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Cohesion and Factors of Sport

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Abstract

This research was done to see how player demographics and other factors of sport effect team cohesion of a soccer program at a Division III level. In this study different demographics such as year in college, transfer status, and how many years you have been playing were explored to see if they impacted the amount of cohesion on the team. Additionally, other factors of sport such as gender, coaching styles, effective student leaders, the wins and goals met as a team, and how athletes interact off the field were also taken into consideration and compared to the amount of cohesion that exist on the team. It was found that nine different factors of sport play a significant role in the amount of cohesion that exist, but no player demographics played a significant role. This research can help inform current or upcoming coaches, captains/leaders, and athletic departments on different factors that help and discourage the amount of cohesion that exist on a team and how it effects factors of a team.

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Cohesion and Factors of Sport

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Abstract

This research was done to see how player demographics and other factors of sport effect team cohesion of a soccer program at a Division III level. In this study different demographics such as year in college, transfer status, and how many years you have been playing were explored to see if they impacted the amount of cohesion on the team. Additionally, other factors of sport such as gender, coaching styles, effective student leaders, the wins and goals met as a team, and how athletes interact off the field were also taken into consideration and compared to the amount of cohesion that exist on the team. It was found that nine different factors of sport play a significant role in the amount of cohesion that exist, but no player demographics played a significant role. This research can help inform current or upcoming coaches, captains/leaders, and athletic departments on different factors that help and discourage the amount of cohesion that exist on a team and how it effects factors of a team.

Cohesion and Factors of Sport

Throughout life we have all been a part of something that involved doing something with a team or group to accomplish a task. Whether or not it was done successfully and you had fun doing it you displayed factors that make a group or team be cohesive or not. You may not have been the best team ever but you trusted one another and believed in one another which led to success and created memories. That post game dog pile after a big win, that time that the team poured water on the coach, that time you won a championship or reached your goals you had made, or even that time in class when you had to do a group project and your group got the highest score. All these examples consist of a group of individuals coming together as a team or a group and accomplishing something as a unit.

Throughout sport, team cohesion, how well a team can stick together, has impacted how successful a team can be on the field (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). Along with team cohesion, there are other factors that also impact how successful a team can be on the field. To be successful as a team it is crucial to understand how these cohesion and other factors of sport can complement or neglect one another.

Cohesion and factors of sport have both been found to have an effect on persistence and learning along with the performance overall signifying how essential they are to any successful team (Halbrook, Blom, Hurley, Bell, & Holden). However these two have yet to be examined in relation to one another when looking at sport, gender, team success, coaches, and off the field activities involving the team and the overall impact they have on team cohesion. The purpose of this study is to see if there is a correlation that exist between cohesion and other factors of sport and to try and understand why this is.

This study is important because it create more discussion on how much factors of sport as a whole can effect cohesion of a team at a Division III collegiate level. This could help current coaches by giving them different ways they could approach their team and how their players might react to certain approaches. It could help athletic departments when hiring new coaches based off of their coaching styles. And just inform the sports world on a new study and create discussion between people about how they coach and go about doing things on their team and the effects of them.

Literature Review

Team Cohesion

Cohesion can be defined as a group or teams ability to stick together as they work together to reach their goals (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). Additionally, cohesion has been known

to be “a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs” (Cormier, Bloom & Harvey, 2015, p.1040). Cohesion consists of more than just a group striving to reach goals they have set, cohesion also consists of an individual’s desire and opportunity to make and keep new friends in the process (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). Cohesion has been compared to an adhesive because it brings and holds members of a team together and expresses the strength of social and task related bonds that exist among the members of the team group (Onag & Tepeci, 2014; Cormier, Bloom & Harvey, 2015). In a study done by Leo Marcos et al. (2012), they gathered information from experienced investigators and found that in group dynamics the two most important qualities that can exist in a group or on a team is cohesion and efficacy (Leo Marcos, Sánchez-Miguel, Sánchez-Oliva, Alonso, & García-Calvo, 2012). This was later proven again by Eys et al. and their study (2015), when they found that an increase in cohesion has been shown to create fewer perceptions of anxiety and a higher amount of collective efficacy (Eys, Evans, Ohlert, Wolf, Martin & Van Bussel, 2015).

