Opinions concerning the relationship between morality and sport

Finally, we wanted to know participants opinions on whether sport is an ideal

place to develop morality. As well, we discussed an example of an immoral situation they had experienced.

Experienced immoral situation. Initially, the interview was design to allow participants to describe any immoral experiences they had whilst they were athletes. However, out of the eight situations reported, four corresponded to their athletic life (the three RG coaches and BB1); whereas four did not. Immoral situations described were related to “unfair decisions” (RG1, RG2, RG3, BB1, and BB3); “swearing” (BB2); and “stealing” (BB4). These situations were not traumatic for participants, as a matter of a fact, participants struggled to find examples of them during the interview. Nevertheless, all participants reported learning from that lesson. Achieved learning was: “avoiding unclear situations,” “authority is related to power and this relationship deserves to be considered in order not to abuse from it,” and “enacted actions have consequences” (RG1); “people are different” (RG2); “discipline” (BB1); “the importance of establishing codes between coach and athlete” (RG3, BB2, and BB4); “life exceeds sport” (BB3).

Sport as an ideal setting for developing morality. According to these coaches, sport is an ideal setting to develop morality. First, sport offers the possibility of having an “active lifestyle” (RG1) and a potential for “professional development” (RG2). In addition, given that it requires such a devoted dedication, “athletes have no free time to engage in antisocial activities” (RG1). Furthermore, moral behaviours such as effort, work ethics, discipline, respect, cooperation, and responsibility can be exercised on a daily basis, as noted by all coaches. Finally, and in concert with previous literature (e.g., Petitpas et al., 2004; M.R. Weiss et al., 2007), all coaches agreed that although sport is

an ideal setting for moral development; special effort and attention is required. BB3 said: “when you have the right coach, no matter the sport, but the right coach teaching them the right things, you could, you could really change a person.”

Conclusion

The main purpose of the present study was to study the coach as a moral influence. Specifically, we wanted to know how participants had been influenced by their previous coaches when they were athletes; how they morally influenced their athletes in their current coaching practices; and whether past moral influences had an impact in current coaching practices. We used a purposive sample. All participants had an extended elite sport involvement. Two cases were defined for the purposes of comparison. Cases were based on the participants gender, dynamic of sport they coach (i.e., individual vs. team sport); physical contact required by the sport they coach (i.e., non-contact vs. medium to high contact); sport context (i.e., educational vs. competition); and cultural background.

The present study yielded three major findings. First, the fact that the coach is a moral influence was confirmed and explained by these participants. Participants past coaches were important moral influences for them at the time they were athletes. The moral influence participants received in the past was associated with all participants current coaching practices. Coaches moral influence was stronger in RG participants when compared to their BB counterparts. Participants reported that their coaches were coherent in the messages they delivered and what they finally did. Probably this coherence fostered athletes acceptance of the coaches moral message.

Another pattern that was identified was that parents, a second source of influence, were stronger moral influences for BB participants than for RG participants. This finding is in line with previous literature conducted in North American context (Côté, 1999). Teammates and peers, elsewhere identified as important social influences (e.g., Holt & cols, 2008; Smith, 2003), were the less frequently identified moral influences. This suggests that moral influences in sport begin at home and continues with coaches without much influence of teammates over the athletic life span.

Concerning current moral practices, all participants agreed that they were responsible for educating their athletes at a moral level. However, they agreed that they did not deal with moral issues on a daily basis. Instead, they set the tone and they expect athletes to adapt to their rules. BB reported more openness to discuss with their athletes concerning moral issues. Based on experienced moral situations, these coaches agreed that sport is an ideal place for moral development.

A second finding is that, for all participants, moral influences entailed a process of social interaction. Cross-case comparison indicated that participants referred they received and provided similar moral influence; however, differences across groups were identified. BB participants reported more interchange and discussion with their coaches and current athletes than RG participants. Culture and the coach-athlete relationship played an important role concerning moral influences. The former set the tone for the type of moral influence; whereas the latter regulated the type of interchange, and therefore the extent of the moral influence. Observation was a commonly reported way to learn morality for all coaches. Although all participants agreed that the moral atmosphere of the sport team had an influence on them, they did not engage in situations

they did not agree with. In those cases, participants either quit the situation, or kept on doing what they assumed to be the right thing to do.

Another major finding was related to the interpretation of the results. Due to the purpose of the study, as well as, to the nature of the design, the interpretation of the present findings either exceeds, or partially contribute to support the contentions of the two major theories currently used (i.e., the social cognitive theory and the structural developmental theory). For example, participants reported the importance of observation, interaction with others and the environment, and self-regulation as proposed by the social cognitive theory. However, perceived efficacy, a central component of social cognitive theory, was not referred to by participants (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Also, it is not an individual role model or referent that people follow. Instead, it is all possible varieties of social examples included in a given culture whose moral influence may overlap in both quality and time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Higgins et al., 1984; Kohlberg et al., 1971; Turiel, 1989).

On the other hand, the structural developmental theory (Higgins et al., 1984; Kohlberg et al., 1971), proposes that the reigning moral atmosphere has an influence over members involved in the group. These participants mentioned that they either did not engage, or quit the situation when immoral situation arose. This confirms that the social context is of great importance, but individuals contribute to their development via self-regulation (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998). The fact that in order to interpret our data we have pulled from different theories and models related to morality seems to indicate that the study of morality in the field of sports requires of a more comprehensive framework. This finding strongly suggests that in order to understand moral influences

in sports, a more comprehensive and grounded theoretical approach needs to be developed.

Additionally, qualitative research has demonstrated to be an adequate research strategy to capture moral influences in sport. Not only in the consideration of participants viewpoints and experiences as being important to understanding how moral influences occur, but also data coming from qualitative design may lead to the development of grounded theory concerning moral influences.

This study arguably has some limitations. First, the sample size is limited. Also, although we found some differences when comparing cases, we do not certainly know which of the five characteristics that limited the cases were driving the differences. We can speculate that it was culture, due to the fact that coaches mentioned it. On the other hand, as we included a negative case, who was a female BB coach, and that her responses corresponded to her BB peers, it would seem that gender differences may not explain the case differences. However, a more in-depth assessment of the variables delimitating the case should be done. The study has some strengths as well. The specific characteristics of the bounded cases allowed us to draw important and reliable conclusions concerning moral influences. Finally, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study showing the participant' perceptions of the moral influences their coaches had over them, and how these moral influences affected participants current practices.

Concerning future research, two main paths are suggested. Although the current study has contributed several new findings to the area, there is now a necessity to replicate this study. The replication of the current findings, ideally using different research designs, will help to confirm stable patterns within the literature. The other

main path should focus on extending the current results. For example, different sport participants, participating in different sports, and representing different sports contexts should be sampled. It would be also interesting to study a sport dyad to investigate how a coach's moral behaviour correlates with his or her athlete's moral behaviour. Given that the coach-athlete relationship and culture were major components in the process of moral influence, an in-depth exploration of them seems to be promising. Finally, the present study indicated that a coach-athlete relationship played an important role concerning moral influences. The exploration of athletes and coaches affects, emotions, and empathy seems to be an interesting line of research as well.

The current study provides some insight into potential ways to improve moral behaviour in sport. Interventions aiming to foster moral behaviours in sport should primarily target coaches, by offering a space for discussing in order to reach an agreement. Also, coach-athlete interchanges should be promoted via tailored interventions. This will be helpful to clarify moral standards and to discuss daily decisions that entail moral issues.

In conclusion, understanding moral influence in sport is important as it offers a scenario for the individuals to exercise morality. Exploring the dynamic, the impact, and the consequences of moral influences will be helpful for designing future interventions to foster moral development. Coaches need to be aware of the responsibility related to their position, as well as, the impact they have over their athletes. Though sport is an ideal place to foster moral development if it is not structured, sport could also turn out to be a place where undesirable moral behaviour can occur as well.

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CHAPTER 4 - THE COACH AS A MORAL INFLUENCE

RUNNING HEAD: Moral influences

The coach as a moral influence

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Abstract

Objectives: Previous literature acknowledged the fact that coaches are important moral influences for their athletes. However, there are some issues that require more in-depth consideration. For example, little is known about how a moral influence takes place, or the impact this past moral influence has in current coaching practices. The main purpose of the present mixed design study was to replicate previous findings (Peláez, Aulls, and Bacon 2010a, 2010b). Design: Mixed method study. Method: Ten elite coaches socialized in Canada and accounting for extended sport involvement were interviewed. Data was qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. Results: Findings confirmed that coaches are important moral influences for their athletes. A coach's understanding of morality is translated into coaching moral practices that in turn affect athletes. In addition, past moral influences participants received from coaches affected participants current coaching practices. A coach-athlete relationship and an athlete's self-regulation enable or prevent a coach's moral influence to take place. Given that morality is context-related, culture plays an important role in determining moral values. Conclusion: Future research should study different sport participants, from different contexts, and different sport settings (e.g., recreational sport). The role of culture concerning morality should be assessed in-depth. Sport interventions aiming to enhance moral behaviour in sport participants should purposefully organize a program of activities to help individuals clarify moral standards of the team via the discussion of moral issues.

Keywords: coach – morality – culture – coach-athlete relationship

The coach as a moral influence

Previous literature acknowledged the fact that coaches are important moral influences for their athletes (cf. Peláez, Aulls, Rossi, & Bacon, 2010 for a review). Although this evidence has been confirmed across different studies, there are some issues that require more in-depth consideration. For example, little is known about how a moral influence takes place, or the impact this past moral influence has in current coaching practices. A previous attempt to address these issues indicated that both coach-athlete relationship and culture were important factors concerning the occurrence of moral influences (Peláez, Aulls, & Bacon, 2010b). However, due to the nature of the sample, it was not possible to clarify the role certain aspects such as gender, culture, sport dynamics, and sport context played in regard to moral influences.

The main purpose of the present study was to extend the current literature, and specifically Peláez, Aulls et al.'s study (2010a, 2010b) by studying 10 elite coaches socialized in Canada and accounting for extended sport involvement. This study used the social constructivism perspective to understand coaches experiences concerning morality. Social constructivism is concerned with the understanding of subjective and unique perceptions that result from social interactions and negotiations (K.J. Gergen, 2009; M.M. Gergen & Gergen, 2003). Five issues related to the coach as a moral influence were addressed. First, participants understanding of morality was qualitatively assessed (using the concept that actions are based on cognitions, Dickins, 2004). Second, participants encounters with sources of moral influence were examined to understand how they took place. Third, participants perceived current moral influence over their athletes was studied to explore: a) how a coach might morally influence athletes in

current coaching practices and b) whether past moral experiences are translated by participants into their current coaching practices. In addition, participants self-efficacy to instil moral values was examined and compared to coaching practices reported by these participants. Finally, based on their experiences, participants opinions concerning the relationship between moral development and sports were analyzed.

Sport as a context to promote moral development: Arguments for and against

It seems that the ultimate goal of studies tackling morality and sport is to address the question of whether sport is an ideal context to develop morality. The notion that sport is an ideal vehicle to promote morality and a facilitator of moral development is a strong belief in our society (G.H. Sage, 1990). However, there are arguments indicating that sport participation might not be an optimal setting to carry out this endeavour (e.g., Ogilvie & Tutko, 1971; Shields & Bredemeier, 2005). Thus, despite the idealization of sport involvement, research evidence associating sport participation and morality is mixed (M.R. Weiss, Smith, & Stuntz, 2008). The arguments “for” and “against” are presented below.

Arguments “for” sport and moral development. These arguments were initiated by scholars in the field of philosophy. These scholars supported the idea that thanks to its inherent characteristics, sport builds character. For example, Arnolds (1984) claimed that sport allowed the exercising of justice and fairness by the confluence of freedom and equality. It should be noted though, that this position lacked empirical evidence to support the claim. In support of this position, authors from the field of sport pedagogy claimed that due to the fact that sport requires knowledge of and the application of rules, it is an ideal setting for the exercise of morality (Jantz, 1975; Linaza Iglesias &

Maldonado, 1987).

Further evidence to support the “for” argument is that sport programs designed to foster moral development, attain their goal. The first attempts to promote moral development through sport programs were delivered by Romance and colleagues (1986), and were quickly followed by other programs (“Fair play for Kids” (Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1997; Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995), “Self- and Social Responsibility Model” (De Busk & Hellison, 1989; Hellison, Martinek, & Cutforth, 1996), “Sport for Peace” (Ennis, 1999; Ennis, Cothran, Davidson, Loftus, & Owens, 1997; Ennis et al., 1999), “Sociomoral Educational Program” (S.C. Miller, Bredemeier, & Shields, 1997; Solomon, 1997), and “Life Skill Developmental Model” with its two programs “Going for the Goal program” (GOAL, Danish & Nellen, 1997; Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1992) and “Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation program” (SUPER, Danish & Nellen, 1997; Danish, Nellen, & Owens, 1996). These programs were monitored during and after their implementation. Evidence indicated positive moral development in the intervention groups, especially when compared to individuals in the control groups (e.g., Danish & Nellen, 1997; Solomon, 1997).

Recently, structured, sport-based activities have been identified as important settings for fostering positive youth development. These programs are based on the fact that positive youth development is most likely to occur when organized programs offer positive adult behaviors and foster personal skills (M.R. Weiss, Bolter, Bhalla, & Price, 2007). Positive youth development is an approach that works both to promote desirable outcomes and to prevent undesirable behaviours (Holt, 2008; M.R. Weiss et al., 2008). It is proposed that sport is an ideal context to develop morality because it relies on external

resources (i.e., close relationships) and internal assets (i.e., skills that youth can learn and transfer). Two programs have been identified in line with this approach: the “Play it Smart” (Petitpas, Van Raalte, Cornelius, & Presbrey, 2004), and “The First Tee” (M.R. Weiss et al., 2007) programs. Preliminary evidence suggests that these two programs promoted general life skills experiences (e.g., positive relationships with both peers and adults); psychosocial outcomes (e.g., perceived behavioral conduct); and life skills transfer (e.g., solving conflicts, pursuing education). Therefore, within the context of these programs, certain aspects of morality seemed to improve.

In a different vein, research has also confirmed that sport is an ideal place for moral development. Specifically, two recent studies informed coaches opinions concerning the relationship between sport and morality. Rudd and Mondello (2006) interviewed twelve head coaches who emphatically affirmed that sport participation fostered moral development. However, the authors noted that the question posed to coaches lacked specificity (i.e., did neither attempt to dig into coaches definition of morality, nor coaches understanding of morality). Therefore, it was not possible to distinguish whether sport was effectively related to morality because no rationale for the coaches position was asked. Peláez and colleagues (2010b) extended this work by asking coaches for a rationale to explain the relationship between sport and morality. All seven coaches studied said sport was an ideal setting for personal development. Coaches rationale was based on the fact that sport: a) offers the possibility of having an “active lifestyle;” b) is a place for potential “professional development;” c) “fosters the exercise of moral behaviours;” and d) leaves no place for engaging in “antisocial activities.” Also, these coaches mentioned that they experienced situations whilst being athletes that did

not fit their moral parameters, such as the coach favouritism towards certain players. However, none of these situations was unbearable or traumatic for them and they actually learned from these situations.

In summary, sport has all the necessary characteristics to allow for the exercising of moral behaviours. Programs designed to foster positive youth development and more specifically, moral behaviour have been demonstrated to be effective in influencing behaviour in the short-term. In addition, research devoted to reflect coaches viewpoints concerning the relationship between sport and morality found that according to coaches, sport was an ideal setting for moral development.

Arguments “against” sport and moral development. The arguments on the “against” side of the debate have resulted primarily from studying morality via the comparison between athletes and non-athletes. Research comparing individuals who do and do not engage in competitive sports evidence indicated that moral reasoning was different in athletes and non-athletes. Specifically, athletes reported less sophisticated levels of moral reasoning (Bredemeier & Shields, 1984), or they was less mature or no different (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986b) to non-athletes. Elaborating on this with athletes, Bredemeier and Shields (1984, 1986b) found that extended sport involvement (i.e., being involved in sport for a long time) was related to lower moral reasoning (Bredemeier, 1985, 1994).

As detailed above, there exists empirical evidence to both arguments “for” and “against” the relationship between sport and moral development. Evidence indicates that when physical activity and exercise programs use either educational or recreational sport, moral development can be fostered (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Weinberg & Gould,

2007; M.R. Weiss & Smith, 2002; M.R. Weiss et al., 2008). Even further, sport settings specifically designed to promote moral development not only achieve their goal (e.g., Petitpas et al., 2004; M.R. Weiss et al., 2007) but also promote positive personal development (Holt, 2008). However, sport contexts where no specific intervention has been designed seem to be less adequate for fostering moral development (e.g., Long, Pantaléon, Bruant, & d'Arripe-Longueville, 2006). Thus, it seems that sport offers a plausible scenario for moral development, but is most effective when specifically structured with that purpose (Holt & Jones, 2008; Holt, Tamminen, Tink, & Black 2009).

It should be pointed out though, that the majority of the studies evaluating the effects of specifically designed programs on moral development are quantitative and cross-sectional in nature. As noted by Weiss et al. (2008), it is somewhat limited to conceptualize moral development based solely on these kinds of studies. In this vein, Solomon (2004) noted that “moral development by definition implies a developmental emphasis or a lifespan approach” (pp.453) which is largely the result of extended longitudinal studies. This lack of and need for longitudinal studies in this field has been previously documented (Kavussanu, 2008).

