

# **“Fixing the Mess”: A Grounded Theory of a Men’s Basketball Coaching Staff’s Suffering as a Result of Academic Corruption**

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Individuals who are appointed the responsibility of managing a sport program following an instance of academic corruption endure various forms of harm that warrants investigation. Extending from our empirical study of the University of Minnesota’s incidence of academic corruption (Kihl, Richardson, & Campisi, 2008), this article provides an associated grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of suffering that conceptualizes how a newly hired coaching staff is impacted. Using a grounded theory methodology, it was theorized that academic corruption causes a coaching staff to suffer four main consequences: sanctions, stakeholder separation, reform policies, and managing multiple roles. These consequences lead to various harmful outcomes (e.g., distrust, dysfunctional relationships, anger, stress, and conflict). The results are compared with existing research that assisted in the generation of a theory of suffering. This theory adds to our knowledge about the challenges a coaching staff experiences when administrating an intercollegiate basketball program during postcorruption.

Corruption impacts an organization in a variety of ways including via sanctions, a negative reputation, loss of public confidence, and assorted financial losses (Cialdini, Petrova, & Goldstein, 2004; Maennig, 2005). Organizational stakeholders who are not involved in malfeasant activities but continue to work within the organization during the postcorruption period experience various types of harm that is associated with their respective roles and responsibilities (Miller, Roberts, & Spence, 2005; Zahra, Priem, & Rasheed, 2005). In our first article (Kihl, Richardson, & Campisi, 2008), we presented a grounded theory of intercollegiate student-athlete suffering and dealing with academic corruption. Suffering is defined as “the emotional distress experienced by individuals who remain with the program who must deal with the effects of the corruption” (Kihl et al., 2008,

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p. 283). It was theorized that student-athletes suffer due to three main consequences of academic fraud: negative treatment, sanctions, and a sense of loss. These in turn lead to several harmful outcomes including distrust, embarrassment, dysfunctional relationships, stakeholder separation, anger, stress, conflict, and noncompliance. The consequences also create a positive outcome displayed through a dual consciousness of corruption where the players seek empowerment and exhibit resiliency. This second paper introduces an associated grounded theory of stakeholder suffering that was generated from our empirical investigation of the University of Minnesota's incidence of academic corruption. The aim of this second paper is to provide a related theory of suffering that conceptualizes how a newly hired coaching staff<sup>1</sup> is affected by academic fraud during the postcorruption years.<sup>2</sup> Through our theoretical explication of conceptual categories and their properties, we aim to present the similarities and a distinctive set of challenges and difficulties that a coaching staff encounters compared with student-athletes' experiences following corruption. Situated on the front lines, a staff must contend first hand with corruption's ensuing aftermath. A coaching staff is assigned the responsibility of fixing the corruption's mess through effectively managing imposed sanctions, restoring integrity to the program while simultaneously maintaining a competitive program. Enhancing our understanding of these challenges builds upon our first theory of student-athlete suffering as well as contributing to the limited existing theoretical understandings of corruption's effect on organizational managers in the sport milieu.

## Review of Literature

The majority of the corruption literature examines the macro implications of malfeasant activities (e.g., bribery, fraud, insider trading, misappropriation, and match fixing) where it suggests that these activities lead to various consequences including sanctions (e.g., reducing scholarships, limiting recruiting practices, expunging of records, increased oversight, and probation), different types of harm (e.g., loss of reputation, loss of trust and public confidence, and financial loss), and dismissal of personnel (Baucus & Baucus, 1997; Kihl et al., 2008; Luo, 2004; Maennig, 2005; Miller et al., 2005; Reichert, Lockett, & Rao, 1996; Zahra et al., 2005). The specific type of malfeasant acts will distinctly impact an organization (Baucus & Baucus, 1997). For example, economic corruption impedes organizational development and growth (Fjeldstad & Tungodden, 2003; Gray & Kaufmann, 1998) as illegal activities reduce investments, compromise the state's ability to collect tax revenues, and add to the overall cost of production (Jain, 2001; Kimuyu, 2007; Tanzi, 1998). Organizational profits are significantly affected by corporate illegal activities, which ultimately decrease stakeholder investments in both the long and short terms (Jain, 2001; Karpoff & Lott, 1993; Lean, Ogur, & Rodgers, 1985). Furthermore, economic corruption tarnishes a company's reputation, damages business relationships, and erodes citizen trust that can consequently inhibit ongoing business transactions by current and future customers (Luo, 2004; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2005). Educational corruption (e.g., bribery, academic fraud, plagiarism) also detracts from the institution's reputation, corrodes public trust, teaches distorted values and culture, while leading to lasting social and economic effects (Altbach, 2004; Rumyantseva, 2005).