From existing literature cohesion has found to be described as a “construct with two dimensions,” specifically, task and social cohesion (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). Task cohesion refers to the amount of drive or motivation that a group/team has and how they use their drive or motivation to reach their group goals. Along with this, it is also known as the ability of the group/team to make it possible for everyone on the team to reach their individual goals as well as their team goals (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). To go one step further, Cronin et al. (2015) found that task cohesion must include team cooperation in order to achieve both practice and competition goals that have been set by the group/team (Cronin, Arthur, Hardy & Callow, 2015). On the other hand, social cohesion refers to the willingness or desire of the members to work together in

order to be as successful as possible (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). This was also seen in a later study done by Cronin et al. (2015) where they defined social cohesion as a variety of characteristics that allow a group to function together and in return shows their overall progress (Cronin, Arthur, Hardy & Callow, 2015). Overall, cohesion can be affected by an abundant amount of factors such as; environmental, personal, leadership, and team factors which all can play a role in the amount of cohesion that can exist within a group (Marcos, Sánchez-Miguel, Sánchez-Oliva, Alonso, & García-Calvo, 2012). In Marcos et al. study, factors such as gender, sport, coaches and their coaching styles, captains or leaders, on the field success (record of team), off the field (practice), and off the field activities done by the team will be experimented with to see how they all affect team cohesion on a team.

Off the Field

When looking at off the field factors that influence team cohesion, elements such as group dynamics, group norms, cliques, hazing, and socialization are the most common ones studied. All these factors are considered because they all affect how a group or team act off the field or behind the scenes (Martin, Wilson, Evans, Spink, 2015). Group dynamics has been defined as a “field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their development, and their interrelations with individuals, other groups, and larger institutions” (Martin et al, 2015, p. 82). Almost all sports incorporate the use of groups whether in competition, during training, or during practice, this also holds true in individual sports because athletes are still usually seen competing, training, and practicing alongside other members on the team (Martin et al., 2015). Associated with group dynamics are group norms, norms are referred to as the expectations and the behaviors of the members a part of the group/team, they determine what should be done for the team so they can retain their wanted

outcomes/goals as a whole (Onag, Tepeci, 2014). Group norms can also be thought of to be unwritten rules about how things should be done. Onag and Tepeci believe that even if there are policies, procedures, and rules in place to guide behavior, every team will develop group norms sooner or later (Onag, Tepeci, 2014). Group norms do not always have to be a bad thing. One of the most important norms that was found by Onag and Tepeci (2014) was trust between teammates, if the level of trust between teammates is high then the overall performance of the team should also be high as well.

Being a part of a team requires you to have to pay certain costs like time, money, being subjected to social pressures, and expending your energy to the goals of the team as a whole (Van Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, & Brewer, 2007). Cohesiveness can be an attraction to group membership, as it can act as the cost and benefits or barriers to entry (Raalte et al., 2007). Martin et al. and Van Raalte et al. found similar results with their studies (2015), cliques can be defined as small groups of individuals who have shared interests and other features, these groups of people tend to spend more time together than others and do not allow others to join them very easily (Martin, Wilson, Evans & Spink, 2015). When referring to sports, cliques can be known to be small groups, also known as a subgroup or outsiders that exist on a team (Martin et al., 2015). With this being said, Martin et al.; have concluded that cliques can be considered troublesome and their existence among team sports should be unwanted (2015). Martin et al. believe this because they found that cliques create the potential for disruption and can cause some players to be excluded which can cause dispute and decreased effectiveness between the members of the team (2015). This was previously discovered by Eitzen (1973), when cliques are present, compared to when they are not, the probability of success is diminished (Martin et al., 2015).

Along with cliques, hazing can also affect the amount of cohesion that can exist within a team. Hazing has been known to be common and popular throughout history, hazing is most closely associated as a form of initiation into fraternities, service clubs, schools, cliques, and sport teams (Raalte, Cornelius, Linder & Brewer, 2007). Although hazing is illegal in a lot of states it is known and seen to still be happening today for a number of group related reasons that are believed to serve as team functions and to enhance team cohesion (Raalte et al., 2007). Most reasons why it still exist today is because players see it as traditional team bonding experiences and believe they are good for the team (Raalte et al., 2007). Furthermore, hazing has also been described as, “promoting team cohesion, increasing social attraction to the team and its members, and enhancing the ability of teams to work together effectively to attain team goals” (Raalte et al., 2007). On sports teams hazing is tough to get rid of because most of the time the athletes that are being hazed are already members of the team and to stay on the team they must involve themselves in the activities (Raalte et al., 2007). Although all these ideas of hazing being good for a team, Raalte et al. proved that people who argue hazing builds team cohesion are wrong. Like cliques, when hazing is present on a team/group then the probability of success is diminished (Martin, Wilson, Evans, Spink, 2015). They believe this because their results showed that the more player friendly team building activities that the athletes were in cooperated in, the more socially cohesive they recognized their team to be (Raalte et al., 2007).