Coaches understanding of morality

The consideration of coaches understanding of morality is important because individual's practices are based in individual's understanding and conceptualization of a given topic (Dickins, 2004). Specifically, people's moral behaviours depend on their knowledge, values, and beliefs (Piaget, 1932/1965). Even more, the literature in the field of higher education indicates that University teachers try to induct students into ways of thinking and practising in a given subject, initially through teaching and learning

activities (Entwistle, 2005). This is because students learning largely depends on the way it is delivered and the reasons underlying its importance. In addition, professors teach what they can understand and conceptualize (Entwistle, 2005; Entwistle & Peterson, 2004).

Many scholars in the field of social sciences have attempted to clarify the boundaries of morality. For example, Blasi (1987) described morality as an intentional and ideal response to an obligation (1987, 1990). Barrow (2007) went further in defining morality and proposed that it is based on six higher order principles: a) fairness; b) respect; c) freedom; d) truth; e) wellbeing; and f) beauty or aesthetic quality. In a different vein, Turiel (1983) noted that a reason for being moral is because moral behaviours have consequences for others rights and wellbeing. As it can be seen, each definition complements the others because they contribute to different aspects of the same phenomenon.

Several studies in the field of sports have attempted to define the boundaries of morality. First, the *game reasoning model* was developed (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995, 2001), which referred to morality as *character*. A major standpoint within this model was that sport favours a “bracketed morality” (i.e., a way of moral functioning that differs from everyday moral standards, Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). However, Rudd (2005) noted that “character” has been used in two senses in the field of sports. “Moral character,” which is based upon moral values such as respect and cooperation, is related to modes of behaviour between people (Rokeach, 1973); therefore, it is critical to human relationships (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Belier, 1999). On the other hand, “social character” is based upon social values that are held by a society or culture and that

are considered vital in reaching a desired end state. Rudd noted that these values were frequently mentioned by coaches, athletes, and sport managers, and suggested that this was probably because these values were effective for winning.

The next model to be developed was the *social-psychological* model of *sportsmanship* (Vallerand, 1991; Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997; Vallerand, Deshaies, & Currier, 1997; Vallerand, Deshaies, Currier, Brière, & Pelletier, 1996; Vallerand & Losier, 1994). Sportsmanship was understood as respect and concern for: a) one's full commitment to sport participation; b) rules and officials; c) social conventions; and d) the opponent. In addition, a fifth factor, a negative approach to sport participation was also considered. This factor included elements such as the desire to win at all costs. Using a different perspective (i.e., the framework proposed by the interpersonal theory), Kaye (2009) described unsportsmanlike behaviour as an interpersonal behaviour characterized by being: hypercompetitive; intimidating; antisocial; disrespectful; acquiescent; over deferential; abetting; and melodramatic.

Third, the concept of *fair play* was studied and gave rise to the following variables: a) recognition and respect towards the rules of the game; b) correct relationships with the opponent; c) maintenance of the same opportunities and conditions for everybody; d) avoiding winning "at all cost"; e) an honourable attitude in winning and in defeat; and f) commitment to giving as much as possible (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995; Boixadós, Cruz, Torregrosa, & Valiente, 2004).

Finally, based on the fact that what finally counts is enacted behaviour (Bandura, 1991), Kavussanu and colleagues (e.g., Boardley & Kavussanu, 2007, 2008; Kavussanu, 2006; Kavussanu, Seal, & Phillips, 2006) examined *moral behaviour*. Moral behaviour

has been assessed via *prosocial behaviours* (i.e., behaviour entailing actions intended to benefit others than oneself, Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998), *antisocial behaviour*, and *moral disengagement* (i.e., behaviour intended to harm or disadvantage others Kavussanu, 2006; L. Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006). These studies demonstrated how motivational climate (mastery or performance related) and goal achievement perspective (ego and task related) were related to moral behaviour. Specifically, an environment emphasizing performance and individual ego orientation tended to have higher levels of antisocial behaviour.

It should be noted that in a previous study participants referred to morality as *ethics* as well (Peláez, Aulls, & Bacon, 2010a). While there is no difference at an etymological level, there is a distinction at a practical level. Ethics is used as a synonym of moral philosophy and is associated with a standard and abstract code of conduct (Barrow, 2007), whereas morality refers to concrete attitudes and behaviours enacted at a social level.

Extending the work on defining morality, several studies have tried to assess coaches understanding of morality (Duquin, 1984; Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Rudd & Mondello, 2006). Duquin (1984) studied coaches moral rationale by focusing on the relationship between authority and power in sport. Five groups of responses emerged from the data: a) ethic of care (i.e., acting honestly and in good faith; avoiding taking advantage, oppressing, and exploiting; providing resources based on need or parity; interpreting rules in light of individual circumstances; protecting others); b) self-interest (i.e., use of responsibility in their best interest; distribution of resources upon competition or utility; protect themselves when others break rules in

pursuit of their own self-interest); c) the consequences (i.e., correct actions is determined by evaluating potential gains and loses, as well as positive and negative consequences); d) rules (i.e., rules must be obeyed by everyone and the ignorance of the law is no excuse for disobedience); and e) mutual-responsibility (i.e., everyone has the responsibility to behave properly and the right to protect themselves from being exploited). They found that females tended to use the ethic of care more; whereas males used the self-interest rationale.

Similarly, Romand and Pantaléon (2007) interviewed coaches concerning values they imparted to their athletes. Some of the values coaches taught were related to morality (e.g., rule-abidance, respect for others, solidarity, involvement); whereas others were not (e.g., combativeness, caring about success). These coaches were also vigilant of prosocial norms such as punctuality. Although this study has contributed to the literature by providing the coaches perspectives, it only focuses on rules and prosocial norms, meaning that it did not refer to morality as a higher category for which rules are only a part of it. Rudd and Mondello (2006) interviewed college coaches and found that these coaches emphasized social character as compared to moral character. Also, these authors observed that coaches definition of character was lacking specificity.

Finally, Peláez and colleagues (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a) found that coaches agreed that morality resulted from the interaction among behaviours, attitudes, and values. In addition to values described in previous sport literature (e.g., “respect”, “honesty”), coaches in this study mentioned two other values. One group of values was related to elite sport involvement (e.g., “effort,” “work ethic”), whereas the other group of values included an element that can be considered as an antecedent of any moral

relationship, “being in harmony with ones-self.”

The brief review of literature above highlights the fact that while there are some common and shared theoretical and empirical viewpoints, there is no complete agreement on the boundaries of morality. This lack of clarity was reflected in the studies which assessed the coaches perspective, translating into inconsistent coaching practices related to morality. Therefore, examining coaches understanding of morality can be beneficial in the design of tailored coaches educational interventions related to morality. This in turn may foster coaches consistency concerning moral understanding which will be reflected in consistent coaching practices.

The coach as a moral influence

Elite sport requires a great amount of time deliberately devoted to training and to optimizing improvement (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993). It can be speculated that elite athletes shared a great part of their lives with coaches than with other potential sources of influence (Jowett, Paull, Pensgaard, Hoegmo, & Riise, 2005). Coaches are important moral influences (Peláez, Aulls, Rossi et al., 2010), as such, it is crucial to understand the way these moral influences occur and the impact they have on individuals.

Theoretical framework. In the field of elite sport, two main theoretical frameworks nested in the cognitive tradition have been used to study moral influences: a) the cognitive theory and b) the structural developmental theory. The *social cognitive theory* (Bandura, 1986), explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interactions between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. Moral learning occurs as a part of the socialization process. Moral behaviour is assumed to be socially defined, overt and observable, and dependent upon a person’s learning history.

Individuals learn moral standards by observing and analyzing, retaining, and reproducing socially accepted behaviours. Finally, as a result of both vicarious learning (i.e., external) and the self-efficacy of being able to do something (i.e., internal), the enacting of a given moral behaviour brings motivation to the individual. In order to be internalized, moral behaviours require self-regulation (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Self-regulation represents a balance between an individual's cognition and environmental influences (i.e., internalized rewards and punishments are translated into self-control, Bandura, 1991). In addition, perceived efficacy (i.e., belief in one's capability of achieving personal control) mediates moral cognition and moral action (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Thus, individual engagement in moral behaviours depends on the activation of self-regulatory and perceived efficacy capabilities (Bandura, 1986, 1991). The most common strategy used by scholars in the field of sport basing their work on the social cognitive theory was to predict athletes moral behaviours by assessing coaches characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours (e.g., coaches self-efficacy) (e.g., Boardley, Kavussanu, & Ring, 2008).

The *structural moral development theory* (Kohlberg, 1984) is a constructivist approach that assumes morality to be culturally universal and organized in invariant sequence of stages that reveals an individual's thought and behaviour. Kohlberg and colleagues (Higgins, Power, & Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg, Scharf, & Hickey, 1971) noted that moral development is an individual process influenced by social participation. According to these scholars, although moral viewpoints are individual, an individual's exposure to a conflicting moral environment results in them changing to fit the reigning moral environment. This moral environment has also been referred to as moral atmosphere (Kohlberg et al.). The moral atmosphere reigning within a group set the tone

for members moral behaviours, even if the created and accepted moral tone does not agree with each individual's level of moral development (Higgins et al.).

Some scholars have proposed that morality is not universal (Turiel, 1983); thus some advances enhancing the study of an individual's cognitions concerning morality with consideration to specific social variables and situational factors have been proposed. Gilligan (1982), for instance, pointed out that Kohlberg's model neglected values such as care, relational responsiveness, and responsibility, facets that were typically more likely to be associated with females than males. In addition, Haan (1991) proposed the idea of a moral balance about rights, privileges, and responsibilities, with moral dialogues being crucial to attain moral balance. For Haan, the idea of moral context was crucial to the understanding of moral reasoning because it included aspects of cognitive function. Another important referent that advanced on Kohlberg's ideas was Rest (1983, 1984). Rest (1984) supported the idea that behaviour, as well as affect, emotion, and cognition should be studied together. Also, this author stated that the study of morality should focus on the understanding and explanation of moral action.

Finally, Turiel (1989) stated that "culture is *the* context that organizes psychological acquisition" (p. 92). People may be part of the same culture; however, due to personal choices and moral judgements, they may stay apart from some culturally established standards (Turiel, 1998, 2002). Thus, this author proposed the *social domain theory* that understood morality as not universal, but heterogeneous. According to Turiel (1983), morality referred to prescriptive and universal rules (e.g., rights, justice, welfare); whereas social conventions were described as arbitrary and regulated based on social consensus. In an attempt to delimit the boundaries of morality, Turiel (1983) stated that

moral behaviours are those that have consequences for others rights and wellbeing. As such, although morality is culturally shaped; individuals go through their own personal process of construction of moral standards. By posing this statement, Turiel was the first to propose the heterogeneous nature of morality, accepting that there are universal principles, as well as, conventions socially regulated (Turiel, 1983, 1989, 1998, 2002).

Turiel (1983) divided rules into three systems: the moral, the conventional, and the personal. In this model morality referred to prescriptive and universal rules, and it pertained to rights, justice, and welfare. Social conventions were described as arbitrary with socially regulated rules, meaning that they resulted from a social negotiation among the involved parties. These rules could vary depending on the nature of the social consensus¹. Finally, the personal system pertained to things seen as being outside the realm of moral or conventional regulation (e.g., what to be done during free time; what type of sport to practice). Therefore, within the social domain theory, morality and convention are understood as distinct and parallel developmental frameworks.

Past moral influence. A previous retrospective study interviewed coaches concerning the moral influences they received when they were athletes (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010b). Coaches in that study discussed about moral influences they received from their past coaches. Evidence indicated that when participants refer to both their understanding of morality and their current moral influence over their athletes, they referred to the same components of morality they described when referring to the moral influence they received from their past coaches. This indicates that coaches understanding is largely based on past moral influence received from past coaches. These coaches elaborated, as well, on the process via which their coaches influenced them and

the impact this moral influence had on them. They mentioned they learned morality throughout a “process” of “social interaction” where “observation” of their coaches was one of the most important means of obtaining such information.

All participants in Peláez et al.’s study (2010b) agreed that the reigning moral atmosphere did not affect them in a negative way. Specifically, participants explained that they neither followed immoral examples, nor engaged in an immoral atmosphere. Instead, these participants either removed themselves from the particular situation, or they stayed there, but did not participate in it. This evidence is consistent with that previously reported by one study (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996). Confirming this finding is of a great importance as it contrasts with previous literature indicating that the moral atmosphere reigning within an environment had an important impact on immoral attitudes and behaviours (e.g., Higgins et al., 1984; Long et al., 2006). Another important finding of Peláez et al. was that not all coaches have a moral influence over an athlete; on the contrary, it is each athlete who decides what to take from each situation. In addition, participants mentioned that the influence of the coach on moral issues was more likely to occur if their standing point was consistent with that being instilled at home. Further from the quality of reported experiences, all participants mentioned that consequences of moral influences had been positive in their lives. This finding is in line with recent research in general psychology that shows that resisting social influences is possible via active self-regulation (Janssen, Fennis, & Pruyn, 2010).

Current moral influence. A coach’s behaviours and a coach’s characteristics have been identified as mediating moral influences. The coaches characteristics which have been related to moral influences are: age; gender; coaching efficacy; goal orientation;

level of moral reasoning; and sport background. In relationship to age, a previous study reported that coaches that were seen as moral influences were older than athletes (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010b). Concerning gender, female athletes having female coaches, as compared to those having male coaches, believe their coaches are less likely to accept aggression and cheating (Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner, & Bostrom, 1995). Also, female coaches, are more likely to use an ethic of care towards athletes as compared to male coaches, who promote self-interest orientation (Duquin, 1984). Concerning coaches efficacy, a positive perception of their coaches character building efficacy by the athletes is related to increased moral behaviour in the athletes', but is unrelated to athletes immoral behaviour (Boardley et al., 2008). On the other hand, coaches own reports of high game strategy efficacy is positively associated with athletes self-reported likelihood to aggress, but there is no association between coaches self-reported character building efficacy and lower likelihood to aggress (Chow, Murray, & Feltz, 2009).

A coach's goal orientation has also been found to be related to morality. Goal orientation theories assume that individuals strive to demonstrate ability or competence in the presence of achievement situations (Ames, 1992; Nicholls, 1989). Two types of goal orientations have been described: ego (i.e., tendency to use other-referenced criteria) and task (i.e., use of self-referenced criteria) (Nicholls, 1989). Similarly, other studies have assessed perceived performance motivational climate, defined as athletes perceptions of how the learning environment is structured, what behaviours are valued, and how success in their team is evaluated. This has lead to the identification of two distinct climates: A mastery motivational climate which use self-reference criteria; and a performance climate where other-referenced criteria are emphasized (Ames, 1992). It has been found that the

performance motivational climate is related to low levels of moral functioning and that mastery climate is related to higher levels of moral functioning in young athletes (Kavussanu & Spray, 2006; B.W. Miller, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2005; Ommundsen, Roberts, Lemyre, & Treasure, 2003).

It has also been shown that a coaches level of moral reasoning is related to athletes moral reasoning. For example, some studies have demonstrated that a coach's justification and acceptance of certain moral behaviours is reflected in both an athlete's moral reasoning and moral behaviour (Goeb, 1997; Long et al., 2006). Finally, a coach's sport background, such as being knowledgeable, and having a certain professional reputation and recognition in the field of sports, were identified factors associated with a coaches having greater perceived moral influence over their athletes (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010b).

Previous literature has also reported a relationship between a coach's behaviour and moral influences over athletes. First, a coach's immoral behaviour associated with a "winning at all cost" philosophy, resulted in athletes having poor behaviour (Buford-May, 2001; Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Shields et al., 1995; Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005; Stornes, 2001; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). Second, when a coach abuses the power associated to their status, moral conflicts with their athletes arise (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Stornes, 2001). Finally, the norms and rules a coach's establishes and allows within a team environment always have a strong influence on athletes behaviours. The two sources most likely to inhibit athletes acts of resistance are coach's legitimate power (i.e., the coach is the appointed leader of the team) and expert power (i.e., the coach is assumed to be the most knowledgeable person in the field within

a team). Under the exertion of power, athletes moral conscience is jeopardized because coaches leave no space for athletes to express themselves. The most common coaching abusive behaviours reported by athletes are: a) reactive abuse (e.g., pushing); b) strategic abuse (e.g., play with an injury); and c) emotional abuse (e.g., humiliation) (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996). In addition, athletes not willing to follow coaches instructions reported conflicts with their coaches (e.g., Long et al., 2006).

Athletes acknowledge that coaches promote moral values (e.g., respect for the rules); however, sometimes coaches create ambiguous situations by calling for, allowing, or not condemning, or congratulating some poor behaviours from their athletes (Guivernau Rojas & Duda, 2002; Long et al., 2006; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Stornes, 2001; Trudel, Dionne, & Bernard, 1992). Reasons reported by coaches as related to breaking game rules are pressure and the need for performance results (e.g., winning, Long et al., 2006). The fact that coaches had good intentions concerning morality, but do not effectively stand up for them under certain circumstances, left a vacant leadership space that is sometimes occupied by others (e.g., team captains) (Lagzdins, 2008).

The past moral influence coaches receive from their former coaches affect their current coaching practice (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010b). This was mainly because former coaches were seen as important sources of reference to either follow, or critique. This study also reported that specific moral issues rarely arise in the context of current coaching practices, and as such, coaches do not have to deal with them on a daily basis. Coaches deal with moral issues via two strategies: a) they set the moral tone either at the beginning of the season (e.g., clarifying their expectations concerning athletes moral behaviours); and b) intervening if necessary for any given specific situation. Coaches in

this study identified themselves as significant moral influences for their athletes and took responsibility for this role. It should be noted, that another study has found that coaches acknowledged their responsibility for moral influence, but that explaining the process to deliver this was a tough endeavour for coaches (Lagzdins, 2008).

