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Perceptions of servant leadership are positively correlated to leadership trust (Joseph & Winston, 2005). Additionally, a conceptual framework for servant leadership has indicated that trust in the leader could mediate the relationship between servant leadership and organizational outcomes (van Dierendonck, 2011). Trust created by a servant leader facilitates an open climate, builds a helping culture, and is associated with organizational citizenship behaviors (Ebener & O'Connell, 2010; Hu & Liden, 2011). As such, we posit the following:

H2 The positive relationship between servant leadership and ethical climate will be mediated by the follower's level of trust in the leader.

Given the influence of stakeholders within the context of intercollegiate athletics (Schroeder, 2010; Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011), specifically powerful external stakeholders (e.g., athletic boosters and donors), this influence must be taken into account when examining a leader's ability to develop a positive ethical climate. Therefore, we put forward the final hypothesis:

H3 The relationship between servant leadership and ethical climate will be moderated by the level of stakeholder influence perceived by the follower.

This study is in progress. Data will be collected, through use of an online survey, from a random sample of senior level intercollegiate athletic administrators working within NCAA Division I athletic departments. Participants will be asked to evaluate their athletic director on servant leadership (SLS, van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and transformational leadership (MLQ, Bass & Avolio, 2000), and to assess the current ethical climate within their athletic department (ECQ, Victor & Cullen, 1988). Participants will also assess their level of trust (OTI, Cummings & Bromiley, 1996) in their athletic director. Finally, participants will identify and rate the influence of stakeholder groups within and outside of the athletic department.

Research hypotheses will be evaluated using structural equation modeling, and analysis of moderated mediation as detailed by (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). It is expected that all hypotheses will be supported, and results of the analyses will be discussed within the frameworks of servant leadership and transformational leadership. Based on these findings, it could be conjectured that servant leadership will be important to the reform of intercollegiate athletics by helping to establish a more ethical climate within athletic departments. Practically, this might require athletic directors to shift focus from organizational objectives to nurturing followers and fostering leadership behaviors which support positive ethical climates. A review of future research directions, such as replicating this study within other Divisions of intercollegiate athletics, will also be provided.