Gender

Along with off the field factors, gender also plays a role in how cohesion exist within groups/teams and how it differs between male and female groups/teams (Martin & Good, 2015). A number of studies have consistently shown that women display much greater in-group bias than men do. This was seen in the study done by Martin and Good (2015) where they found that

all female teams showed a much higher rate of team cohesion and member satisfaction (Martin & Good, 2015). Along with the all-female teams showing more team cohesion, they also reported a much greater amount of satisfaction in the group compared to the other all male or mixed groups (2015). On the flip side, all the male teams' goals were much wider-ranged and the decisions made were much riskier and more rewarding (2015). This was also seen in Eys et al. study (2015), where they found that males react much better emotionally with threats of social exclusion compared to females reactions (Eys, Evans, Ohlert, Wolf, Martin, & Van Bussel, 2015). With these findings Eys et al. also concluded that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can be put into two different construals, these consist of an independent construal and an interdependent construal (Eys et al., 2015). An independent construal best refers to the focus on maintaining self-determination or being self-centered. A little different then an independent construal, an interdependent construal refers to creating relationships with the members of the group/team (Eys et al., 2015). Furthermore, Eys et al. also discovered that in all female groups the independent construal is more likely to be present, this resulted in a higher motivation by the females to make and keep close relationships with other members in the group/team (Eys et al., 2015). In summary, there seems to be a difference in team cohesion depending on gender. The research above suggest that the way men relate to men and women relate to women may lead to differences in the way that the team bonds, which can be seen by the satisfaction levels of teammates and the cohesion that exist between them.

Team Cohesion and On the Field Success

There is a direct relationship between on field success and team cohesion. One of the most important variable that is linked with cohesion is group performance (Eys, Evans, Ohlert, Wolf, Martin, & Van Bussel, 2015). Widmeyer, Carron, and Brawley (1993) found that about

83% of the research done in the area of cohesion found that a positive correlation existed between cohesion and group performance (Warner, Bowers & Dixon, 2012). In other words, it is accurate to say that as levels of cohesion rise then the performance of the team should rise as a result. The same is true for performance, as the performance of a team improves and continues to increase over time, then the levels of cohesion should also improve and increase at the same rate of performance over time (Warner, Bowers & Dixon, 2012). These findings of group related research from Widmeyer et al. (1993) and Warner et al. (2012) can be attributed to many factors. One factor that is seen widespread throughout almost all sports and relates to the findings is the existence of groups in sports. To show this we can take a look at all sports both group and individual, the use of groups in competition, training, and practice is very typical in group sports along with individual sports where you still compete alongside teammates (Wilson, Evans & Spink, 2015).

There is also a significant correlation between commitment, being a tight knitted team (also known as being a family), having the desire to work as a team to achieve the team goals and group satisfaction. This means that as individuals on teams or in groups begin to come together and grow, satisfaction among the team members should also grow (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). Previous work done by Dhurup and Reddy (2013) show that both of these aspects above are correlated with team group satisfaction (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). In their results they discovered that when students worked in groups, more times than not there was a greater amount of satisfaction within the group/team and the production levels were also greater within the group (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). In addition, the higher amount of identification an individual has towards a group, the more the individual should contribute to the group (Martin, E., Good, J.,

2015). The stronger that the individual believes to be a part of the group/team, than the greater amount of identification will be displayed by that individual (Martin, E., Good, J., 2015).

Coaches, Captains, and Leaders

Another contributory factor to how cohesive a team are the coaches, captains, and leaders in the group/team. In general, coaches are “influential figures who foster athlete learning affect relationships with other participants, and determine athletes’ affective evaluations of coaches and sporting experiences” (Cranmer & Brann, 2015, p. 193). Murray found that the coaches who create a more positive environment on the team did experience higher levels of task and social cohesion (Cormier, Bloom, & Harvey, 2015). To create a more positive environment coaches should focus on giving positive feedback and social support to their teams (Cornier et al., 2015). When compared, it is easily to see a correlation between the actions of the coach and the development and amount of team cohesion on their team’s (Cornier et al., 2015).

Along with coaches, captains and leaders of a team can be just as influential as the coach is when looking at the amount of cohesion that exist. Captains and leaders are very important to how successful a team is, powerful leaders tend to propel the team in new directions and can encourage the team to change in order to achieve the goals that were made by the team. This can be most closely associated with a transformational leadership (Crozier, Loughhead, & Munroe-Chandler, 2013). Burns (1978), described a transformational leader as someone who “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher-level needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (Cronin, Arthur, Hardy & Callow, 2015, p. 23). Bass (1995), described transformational leadership “as a process that raises follower’s awareness about issues of consequence, influences followers to transcend their own self-interest for the good of the group,

and causes followers to work harder than they originally expected to do” (Cronin, Arthur, Hardy & Callow, 2015, p. 23).