Coach-athlete relationship and moral influence. The nature of the coach-athlete relationship has also been assessed as a determinant of moral influences. Previous evidence agrees that a healthy coach-athlete relationship, based on a fluid interchange among members involved in the relationship, fostered a positive moral influence. Specifically, within the frame of a nourishing and nurturing coach-athlete relationship, athletes were more prone to accept moral guidance from their coaches (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Lagzdins, 2008; Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010b).

Based on the fact that the coach-athlete relationship is one of the most important factors associated with an athlete's motivation and performance, Mageau and Vallerand (2003) proposed a model that emphasizes coaches autonomous supportive behaviour towards their athletes. This model built on Deci & Ryan's (1985) theory that the person that is in the position of authority (e.g., the coach), by acknowledging the others needs (e.g., the athlete), provides him or her necessary information and autonomy as to promote choice, responsibility, and independent problem solving capacity. In the sports context, examples of a coach's autonomous supportative behaviours could be: a) providing choice within specific rules and limits; b) providing a rationale for tasks and limits; c) acknowledging the other person's feelings and perspectives; d) providing athletes with opportunities for initiative taking and independent work; e) providing non-controlling competence feedback; f) avoiding controlling behaviours; and g) preventing ego-

involvement in athletes (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). The authors proposed that a coach providing autonomy support to his or her athletes may impact athletes behaviours, including those related to morality.

Jowett and colleagues (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000) went further in the study of the coach-athlete relationship and incorporated the consideration of behaviours, emotions, and cognitions. Within this framework, the coach-athlete relationship may be healthy (i.e., successful and effective) or unhealthy (i.e., unsuccessful, ineffective). Healthy coach-athletes relationships are characterized by closeness, co-orientation, commitment, and complementarity. Closeness refers to the emotional tone of the relationship and reflects the degree to which the coach and the athlete are connected and the depth of their emotional attachment. Liking, trust, valuing, helping, and respect are examples that reflect closeness within a relationship. Co-orientation refers to coaches and athletes perceptions about each other from two perspectives, direct perspective (i.e., athlete's self-assessment) and meta-perspective (i.e., athlete's ability to infer his or her coach's position). Commitment reflects the intention or desire to maintain an athletic partnership over time and so it is viewed as a cognitive representation of the connection between the coach and the athlete. Complementarity reflects the extent to which coach and athlete work together, co-operate, and contribute from their own sides to improve the relationship. In this context, communication is important for both athletes and coaches to share their experiences and concerns.

The research relating moral influences and coach-athlete relationship indicates that an enriching coach-athlete relationship resulted in the creation of a positive moral atmosphere. Therefore, a coach's moral influence is more prone to take place and

negative social behaviours are reduced. Conversely, a poor coach-athlete relationship prevented coaches from having any moral influence on their athletes (Duquin, 1984; Lagzdins, 2008; Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010b; Rutten et al., 2007). It is noteworthy that although the coach-athlete relationship is important in the understanding of moral influences, there has been limited consideration of the coach-athlete interaction in previous research. In sports, the development of both morality and empathy depend on values held and shared in a coach-athlete relationship (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996).

Culture and moral influence. Geertz (1973) mentioned that the complexity of human behaviour has to be captured in its cultural environment. The cultural system in which each individual is raised shapes him or her through societal rules, language, religion, and ideology. Therefore, behaviours have to be considered and analyzed within the context where they take place because people build their identities by following all possible varieties of models in a given culture (Turiel, 1989, 1998, 2002). Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed that interactions with peers within an environment were essential to the explanation of human development. Sport is a social activity that reflects values, norms, structures, and processes that are sociocultural-specific (O. Weiss, 2001). A previous study that interviewed coaches found that morality largely depends on the culture where it takes place (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a, 2010b). For example, coaches socialized in North America mentioned that having a moral attitude had to do with engaging in positive behaviours. Conversely, coaches socialized in Eastern Europe acknowledged that morality had to do with both engaging in positive behaviours and avoiding engaging in negative behaviours.

Self-efficacy and morality. Effective coaching behaviours produce positive outcomes in athletes, with coaching effectiveness typically being operationally defined in terms of outcome scores (e.g., performance results) or positive outcomes (e.g., satisfaction) (Horn, 2002). High-efficacy coaches are more likely to be successful in their career and therefore more effective in coaching their athletes. The construct of coaching efficacy was developed by Feltz and colleagues (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999), who used the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1991) to develop their model. Coaching efficacy was defined as “the extent to which coaches believe that they have the capacity to influence the learning and performance of their athletes” (Feltz et al., 1999, pp. 765).

Coaching efficacy was described by the authors as multidimensional in nature, consisting of four dimensions: motivation, game strategy, technique, and character building (Feltz et al., 1999). Character-building efficacy concerns the coaches beliefs in their ability to influence their athletes personal development and positive attitude toward sport. Feltz and colleagues proposed that high levels of coaching efficacy should result in several desirable outcomes for both coaches and athletes. Effective coaches typically engage in certain behaviours, which in turn influence athlete outcomes was previously suggested (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978; Horn, 2002; Smoll & Smith, 1989). For example, high coaching efficacy would lead to more character development coaching. Consequently, athletes having high efficacy coaches in instilling morality would display more positive sport related character.

The present study

The study of moral behaviours is important because they are behaviours that have

consequences for others rights and wellbeing (Turiel, 1983). Due to training demands (Ericsson et al., 1993), elite athletes spend a great amount of their time training with their coaches, who are important moral influences (Peláez, Aulls, Rossi et al., 2010). Despite previous research efforts, the nature of the process and the impact of a coach's moral influence still remain unclear.

Building upon previous work of the authors (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a, 2010b), the main purpose of the present study was to understand the nature of a coach's moral influence. In order to do that, this study used the social constructivism perspective. Social constructivism is concerned with the understanding of subjective and unique perceptions that result from social interactions and negotiations (K.J. Gergen, 2009; M.M. Gergen & Gergen, 2003). Ten elite coaches were sampled. Five issues were addressed: a) participants understanding of morality; b) the impact of participants past moral influences on current moral practise; c) participants perceived current moral influence over their athletes; d) participants self-efficacy to instil moral values and participants moral standards; and e) participants opinions concerning the relationship between moral development in sport settings. Understanding how a coach morally influences his or her athletes who themselves then pursue a coaching career provides important information in the development of interventions to sensitize coaches about their moral responsibilities.

Methods

Type of design

The present study is a mixed method design collective case study (Stake, 1998). We emphasized the qualitative component of our design to promote understanding of a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In addition, we wanted to assess coaches self-

efficacy to instil morality and to triangulate it with qualitative data generated via the interview. This design involves the study of an issue explored through multiple cases within a bounded system (Stake, 1995, 1998; Yin, 2003, 2006). Case study designs aim at developing in-depth description to provide insight and understanding into an issue. Case studies are used when accurate but limited local understanding based on interpretation and uniqueness is sought (Stake, 1998). In this case, more than one unique case was sampled to achieve better understanding through comparing multiple cases (Stake, 1998). Given that case study designs are eclectic in nature and therefore they contemplate the possibility of considering different strategies of data analysis (Creswell, 2007), open coding, axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and pattern analysis (Yin, 2003) were used for data analysis purposes. A distinctive characteristic of case studies is that they are bounded systems (i.e., systems delimited by precisely defined characteristics. In the present study, characteristics that delimit the case are: a) shared by all cases (elite level of competition; extended sport involvement; and culture); and b) selected for the purposes of comparison (gender of athletes; required physical contact; type of sport dynamic; and sport context).

Participants

Ten elite coaches (1 woman, 9 males; $M (SD)$ age=41.8 (12.4)), with extended sport involvement participated in the present study. All participants competed as athletes for a North American team ($M (SD)$ years competing at an elite sport level = 7.8 (4.0)) and were currently coaching in Canada ($M (SD)$ years coaching=14.9 (10.5)). Other criteria previously used to characterize elite coaches were national or international coaching experience and having performance outcomes as coaches (Côté, Salmela,

Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995). These two criteria were used to select these participants as well. More specifically, these requirements were checked before fixing an appointment for the interview.

The only female in the sample was coaching a female team of Rhythmic Gymnastics. Four participants were currently coaching individual sports (Rhythmic Gymnastics, Judo, Swimming, and Fencing); the other participants were coaching team sports (Volleyball Baseball, Rugby, Hockey, Football, and Soccer). In addition, four participants were coaching low impact sports. The other participants were coaching high impact sport, two of which were combat sports (Judo and Fencing). Details concerning the sport they coached, the gender of the athletes coached, and the sport context in which these coaches participated as athletes and as coaches is displayed in table 1.

(Insert table 1)

The participants constitute a purposive sample. They were deliberately selected to address certain factors that have been previously related to morality. Specifically, these factors are: a) gender of athletes; b) required physical contact (i.e., non to low vs. medium to high); c) type of sport dynamic (i.e., individual vs. team); d) sport context (e.g., educational vs. competitive); e) elite level of competition; f) extended sport involvement; and g) culture. The first four issues were compared across cases. Concerning gender, this study prioritized the gender of the athletes these coaches were coaching for three main reasons. First, although the percentage of female athletes currently competing is at an all time high the representation of females as coaches is still scarce; second, women coaches typically coach female sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010); and finally, female athletes reported having more moral conflict with their male

coaches when compared to male athletes (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996). Being involved in a sport that requires medium to high physical contact (e.g., Conroy, Silva, Newcomer, Walker, & Johnson, 2001) and competing as a team sport (Goeb, 1997; Joyner & Mummery, 2005; Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997) have been associated with lower moral functioning in the previous literature.

In the context of the present study, four coaches were coaching individual sports (i.e., rhythmic gymnastics, judo, swimming, and fencing) and four coaches coached sports which required non to low physical contact (i.e., rhythmic gymnastics, volleyball, swimming, and baseball).

To be included in the study all coaches needed to be involved in elite competition either as athletes, as elite coaches, or both. Having an extended involvement in sport (e.g., Silva, 1983) and competing at an elite level (e.g., Smith, 1979) have been associated with lower moral functioning in the literature. Also, all participants represented the same socio-cultural environment (i.e., North America). This decision was based on a previous study showed that culture differences were important in both the understanding of morality and the way moral influences were experienced (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a, 2010b); Therefore, we wanted to replicate data previously related to coaches socialized within the North American culture.

One additional factor was used for comparison purposes: sport context. Sport context refers to the context where the competition is framed. In the present study, two contexts were considered: competitive and educational. The educational setting includes coaches currently coaching athletes within the context of educational institutions (e.g., high school, college, university). Instead, the competitive setting included coaches

coaching at either professional or amateur level. In the competitive settings, sport involvement was a full time activity that was carried out in settings other than educational context. Coaches sport background as athletes was only considered for the purposes of description. Finally, for confidentiality purposes, coaches were referred to as C1 to C10.

Data collection

Upon receiving approval from the human subjects ethics board at the lead author's institution, coaches were contacted, the project was described and a meeting time and place convenient to the participant was established. Before each interview, coaches signed the informed consents. Each meeting was conducted on an individual basis and lasted approximately ninety minutes. One participant was interviewed via phone. All participants provided demographic information using a standard questionnaire previously used by our research group.

Coach's understanding of morality and moral influence. In order to let participants expand their ideas, a semi-structure interview was conducted. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to describe their understanding on a given topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The purpose was to discuss gaps in literature, and to seek deeper understanding, based on the evidence coming from a previous study (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a, 2010b). The interview guide was divided into five interrelated sections: a) introductory comments and instructions; b) coach's understanding of morality; c) description of their past moral influences; c) description of their current responsibilities concerning morality; and e) final and additional comments and interviewee's perception of the interview. In the original study, participants were invited to expand on the characteristics of morality (c.f. Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a for details concerning the

interview). Evidence indicated that participants viewpoints concerning the characteristics of morality were in line with available research. For that reason we decided to explore more in-depth participants understanding of morality. Also, in the original study, the coach-athlete relationship was associated with moral influences. For that reason, we offered participants the opportunity during the interview to elaborate on the description of the context of participants experiences concerning moral influences (Seidman, 2006).

Several procedures to enhance trustworthiness in data collection were followed. The adequacy of the interview schedule was previously evaluated in the context of the original study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Also, planned probes were used to clarify, confirm, or exemplify responses to open-ended questions (Patton, 2002). In addition, interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim (the first two interviews by the first author and the followings by a third party), and transcription quality was reviewed by a research associate (Poland, 2001). Data collection was rigorous because participants within each case were interviewed up to the moment where data saturation was achieved (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Each participant received his or her transcribed and reviewed interview and was given the opportunity to make changes or additions that they perceived to be critical to understanding their views.

Coaches self-efficacy. All participants completed the Coaching Efficacy Scale (CES, Feltz et al., 1999) after the interview. For the purposes of the present study, only the four items assessing the dimension related to self-efficacy to instil moral character were used. Our decision to include this instrument was based on three reasons. First, it is the only instrument to assess morality from a coach's viewpoint. Second, we used it to triangulate qualitative data generated via the interview. Finally, we thought that the

purpose of our study is directly related to the intention of the instrument; thus, it would represent a unique opportunity to test its qualities.

Data analysis

Semi-structured interviews. Transcripts of the interviews were inductively analyzed by following analysis procedures from Grounded Theory methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This procedure consists of two main steps: open coding (breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data, pp. 195) and axial coding (data is put back together and new connections are established, pp. 195) (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Coding was conducted by analyzing segments of the transcripts (e.g., words, sentences, paragraphs) that made sense by themselves (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These procedures were used because the primary purpose of the study is to produce theory from data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The first author holistically read the transcriptions of the first three interviews and conducted open coding. Based on this initial sense of data, minor adjustments to the interview guide were done and the researcher continued with data collection. This interaction between data collection and data analysis has been referred to as an “iterative process” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and allows adjustment to each interview on the basis of concepts that emerge from participants (i.e., theoretical sampling). Therefore, the first author continued interviewing participants until no new information emerged and theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was achieved.

The remaining interviews were analyzed by referring to the primary framework developed within the analysis of the first interviews. Throughout these stages of the analysis, open coding was used (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This technique consists of constantly comparing inductively derived categories and properties to ensure that each of them is unique, self-contained, and meaningful. Also, specifically concerning the definition of morality, a comparison with the available literature was done. In addition, a verification of the statements against data was conducted. On the other hand, by asking questions to the raw data as well as to the newly organized categories, new categories were generated and the old ones were redefined. Within this process, analytic memos generated from the researcher's field notes (i.e. mainly represented by comments participants added after the interview; therefore not recorded), impressions, interpretations, and preliminary interpretations were integrated into the coding. Also, analytic memos were used to explain relationships among emergent concepts, or to question both the raw data and the analyzed data.

Finally, pattern analysis (Yin, 2003) was conducted to compare bounded cases. Yin (2003) pointed out that multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern-matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory. Pattern-matching is a technique that compares an empirically based pattern with a theoretical proposition. This procedure reinforces the internal validity of the case study.

Assuming that our personal background would have an impact on our interpretation of the results, we combined researchers having different sport involvement. The first author was considered as an insider because she has previous athletic involvement and current sport involvement working in the field of sport psychology. A

graduate student trained in qualitative methods was considered as an outsider because she had no involvement in the field of sport, neither as a researcher, nor as an athlete. Once all the analyses were completed, the first author met with the graduate student and both codes were compared. In the first round, 70% agreement was found by using an internal attribution of values (4 points to agreements categories; 2 points to agreements properties; and 1 point for agreements dimensions). The majority of the agreements corresponded to variable dimensions; whereas the disagreements corresponded to categories. Coders discussed their viewpoints up to until agreement was achieved. In a second round, the first author gave the graduate student material where all categories, properties, and dimensions were defined using participants words. Both researchers tried to maintain the in vivo codes (i.e., words which were used by interviewees (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), as much as possible across different stages of analysis. In general, dimensions were labelled using participants words; however, when similar ideas were put together (i.e., properties and categories), the theme that served to group elements was used to created labels. As suggested by Stake (1995, 1998) naturalistic generalization was attempted, meaning that description is a partially intuitive process arrived at by recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of the context of the present study. Finally, this data was presented to the other two members of the research team, that were insiders-outsiders who had no research experience in the field of sports, but had been involved in the development of the present project (Holt & Sparkes, 2001).

Scale. Considering the size of the sample (10 participants) the purpose of using the coaches self-efficacy scale was not statistical per se. Instead, scales were used to triangulate data. For this reason, only means were analyzed. However, a comparison

between individual items was done.

After all qualitative and quantitative results were put together, all participants were invited to a debriefing meeting where results were presented. Participants were invited to discuss the results and to contribute with their viewpoints.

Results and discussion

Interviews yielded 120 pages of 12-point, times new roman, single-spaced text. Information participants provided was grouped into three main categories: a) coaches understanding of morality; b) moral influences; and c) sport and moral development. In addition, within-case comparisons were conducted.

Coaches understanding of morality

A first step in studying the nature of moral influences in coaching is to examine participants conceptions of morality. Knowing the participants viewpoint towards morality may enhance the comprehension of participants perception and enactment of moral influences (Dickins, 2004; Entwistle, 2005; Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Piaget, 1932/1965).