The seriousness, form, and number of violations committed influence the extent of the impact on an organization (Baucus & Baucus, 1997; Luo, 2004). Serious cases of corruption can cause enduring suffering as a result of assorted visible and nonvisible damages, and penalties (Luo, 2004). Firms convicted of significant illegalities (e.g., Enron, Tyco, and WorldCom) or have multiple convictions experience prolonged consequences, which negatively affect financial performance (in terms of accounting returns, sales growth), damage their image, produce negative publicity, and lead to costly sanctions (e.g., fines and punitive damages) and legal costs (Baucus & Baucus, 1997; Elkins, 1976). These damages, Luo (2004) argues, are long lasting and no single course of action can successfully compensate for an organization's decline.

The micro implications of malfeasant behavior are an understudied aspect of corruption research (Baucus & Baucus, 1997; Caiden, Dwivedi, & Jabbra, 2001; Zahra et al., 2005). Organizational stakeholders (staff, managers, shareholders, and the public) who were not involved in the malfeasant activities but continue their association with the organization in different capacities, experience similar as well as various detrimental outcomes. Employees tend to demonstrate low organizational commitment, absenteeism, decreased performance, and turnover intentions (Pelletier & Bligh, 2008). Fraudulent activities can also result in indirect effects through a degradation of the work environment such as adversarial relations between employer and workers, diminished productivity, dysfunctional relationships, and decreased staff morale and motivation (Luo, 2004; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2005). Increased oversight due to corruption can additionally cause workers to perceive management's distrust of them (Cialdini et al., 2004) and thus feel offended that their integrity is being questioned. In contrast with the negative effects of corruption on employees, shareholders and the community typically experience financial losses. Concomitantly, the research also suggests that employees, shareholders, and the public all experience personal embarrassment, and loss of their reputations, as well diminished faith and trust in organizational leadership (Moore & Mills, 1990; Pelletier & Bligh, 2008; Zahra et al., 2005).

The limited research on corruption in sport management provides a macro perspective of the consequences of malfeasant activities on sport programs (e.g., Hughes & Shank, 2005, 2008; Maennig, 2005; Mahoney, Fink, & Pastore, 1999). Corruption in sport leads to various social costs related to punishment (e.g., costs of imprisonment), loss of income, an inability to find employment (Maennig, 2005), and the costs associated with implementing reform strategies. Furthermore, Hughes and Shank (2005) argue that the number of individuals involved and extent of the violations influence the public's negative perception of sport stakeholders who were involved in malfeasant activities. In the case of intercollegiate athletics, programs that have committed National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules violations are directly affected as they receive various sanctions that result in subsequent financial losses (i.e., reduction of income due to game forfeits, returned revenue, decline in donor activity, and reduction of competitions), and negatively affect public relations (Mahoney et al., 1999). In the long term, institutions may experience a decline in charitable giving and overall student enrollment and struggle to recover from precorruption fundraising capabilities (Hughes & Shank, 2008). Research further suggests that the specific team on NCAA sanctions for rules violations is associated with decreases in donor activity

(Rhoads & Gerking, 2000). Rhoads and Gerking (2000) found that a university's men's basketball team on NCAA probation will experience greater reductions in alumni giving than when a football program is on probation while Mahoney et al. (1999) reported that sanctions imposed on a sport program had a minimal impact on team performance.