In a previous study, athletes believed that leadership should be spread out throughout the team and not just by your captains (Crozier, Loughhead & Munroe-Chandler, 2013). Their results found that athletes believed that 85% of a team’s roster should consist of leaders which should be broken down into 2 categories, formal leaders and informal leaders (Crozier et al., 2013). Out of the 85% athletes believe that 19% of the roster should represent formal leaders and the other 66% would be occupied and represented by informal leaders (Crozier et al., 2013). Formal leaders are like captains on a team, they have power a little more power than other teammates on the team. Informal leaders on the other hand are the ones who can influence the actions that are done by a team. By having leaders on a team it can influence an abundant of group dynamics, including member attributes, structure of the team, cohesion, team process, individual outcomes, and different behavior’s by the leaders (Crozier et al., 2013). Another way a leader can influence the team is by having high expectations to do this the leader expresses that he/she expects high standards from the team/group (Cronin, Arthur, Hardy & Callow, 2015). Similar to what was mentioned before, most sports involve teammates to train and compete alongside one another, this is done by integrating each player’s set of skills in an interdependent pattern of teamwork to achieve the goals of the team (Cormier, Bloom & Harvey, 2015). Along with the skills of the players, and how successful the team is as a whole, communication plays a big role when looking at cohesion. Valuable communication within the team will assist athletes by orienting, stimulating, and evaluating the individual performances on the team (Onag & Tepeci, 2014).

In the past, studies have been done to see if gender impacts the amount of cohesion that exist on a team (Martin & Good, 2015). There has also been studies done to see if there is a

correlation to the performance of the team and the amount of cohesion that exist between the members on the team (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). However, no study has been done on how factors of sport effect team cohesion as a whole. The purpose of this study is to understand what factors impact team cohesion in sports at St. John Fisher College. The predicted outcomes and research question for this study are as follows:

RQ: In what ways do player demographics impact team cohesion?

H1: Women's soccer will have a higher level of cohesion then men's soccer

H2: Coaches with more democratic style leadership will have teams with stronger cohesion

H3: Teams that have effective student athlete leaders will have stronger cohesion

H4: The more wins you have or the more goals that the team meets the greater the cohesion

H5: Athletes who socialize and engage in activities outside of sports with teammates off of the field will have greater cohesion

Method

Participants

The desired target population for the present study consisted of 73 athletes (47 male and 26 female) representing one team sport. For the study 73% of the desired population responded to the survey (33 males and 20 female). This number of athletes was picked based off of past studies done by Crozier, Loughhead and Munroe-Chandler (2013), Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, and Brewer (2007), and Onag and Tepeci (2014). Everyone who is listed on the soccer roster was selected; this was retrieved from the St. John Fisher College athletics website. The selection technique for this research study consisted of picking both a men's and women's sport where

most of the rules were similar. In soccer there is very little contact between opponents and teammates during games and practice so cohesion should exist more on the teams. Soccer was also selected because this research is being done in New York during the fall of 2016; this way when the data is collected these sports will be currently in season so the data should be most relevant to the athletes.

Variables and Measures

This research had six independent variables; gender, coaches and their coaching styles, captains, on the field success (record of team, team goals), off the field (practice), and off the field activities done by the team. The dependent variable in the study was cohesion. In this study, cohesion will be measured in a direct approach, this will be done by asking questions such as, “I enjoy being a part of this team” or “I am not going to miss the members of this team when the season ends” (GEQ; Widmeyer, Brawley & Carron, 1985).

Depending on your gender your perceptions of things may be different and you may react different than a member of the opposite sex would react. A number of studies have consistently shown that women display much greater in-group bias than men (Martin & Good, 2015). Gender will be measured on a nominal scale with two possible answers; the answers will be male or female. The results that are attained from which gender is chosen and the rest of the answers following it will be measured in an interval scale so the differences between male and female can be compared to find any differences between the two genders.

Coaches and captains will be measured because they are the leaders of the team, depending on how the coach(s) and captains act and make their teammates feel will play a role in the cohesiveness that exist within the team. Leadership is viewed as an important component for team success (Weinberg & McDermott, 2002). “Effective leadership can propel groups in new

directions and promote change towards achieving its objective” (Crozier, Loughhead & Munroe-Chandler, 2013). Respondents will be asked questions related to the behaviors of their coaches and captains using a Likert Scale with a range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 or 6 depending on the question (strongly agree).

On field success (win/loss record of the team, and team goals) will be measured because of the belief that the more team cohesion there is the better the team will perform, this was proven in Warner’s, Bowers and Dixon’s study (2012). Both of these variables will be measured on a nominal scale.

Off season activities will be measured to see if group norms or different cliques exist and if they play a role on how cohesive the team is as a whole. Off the field activities, this is closely associated with group norms and cliques, but goes one step further and sees what the teams does off the field together (e.g eating together, live together). Both of these factors will be measured on a Likert Scale with a range of 1 to 5 (1 being 0, 2 being 1-5, 3 being 6-10, 4 being 11-15, and 5 being 15 or more).