In order to unveil participants understanding of morality, they were invited to brainstorm ideas representing their understanding of morality. Initially, two trends were observed. First, participants asked whether morality had to be defined from the coach's or the athlete's perspective. According to these participants, being a coach is associated with responsibilities towards their athletes. Second, defining "morality" is not an easy task for these participants. For example, C3 said:

I would really like you to coach with me for a week so that you can define my rationale concerning morality, because, you know?... (silence)... Ok, just give me

thirty seconds to think about it.

In addition, during the interview, the first author used the word “morality” when discussing the topic. Although the participants used the terms “morality” proposed by the researcher as well, “ethics,” “character,” “fair play,” and “sportsmanship” were used as synonyms of morality. Two participants mentioned “ethics” and described it as related to “formal sport regulations shared by all members of a community” (C9).

Concepts participants associate with morality have been grouped into four dimensions by the researchers: a) “elite sport involvement;” b) “game;” c) “interaction with others;” and d) “self-related.” The dimension “elite sport involvement” includes “discipline,” “working hard” and “commitment”. This dimension has been described in the previous literature as social character by Rudd (2005) and social conventions by Turiel (1983). “Game” instead refers to the attitude that is required to play beyond performance results (i.e., playing a game and honouring the game consequences, such as winning or defeat). This dimension has been previously described in literature as “fair play” (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995). The dimension “interaction with others” refers to the “minimum required to interact with others” (C1), such as respect. This dimension is consistent with what others have referred to in literature as “morality” (Barrow, 2007; Blasi, 1987, 1990; Turiel, 2002). The last dimension, “self-related,” has to do with the level of self-wellbeing required which is not only necessary at a personal level, but is also needed to establish a relationship. This concept has been described in a similar fashion in previous literature and referred to as “wellbeing” (Barrow, 2007). The dimensions more consistently emphasized by the participants are “elite sport involvement” and “interaction with others.” The four dimensions that arose as a result of the analysis and concepts

associated with them are displayed in table 2.

(Insert table 2)

As shown in figure 1, all dimensions have a specific content and a shared content. For example, “respect” is mainly associated with “interaction with others;” however, being disciplined, a major component of “elite sport involvement,” entails respect for the prescribed activity. Similarly, playing fairly implies respecting the rules (“game”) and self-respect (“self-related”). For this reason, participants ideas were placed in relationship to the context where they were mentioned. As an example, C5 said: “do things your coach is asking you to do.” Out of context, this may be understood as something necessary to support the coach-athlete relationship; however, C5 meant that if done as a part of athletes moral obligations, this may lead to success. The dimensions and its associated importance are represented in figure 1.

(Insert figure 1)

Collating all the information and ideas generated from the coaches, the collective meaning assigned to morality is: “Shared righteous standards transmitted via and necessary for social interaction.” According to participants, morality entails personal responsibility (e.g., “to take decisions,” C8), respect (e.g., to others, C2), and “self-related” (e.g., “self-respect,” C6), mainly because moral behaviours have associated consequences towards others, as noted by Turiel (1983). Specifically related to sport, morality is strongly associated with “discipline” (C1) “working hard” (C8) and “honouring the game.”

In concert with previous findings, morality is described by these participants as best captured in “behaviours” (e.g., greet the opponent), reflected in “attitudes” (e.g.,

honour the winning), and based on “values” (e.g., respect) (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a). Values and principles belong to a “higher-level of a hierarchy” (C2) because they were assumed as being universal. C3 said the following: “I find it difficult to regulate everything because I find that you never have enough rules to regulate each situation... So I insist on values because everything is based on that....” C10 added: “Certainly there are regulations that establish the limits... we have to adapt to them... we do not control them.” Rules, on the contrary, are agreements that result from specific decisions; and thus, they may change or be adapted according to the circumstances. As an example, C6 mentioned that he establishes clear rules, but he adapts them under certain circumstances:

I am a little bit more tolerant to their mistakes compared to somebody who comes from a much better household or much more supportive household. I shouldn't say better, because in both situations maybe there is lot of love, but maybe there is just not the support of the resources. But certainly for someone who comes from a tougher situation, I am more tolerant with...

All participants agreed that there are cultural differences concerning morality and that individuals decided what to take from each situation. Consider what C4 said:

I don't think we are all gonna agree on what morality is. I think you can take pieces of that, because I think we all have basic understanding of what morals are and from there I think people sort of take what they want from that.

In addition, participants mentioned that morality has to do with “keeping things fair” (C5) and “knowing what is right and wrong” (C7). What is not clear is who sets cultural values, nor what “righteous” or “positive” meant. Consider C6's reflection:

Well, that's a good question, who sets the values? I guess basically what we

interpret from our religion, from our society, as being what's correct, what's proper. I guess that who would sets the values; certainly they seem to get eroded over time and change, I would necessary say, they're always evolving and positive manner and sometimes they are and sometimes they are not evolving in a positive manner.

A comparison between moral and immoral behaviours (see tables 2 and 3), indicates some trends in participants responses. First, in concert with a previous study, these participants elaborated more when describing moral behaviours, as compared to immoral behaviours. More specifically, participants devoted more time and effort to elaboration on issues related to morality. Conversely, when they referred to immoral behaviours, they simply mentioned them, but they did not expand on them. This finding is in line with previous evidence (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a). Second, while participants emphasized the moral importance of the “elite sport involvement” dimension, the reference to the immoral aspects of this dimension was practically non-existent. Third, while the participants were devoted to describing morality, they often referred to it as a dichotomized phenomenon (i.e., righteous, positive, moral attitudes and behaviours vs. wrong, negative, immoral attitudes and behaviours). However, it was during the discussion of some specific hypothetical situations that participants indicated intermediate positions. These intermediate positions referred to situations that were not moral per se, but coaches justified them by mentioning the reason behind them. For example, C10 said: “There are internal regulations that underlie main established regulations. At competitive levels, regulations are already established.... But sometimes, we have to play with that.” This means that these participants know that rules have to be

respected; however, under certain situations the enactment of immoral behaviours was rationalized.

(Insert table 3)

As an overall conclusion, participants expanded more on concrete experiences related to morality, rather than on the definition of morality itself. The fact that coaches approached the definition of morality with uncertainty was previously reported (Beller & Stoll, 1993; Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a). For these coaches, morality entailed four dimensions: “elite sport involvement,” “game,” “interaction with others,” and “self-related.” The most classic way of understanding morality in sport refers to “game” and “interaction with others” (Kavussanu, Roberts, & Ntoumanis, 2002; Kavussanu & Spray, 2006). Participants mentioned two other elements related to morality. One of them “elite sport involvement,” has been described in previous literature as pertaining to social conventions (Turiel, 1983) and to social character (Rudd, 2005). The other component, “self-related,” refers that in order to have a healthy interaction with others, a minimum of personal wellbeing is necessary (Barrow, 2007). This dimension of morality has neither been assessed, nor described in the field of sport. In general, the evidence supports and expands results from a previous study (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a). The only exception was that these participants differentiated coaches morality from athletes morality based on different responsibilities associated to their coaching position (e.g., caring about athletes wellbeing) and not from a hierarchical perspective (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010b).

Moral influences

We aimed to understand the nature of moral influences in coaching practices. Initially, we described what coaches perceived to be moral influences when they were

athletes. Then, we sought to determine coaching practices associated with past moral influences initially identified. In order to identify past moral influences, we attempted to identify: a) what coaches perceived as being a moral influence; b) their sources of influence; c) type of influences they experienced; d) coaches description of the process of moral influence; and e) were the characteristics of the coach-athlete relationship at the moment the moral influence took place.

Past moral influences received by participants. All participants agreed that their past coaches were important moral influences, as suggested by previous literature (Peláez, Aulls, Rossi et al., 2010). When coaches were asked when past coaches moral influence took place, they all indicated that it was during their adolescence. Six participants elaborated on the moral influence of their coaches; whereas the other four participants expanded on the moral influence of other sources. Other sources of moral influence were parents and teammates. In those that mentioned them, parents were identified as the primary providers of moral influence, which is consistent with the previous literature (Côté, 1999). Two participants identified teammates as moral influence as well. For example, C6, who was a professional football player, said the following:

I was very fortunate. When I started playing professional football, I had some really good people take me and when you mentor me... he really took, really took good care of me, looked after me and that really helped me in a lot of ways, see, what's right, what's wrong, to be honourable, to understand honour.... (because) at the professional level, you are dealing with some coaches who... preach

values... but really don't demonstrate those values and you are dealing with some coaches who don't even pretend to look at family values.

C8 explained that his high school coach was a moral influence for him. Then, because of his sport performance improvement, he moved to higher calibre coaches. These coaches were coaching at the national centre. This participant said the following when he was asked about the possible moral influence his elite coaches had on him: "Let's say that the presence of these coaches was not good. We were not supervised at all." This participant added that at that point in time, a teammate was his moral referent: "He was a more like a leader... He knew where he was going." However, his teammate was not necessarily a positive moral influence, as explained by the participant: "He was very drastic, in his behaviour; he was a fighter, may be too much." Previous literature indicates that when coaches do not exert their moral agency, other athletes assume this position (Lagzdins, 2008). This study confirmed this evidence, and showed as well, that teammates may be both moral or immoral influences.

In addition, participants mentioned that "people of your age" (C4), "older people" (C4), "school" (C7), "social institutions" (C4), "political frames" (C4), "culture" (C6), "sports" (C6), and "religion" (C5) were also moral influences, though, no further description about their role was provided. The three participants that mentioned "religion" as a moral influence specifically referred to "Christian catholic." Participants were asked to reflect on the degree of conflict existing between all the sources of moral influence they had. Three participants reported that the influence provided by their coaches was not always coherent with parental influence. In addition, one of these participants mentioned that this influence was sometimes complementary. C1 explained

that her coach provided her the “elite sport involvement” perspective, whereas her parents provided her the “interaction with others” perspective:

For sure she (her coach) had an enormous influence concerning discipline and engagement... my parents instead contributed in showing me how to deal with people at a social level of interaction... Each of them did their job... and there were no contradictions between them.

The most emphasized moral influences participants reported were “work ethic,” “game vision,” and a “relationship model”. “Work ethic” was the most frequently mentioned value. “Accept defeat” (C2) was described as an important influence because not being able to do it was related to both violence and frustration. Finally, “game vision” referred to how to “interpret the game through available rules and regulations” (C4). The interpretation of the rules was related to how to use rules in their favour, C4 said:

So I would definitely say your coaches are gonna always have huge moral influence on you because they are gonna be the ones that... you could interpret the rules and regulations of the sports you play. Your coach is there to...perhaps to have you look at it in different ways and I think you judge from there whether you want to be associated with that group, that coach or you decide to go along with other people who see the game how you see it.

These participants mentioned they learned the importance of how to deal with athletes (i.e., a “relationship model”). This entailed the “responsibility” to watch over athletes (C2), being “creative” enough as to stimulate athletes (C3), being “open” when dealing with different situations (C1), and establishing a “fluid and rich coach-athlete relationship” (C8). Previous evidence indicated that coaches understanding of morality

was strongly associated with moral influence received from their coaches (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a, 2010b). This result was confirmed by this study as well.

Coach-athlete relationship. Participants mentioned they had a good and healthy coach-athlete relationship with past coaches they identified as important positive moral influences. This confirms that a coach-athlete relationship not only plays an important role in many coaching aspects, but also concerning moral influences. First, they train many hours per day, so the contact with the coach was high. C1 said: “She (referring to her coach) tried to understand me. She was important, for sure... I started during my adolescence, so you know, long training sessions, so it was not easy to be in contact with someone else like friends.” Second, all participants mentioned that their coaches took care of them. C1 said: “she was very strict, but she was strict because she pushed me a lot. It’s hard, you know, the routines, and she knows that it takes that to improve.” In addition, C2 said: “he was a good person, harmless, that paid attention to personal differences.... There was a comprehension of the human.” Finally, C8 said “he joined me at an interpersonal level, he was a young person, and he made us laugh.”

Participants mentioned that they have been morally influenced via two primary means. First, all participants mentioned “observation.” C9 said: “Observation... by far the way people behave.” While referring to observation, these participants mentioned the qualities of their coaches as well. As an example, C9 said: “In general, the majority of my coaches... inspired me, and they even do that today... I find that when people are passionate about what they do, they have the tendency to transmit their message easier.” The second means of moral influence was through “interaction with their coaches.” C2 explained referring to his coach:

He liberated a morality that was well anchored in both principles and values that dictated the way he lived his life himself and in relationship with others... he did many things (concerning morality)... meetings one-to-one, ... things not related to sport, ... team meetings.

Finally, C1, who had the same coach all throughout her career, mentioned that the moral influence entailed a process. She described it in the following way:

No, (the moral influence) was not strong at the beginning, I was afraid of her, ha, ha... but the more I improved, the more she had an influence over me, a good influence... But not at the beginning. She was not even able to pronounce my name, so that was funny... At the beginning I did not understand what she said to me, with her expressions (referring that her coach spoke in Russian), but I learned to know her, then that went well, and the relationship between us was from better to better.... She really pushed me to start coaching... She really has guided me very well.

All these examples illustrate that for these participants, the most important component of a coach-athlete relationship leading to the occurrence of moral influence, is “closeness.” Closeness described the emotional tone characteristic of a healthy coach-athlete relationship. It reflects the connection and emotional attachment between a coach and his or her athletes (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000).

Finally, a trend in participants answers was identified. At the beginning of the interview, participants were invited to define morality. Each participant elaborated her or his own ideas. Once the researcher moved on to the third part of the interview, the moral

influences received, participants referred to the same ideas they mentioned while describing morality. For example, C1 emphasized the significance of discipline. This coach referred to morality in this way: “I guess that discipline is more obvious in athletes and coaches, you know, because of the strictness that sport entails.” Later on, when referring to the moral influence this coach received from her past coach, C1 explained: “It’s sure than from Mrs. (the name of her coach) whatever I received was related to discipline.”

Current moral influences exerted by participants. All participants recognized that as coaches, they are important moral influences for athletes. Instilling morality is conceived as being an inherent part of their role. In this vein, C4 said: “You have a moral obligation as a coach... for example, you are not going to keep up the score.” Participants assumed the responsibility to provide and assure a positive environment. C2 said: “Me, as a coach, my job is to educate.... The bottom line is to offer them a space to improve at different levels.” However, these participants did not assume the responsibility when things were wrong. In those cases, other sport participants were responsible. As an example, C4 said: “... other coaches were sleeping with people on the team, which I didn’t think was very, very good.”

Participants mentioned that they reinforce the following moral values in their athletes: a) “discipline;” b) “respect” (to their work, to teammates, to the opponents, to the sport organization); c) “do the right things;” d) “fair play;” and e) “responsibility.” Generally, these values are combined. C3 gave an example where discipline, respect, and responsibility were present:

If I say the bus comes at 4:00, and a guy comes at 4:03, 4:04, 4:05 and everybody

waits for him. Ok, it may happen that due to that delay, we arrive late to the practice because everyone waited him. So what happens is that we have less time to train, therefore everybody is cursing, so the guy stops doing it.

Other participants quotations exemplifying each dimension are displayed in table 4. It should be noted that participants expanded and clarified each term, with the exception of one: “do the right thing.” Two participants mentioned the importance of doing the right thing; however, they did not elaborate on what makes a thing righteous.

For these participants, morality is transmitted via three means: a) interaction with athletes (e.g., communication, discussion); b) by setting the tone at the beginning of the season (e.g., explaining what was expected); and c) by enacting personal behaviour (e.g., being a role model). As well, these participants mentioned that they intervene concerning moral issues if needed (i.e., if any problem emerges). This means that these participants do not frequently deal with moral issues.

(Insert table 4)

Finally, the participants mentioned that past moral influences provided them both a frame of reference and a certain awareness of morality. Coaches are important models and referents to either copy or criticize. For example, C3 said: “... I had a coach... that said: “If you are in trouble, I don’t have anything to say, I will save my job, and if I save my job, everyone is happy”... I am the contrary!” In conclusion, although described by referring to different terms, a parallel between participants and their coaches can be established. Specifically, participants understanding of morality is related to coaches moral influences received from their past coaches. In addition, participants current coaching practices associated with morality is described in reference to their past

coaches.

Coaches self-efficacy to build moral character. The analysis of the means of participants self-efficacy ($M=7.8$; $SD=0.9$) to instil moral character is within the higher range (range: 6-9) proposed by the authors of the instrument, see table 2. This means that there is no difference among participants in the response to the items. This is probably due to the nature of the instrument. The statements devoted to evaluate a coach's self-confidence to instil moral character use different ways to refer to morality (i.e., sportsmanship, fair play, moral character), as well as, one of the most important dimensions of morality (i.e., respect). As noted in the introduction, as well as, in the results of the present study, many different concepts have been used to refer to "morality," and it is not clear what the differences among these concepts are. Therefore, it is probable that these coaches assumed the statements were referring to the same idea (i.e., morality), and for this reason there is not a great deal of variability in measuring coaches self-confidence to instil morality (or more specifically to instil moral character as referred by the authors. It should be noted that Feltz and colleagues (1999) acknowledged the exploratory nature of the instrument and suggested using it with caution. In addition, these authors encourage new attempts to test the instrument.

In summary, participants mentioned their coaches were important moral influences and acknowledged they themselves are important moral influences, which is consistent with previous literature (c.f. Peláez, Aulls, Rossi et al., 2010 for a review). For these participants, not all past coaches had a moral influence over them. Instead, certain facilitators of moral influence (e.g., a coach's characteristics, a coach-athlete relationship) interact with an athlete's self-regulation, what in turns, mediates the coach's moral

influence. Participants mentioned that morality entails continuous reciprocal interactions between the individual and the context (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Concerning current coaching practices, participants mentioned they are responsible for fostering athletes moral development. In concert with their sense of responsibility, the participants reported high levels of self-efficacy to build character and high respect for others according to their moral standards.