Empirical investigations of corruption's consequences on sport organizational stakeholders appear to be absent from the literature (Kihl et al., 2008). While instances of corruption within intercollegiate athletics may be well documented (e.g., Finley & Finley, 2006; Funk, 1991; Gerdy, 1997; Thelin, 1994), minimal empirical research and theoretical understandings exist that document newly hired personnel experiences in dealing with a specific case of academic corruption within the context of an intercollegiate athletic sport program (Kihl et al., 2008). The purpose of this paper was to first theorize about how a specific type (fraud), form (academic fraud) and extent (extreme case) of corruption affect a newly hired men's basketball (MBB) coaching staff whose main responsibility is to repair and manage the damage in the subsequent postcorruption period. A secondary objective was to build on Kihl et al.'s work to posit a general theory of coaches' and players' suffering and coping with academic corruption. Critical to furthering our understanding of corruption's impact on organizational managers as well as increasing our knowledge about the human costs of malfasant behavior is the exploration of how corruption affects a newly hired coaching staff with the aim to: (a) assist future coaches who are assigned the staggering task of managing a team after an instance of academic corruption, and (b) provide insight for organizational administrators who may be faced with presiding over such an adverse situation.

## Context of Academic Fraud

The MBB program was embroiled in an extensive incidence of academic fraud from 1993 to 1999 (NCAA Infractions Committee, 2000; Wertheim & Yaeger, 1999). Broadly conceived, academic corruption is the abuse of authority and misuse of trust by a public official and/or private actor for personal or material gain. In this case, academic fraud was conceived of, and supported by, the Head Men's Basketball Coach, his staff, the team's academic counselor, and the sport's secretary (NCAA Infractions Committee, 2000). The former Academic Counseling secretary wrote approximately 400 pieces of course work (homework assignments, preparing take-home exams, typing, and composing theme papers) for at least 18 men's basketball players (NCAA Infractions Committee, 2000). Institutional and NCAA investigations found that copious rules violations—academic eligibility, extra benefits, lack of institutional control, and unethical conduct—were apparent and the case was labeled as one of the most serious instances of academic fraud in the history of intercollegiate athletics (Wertheim & Yaeger, 1999).<sup>3</sup> The University and NCAA imposed numerous sanctions<sup>4</sup> on the men's basketball program and the athletic department as a whole. A new basketball staff was hired four months after the corruption was exposed and was assigned the enormous challenge of fixing what was referred to as “a different kind of mess” (Coach interview, September 20, 2004). At the time that the study was conducted, the head coach and two of his assistants had led the program for the past seven

seasons and a third assistant had been with the program for one season.<sup>5</sup> The sanctions on the MBB program expired in 2004, however, the initial four-year probation was extended an additional two years due to major violations committed by the women's basketball program.<sup>6</sup> The athletic department was officially removed from probation in December 2006 (Thorpe, 2006).

## Research Design

A single-case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) and grounded theory traditions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were used to generate a substantive theory of a coaching staff's suffering and coping with academic corruption (Kihl et al., 2008). Data collection was initiated by conducting an extensive review of pertinent documents about the case that involved gathering newspaper and sport media articles, University and NCAA reports, and institutional meeting minutes. Based on the preliminary data collected, the following research questions were posed: (1) How was the MBB program impacted by the incidence of academic corruption? (2) How did the instance of academic corruption impact the newly hired men's basketball coaching staff? (3) What specific consequences of the academic corruption affected the newly hired men's basketball coaching staff? (4) How did the consequences of the academic corruption affect the newly hired men's basketball coaching staff? Upon gaining access and institutional ethics approval, theoretical sampling steered preliminary data collection of documents and analysis. The data were openly coded and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Subsequently, the data were organized into major categories and subcategories based on their respective properties and dimensions. Major categories at this point in the analysis included sanctions and reform policies. Subcategories consisted of a) sanctions (recruiting), and b) reform policies (increased university oversight, university restructuring, and increased policies and procedures). Following this initial data analysis, the research questions were expanded to ask: (1) How did institutional and NCAA sanctions affect the coaching staff? (2) How did academic corruption reform policies impact the coaching staff? (3) What impact does academic corruption have on the coaching staff's relationships with various university stakeholders? (4) How does an instance of academic corruption impact the staff's ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities?