Data Collection Instrument

For this study a survey instrument was designed through Qualtrics. In the past there have been a handful of questionnaires created and used to determine the existence of cohesion making this approach common for this type of inquiry. These consist of Sports Cohesiveness Questionnaire (SCQ; Martens & Peterson, 1971), Team Cohesion Questionnaire (TCQ; Gruber & Grey, 1981), Sport Cohesion Instrument (SCI; Yukelson, Wienberg and Jackson, 1984), Group Environment questionnaire (GEQ; Widmeyer, Brawley & Carron, 1985), and Team Psychology Questionnaire (TPQ; Partington and Shang, 1992). There will be nine questions on the survey with some question ideas coming from the questionnaires listed above. There will be a

few different questions types, one type will consist of the participant picking which sport they play for (a nominal scale). Another type will consist of the participant picking which answer best reflects how they feel about a situation (e.g. agree or disagree). And lastly the participant will have to pick from a group of numbers that will display how many times they have done something with their teammates. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey instrument.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure will consist of multiple steps. The first step consisted of figuring out what sport was going to be used and why this sport was being used in this study. In this study a primary, post-positivism method with quantitative data is being used. The research purpose for this study is descriptive. A cross-section survey will be used to find out if the hypothesis/research questions can be proven right or wrong. Everyone selected will be sent an email asking to participate, it will be their decision if they would like to participate or not. During the survey that participants will take, they will be asked other questions; the questions will help in the measuring process. The questions will be designed to assess all the variables so that the research questions can be answered. After this is done all the data will be downloaded over to an Excel spreadsheet so all the answers can be easily seen, read, and analyzed. The Excel spreadsheet will be broken down so that all the questions and answers can be compared to one another to try and find any correlations. After the data is analyzed the hypothesis and research questions can be answered to see if they were supported or refuted. With the hypothesis questions answered, the results need to be recorded and analyzed to see if there are any significant numbers or not (Jones, 2015).

Data Analysis Plan

Once the survey was closed the data was then downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet. Surveys that were not completed fully were then taken out of the research and neglected from the study. The information was then broken up into different rows and columns and given a specific name so that the information was easier read. The data was translated over to an excel document in both numerical form and word form. Once everything was onto an Excel it was then transferred over to IBM SPSS Statistics 24 where it was further broken down and analyzed. On SPSS the player demographics and other factors of sport were taken and compared to the level of cohesion on the team. This was done to try and find a correlation between any of the independent variables and the dependent variable. Additionally, the means of all the answers given on the survey were also calculated. This was done to see if there was an overall higher level of agreement or disagreement to the answers asked on the survey.

Results

Overall, the responses uncovered an understanding on how demographics and other factors of sport effect the overall cohesion that exist on the team. The main themes that were discovered consisted of demographics and how they impact levels of cohesion, and factors of sport and the role they play in the amount of cohesion on the team. Responses also revealed what can be done in the future to ensure that cohesion can exist on a team and factors that increase or decrease levels of cohesion on a team.

When looking at the respondents it included all academic years (freshman=15; sophomores=11; juniors=15; seniors=12) and 62% of respondents were male soccer player's. Out of the 53 total respondents, only three of them said they transferred in from another school. Taking a look at the means that were calculated (refer appendix D. table 1), most of the members

on the soccer teams at St. John Fisher College are satisfied with the current level of cohesion that exist on the team (mean=4.11). Additionally, respondents noted that the current level of cohesion that exist is also high (mean=3.47). When asked if the respondents would miss the team when the season was over the overall mean that was calculated was 2.72. The mean that was calculated when the respondents were asked if they enjoy being a part of the team was 5.09. Around 66% of the participants agreed that their voice is heard when the team makes decisions as a whole (mean=4.00). When looking at the coach and if he/she allows contribution to decisions made, about 58% of respondents said the coach allows contribution (mean=3.47). When taking a look at if you win and how often you win along with the goals that were set by the participants for their season it was found that about 82% of participants thought that if we win then we will be more cohesive (mean=4.89). Around 75% of participants said that the more wins they have or the better their record is then the overall team cohesion will be higher (mean=4.51). About 80% of the participants thought that if the team reaches their overall goals that were set by them then the team would be more cohesive (mean=4.81). It was discovered that 54% of participants thought their coach helped them be a cohesive team (mean=3.25) where 67% of the participants said their captains and team leaders helped them be more cohesive (mean=4.02). The mean calculated for the amount of in season activities done by the team was 2.49 and the mean for the amount of out of season activities done by the team was 2.47. Furthermore, just under half of the participants said they participate in about 1-10 team activities in season and out of season.