Sport and moral development

Moral atmosphere in sport. A commonality among these participants is that they mentioned that when they were athletes they choose what they found of interest, and that they put aside what they did not like or what they perceived as being morally inadequate from their viewpoint. As an example, C5 said:

From a team point of view I think that...I have some friends on the team...some of us were...didn't buy into what was happening from the situation where the uncomfortable situation we were put in because of our teammates so like can find in them... we provide a little bit of leadership for our team but we were not strong enough to overtake the *bullyism* in the team I guess.

The major issue emphasized by participants was the sense of "responsibility." According to them, there are always immoral situations and temptations, but it is the individual who is responsible for keeping the line. C6 explained it in this way:

Because at that time, you have a lot spirit time and a lot of money, so it's easy to get involved into other things... But I come to realize that with money or without money, the same value should hold true. And if you are a jerk, when you are poor, you are going to be a big jerk when you have money; and if you are a good

person, and you are a good person and money really shouldn't make any difference. So I was taught those lessons very, very early in my career by those people... and it was my job to make them hold true.

C5 explained the same situation using similar words:

Hockey is a sport of intimidation... so I didn't want to get involved in that and ...I don't know what I had learned from it but it certainly was something really negative rolling up and I was never that bad type of person that want to intimidate. I just preferred to work with my skill and let my skill do the talking.

This evidence is in contradiction with previous literature. Both in the general and sports literature it has been suggested that individuals engage in the reigning moral atmosphere (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Long et al., 2006). The participants in our study mentioned that although they had been surrounded by different immoral behaviours, they made the decision to not participate in them. As described by these participants, a key component of this decision was personal responsibility. Therefore, perception and evaluation of the situation, followed by a personal decision was applicable by these participants to the moral influence coming from both the coach and the moral atmosphere. In addition, all participants mentioned that according to them, sport was an ideal setting for moral development. However, it should be noted that all these participants represent athletes who became coaches, probably, because they had a good perception of the sport environment, which could limit the generalisability of the findings.

Experienced immoral situation. Five participants shared immoral experiences as athletes and six immoral experiences lived as coaches. None of the experiences were

unbearable according to the participants. Seven experiences were related to a lack of respect (e.g., to themselves, others, the rules, or the opponent) and two experiences were related to violence and aggression. Only one coach was directly affected by the situation reported; three reported a member of his team as being involved in the negative situation; the rest only witnessed a situation. The five participants coaching high contact sports referred to the importance of referees in preventing a situation for becoming morally unbearable. The following excerpt from C9 exemplifies that immoral situations are acknowledged by sport participants, but not necessarily experienced by them:

As a matter of a fact, within our sport there is always, for sure, the suspicion of doping, that is in effect a situation related to morality because effectively some athletes... take illegal products... to improve their performance... And that opens a place for frustrations for the others around them because they asked themselves whether they take the same products or not, and in case of doing it, what may happen to them... So that is a sensitive “file”... but on the other hand it is never confirmed, I mean, there is a suspicion about someone taking drugs, but that has never been proved.

In brief, these participants experienced or guessed what they referred to as immoral situations. However, none of these situations were unbearable for the participants, meaning that although the situations were not ideal from a moral viewpoint, they did not represent either a traumatic experience. Also, these participants acknowledged that sport was an ideal place for moral development.

Within-case comparisons

The present study represents a system bounded by different factors described in

the methodology section. This section presents a comparison of participants understanding of morality, participants perception of moral influences, and participants opinions concerning sports and moral development. These comparisons have been made based on the factors we used to delimit the purposive sample. These factors were: a) gender of the athlete; b) required physical contact (i.e., non to low vs. medium to high); c) type of sport dynamic (i.e., individual vs. team); d) sport context; e) elite level of competition; f) extended sport involvement; and g) culture. The first four factors were different among participants, whereas the last three factors were common among them. Table 5 presents the four factors with exemplary excerpts that illustrate participants differences.

(Insert table 5)

Nine out of ten participants were males. Four participants were coaching female sports and two participants were coaching individual sport where both females and males athletes were training together. When asked whether there were differences in coaching females or males, all participants agreed that females were different than males; however, differences pointed out were based on different reasons. For example, the two youngest male participants in the sample, one of them coaching both males and females, and the other one coaching only males, reported that “understanding females” was complicated for them. Four participants mentioned that females have a different attitude when compared to males. Females characteristics that participants identified were joy when playing, different worldview perspective, more aggressive, and having a lack of self-motivation. Two of these participants suggested that this different attitude may be related to the fact that, according to them, females are less self-confident. No differences among

participants were noted in relationship to their understanding of morality, their perceptions of moral influences, or their opinions concerning sport and moral development.

Concerning physical contact required in sports, all participants currently coaching high impact sports, reported that when physical contact is required, morality is at risk. Specifically, the situation (i.e., game, match, combat) is more intense and the possibility of using the body in an immoral fashion (e.g., body-checking) is more feasible. Besides other differences among participants, such as gender of athlete coached, sport dynamics, and sport context, all participants acknowledged the importance of the referees in keeping the situation under control. All participants who coached high contact sports condemned intentional aggression against opponents; however, they assumed injuries as a normal component of their sport. For example, C6 said: “And a great thing about football is that those 12 guys go on the field, they will huddle, they will spill blood, they will sacrifice their physical wellbeing for each other.” There were no differences among these coaches concerning moral influence, and opinions concerning sport and moral development. However, these participants justified, and therefore accepted, physically tougher contact when compared to other participants. Thus, it seems that when physical contact is an integral part of competition, as for example in judo, coaches coaching these sports are more tolerant and more open to accept a tougher physical contact than coaches coaching non-to-low contact sports.

In relationship to sport context, 2 out of 10 participants had always been involved within an educational setting both as athletes and coaches. These two participants were the only ones to mention that there were no differences concerning morality in different

levels of competition. These two participants agreed that they provide their athletes an environment where “everything goes towards the right direction” (C2). Concerning immoral situations, one of these participants did not recall being involved in any immoral situation during his career, whereas the other mentioned that he had only heard about such situations. Specifically, C9 said:

In our sport there is always a suspicion of drugs... Effectively, there are some athletes that have been suspicious of taking illegal products to help them improve their performance... Many of them have been suspicious without being sanctioned, because at the end of the line it is easy to judge without having evidence, isn't it?

All other participants had either been involved in immoral situations either as athletes, coaches, or both in competitive settings. The four participants who were only involved elite competition as athletes and coaches, devote less time and less attention to promote moral development during their current coaching practises. There were four participants that have been involved in competitive settings during their athletic life, but were currently coaching within the educational setting. Consistent with the purposes of educational institutions, these coaches provided a structured environment to their athletes, who they mentioned as being among their major responsibilities.

A commonality between participants in high contact sports as well as participants in competitive sports was observed. When referring to morality, these participants emphasized the “elite sport involvement” component of morality. This emphasis is evident for both moral influences received as athletes in the past and currently provided in their coaching practices. This indicates that both the competitive setting and the level

of physical contact may require and accept a different moral viewpoint that emphasizes a rigorous behaviour as compared to other contexts that highlight the importance of interaction with others.

Finally, there were no differences concerning type of sport dynamic. Those participants involved in individual sports mentioned they work to foster a sense of team which was consistent with those who worked in team sports.

Three common factors characterized all the cases. These factors were: a) extended sport involvement; b) elite sport participation; and c) culture. Given that all participants shared these factors, the variability, if any, associated with these factors was not purposefully addressed. However, it is noteworthy that although the present study looked for participants coming from the same culture, the issue of cultural differences in relationship to morality arose in participants discourse. Specifically, these participants reported experienced or observed cultural differences when: a) interacting with coaches coming from different cultures; and b) cultural differences among sports. First, four participants had previously had coaches coming from other cultures. These participants reported receiving both high quality training and a different approach as compared with athletes of their sport training with North American coaches. However, these same participants mentioned cultural differences with their overseas coaches as well. According to participants, overseas coaches, who came from different places (two from Eastern Europe, one from Egypt, and one from Latin America) were more centered in “winning-at-all-costs” and while they were not immoral per se, they accepted or called for immoral behaviour as needed. Second, concerning sport culture, C4 explained that due to sport differences, it is sometimes hard to understand what others sport participants are

doing:

When I look myself at hockey I know I don't get along morally speaking, because I didn't grow up...I never played hockey I can't...I can't see how they see it.

In summary, from the four variant factors across cases (i.e., gender, required physical contact, type of sport dynamic, and sport context), only one did not account for differences concerning morality: sport dynamic. In addition, three invariant factors were proposed to delimit this purposive sample (i.e., extended sport involvement, elite level of competition, and culture). Although these factors were not intended for comparison purposes, participants frequently referred to cultural differences they had experienced (e.g., with their coaches, or currently with their athletes). This means that sociocultural factors can play an important role concerning morality and moral influences.

Conclusions

The main purpose of the present study was to extend the current literature concerning the coach as a moral influence. To attain that purpose, we design a mixed method design collective case study. We first assessed participants understanding of morality; second, we examined participants perception of moral influences; finally, we explored participants experiences related to sport and morality.

Evidence from this study indicated six major findings. First, coaches are important moral influences. All participants acknowledged their past coaches were important moral influences for them. As well, these participants recognized that they have a commitment to instil morality in their athletes. It should be noted that, though previous literature assumes all coaches to be moral influences, the participants in this study contradicted this evidence and indicated that only some coaches are moral

influences. In addition, all participants reported high levels of self-efficacy for the situations of building an athlete's character, and providing high respect for others based on each coaches personal moral standard. Also, they all assume the responsibility of instilling morality in their athletes, yet, they devoted little to no time for moral endeavours.

A second major finding is coaches understanding of morality. The collective meaning assigned to morality is: "Shared righteous standards transmitted via and necessary for social interaction." Participants agreed that morality is heterogeneous; entails interactions cognitive, behavioural, and environmental interactions; and, results from socialization. In addition, participants defined morality as having four components: a) "elite sport involvement;" b) "game;" c) "interaction with others;" and, "self-related." For these participants, social values and social conventions are considered dimensions of morality. Results strongly suggest that past moral influences are reflected in coaches understanding of morality, and are represented as well in current coaching practices.

Third, this data suggests that past moral influences are reflected in coaches understanding of morality, and captured in current coaching practices. Participants understanding of morality was related to what they referred to as moral influence received. In addition, participants current moral practices were strongly related to past moral influences received, and therefore, to participants understanding of morality. According to these participants, their moral knowledge was primarily based on their own practical experiences. If this holds true, this result is of great value because it highlights the importance of coaches formal moral education (i.e., including aspects of morality in coaching courses and certifications), an issue apparently not yet addressed.

Fourth, this study also found that there are three issues that play an important role concerning morality. One is culture. Following Geertz (1973) definition of morality as a “cultural system that shapes each individual,” it can be speculated that each sport represents a culture. All interviewed participants either acknowledged or elaborated on the relationship between culture and sport, even though this was a culturally homogeneous group. Also, a coach-athlete relationship appears to be important concerning moral development. A healthy coach-athlete relationship creates a more adequate atmosphere where athletes are more prone to receive a coach moral influence. These outcomes put together suggest that cultural differences, resulting from the multicultural essence of our society, may cause misunderstanding and differences in opinions among coaches and athletes. These differences need to be addressed because it has been demonstrated that a coach-athlete relationship plays an important role in order to prevent immoral behaviour.

In addition, it seems that athletes have some of the responsibility for deciding when to be open to a coach’s moral influence. The last issue is an athlete’s self-confidence. Previous literature indicated that reigning moral atmosphere created an environment that facilitates moral influence to take place (Long et al., 2006). Conversely, these participants mentioned that they did not engage in situations they did not agree with when they were athletes. This was due to athletes self-regulation, as described by Bandura (Bandura, 1991), which was needed for athletes to control the moral influence they received from their coaches. Therefore, the coach-athlete relationship along with an athlete’s self-regulation, are factors that enable or prevent the occurrence of moral influences.

Fifth, the obtained results indicate that no single theory can explain the phenomenon and as such, several available theories need to be used in conjunction. In addition, some results exceeded available theories, such as morality is associated to discipline, effort, and hard work. This indicates that there is a need to develop grounded theory concerning morality in sport. One example is the emphasis of discipline and effort associated to the understanding of morality. While in other social context this has been related to conventionality (Turiel, 1983) and social character (Rudd, 2005), it seems that the situation is envisioned by coaches in a different way. These coaches considered social values as moral values, and in addition, they recognized them as central and inherent components of sport. Other moral values such as those related to “game” and “interaction with others” were, for these coaches, second order values.

This study demonstrated that moral influence largely depends on a process. Therefore, in order to best capture its essence, qualitative or mixed method design studies may be more appropriate than quantitative cross-sectional designs. With the current study the use of this kind of methodology enabled us to obtain a rationale for the understanding of morality, as well as, to build on participants experiences concerning morality. While previous quantitative studies provided valuable information concerning the relationship among variables involved, qualitative research has demonstrated to be an adequate research strategy to explore the processes underlying moral influences.

One of the limitations of this study was that the data collection depended solely on face-to-face interviews, rather than direct observation of the coach and athletes working together. The interview also asked retrospective questions and some participants may have had difficulties in recalling their past experiences. A final limitation was that

due to the purposes of the study, only former athletes that are current coaches were sampled. Therefore, moral influences received by past athletes that have followed different professional paths have not been reflected here. Some strengths can be pointed out as well. Evidence from this study confirms previously reported results (Peláez, Aulls et al., 2010a, 2010b). In addition, the sample characteristics, though reduced in size, allowed for the attainment of sustainable conclusions, for example, the way a coach-athlete relationship allows moral development. Although replication is not a purpose within qualitative research (Stake, 1998; Stake & Trumbull, 1982), this study confirms and expands previous evidence.

Finally, the results of this study provide some insights for future interventions to improve the moral development of athletes. Specifically, coaches had difficulties in defining morality and they assumed aspects related to social character to be part of morality. In order to prevent false assumptions and misconceptions about the nature of morality, a training program designed and implemented with coaches to define morality and their role in moral development appears to be warranted. These interventions should address the current lack of information exhibited by coaches and to empirically evaluate whether training may provide that information in a manner that can be used in coaching. Ultimately, such an intervention should aim to prevent future moral conflicts and immoral situations from arising.

Future research should study in-depth the role that the culture of sports plays in moral development. Specifically, how the coach and players jointly construct the team culture within the broader culture of a particular type of sport. The evolution of team culture over time through participant observation and or action research is necessary to

fully understand how morals evolve as the culture of the team evolves. Also, conflicting coach-athlete expectations concerning morality have to be considered in depth from an ecological viewpoint. Cultural differences have to be addressed and comprehensively framed. In addition, given the evidence coming from this study, future research should consider the probability that coaches moral knowledge is not necessarily conscious, which will effect data collection.

In conclusion, if we assume that past moral influences may be associated with coaches understanding of morality, and are potentially applicable to current coaching practices, it is crucial to address coaches moral education given the influence they have over their athletes. A better understanding of moral influences in sport requires a comprehensive theoretical framework that reflects different theories of morality and social influences, and an in depth study of different factors associated with morality as well as the examination of moral influences in different sport settings (e.g., educational sport) and according to different viewpoints (e.g., athletes).

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Footnotes

¹ Recently, based on Turiel's claim, Lévy and Lehalle (2002) distinguished five types of rules systems: legal rules (forbidden by law), ordinary rules (that govern collective life), moral rules, interpersonal rules (behaviours that should be adopted for interpersonal relationships), and conventions (arbitrary).

Table 1

Participants sport coached and sport context

Participant	Sport coached (athletes gender)	Sport context	
		As athletes	As coaches
C1	Rhythmic Gymnastics (Females)	National - Amateur	International - Amateur
C2	Volleyball (Females)	High school	University
C3	Baseball (Males)	International - Professional	International - Professional
C4	Rugby (Women)	National - Amateur	University
C5	Hockey (Women)	National - Amateur	University
C6	Football (Males)	International - Professional	University
C7	Soccer (Males)	Provincial - Amateur	Provincial - Amateur
C8	Judo (Females and males)	International - Amateur	International - Amateur
C9	Swimming (Females and males)	High school	University
C10	Fencing (Females and males)	International – Amateur	International – Amateur

Table 2

Participants self-confidence to build moral character score

Participant	Self-confidence to build			
	Good moral character	Fair play	Sportsmanship	Respect for others
C1	7	7	6	8
C2	8	9	5	8
C3	8	8	9	8
C4	7	8	8	8
C5	8	8	8	8
C6	8	9	9	9
C7	9	9	9	9
C8	6	8	9	8
C9	7	8	8	8
C10	7	8	8	8

Table 3

Dimensions of moral attitudes and behaviours as defined by participants

Dimensions	Concepts associated (Number of participants referring to it)
Elite sport involvement	Discipline (5); effort (4); work ethic (regularity, constancy, strictness, rigour) (4); commitment (motivation, will, determination, engagement) (4); encourage (3); working hard (2); organization (2); punctuality (2); do things your coach is asking you to do (1); patriotism (1).
Game	Accept and overcome defeat (accept others winning, go through good times and bad times) (6); honour your winning and the person (perform at your best) (3); control of emotions (canalize energy, have an appropriate attitude); control ego (1); (3); keeping things fair (keep the score respectable) (2); have high moral standards (1); greet the opponent, teammates, coach (1).
Interaction with others	Respect (opponents, teammates, rules, regulations, organization, sport) (10); responsibility (7); honesty and sincerity (4); altruism (3); share (do things together) (3); making sure athletes are treated fairly and securely (2); knowing and doing what is right (2); tolerate (1); listen (1); comprehension (1); clear and conscious decisions and judgements (1); trust (1); open to feedback (1); be aware that we affect others (1); justice (1); equity (1); help (1); overtaking (1).
Self-related	Self-respect (2); Self-confidence (1); have fun and enjoy (1).