## Participants and Data Collection

In-depth, semistructured, face-to-face and phone interviews were conducted with 19 university stakeholders: four MBB coaches, two former MBB student-athletes, five athletic department and university administrators, one compliance administrator, three Academic Counseling Services for Intercollegiate Athletics (ACSS) staff, and four faculty.<sup>7</sup> Participant selection criteria were based on: (1) a willingness to partake in the study, (2) possession of first hand knowledge of the consequences of academic corruption, (3) the capability of helping explain categorical properties and dimensions, and (4) an ability to clarify any relationships between emerging categories.

The research questions and the constant comparative data analysis process assisted in creating appropriate interview questions that included: What happened after the coaching staff was hired? How did the corruption impact the coaches? What were the specific consequences of the corruption? How did these consequences impact the coaching staff? How did the consequences impact their ability to do their job? How would you describe your experiences with the program and dealing with the corruption? Participants in general were asked the same questions on the interview guide. Certain questions were altered based on the participant's role and relationship with the basketball coaches. The data generated from these interview questions facilitated the development of novel categories and subcategories that included, for example, stakeholder separation and managing multiple roles and subcategories such as negative reputation, negative recruiting, the virus, altered philosophy, and conservative recruiting practices. As we progressed, primary interview questions were revised to ask: How had the corruption affected the coaches' relationships with faculty members, administrators, players, and the media? What was it like coaching the team the season after the incident occurred? What was it like coaching the team in subsequent years? How did the sanctions impact the coaching staff? How did the recruiting sanctions impact the coaches' ability to carry out their jobs? Interviews were 30–60 min in length, audio-taped, and transcribed verbatim.

Participant observations were a secondary source of data collection (Kihl et al., 2008). The research questions and emergent theoretical categories directed observations (Patton, 2002). "Informal and formal interactions with players, coaches and faculty, planned activities (student study tables, road trips, meetings), and communications (with student-athletes, faculty, support staff, coaches, and administrators) were documented during data collection" (Kihl et al., 2008, p. 281). Data collection took place during a 12-month period and generated approximately 300 single-spaced pages of interview text, 200 pages of documents, and 30 single-spaced pages of observational text. The transcripts, recorded observations, and documents were downloaded into the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti (1997), which was used to assist with the analysis. Identification codes were assigned to each participant and based on their agreements to partake in the study, they are identified in this paper by their general position (i.e., coach, administrator, or student-athlete) and participant profiles were not provided.

## Data Analysis

Theory generation was formulated through a systematic process of data conceptualization by using assorted coding procedures and the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). First, open coding was conducted where codes were first developed based on concepts that were described in events, actions/interactions, and objects or through in vivo coding where concepts are derived from the participants' actual words (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Examples of conceptualized codes were conservative recruiting, dysfunctional relationships, stakeholder separation, long term effects, and insular behaviors. In vivo code examples included "the virus," "negative recruiting," "behind

the eight ball,” and “distrust.” Categories and subcategories were subsequently defined in terms of their properties and dimensions. Axial coding was then performed to describe the relationship between the core categories and respective subcategories, which in turn was linked to the larger category of suffering and dealing with academic corruption. For example, the category “sanctions” and respective subcategory “recruiting” were examined to determine the relationship with the specific harmful outcome of recruiting challenges. A limitation on the number of days a prospective student-athlete can be evaluated and official on-campus visits alters a coaching staff’s recruiting philosophy that leads to conservative recruiting. Axial coding therefore was the initial process of conceptually integrating the various categories and subcategories thus explaining theoretical conditions, actions, and consequences of how a coaching staff is affected by an instance of academic corruption.