When looking at correlations and the different strengths and significant levels between two items we can see what things have more effect then others. Appendix E, table 2 displays the r and p values pertaining to the player demographics and the current level of cohesion on the

team. Juniors and seniors reported a higher current level of cohesion (18 out of 53) compared to 14 out of 53 from freshman and sophomore. But, at the same time 5 juniors and 1 senior said the current level of cohesion is very weak or weak compared to only 1 freshman and 1 sophomore said it was weak. With this being said, the juniors and seniors had more diverse answers than the freshman and sophomores. Additionally, there is no correlation between what year you are in school and the overall cohesion that exist on the team in your eyes. 3 out of 53 people said they transferred in, from these 3, 1 said the current level of cohesion is weak, 1 said it was neither strong nor weak, and 1 said it was strong. Furthermore, there is no correlation between whether or not you are a transfer student and how you perceive the current level of cohesion that exist on the team. 39 out of 53 participants have been playing soccer for at least 9 years with the most being 18 years. Out of the 39 that have played for at least 9 years, 25 of them said the current level of cohesion is strong or very strong. Additionally, there is no correlation between the amount of years you have been playing soccer and the amount of cohesion you believe exist on the team.

Appendix F, table 3 displays the r and p values pertaining to different factors of sport and the current level of cohesion of the team. Of the 53 people who took the survey 33 of them were on the men's soccer team and 20 were on the women's soccer team. 20 people on the men's soccer team said they believed the current level of cohesion is strong or very strong compared to 12 people on the women's soccer team. 6 people on the men's soccer team said the current level of cohesion was very weak or weak and only 2 people on the women's soccer team thought this. There is no correlation between what sport you play (women's or men's) and the amount of cohesion that exist on the different teams. Although there is no correlation between whether or not you will miss the team when the season is over and the current level of cohesion this is

significant in this study because it shows that there cohesion that exist. Additionally, with the respondent's answers it shows that they because they will miss the team in the future then the cohesion on the team is at an acceptable level. There is a moderate positive relationship between the amount you enjoy being a part of the team and the current level of cohesion that exist ($r = .638, p = .000$). 21 out of 53 people said that when coach lets them contribute to decision making then their current level of cohesion is strong or very strong. Therefore there is no correlation between how much the coach lets the athlete contribute to decisions and the level of cohesion that exist. 29 out of 53 people said that when their voice is heard by the captains/leaders of the team then their current level of cohesion is strong or very strong. With this being said there is a moderate positive relationship between your voice being heard by the captains/leaders and your current level of cohesion ($r = .661, p = .000$). There is a strong positive relationship between the satisfaction of the teams current level of cohesion and the current level of cohesion ($r = .781, p = .000$). 28 out of 53 people said they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with the more wins the higher cohesion also believe the current level of cohesion is strong or very strong. This means that there is a weak positive relationship between if we win and the current level of cohesion. Going off of this the data showed that there is no relationship between the more wins you have the more cohesive you will be. 31 out of 53 people said they somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with if goals are met there's higher cohesion also believe the current level of cohesion is strong or very strong. Furthermore, there is a weak positive relationship between if goals are met then the cohesion will be higher ($r = .415, p = .002$). 19 out of 53 people agreed that when coach encourages them to be cohesive also felt that the current level of cohesion was strong or very strong. With this being said we see that there is a weak positive relationship between coach helping us be more cohesive and the current level of

cohesion ($r = .453$, $p = .001$). 27 out of 53 people agreed that when the captains/leaders encourage them to be a cohesive unit also felt that the current level of cohesion was strong or very strong. In other words this shows that there is a moderate positive relationship between the captains/leaders helping the team be more cohesive and the current levels of cohesion ($r = .637$, $p = .000$). 30 out of 53 people who participated in an in season team activity also said that the current level of cohesion was strong or very strong. Overall, there is a weak positive relationship between the number of in season team activities done and the level of cohesion on the team ($r = .329$, $p = .016$). 30 out of 53 people who participated in an out of season team activity also said that the current level of cohesion was strong or very strong. Like in season, the number of out of season activities done has a weak positive relationship with the level of cohesion ($r = .443$, $p = .001$).

Discussion

The information that was presented from the participants shows that demographics such as what year you are, if you are a transfer student, and how many years you have been playing soccer do not have an effect on the overall cohesion that exist on the teams here at St. John Fisher College.