Table 4

Dimensions of immoral attitudes and behaviours as defined by participants

Dimensions	Concepts associated (Number of participants referring to it)
Elite sport involvement	Being too competitive (running up the score) (2)
Game	Play forcing the limits (1); accept an undeserved winning; not accepting the defeat (1).
Interaction with others	Lack of respect (6); Physical violence and aggression (fighting, punching, deliberately injure an opponent, harming, hurting) (5); misbehave (speak in an inappropriate fashion, shout referee organize a complot or boycott towards others, being malicious; favouritism) (4); turn down others (4); cheat and lie (3); save info (2); frustration (2); drugs (2); pressing (pushing) for results (2); double message (1); swear (1); not be emotionally involved (1); stealing (1); mislead someone (e.g., a student to enter into a team) (1); sleeping with athletes (1).
Self-related	Being unhappy (or sad with themselves) (2).

Table 5

Participants current moral influences

Property	Dimensions	Examples
Main moral content transmitted to athletes	Respect	<p>“I will have some values... like respect” (C9)</p> <p>“It is sure that we have to learn to respect others abilities and group life as well” (C8)</p>
	Responsibility	<p>“Now you discuss, and you give them, ... responsibility” (C7)</p> <p>“You can’t be really what you want to be; there’s responsibility of being on this team and the responsibility of how to behave” (C4)</p>
	Do the right thing	<p>“You sit down with either the leadership of the team or the team as a whole to discuss the rights and wrongs of it and hopefully have your players learn from it” (C5)</p> <p>“what’s right, you always do what’s right” (C6)</p>

(Table continues)

Table 5. (continued)

Main moral content transmitted to athletes	Fair play	<p>“when you play sports, somebody’s gonna win, somebody’s gonna lose and there’s different way of taking it, but by the end of the day the moral high ground if you want is to accept the defeat and face your winning and try to overcome that for the next time you compete” (C4)</p> <p>“The defeats... they force you to... accept that you put all there, but you did not win. I think competition continuously force you to face yourself and face others. And I think this is the most important learning related to morality, to accept that at a given point in time you realize you gave everything, but you feel powerlessness” (C2)</p>
	Discipline	<p>“You want to discipline somebody, to make them better” (C6)</p> <p>“I just teach them to be disciplined and how to conduct yourself as part of the team” (C7)</p>

(Table continues)

Table 5. (continued)

Way of transmitting morality	Interaction with athletes	<p>“So, that’s it, I try, but it is like... it depends on any adolescent” (C1)</p> <p>“So I go to run with him... it is probably an opportunity to talk with him, so I say: “I also had that problem at a similar match” (C3)</p> <p>“It is better to force them (referring to athletes) to look for moral values, instead of providing them” (C3)</p>
	Set the tone	<p>“I sit as the head coach so I would expect that people that are working with me have the same type of value with me towards the sports” (C5)</p> <p>“I want to make sure we all look at it in that way, and I think we have no other way” (C6)</p>
	Behaviour	<p>“First, I always do what’s right” (C6)</p> <p>“It is difficult to ask the others to do something you can not do yourself... The coach has to be the most disciplined of the group” (C9)</p>

(Table continues)

Table 5. (continued)

Reasons underlying current moral practices	Individual foster guidance and growth	<p>“Everybody is here to get an education... Certainly the combination of academics and athletics is something that we as coaches have to make sure that everybody is on board and doing things certainly from academic point of view that doesn’t affect them athletically and doing things from athletic view that doesn’t affect them academically. So we make sure that the combination of academics and athletics is solid and from a moral point of view” (C5)</p>
	Team development	<p>“The score is not important; it’s the effort and it’s the development of your team over a long period of time what I’m looking for as a coach now” (C5)</p>

Table 6

Cross-case comparison concerning different factors associated with morality

Factors	Examples
Athlete's gender	<p>“I can certainly coach men. I mean the game is the same, I think that dealing with attitudes... there are stars in their eyes in the sense that they still have professional hockey in the right... women really play for the joy of the game as opposed to mans side as they are looking at making career out of their sports” (C4)</p> <p>“I have not coached a female team for that reason... I feel that there is a difference. I don't understand how women think, how they play... maybe they are thinking differently... I think... another girl or another woman is going to better understand them” (C7)</p> <p>“It's sure that as I am a boy, so for me it's easier to work with boys. The girls are ok, but you know? There are some of them that are more reserved... (so) the contact it's more difficult... For example, boys will fight and they will keep the friendship there... girls... are more malicious towards their opponents, it is going to be more aggression... I think it at a confidence level; they (girls) are less confident” (C8)</p> <p>“Girls seem to easier respect the rules established by the coach... boy instead, challenge rules a little bit... On the contrary, boys are generally more motivated, they seem to work for them and no for other like mom, or dad, or the coach, or friends. They are more responsible for their</p>

(Table continues)

Table 6. (continued)

	<p>defeats and victories... they are maybe more independent... (girls) are more sensitive to others” (C9)</p> <p>“I feel more insecurity in females... before competition, there are a lot of excuses... at the mood level there is a gap... emotions in females are more fragile... boys are more stable” (C10)</p>
Required physical contact	<p>“I think in rugby, because of the physical nature of the sport, there are things obviously happening, such as in hockey ...because of the contact, there are things that happen and will spread at the moment, and some of those things could be decided before it happens. Let’s say, how we are gonna approach the game, to tackle, whatever. I think if you know that’s crossing a line... that it’s gonna be either an attempted injure or somebody could get hurt out... I mean with the intentions of the athlete... I think you have to drag that person back, so you know moral speaking that’s not cool, that’s not the spirit of the game either” (C4)</p>

(Table continues)

Table 6. (continued)

Type of sport	“Well, I do a team sport, so everything is based on that, sharing, relationships” (C2)
dynamic	<p>“That’s why I love football. On my team I have blacks, whites, we have Koreans, Chinese people, we have Indians, we have Muslims, we have Catholics, we have Hebrews, we have everything! ... Nowhere else in the world, you will see that situation. That’s why I love football, because it transcends... race, it transcends culture, and that’s what my favourite things about football” (C6)</p> <p>“I think those in team sport will be more prone to socialize because they already have their friends... It is sure that at a team sport situation you have to learn to respect everyone’s capacities... But there are certain basic principles that I teach to all group” (C8)</p> <p>“I try to have a common message... I do not uniform the message, I pass it in a different way” (C9)</p>

(Table continues)

Table 6. (continued)

Sport context	<p>“I have the chance to follow my values... I think that it would not have been like that at a big professional organization... I would not have been able to say (the name of a well-know player): “You broke the tee ball, you’re out”, the guy makes millions and millions per year!” (C3)</p> <p>“Definitely, yeah, I think the...I think there are two types of people who play sports... there are a lot of athletes who are representing the institutions where they go ... (but) the elite athlete has another agenda, but I think people that are driven to be elite athlete they will never get what they really want here, and that’s the kind drive they have... (in educational sport settings) the pressure to win isn’t really here” (C4)</p> <p>“Certainly the combination of academics and athletics is something that we as coaches have to make sure that everybody is on board and doing things certainly from academic point of view that doesn’t affect them athletically and doing things from athletic view that doesn’t affect them academically” (C5)</p>
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(Table continues)

Table 6. (continued)

Sport context	<p>“That’s a different situation because as the professional level, and that’s why I enjoy coaching in university, you are a big part of the young man’s life here arrives 17, 18 years old. So you are big part of how he is going to evolve into a young man and a lot values are going to come from you. Certainly, you are there for him in their respect, at the pro level, it’s a job. The coaches aren’t able to talk about the morality, they’re there to win. So truly it is a very different context, a professional coach is supposed to university coach... certainly there is big difference between a professional coach, an amateur coach, and a university coach.... At the professional level, you are dealing with ... (silence)... you are dealing with some coaches who... preach values... but really don’t demonstrate those values and you are dealing with some coaches you don’t even pretend to look at family values. They think about winning and nothing else is important. And then you have some coaches that I believe people inside but don’t want to get involved emotionally or philosophically on values because they have a job to do, so they separate themselves from it. And I think that it’s dangerous of coaching and being a position where there are demands on wining, even at this level, there are certain demands if we go to lose the game... I can’t compromise my co-values for wins or losses... if I gonna tell a young man he is not good enough to play here anymore, I have to release him</p>
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(Table continues)

Table 6. (continued)

Sport context	<p>from the team, the day that I don't have sad feelings about that is just some easy thing for me to do, I really feel bad about my situation. It bothers me that I have to tell someone they can't play here anymore. They are losing their right to play, that is something that bothers me in a whole bunch, and I think it's good because I have that concern that I care for each individual. At the pro level doesn't exist, maybe to the point which it does not care, but no further... we came up numb and more interested about the winning stuff" (C6)</p> <p>"Well, in a match, you know, the team is ah, you see, the momentum of the team is going, and going, and going, and maybe one player as Beckham who's on the losing team has to change the momentum of game he may have to fake into fall or push on somebody to provoke something to happen to change that the momentum, so yes, you capable to do it, but they do it for reasons when they play" (C7)</p> <p>"I had the change to develop in a sport where there is justice... there is a chronometer and there is no place for interpretation" (C9)</p>
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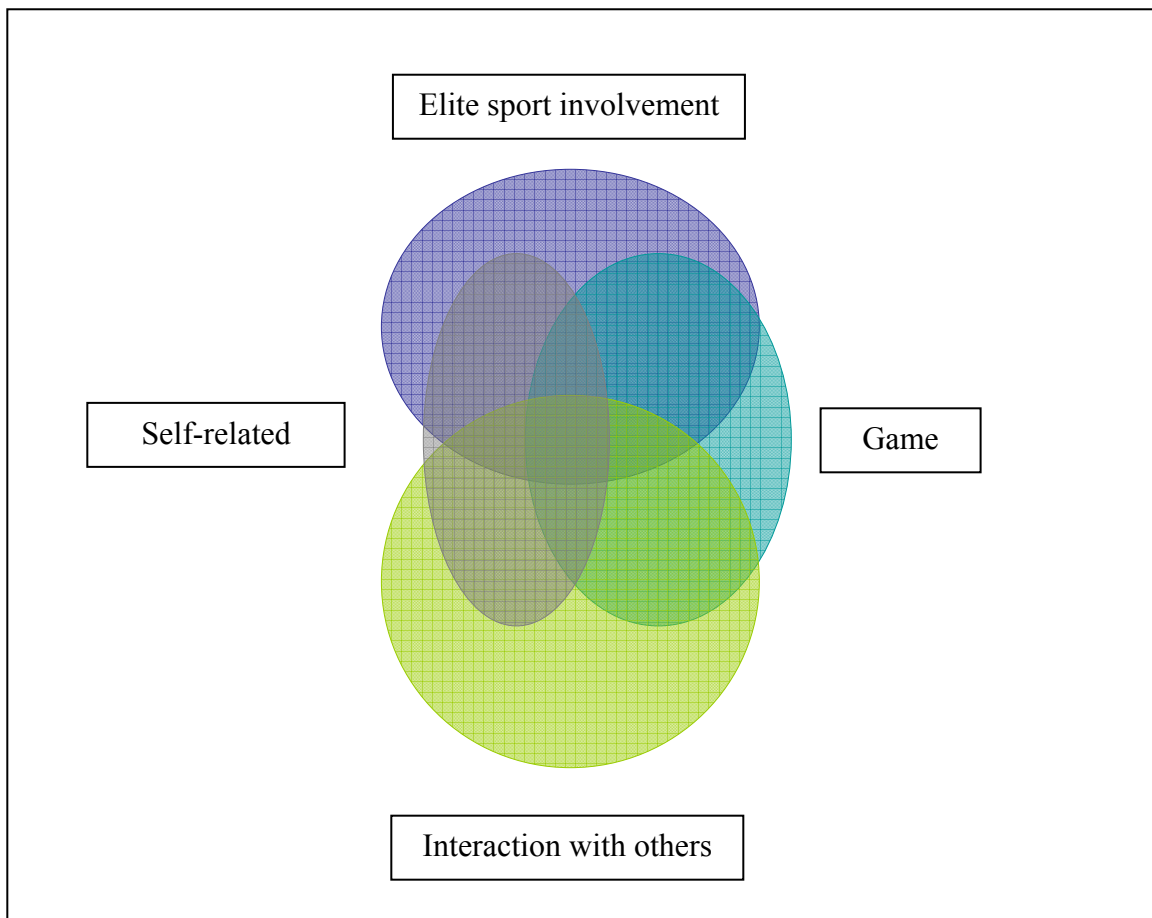
Table 7

Examples of participants contradictions concerning morality

Participant	Examples
C1	“This is like a family” - “It is hard to make a link with the girls because they see there is a barrier, a line that they do not have to go beyond”
C5	“When I look at my own children now I don’t know whether it’s an overall real positive environment for my children in, playing in the hockey” – Yes (referring to sport as an ideal place to develop morality) ...that depends on how you define morality; but the way I defined it, again, your respect for people working hard and for people doing the job, yes”
C10	“There are rules that indicate the limits” - “There are regulations, and there are rules that underlie those regulations. At a competitive level, those regulations are clear; however, we can play a little bit with the rules”

Figure 1

Interrelationship among dimensions of morality



CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Major findings

The main purpose of the present thesis was to study the coach as a moral influence. To achieve this purpose, three main works were completed. First, I conducted a purposive (Suri & Clarke, 2009) and interpretative (Eisenhart, 1998) review in the field devoted to studying the role of the coach as a moral influence. Based on evidence coming from the review, I conducted a pilot study, as a first exploration of the nature of the topic of interest. Again, based on results from this pilot study, I conducted a main study in an effort to both replicate and elaborate on the findings of the pilot study. Each study in this thesis offered a unique perspective on a coach's moral influence on athletes, as well as, extended links to research in the field.

Evidence from these series of endeavours indicated six major findings. The first finding is that coaches can be important moral influences for their athletes. This was confirmed via the review and via the two empirical studies. The review included eighteen studies. Theoretical and methodological differences among individual pieces of work, done using criteria to assess internal coherence of research designs, made comparisons was complicated. However, in all studies, athletes attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics were in concert with those of coaches. A coach's moral influence seemed to exceed the variables assessed. Due to the lack of design integrity among studies, the specific impact of the coach's moral influence across studies did not have the same operational meaning; therefore, the interpretation of results must be made with caution.

Based on results from the review, a pilot study was conducted. The underlying reason for this study was to make a first step in exploring the field depicted by the

review, to address some knowledge gaps in the literature, and to generate evidence to design a larger study. Seven current elite coaches that had been athletically involved in their past were sampled. Via the administration and analysis of semi-structured interviews, the fact that coaches are important moral influences was confirmed in the pilot study. This was done by: a) retrospectively reflecting upon their past experiences as athletes; and b) reflecting upon their current coaching practices. All participants in this study agreed that past coaches had a moral influence on them. However, these participants mentioned that not all past coaches had a moral influence on them. Participants mentioned that it is an individual's self-regulation and a coach-athlete relationship that enables or prevents the occurrence of a moral influence. In a similar vein, these participants acknowledged they are moral influences for their athletes. Therefore, the pilot study, found that coaches are important sources of moral influence for athletes, but only under certain conditions.

Based on the results from the pilot study, adjustments to the design were made and the main study was conducted. Two purposes guided this study. First, this study attempted to elaborate on and extend the evidence base generated from the pilot study. Second, although the main purpose of qualitative research and mixed method design is not the replication of findings per se, as noted by Drotar (2010), the absence of replication of findings in behavioural sciences limits the understanding of evidence. As such the main study was constructed to be able to replicate some of the main findings from the pilot study. For the main project 10 current elite coaches that were athletically involved in their past were sampled. Again, the coach as a moral influence was confirmed. Also, participants acknowledged the roles of self-regulation and the coach-

athlete relationship in enabling, or not, the coach's moral influence. Not only did this study replicate these important findings from the pilot, but it also elaborated on this previous evidence. For example, it confirmed that coaches build on parental moral influences. In addition, it showed that moral influence has to be understood as a process that takes place during a timeline and its effects are perceived differently across different time points. Thus, both via the compilation and reviewing of literature and via empirical attempts the fact that the coach is an important moral influence was supported. In the context of this study, moral influences were not depicted as a linear process of influence where an agent or source was seen as causing an effect on a recipient. Instead, moral influence was seen as a process of interaction where all participants involved play a role.