Theoretical memoing was performed throughout the analysis process to assist in theory formulation and to explain categorical and subcategorical dimensions and properties (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The third step in the analysis process entailed performing selective coding where concepts were integrated around core categories to assist in refining the theory of coaching staff’s suffering and academic corruption (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Coding categories were further developed and refined through the process of selective coding, and writing theoretical and operational notes. Finally, a theoretical diagram (see Figure 1) was formulated illustrating the major concepts, subcategories, and their connections leading to a substantive theory of a coaching staff’s suffering as a result of academic corruption.

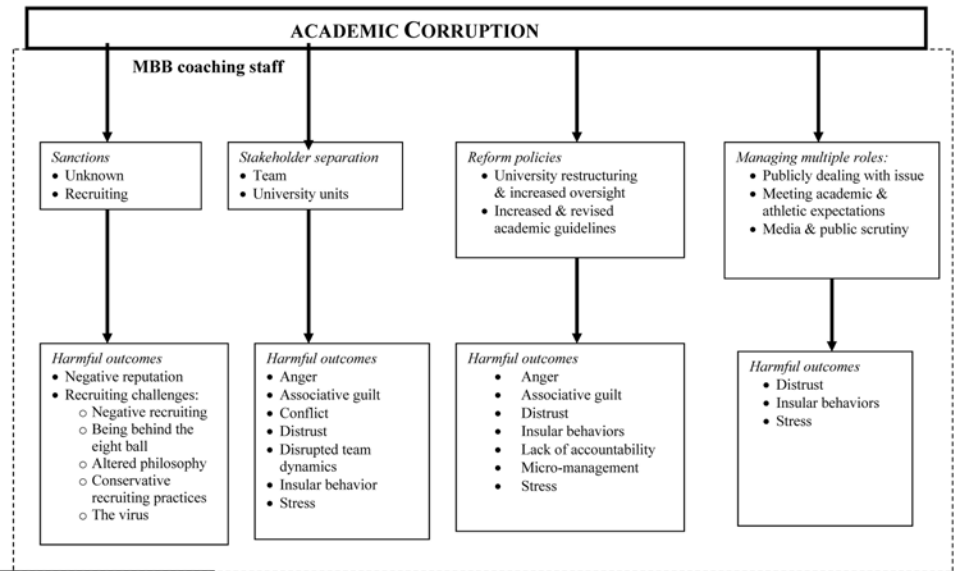


Figure 1 — Consequences and harmful outcomes of academic corruption.



## Findings

Our findings demonstrate that the core category of suffering is delineated by a coaching staff experiencing four main consequences (see Figure 1): (1) sanctions; (2) stakeholder separation; (3) reform policies; and (4) managing multiple roles. These four consequences generate several harmful outcomes including negative reputation, recruiting challenges, disturbing team dynamics, distrust, stress, anger, conflict, associative guilt, micromanagement, and insular behaviors. Each of the four consequences and harmful outcomes are conceptualized through the explanation of relevant subcategories and associated concepts. The findings are then discussed in relation to the literature and recommendations are provided for future research. A grounded theory of coaching staff suffering and academic corruption is then presented, along with a general theory of suffering and academic corruption. Last, concluding comments are provided.

### Suffering and Sanctions

The NCAA and self-imposed sanctions generally restrict a coaching staff hired to “clean-up” a corrupt program in their ability to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities. The restrictions generate different forms of suffering in performing work-related tasks. This is most acute before sanction announcement, after the sanctions are imposed, and when the first recruiting class enters their third year of participation. Before the release of the penalties, the biggest concern is dealing with the sanction of the “unknown,” which is conceptualized as the period of time where uncertainty exists about potential penalties that will be imposed by the University and NCAA. Official sanctions generally will not be imposed until the completion of institutional and NCAA investigations and reports, which in the Minnesota case was approximately one year after the incident was exposed. Consequently, a program is in “limbo” as it cannot attempt to move forward and put the incident behind it. During this limbo period, the negative reputation of the program is perpetuated. The negative reputation associated with academic corruption incites negative labels such as dishonesty, lack of integrity, untrustworthy, cheaters, and win at all costs. During the investigation facts are revealed about the nature and extent of academic fraud and these afore-said negative labels become associated with the new coaching staff.