Women's soccer will have a higher level of cohesion then men's soccer was found to be unsupported in this study. Martin and Good (2015) found that that women display much greater in-group bias than men do. In this research it was proven that a majority of women felt the cohesion was good, but it was not overall significant in this research. Although there is no significant relationship between the two in this research there is still data that supports what has already been found about gender and how it impacts cohesion on different sports teams. Additionally, the 2016 men's soccer team won their conference and went to the NCAA Division

III playoffs for the first time in program history while the women's soccer team did not make their conference championship playoffs. Eys et al. also discovered that in all female groups the independent construal is more likely to be present, this resulted in a higher motivation by the females to make and keep close relationships with other members in the group/team (2015). Although there was no significant results that stated the women's team was more cohesive there was significant data that stated the athletes did enjoy being a part of the team.

Taking a look at the second hypothesis, coaches with more democratic style leadership will have teams with stronger cohesion was also found to be unsupported. On the other hand it was found that if coaches encourage cohesion then the cohesion levels that exist will be greater. Seeing what Murray (2015) said about coaches who create a more positive environment on the team did experience higher levels of task and social cohesion (Cormier, Bloom, & Harvey, 2015). This was further supported in the research done where we found that there is a relationship between the coach helping the team be more cohesive and the actual levels of cohesion that exist on the team. Coaches should focus on giving positive feedback and social support to their teams to have a more cohesive team, this was proven in the results where it was found significant that the coach encourages the team to be cohesive.

Hypothesis three was supported in that, teams that have effective student athlete leaders has stronger cohesion. Captains and leaders are very important to how successful a team is, powerful leaders tend to propel the team in new directions and can encourage the team to change in order to achieve the goals that were made by the team (Crozier, Loughhead, & Munroe-Chandler, 2013). This was further supported in the research when the results showed that when every member of the team got to contribute in the decision making process then the cohesion that exist on the team was higher. Also supported was that when captains and the leaders of the team

encourage the team to be cohesive then the overall levels of cohesion will be higher. A leader is someone who “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher-level needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (Cronin, Arthur, Hardy & Callow, 2015, p. 23). The more that the captains/leaders seek to satisfy their teammates and encourage their teammates to follow them the more cohesive they will be as a group.

Hypothesis four stated, the more wins you have or the more goals that the team meets the greater the cohesion, both of these were found to be correct and supported in the research.

Widmeyer, Carron, and Brawley (1993) found that about 83% of the research done in the area of cohesion found that a positive correlation existed between cohesion and group performance (Warner, Bowers & Dixon, 2012). In the results it was found that if goals were accomplished by the team then their overall cohesion was higher. Along with this it was found that if the team wins then their overall cohesion also increase, but the number of wins a team has does not have a significant impact on the overall cohesion of the team. There is a significant correlation between commitment, being a tight knitted team (also known as being a family), having the desire to work as a team to achieve the team goals and group satisfaction (Dhurup & Reddy, 2013). Both soccer teams said that the more goals reached then the higher amount of cohesion would be present on the team, they both also said that their current level of cohesion is moderately high. The more desire you have to work as a team will correlate with goals reached as a team and a more cohesive environment.

The last hypothesis that was looked at in the research was, athletes who socialize and engage in activities outside of sports with teammates off of the field will have greater cohesion, and this hypothesis was supported to be correct. Group dynamics has been defined as a “field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their

development, and their interrelations with individuals, other groups, and larger institutions” (Martin et al, 2015, p. 82). It was found that the more out of season and in season activities done as a team then the overall level of cohesion was greater. The more dedicated you are to go do things with your team in and out of season the more cohesive you will be with your team members. Associated with group dynamics are group norms, norms are referred to as the expectations and the behaviors of the members a part of the group/team, they determine what should be done for the team so they can retain their wanted outcomes/goals as a whole (Onag, Z., Tepeci, M., 2014). To understand your teammates norms and their needs or wants you have to spend time with them off of the field whether it is in season or out of season it is important so you can better understand who they are as a person which will overall bring you closer and raise the level of cohesion that exist.

The current studied explored the different effects that factors of sport and other demographics play a role in the amount of cohesion that can exist on a team. It was seen that there are factors that play a role in how cohesion can exist and how much of it can exist on a team. There was also evidence found that does not play a significant role in how cohesion can exist and how much of it can exist on a team. This data can be taken into consideration in the future when looking at or dealing with college soccer teams and relating them to team cohesion. This research now can help inform current or upcoming coaches, captains/leaders, and athletic departments on different factors that help and discourage the amount of cohesion that exist on a team.

In this research there were some limitations that could have played a role in the results of the data. The men’s soccer team at Fisher had their best season ever in school history and the women’s soccer team had a below average season. It was assumed that this played an overall

role in the different levels of cohesion between the two teams. This was assumed because of the other data that was found during the study such as the role wins play in how cohesive a team is. Another limitation is that this research was only done for one season, if this was done again for a couple more years the results found could be different and other things could be found that play a role in the cohesion of the team.