A second major finding of the thesis concerns the understanding of morality elite coaches have. As reported in chapters 3 and 4, one initial concern reported is that there is no agreement on how to define morality in social sciences (R. Barrow, 2007). For that reason, throughout the chapters different ways to refer to morality used in the fields of sports, as well as, different constructs studied have been presented. Character, sportsmanship, fair play, moral behaviour, and ethics have been used indiscriminately as synonyms of morality. Therefore, before tackling the overarching purpose of the study, one must explore coaches understanding of morality. Given that only one previous study (Rudd & Mondello, 2006) investigated coaches definition of character, it was decided to replicate and expand these findings assuming that only by having their conceptions of morality can one be able to study the coach as a moral influence. This assumption was made in order to both cognitively make sense of a situation and enact a social practice (e.g., coaching), a certain level of conceptualization is needed (Dickins, 2004; Entwistle,

2005; Entwistle & Peterson, 2004).

For the majority of the participants interviewed in both studies, it was complicated and hard for them to define morality, a finding previously reported (Beller & Stoll, 1993). However, it was easier for participants to elaborate on morality once they moved into a moral practical discussion, for example, to report how they learned morality or to explain how they currently morally influence their athletes. Participants understanding of morality was dimensionalized into three groups in the pilot study being: a) “elite sport involvement” (e.g., discipline); b) “interaction with others” (e.g., respect); and c) “self-related” (e.g., have fun, enjoy). These dimensions were confirmed in the main study, in which a new dimension arose and was named “game” (e.g., honour the winning). In line with Rudd and Mondello’s (2006), it was found that coaches understanding of morality entails what has been previously described as moral and social values (Rudd, 2005; Turiel, 1983). Examples of social values in the present study were “discipline,” “working hard,” “work ethics,” and “effort.” Also, as expressed by participants, morality regulates the social interactions with others and personal wellbeing (which is a crucial starting point to initiate any social relationship). In relationship to sport, morality has to do with both a fair attitude towards the game broadly understood and a commitment towards the activity that is reflected in the discipline and effort.

A third major finding of this thesis is that there is a strong suggestion that past moral influences are reflected in coaches understanding of morality, and captured in current coaching practices. Due to the interview format, participants were first invited to define morality. Participants responded by brainstorming ideas related to morality. Then, participants were asked to reflect about their past moral influences. At that moment of the

interview, participants used the same ideas they previously mentioned to describe morality to express what they received as moral influences from their past coaches. Finally, when these participants described how they address moral issues in their current practices, they elaborated on what their coaches did as a frame of reference. These participants either copied or criticized their past coaches, but a direct link connecting past experiences and current coaching practices was observed. This confirms that coaches moral practices are based on their understanding of morality which in turn, has been shaped during past moral influences (Dickins, 2004). In other words, the fact that what can be understood and conceptualized is ultimately what is going to be transmitted (Entwistle, 2005; Entwistle & Peterson, 2004).

A fourth finding of the present set of studies has to do with the role of mediators of moral influences. Two of them, briefly referred to above, are individual self-regulation and a coach-athlete relationship. A healthy coach-athlete relationship, especially strong in closeness as defined by Jowett and colleagues (e.g., Jowett, 2003, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000), enables a coach to exert a moral influence. In addition, a coaches moral influence takes place if the athlete enables it via his or her own self-regulation. Specifically, athletes judge a situation and depending on their evaluation they decide whether to engage or not in it. This process, referred to as self-regulation, was previously pointed out by Bandura (1991, 1999).

In addition, these participants referred to the role of culture. For these participants, morality, as previously described by Turiel (1983) is context-related. This means that morality is understood differently depending on the context where it takes place. Cultural differences in the understanding of morality affect both, a coach-athlete

relationship and an individual self-regulation. For that reason, a coach-athlete relationship where members come from different cultural backgrounds may be at risk of moral disagreement if not purposefully addressed.

A fifth important finding is that a better understanding of morality and moral influences is attained if different available theoretical models are considered together. As previously reported, the literature review indicated that two major theoretical approaches have been used to study morality and moral influences in sport. These approaches are the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1991) and the structural developmental theory (Kohlberg, 1984), as well as, derivatives from it (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Haan, 1983, 1991; Rest, 1976, 1978, 1983, 1984; Turiel, 1983, 1989, 2002). The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1991) emphasizes “moral learning” because this process is seen as based on constant interaction between the individual and the environment. More specifically, it holds that through modelling and reinforcement, individuals learn socially accepted values and behaviours. On the other hand, the structural developmental theory refers to the same process as “moral development” (Kohlberg, 1984) because it takes for granted that the process of social interaction leads to the construction of universal categories of morality. This theoretical approach focuses on the cognitive processes underlying actions. In particular, Kohlberg (1984) mentioned that what distinguished the psychological approach to studying morality from the philosophical approach was the consideration of the “intention” behind the enacted behaviour.

While these theoretical contributions are crucial for the understanding of moral influences in sport, this thesis demonstrated that there are still gaps in the available grounded theory. As already mentioned, topics such as a coach-athlete relationship have

never been considered or addressed in the current literature. In addition, neither the process, nor the causal foundation of moral influence have been considered before. This lack of an all encompassing theory, is probably why scholars in the field have based their research on more than one theoretical approach (see table 1). This use of combined theoretical components has several consequences. First, the combination of different conceptualizations resulted in the use of different instruments to assess both morality and moral influences. Second, there has been a lack of integration between theoretical framework and results (e.g., they report a theory for the understanding morality and another one for the study of moral influences). As a consequence of this theoretical variation and disarticulation, the compilation, synthesis, and reporting of result from studies focusing on the coach as a moral influence is a complicated endeavour. Within the present thesis, an articulation between results and theory has been attempted, leading to a preliminary theoretical framework, which is discussed later.

The studies conducted within the context of this thesis introduced the use of a social constructionism approach (K.J. Gergen, 2009; M.M. Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Shotter, 1995). The main underlying idea of this approach is that the personal inner world is created from a relational process. This approach underlines the role of relationships, as well as the situational environment. More specifically, social constructionism supports the idea of confluence. Thus, all factors included in a situation play a specific role; therefore, all situations have their own characteristics and particularities. In this vein, local and in-depth understanding, which can be achieved via qualitative designs, is an ideal venue for collecting this type of data.

The sixth main result has to do with the methodology. The present set of studies

demonstrated that the use of qualitative research is appropriated to study moral influences. This fact does not deny the importance of other research designs. Understanding the situation prepares the field for future large scales studies. However, in order to benefit from them, it is important to have an in-depth knowledge of what is happening, and how and why it happens. As noted earlier, local understanding is better achieved via qualitative research (Creswell, 2007).

Additional findings

In addition to the findings related to the main purposes of the thesis, there are some associated findings. The first of these findings is that based on their own experiences, participants agreed that sport was an ideal place for moral development. The majority of the participants in both studies emphasized the relationship between sport and moral development. Of note, two participants mentioned that sport was as good as any other place to develop morality. Along with the reference to self-regulation to evaluate situation and therefore, adhere to moral behaviours and withdraw from immoral behaviours, participants mentioned the importance of personal responsibility. In addition, participants mentioned they did not personally experience any traumatic moral situation, and they only guessed or heard about immoral situations, but besides this, their overall sport experience was positive.

One possible explanation to this finding is what Bredemeier and colleagues (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a, 1986b; Shields & Bredemeier, 1984 1995) referred to as “bracketed morality.” More specifically, it is possible that coaches themselves are “bracketed off” and therefore they can simply not identify immoral situations that would be clearly identified as that by outsiders.

As described in chapters 2 to 4, the present thesis consisted of two case studies. A case study is a bounded system, i.e., a system limited by certain conditions, factors, or variables that make it unique. The next associated finding was related to the role that each factor used to delimit the cases played. Two types of factors were used in these studies: a) those used for comparison purposes; i.e., that varied from case to case, and b) those shared by all participants. Factors defining each case were the same for the two studies in the thesis, except for culture. Culture was a factor used for comparison purposes in the pilot study and a factor shared by all participants in the main study. Other factors used for comparison purposes were: gender (of the athlete and of the coach); b) required physical contact (i.e., non to low vs. medium to high); c) type of sport dynamic (i.e., individual vs. team); and d) sport context. Other factors shared by all participants were elite level of competition and extended sport involvement. A brief report of core findings associated to each factor is presented in the following paragraphs.

Concerning gender, one clarification should be made. Although all reviewed studies, as well as, all literature considered within the context of the present thesis, referred to gender. In order to be coherent with previous literature, I decided to define the variable in question as gender. However, it is important to clarify that none of the studies (included the ones that are part of the present thesis) considered the psychosocial components of gender, but to the biological elements that determine sex.

In the present studies, there were no differences concerning the gender of the participant. In relationship to athletes gender, participants mentioned female athletes have a different attitude when compared to male athletes. According to these participants, females demonstrate more joy when training; however, when competing against someone

who they are familiar with, women are more aggressive. Two participants suggested that this differential attitude may be because, according to them, females are less self-confident. In relationship to physical contact required in sports, all participants coaching high impact sports, reported that when physical contact is required, morality is at risk. This is because the context is more intense and therefore actions like body-checking are more feasible to occur. No differences were reported by these participants as related to sport dynamic. In relationship to sport context, participants who only participated in educational settings, both as athletes and as coaches, differed from those who were involved in only in competitive sport or both sport settings. Participants in the educational setting indicated that once the moral basics are settled, “everything goes towards the right direction” (C2). In addition, these participants mentioned that they neither observed, nor were involved in any immoral situations. Conversely, participants who were involved only in competitive settings or in both competitive and educational settings mentioned they either guessed or were involved in an immoral situation but not a traumatic situation, as described by them.

Culture, a dimension that accounted for several differences in the pilot study, was it was used to delimit the boundaries of the cases. Both the understanding of morality as well as the way moral influences were depicted varied in the defined cases. As noted in chapters 2 and 4, the reigning culture within a society conditioned values that in turn were reflected in attitudes and behaviours. Also, although the main study did not use culture for comparison purposes, all participants referred to the role culture played and therefore, to moral differences associated with culture.

Finally, although not purposefully measured, age was an important variable. For

all coaches born and raised up in Eastern Europe, the moment in their lives where coaches were more influential was childhood. Conversely, for all North American coaches, a coach moral influence took place during their adolescence and that family played an important role. There are two possible explanations for this. First, it may be that rhythmic gymnastics is a sport where specific training starts at an early stage of the athletes life. Second, it may indicate that moral socialization is different in Eastern Europe as compared to North American contexts. An element supporting this last speculation is that the interviewed rhythmic gymnastic coach from North America agreed with her North American peers not only concerning the role of her family in relationship to moral influences, but also that her coach moral influence took place during her adolescence.

Implications

Contributions from the review paper in relationship to the state of the art. The review of literature presented in Chapter 2 attempted to: a) purposively and interpretatively synthesize available research concerning the role of the coach as a moral influence; b) inform the field of its characteristics; and c) identify available gaps in knowledge. By doing this, the literature review confirmed the coach was a moral influence for athletes, a fact intuitively assumed, but not confirmed until now. In addition, the literature review provided a valuable description of the reviewed pieces of work. The review informed that although the coach was identified as an important moral influence, this evidence had to be considered cautiously due to the fact that the varied methodology complicated the comparison among studies. However, certain trends were identified. For example, although all types of social influences (moral influences

included) are embedded in a process (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998), a leading research strategy was to assess the role of the coach as a moral influence by using quantitative and cross-sectional designs. Therefore, a major contribution of previous literature to the field was the identification of variables linked to moral attitudes and behaviours. Thus, the review paper identified a gap in the available literature. Specifically, while the *what* is related to moral influences has been reasonably well investigated, the *how* and the *why* remained unclear.

The information resulting from the review paper provided the basis for the planning and the design of the two studies, and to the development of a preliminary framework explaining findings from the participants viewpoint. a strength of the review is the approach used. A purposive and interpretative review focuses in the interpretation of results provided by methodologically different types of studies (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, and mixed designs), intentionally selected to represent a given topic. Conversely, a systematic review would have focused in the statistical interpretation of results, leaving aside studies other than quantitative studies.

Contributions and implications of evidence resulting from the two qualitative studies. The evidence generated in the two studies highlights several theoretical implications for developmental research conducted within the field of sports. Given that the main purpose of the studies was to understand a coach's moral influence, and in relationship with that, a coach's understanding of morality, a social constructivist approach was used. Social constructivism aims to address the understanding and construction of individual's perceptions resulting from social interactions and negotiations (K.J. Gergen, 2009; M.M. Gergen & Gergen, 2003). This philosophical

approach was appropriate to the thesis purposes because participants had a space to display their ideas and perceptions and to be able to link them. Following the assumptions of this paradigm (i.e., that it is people's meaning, coaches in this particular case) that count rather than the standard scholarly definition of morality, interesting information was generated. For example, previous literature assumed both social and moral values were different in nature; and therefore represent different domains (Rudd, 2005; Turiel, 1983).

Rudd and Mondello's (2006) suggested that social values were common in sport because they were helpful to winning. While this proposition may be true, a speculative stance at the coaches definition of morality may suggest that social and moral values are not mutually exclusive. Thus, being disciplined may be helpful for an athlete to achieve a performance goal; however, being disciplined entails respect for the coach's prescription of exercise, respect for and commitment with teammates, and self-respect for one's own performance. For this reason, in a field with the specificities sport has, being disciplined is seen as a moral value. Consequently, within the sport context, being disciplined means respecting others commitment and work.

Another important contribution of the studies is the fact that while it was confirmed that coaches were important moral influences, not all coaches were moral influences. Whilst coaches were important contributors to the moral atmosphere (Kohlberg, 1984), it was an athlete's self-regulation that enabled or prevented a moral influence to take place.

Collective contributions from this thesis. This thesis confirmed that the coach was an important moral influence. However, this moral influence occurs under certain

circumstances. This thesis not only reflected *what* elements were important (e.g., a “winning-at-all-cost” philosophy) in the reporting of the occurrence of a coaches moral influence, but also *how* and *why* a coach’s moral influence takes place. More specifically, these studies indicated that a coach’s moral influence takes place during an extended period of time and constantly interact with parental influences. Also, studies showed that not all coaches are moral influences for their athletes and that the occurrence of this is largely related to the quality of a coach-athlete relationship, and an athletes responsibility and self-regulation. These finding are unique and represent a unique contribution to available theory.

In a different vein, literature has suggested that people’s understanding is reflected in people’s everyday practices (Dickins, 2004). If the previous statement holds true and coaches are uncertain about what the concept of morals entails, then teaching and transmitting moral values to their athletes becomes a complicated endeavour. This is probably due to the fact that the knowledge they have concerning morality is experiential, rather than academic; therefore, coaches may not be giving the right moral message or may not be guiding their athletes in a desired moral direction. This situation has been reported before (Beller & Stoll, 1993) and the present thesis confirms that has not yet changed.

Personal self-reflection. All the findings detailed above have to be understood in the context of my personal position. As mentioned in the methodology section of each study, I have been involved in the field of sports, at different stages (e.g., athlete, sport psychologist) for more than twenty years. Therefore, I am an insider from a researcher viewpoint. Personally, as a “bricoleur” (Becker, 1998) of coaches’ knowledge and

experience to influence others experiences, I assumed my role and tried to reflect about what coaches said at different point in times after each interview. Although I adhered to the non-realistic premises proposed by the social constructionism as a philosophical approach (Sparkes & Smith, 2009), I have followed certain standard procedures to control my personal biases and therefore, assure trustworthiness. These procedures have been appropriately referred and described across chapters 2 to 4.

Preliminary theoretical framework

In order to explain findings from the studies in this thesis, contributions from available theories and models were initially considered. No single theoretical framework was entirely applicable to depict either a coach's understanding of morality or a coach's moral influence. Therefore, evidence coming from the field indicated that a comprehensive framework that builds on previous theoretical basis is needed. Consequently, a preliminary theoretical framework that integrates results with theories and models has been developed. In addition, this framework is comprehensive, holistic, and integrative because it considers contributions from different approaches. This framework must also be considered to be preliminary as well. This is because only two aspects of morality are addressed (i.e., understanding of morality and perception of moral influences), and only coaches viewpoints have been considered. In addition, areas that still require more consideration have been pointed out.

Coaches understanding of morality is based on four major components: a) "interactions with others;" b) "game;" c) "elite sport involvement;" and d) "self-related." These four components have been previously described in the literature; however, one of them has been considered in a different way. Specifically, "interactions with others" has

been described by Barrow (2007), Shields and Bredemeier (1995), Kavussanu (2008), and Vallerand and colleagues (Vallerand, 1991; Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997; Vallerand, Deshaies, & Currier, 1997; Vallerand, Deshaies, Currier, Brière, & Pelletier, 1996; Vallerand & Losier, 1994). “Game” has been referred to by Shields and Bredemeier (1995), Kavussanu (2008), and Boixadós and colleagues (Boixadós & Cruz, 1995; Boixadós, Cruz, Torregrosa, & Valiente, 2004). “Self-related” has been described by Barrow (2007). Concerning the “elite sport involvement” component, previous literature has associated it with social values (Rudd, 2005; Turiel, 1983). However, following Turiel, morality refers to behaviours that have consequences for others. Therefore, it can be speculated that what has been described as social values in the previous general literature is a culturally specific content, necessary for the sport settings. Certain social values such as discipline are important within elite sport because they are associated with the “respect” for conveyed rules and other sport participants. For example, being disciplined, largely considered a social value and a component important to winning, is also related to respect for a coach’s training prescription and to teammates effort.

Concerning the characteristics of morality, results may be best explained by holistically referring to the social domain theory (Turiel, 1983, 1989, 1998, 2002). People cognitively build their knowledge. This knowledge is assumed to be organized in hierarchical levels (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1932/1965) and unveiled in moral behaviour (Rest, 1984). However, it is crucial as well to consider factors as well, such as the intention behind the moral action (Kohlberg, 1984). Therefore, morality is best captured if Rest’s (1984) description is considered. Rest described four components of

morality: a) perception, interpretation, and judgement of a situation; b) evaluation of the situation and devising of a possible course of action based on personal reasons; c) taking a decision; and d) the performance of an action-response and the correspondent adjustments.