The sanction of the unknown also creates recruiting challenges, since in this situation, an opportune time is afforded for the employment of negative recruiting tactics by other college coaches. For example, during the critical summer recruiting period, before the announcement of the sanctions, individuals from other institutions used the potential sanctions and the corruption to perpetuate paranoid attitudes and point out a program’s weaknesses while promoting other programs. Examples of negative recruiting include individuals speculating about the length of the sanctions, individuals questioning prospective student-athletes’ decisions to sign with the corrupt program, being associated with a cheating program, and being associated with a potential losing program. A coaching staff must therefore overcome not only disparaging comments about the incident and the program, but also must transcend negative rumors and speculation regarding the severity of potential sanctions. For example, as some participants explained:



We didn't have any idea how long [the sanctions would last] . . . and as a result people in recruiting would say, "They're going to get the death penalty or they're never going to be on TV. Well they're not going to get to go the NCAA tournament." So they were able to say these things until we got the sanctions. (Coach interview, September 20, 2004)

We were getting the death penalty was part of the paranoia . . . some of the extreme things that you hear around town. (Coach interview, May 12, 2005)

Why would you go to Minnesota they're going to go on probation? They are never going to be any good. Why would you go there because of the sanctions that are going to be on you because of the cloud of negativity they're going to be under? . . . You're going to lose your whole career there . . . It's going to take 10 years. (Coach interview, May 12, 2005)

Much speculation and rumor also circulates in the media and within the basketball community regarding the nature and extent of the sanctions. Coaches must manage the intense sensationalization and speculation about the extent of the sanctions, the MBB players' fears about the severity of the potential sanctions, potential recruits' concerns about the extent of the sanctions, along with their own angst about the outcome, and how this outcome reflects on them.

## **Recruiting Sanctions: Negative Reputation**

Recruiting sanctions create the greatest amount of grief for a newly hired coaching staff, in both the short and long terms. A program is impacted by a negative reputation in three main respects. First, during the immediate and extensive post-scandal period, the local and national reputation of a program is "stripped" which also significantly impacts recruiting as in "why would someone go to something that was damaged" (Coach interview, May 5, 2005). In general, talented prospective student-athletes are less likely to sign with a program that is associated with such a high-profile and fraudulent situation. For example, one prospective student-athlete indicated that his feeling about Minnesota had changed once the allegations of academic fraud became public when he stated, "I'm not so hot about it [Minnesota] anymore" (Dougherty, 1999). Overcoming the negative perceptions of a program is perceived to be a far greater challenge than overcoming the physical recruiting restrictions. A coach explained:

What's worse [than the physical restrictions] is the perception that they are never going to be any good again. Here's the one I hear all the time in coaching: "Minnesota's never won unless they cheated." If you look back at the last 27 years there's been scandals . . . There has been three major scandals here and the perception is that I do not want to say that it's widespread but in some circles it's "Minnesota can't win unless they cheat." (Coach interview, May 12, 2005)