Some recommendations for future research done on this topic would consist of doing it for more than one season to see if the same results are found or not. Another recommendation would be to incorporate the coaches input. For this study the survey was only sent and taken by the athletes on the team, seeing what the coaches perceived about the different factors could bring more information out to see if the coach thought the same thing the athletes did. This was a popular question asked by outsiders when the data was presented, so incorporating the coaches input on the research could introduce new data that was not found in this research.

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Appendix A

Q1 The purpose of this survey is to have a better understanding on how the factors of sport impact team cohesion at St. John Fisher College.



This survey contains seven questions and should only take a few minutes to complete.

There is minimal risk for your involvement in this study and there are no direct benefits for your participation as well. However, it is hoped that through your participation, I can better understand how factors of sport impact team cohesion on the soccer teams here at Fisher.

All data collected will be kept confidential and you may withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely.

Will you participate in this survey?

Yes

No

Q2 Which team are you on?



Men's Soccer

Women's Soccer

Q3 What year are you currently here at Fisher?



Freshman



Q4 Did you transfer here from another school?



Yes

No

Q5 How many years have you been playing organized team soccer through school, such as elementary/middle school to where you are now?



□ Q8



Aside from sport related activities such as practices and games, teammates and teams often do other activities together. Using your best guess, please estimate the following. Activities do not have to be done with everyone on the team, simply going to lunch with three other teammates is an example of an activity.

	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	More than 15
When in season, how many non-sport related activities has your team done ?	<input type="radio"/>				
When out of season, how many non-sport related activities has/did your team do together?	<input type="radio"/>				

Page Break

□ Q9



How would you rate the current level of your team's cohesion?

- Very Weak
 Weak
 Neither Strong nor Weak
 Strong
 Very Strong

Appendix B

Dear Athlete:

My name is Jordan Schofield and I am a senior Sport Management major here at Fisher. For my senior thesis, I am examining how factors of sport impact team cohesion at the Division III level. Because you are listed on a soccer roster, I am asking you to participate in this research study by completing the linked survey.

The survey should only take a few minutes to complete and you may take the survey on a mobile device. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. Copies of the project will be presented to my instructor here at Fisher and answers provided will be reported in general. None of your specific responses will be linked to your identity.

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and follow the submission directions in the survey. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would complete the survey by Wednesday, October 26th. Feel free to contact either my professor or myself if you have any questions. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jordan Schofield
Student
jts04958@sjfc.edu

Emily Dane-Staples
Professor
edane-staples@sjfc.edu

Appendix C

Dear Athlete:

My name is Jordan Schofield, I am contacting you in regards to the last email I sent you on As you are a member of the soccer population here at Fisher, your perspective is very important for me to understand how factors of sport impact team cohesion at the Division III level. I would greatly appreciate you taking only a few minutes of your time to participate in this research study by completing the linked survey.

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and follow the submission directions in the survey. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. Copies of the project will be presented to my instructor here at Fisher.

The last possible date for your perspective to be shared is Wednesday, October 26th. Feel free to contact either my professor or myself if you have any questions. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jordan Schofield
Student
jts04958@sjfc.edu

Emily Dane-Staples
Professor
edane-staples@sjfc.edu

Appendix D

Table 1
Means of the answers given by the athletes

Abbreviations to the questions	Maximum	Mean
Satisfied with current cohesion	6	4.11
Current level of cohesion	5	3.47
Years played	18	10.79
Miss the team	6	2.72
Enjoy the team	6	5.09
Voice heard decisions	6	4.00
Coach lets us contribute	6	3.47
If we win more cohesive	6	4.89
More wins more cohesive	6	4.51
Goals met more cohesive	6	4.81
Coach helps team be cohesive	6	3.25
Captains help team be cohesive	6	4.02
In season team activities	5	2.49
Out of season team activities	5	2.47

Appendix E

Table 2
Player Demographics and Levels of Cohesion

Demographics	r - value	p – value
Year	.031	.825
Transfer	.128	.361
How many years you've been playing	.041	.771

Appendix F

Table 3
Factors of Sport and Current Level of Cohesion

Factors of Sport	r - value	p - value
Sport	.024	.862
Miss the team	.001	.995
Enjoy the team	.638**	.000
Coach allows contribution to decisions made	.265	.005
Captains/Leaders allow contribution to decisions made	.661**	.000
Satisfied with team's current level of cohesion	.781**	.000
If we win, we are more cohesive	.431**	.001
More wins we have, more cohesive	.268	.053
If goals are met, more cohesive	.415**	.002
Coach helps team be cohesive	.453**	.001
Captains/Leaders helps team be cohesive	.637**	.000
In season team activities	.329*	.016
Out of season team activities	.443**	.001