Morality entails an ongoing process of interchange that affects everyone in the same environment and it is best captured in “behaviours,” reflected in “attitudes” and “intentions,” and based on “values.” The individual consideration of these aspects leads to a partial interpretation of an individual’s moral behaviour. Morality lies on both individuals maturity and life experiences; therefore, individuals may change their moral viewpoints across lifespan and depending on different circumstances (Haan, 1983; Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1932/1965; Turiel 2002).

Concerning athletes sources of moral influence, parents, family members, and peers play an important role; however, coaches are major moral referents for their athletes. Different sources of influence have influence along an individual’s lifespan (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Bugental & Goodnow, 1998) and interact among themselves. Family members seemed to be primary sources of influence in certain cultures and during adolescence (Côté, 1999), parental contributions served as a basis for future coaches moral influences. It seems that coaches moral influence is stronger during adolescence and beyond, as noted in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Not only own coaches or head coaches are moral influences, but also other eminent coaches are influential. These moral models stood out as role models because of their characteristics (e.g., they had results, they were knowledgeable, they were highly recognized in their milieu). Rather than rewards, it seems that it is empathy with the

chosen moral model what plays an important role (Hoffman, 1984) in the selection of moral models. Also, individuals are more prone to accept moral standards that are in agreement with their own moral standards (Eisenberg; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Individuals do this selection of moral values via their self-regulation (Bandura, 1991).

Moral influences resulted from a social interaction process. Moral influences include both prosocial or proactive behaviour, and antisocial or inhibitive behaviour (Bandura, 1991). The ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) states that people interact with others and with the environment. These interactions, held at different levels, are key to human development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), individuals participate during their first years of life in different microsystems. These microsystems are groups with low number of people that have close links. Mesosystems represent the space characterized by the space shared by different microsystems. For example, an individual has a given family that follows certain principles and plays a sport where other principles are taught. The congruence between family and sport enables or prevents a coach's moral influence. In a different vein, social learning theory supports the idea that learning entails four processes namely attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Attention refers to the capacity of observing events that could be potential models. Retention included symbolic coding, cognitive organization, and symbolic rehearsal of what has been observed. Athletes take "images" from coaches they assume as moral influences and they kept those images in their memories. Then, years later, athletes become coaches and use those moral images in their coaching practices.

Both coach-athlete relationship and culture are important elements to the

understanding of morality and moral influences. However, much more work is still needed. There is some evidence that indicates that sport itself, as well as, some modalities in sport (e.g., required physical contact, sport dynamic) represent a form of culture or sub-culture (Geertz, 1973), it needs to be clarified how the cultural parameters are negotiated among athletes and coaches. The relationship between a coach-athlete relationship and morality needs to be explored as well. For example, closeness seems to play an important component; however, the role of other components of a healthy coach-athlete relationship, such as empathy, are still unknown.

In conclusion, personal competencies and characteristics interact with environmental influences (e.g., significant others, situational factors) resulting in a given behaviour (Eisenberg, 2007; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). As noted by Rest (1984), morality is a complex phenomenon and a comprehensive understanding of it requires continued research endeavours.

Limitations and strengths

Limitations. This thesis has some limitations. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the whole work was more focused on the evidence coming from the field (i.e., the review paper) and evidence coming from participants (i.e., the two studies) rather than in comparing previous evidence with evidence coming from these three endeavours. Although the purposeful and interpretive review provided valuable information concerning previous literature, a systematic and critical review is needed to inform in-depth about methodological aspects of the studies, such as the validity and reliability of the instruments that were used.

Concerning the empirical studies, only elite coaches have been considered. Exploring physical education, educational, and recreational coaches opinions concerning both morality and moral influences will contribute to a better understanding of the topic. Also, these participants have different backgrounds (e.g., sport trajectory, culture, different level of experience) and characteristics (e.g., gender), all of them have been members of the North American culture and they have experienced similar situations, at least in last years. For that reason, participants viewpoints may be only representative of those having these characteristics.

Another limitation is that the main source of data was semi-structured interviews. While it demonstrated to be an adequate source of information, the triangulation with other sources both qualitative (e.g., observation, narratives) and quantitative (e.g., scales) will be enriching and revealing at the same time. As well, given that the interviews called for recall, some biases from the past (e.g., the impact or the meaning of an experience) may distort what was reported.

In addition, the design was retrospective, this means that the development of morality across the time was reflected by coaches, but not effectively assessed.

Finally, in order to fulfil the Ethics Board requirements for research conducted with people, informed consent was signed by participants before conducting the interview (see Appendix A). The ethics form mentioned that if coaches disclosed any sensitive comments concerning coaches actual behaviour that required legal intervention, this would be forwarded to the appropriate authorities. This clause might probably affected coaches intention to preserve themselves from being legally reported for their immoral practices. In addition, social desirability, understood as the tendency of some respondents

to reply in a manner that will be judged favourably by others (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) may as well play a role. However, both explanations and based on the researchers speculations.

Strengths. The study also has some strengths. First, it represents the first attempt to rigorously synthesize, inform, and assess the role of the coach as a moral influence for athletes. Second, each of the three components of the thesis (i.e., the review paper, the pilot study and the large study) provided unique results and valuable information that were used to the planning and the design of the subsequent component. This means that the three pieces of work are complementary and coherent among them.

Specifically concerning the two empirical studies, the specific characteristics of the bounded cases, as well as, the specificities of the proposed methodology, allowed me to draw important and reliable conclusions. Finally, to the best of my knowledge, three previous studies have done an enriching endeavour (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996; Romand & Pantaléon, 2007; Rudd & Mondello, 2006) by focusing on coaches perspectives concerning the use of power, rule abidance, and character. However, research efforts conducted have neither directly assessed the coaches understanding of morality, nor unveiled the relationship between past moral influences and current coaching practices concerning morality. Therefore, evidence from this study is unique in this sense.

Future directions

Future research. Evidence indicates that much work still needs to be done. Some factors need to be studied in-depth, such as the negotiation athletes and coaches do concerning morality; how a coach-athlete relationship affect the moral negotiation; how

culture affects morality in sport; and what is the role of power concerning morality among others. Exceeding the field of moral influence but related to it, it would be interested to study how morality is built in sports and how the need to win affects the development of morality. It would be interesting as well to investigate how moral influences occur in a three-generational study (i.e., a coach-his or her former athlete currently coaching- and current athletes).

Concerning the overall design, a first suggestion is to focus on grounded theory development (Cohen & Strauss, 1990) devoted to study moral influences in sport. Findings indicate that the study of moral influences in sport has been largely based on general theories; therefore, there is a lack of knowledge specifically generated in the field. Thus, an important issue of concern is that there are no specific theories or models to study moral influences in sport to explain moral influences without referring to existing theory. Second, longitudinal designs should be promoted to capture the process underlying moral influences. Third, it would be interesting as well to consider other ways of data collection such as observation and focus group interviews. Not only would other strategies be helpful for the purposes of data triangulation, but also to generate discussion and capture data in its most natural state. Fourth, more work is still required to consolidate a more comprehensive framework for explaining moral influences in sport. This can be achieved through concentrated endeavours devoted to explore the field via different research designs and the assessment of different factors associated to morality and moral influences. Also, more work needs to be conducted in order to examine the probable outcomes of the preliminary framework. In addition, models used elsewhere to assess social influences could be applied to the study of moral influences (e.g., Model of

parental expectations, Fredricks & Eccles, 2004) and its ability to describe moral influences should be evaluated.

Future interventions. Evidence suggests that coaches need to be sensitized about the role they play in sport and its relationship to morality. Although these coaches completed at least the level 3 of the NCCP, they mentioned that they had no specific systematic education on morality. This indicates that formal education coaches receive needs to be revisited in order to address this void.

Coaches should be aware of the associated impact and risk of their attitudes and behaviours, such as, “winning-at-all-costs.” This will have an impact on athletes moral development and sport experience as well. Consequently, morality has to be included as a crucial component in the preparation of coaches in terms of the potential costs to the athlete and to the concept of sport itself. Sport psychologists should address moral issues by promoting active coach-athlete interchanges.

Final conclusions

In conclusion, the importance of the coach as a moral influence has been confirmed across the review of the literature and the two studies. Findings support the potential relationship between moral development and sport, if purposefully addressed. Therefore, coaches have a moral responsibility to address moral issues, given that they have a strong influence on their athletes. If coaches benefit from moral education, then this will be transmitted to their athletes, and thus, undesired consequences associated with immoral moral behaviours will be reduced and may be prevented.

Given that Canadian families believe that sport is the optimal vehicle to promote positive values for youth (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2002), sport programs in

general, and coaches in particular, should be aware of the importance of their roles and the specific actions they should carry out. A purposefully organized sport program should focus not only in performance, but on the development of athletes positive social skills. An approach like this will have an impact in participants performance results, in health, and in psychosocial development (Holt, 2008).

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Consent form

Describing coaches experiences regarding moral issues (CEMI)

Principal investigator and co-investigators: Dr. Simon Bacon of Exercise Sciences, of Concordia University; Dr. Jim Gavin from Applied Human Sciences of Concordia University; and Dr. Mark Aulls from the Faculty of Education of McGill University.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to understand if your past sports experiences influence your current coaching practices. Specifically, we are interested in how these past and current experiences could have major social and educational benefits.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, we will individually interview you once for 60 to 90 minutes. This will be a face-to-face interview and it will take place at a place and time convenient for you. The interview will be audio-recorded and a verbatim transcription will be made. Before analysis of the interview, you will receive a copy of the transcription so that you will be able to verify what you said and to make changes if you feel that is necessary. In addition, you will be invited to an optional group session, where the final results of the study will be discussed. This session will be held at Concordia University. You do not need to come to this if you do not want to.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no associated risks directly related to this study. However, there is the possibility that you might disclose sensitive past information that harmed you at the time of being an athlete. In that case, we will provide you with details of people who may be of help to you (e.g. counseling services, psychologists). In addition, if you disclose any current or on-going sensitive information which may require legal intervention, such as, physical or psychological abuse, these details will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

There are no direct benefits guaranteed to you as a result of your participation in this study. However results of this study will help us further understand the underlying dynamic of the building of moral development issues and how they can be transmitted in the context of sport. We hope that our results will lead to future coaching interventions.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information related to this project that concerns you (your personal history recorded during the interview) will be kept confidential by identifying you with a code number and only authorized personnel will have access to it.

All data that will be collected are strictly confidential, unless the investigators are legally required to disclose the information.

The research team will use your data and assess them with the data of other participants as part of this research project. To protect your identity, neither your name nor any other

direct identification will appear in any hardcopy or computer files used for data analysis. Your data will simply be identified by a code that will be specific to you.

All research data that concerns you will be stored in secured locked filing cabinets and kept in secured computer files under the responsibility of Dr. Simon Bacon. Your identifying data will be kept separate from your research data, but will be secured in the same way, and will be destroyed after 15 years.

The results of this study will be published and broadcasted but no information enabling to identify you will be disclosed.

E. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you require further information or you need to clarify any of the given points mentioned in this form, you can contact Dr. Simon Bacon of Exercise Sciences, of Concordia University (Phone number: 514-848-2424, #5750, simon.bacon@concordia.ca).

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I have read and understood this form in its entirety, and asked questions about anything that I did not immediately understand. _____ (initial)
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at ANYTIME without negative consequences. _____ (initial)
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential, meaning that the researcher will know my identity but that it will not be used in the publication or representation of any results. _____ (initial)
- I understand that the data from this study may be published. _____ (initial)

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME _____
 SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____
 WITNESS _____
 SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at areid@alcor.concordia.ca.

Appendix B. Interview guide

Definition of morality

1. What are moral issues for you?
 - 1.1. May people have different opinion or viewpoints on what moral issues are?
 - 1.1.1. Why may people have different appreciation regarding such an issue?
 - 1.2. What are possible moral issues that may arise in sport settings? (Or) Please, give me an example.
 - 1.2.1. Why would you say that the examples you just mentioned entail moral issues?

Past influence moral influence

2. I would like you to think of your career as an athlete, since the very beginning to your last days. Who would you identify at that time as an important influence or mentor in moral issues applicable to sport?
 - 2.1. Describe the context where that/those situation/s happened (what, who, where, why, how, and participant's age) (Or) How would you describe a picture of that/those situation/s?
 - 2.2. Why would you say that this person had such influence on you?
 - 2.3. (In case question 2 the person that has been mentioned is not the coach) Who was the coach that you would identify as the most influential for you?
 - 2.3.1. Why do you consider this coach the most influential?
 - 2.3.2. How old were you at that time? At what level were you playing/competing?
3. Do you remember him or her being involved in any situation that could entail moral issues?
 - 3.1. Describe the situation (who, what, when, why, how and participant's age). What did the coach do? Was the decision making done by the coach acceptable for the situation? What other thing could the coach do in a hypothetical situation?
 - 3.2. What would have you done in that situation?
 - 3.3. What did you learn from that situation?
4. How would you describe your learning of moral issues as an athlete?
 - 4.1. Would you say that you have been purposefully taught on how to deal with moral issues or you rather witnessed a situation and made your own conclusions?
 - 4.2. Would you say your coach's moral practices were coherent or would you say that he promoted one way of behaving and he or she behave in a different way? Can you identify any kind of pattern in his or her behaviour?
5. Who else influenced you in terms of moral issues applicable to sports?

Actual professional exercise

6. What are typical daily decisions you now take as a coach that entail moral issues? Please, give some examples and describe the situations.
 - 6.1. How would you describe the logic or the principle that underlies your decision making regarding moral issues?
7. Would you say that you have been influenced by someone in order to act in this given way? (Or) When you take a decision that according to your viewpoint it entails a moral issue, can you identify one or more components of your decision as being the result of a past influence?
 - 7.1. (In case the participant did not identify his or her coach as having influence on his or her moral behaviour) Did your coach have any kind of influence on your actual coaching role? Please, describe it.
 - 7.2. (In case participant identified his or her coach as a moral influence) Were any moral issues promoted by your coach that have influenced your actual practice?
 - 7.3. How do you proceed now as a coach, do you imitate your coach way of acting or do you do your own adaptations? Why? (Or) How do you transfer/include your coach's influence regarding to morals to your own actual practice?
8. How do you deal, as a coach, with moral issues that unexpectedly arise?
9. Are there any kind of sport experiences that can be capitalized on to promote moral development in their actual practices?
10. Would you say that sport is a context ideal to teach and promote moral exercise? Why?

Appendix C. Four items evaluating morality as presented in the Coaching Confidence Questionnaire

Coaching confidence refers to the extent which coaches believe that they have the capacity to affect the learning and performance of their athletes. Think about how confident you are as a coach. Rate your confidence for each of the items below. Your answers will be kept completely confidential.

How confident are you in your ability to:

		Not at all Confident					Extremely Confident			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. instill an attitude of good moral character?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. instill an attitude of fair play among your athletes?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
19. promote good sportsmanship?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
24. instill an attitude of respect for others?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Note: The Coaching Confidence Questionnaire has 24 items. For the purposes of the present study, I only administered coaches the four items assessing coaches character building efficacy.

Appendix D. *Research for Sport and Exercise Quarterly* requirements for papers submission

Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport publishes research in the art and science of human movement that significantly contributes to the knowledge and development of theory either as new information, reviews, substantiation or contradiction of previous findings, or as application of new or improved techniques. *RQES* also publishes research notes and a dialogue section. The editorial board, associate editors, and external reviewers assist the editor-in-chief. Qualified reviewers in the appropriate subdisciplines review manuscripts deemed suitable. Authors are usually advised of the decision on their papers within 75–90 days.

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Manuscripts must conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA; 6th ed.) style. To facilitate the review process, use double-spaced type, and include line numbers. Papers must not exceed a total of 28 pages, including references, tables, and figures. Longer papers may be considered for multiple studies, reviews, and content areas such as sociocultural, historical, or philosophical research. Papers deviating from the recommended format will not be reviewed until they are revised to meet the appropriate format. Authors are responsible for checking each reference against the original source for accuracy.

Electronic submission of manuscripts is required at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rqes>.

The manuscript order is: (1) blind title page, (2) abstract (no more than 120 words), (3) key words,* (4) text, (5) references, (6) footnotes, (7) tables, (8) figure captions, and (9)

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- Include the statement: "This research is not part of a larger study." If it is, then authors must follow the guidelines specified on p. 13–15 of the APA publications manual (6th ed.).
- Indicate the section in which they want the manuscript to be reviewed. Interdisciplinary manuscripts are encouraged, and authors should indicate the sections that overlap the manuscript content.

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Because reviews are blind, make certain that no author-identifying information appears in the manuscript.

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RQES welcomes research notes of 14 manuscript pages or fewer, including text, references, tables, and figures. Certain papers are classified as research notes, such as replications, test or equipment development, computer programming, profile evaluations, brief communications, data re-analysis, and document verification. Do not submit abstracts with research notes, but include key words on the title page. Brief comments and dialogue on previously published papers are also encouraged.

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Appendix E. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise* requirements for papers submission

All submissions should be made online at the *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise* ScholarOne Manuscripts site (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/RQRS>). New users should first create an account. Once a user is logged onto the site submissions should be made via the Author Centre. Online user guides and access to a helpdesk are available on this website.

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