A coaching staff's approach to recruiting in-state versus out-of-state prospects is altered due to the notion of a negative reputation. Recruiting out-of-state prospects is conceivably less challenging as the corruption is reported

infrequently and not as intensely in the national media than in the local media thus the case fades from prospects' attention. In general, recruiting out-of-state prospective student-athletes is a more effective strategy to overcoming corruptions' negative reputation as those athletes "don't get beaten down day-to-day with the negative" [comments made about the program] (Coach interview, May 5, 2005). Recruiting in-state student-athletes is more challenging because, as one coach stated, "it was in the paper and on TV here all of the time so, yes, kids from here . . . were inundated with the scandal and about the sanctions . . . You would see the leading sports story with our logo and either 'scandal' or 'sanction' at the top" (Coach interview, May 12, 2005). Local media coverage of extensive academic fraud is vehement during the investigative period and continues throughout the first and second playing seasons. This coverage perpetuates and extends the discourse within the community about their erosion of trust of the institution and negative reputation of the program. Consequently, this causes a snowball effect in recruiting and performance outcomes. Recruiting highly talented local student-athletes who are reluctant to be associated with a program that represents "corruption" and is "rebuilding" makes the recruitment of these local stars nearly impossible. Potential recruits want to play for a program that has national television exposure, consistently competes in the NCAA tournament, and is a successful major program. A postcorrupt program is composed of average players, receives minimal television exposure, and minimal success, which is not inviting to a highly talented recruit. Long term, the lack of winning places the stability of the head coach in question and thus prospects are not willing to sign with a program when uncertainty exists around the longevity of the staff.

### **Recruiting Sanctions: Being Behind the Eight Ball**

Recruiting sanctions cause a program to be "behind the eight ball"—a situation where the sanctions place a coaching staff in an immense disadvantage with their competitors in terms of recruiting and subsequently in an almost impossible position to overcome. Being behind the eight ball poses both short and long term challenges for the coaching staff. The substantial impact of the recruiting sanctions are more apparent three to four years post corruption, where it is "felt more on the back end and not as extensively felt on the front end" (Athletic administrator interview, October 8, 2004). The aim of probation is "not to kill a program but put it on the low" that is, disable a program for a period of time to balance out the infractions that occurred to gain a competitive advantage. Upon imposing the penalties, "the recruiting sanctions are like a death charge or like a body blow. They hurt you now but they also hurt you down the road because you have to play with players recruited during that time four years ago" (Coach interview, May 5, 2005).

The immediate impact of the sanctions is felt, as previously explained, due to the sanction of the unknown and the actual NCAA and self-imposed sanctions as these actions lead to a negative reputation, negative recruiting, and consequently prospective talented student-athletes not wanting to be associated with a dishonest program. The long term effect of the recruiting restrictions is a result of the staff's

inability to “recruit that next class” and subsequently “become significant usually at a recruiting classes’ junior year” (Coach interview, May 5, 2005). This results in: (1) a team consisting of small numbers in each of the junior and senior recruiting classes, and (2) these classes generally being comprised of individuals who are not necessarily talented enough to be participating at a high level of competition. These two culminating factors ultimately impact performance:

People do not realize that this team and last year’s team is a fallout of all that [the sanctions]. It was easy those first couple years because a) it’s a honeymoon situation for a coach, but b) because we still had good players intact before it happened. So this [the current roster] is a fall-out of only having six recruiting visits for five years and having the restrictions of recruiting for where we could sign a good player here and there, but we were not able to land a class. (Coach interview, September 20, 2004)

A decade later, a program that sport fans in Minnesota were fiercely proud of for years has bottomed out. NCAA sanctions—including scholarship and recruiting restrictions—have come and gone, but the Gophers still haven’t recovered. (Campbell, 2007, p. C12)

To overcome such recruiting sanction obstacles a coaching staff will need to revise their recruiting philosophy, which is outlined next.

## **Recruiting Sanctions: Altered Philosophy**

Significant recruiting sanctions will necessitate a shift in recruiting philosophy. A coaching staff’s recruiting philosophy is adjusted when the objective of recruiting shifts from the idealistic—building a program approach—to the pragmatic—maintaining a program approach. As one coach explained, “When you build a program, a lot is based on the paradigm . . . the culture and the structure. The probation affects your structure because it affects numbers, and it affects what you can do to compete with others” (Coach interview, May 5, 2005). Maintaining a program leads to focusing on recruiting junior college or high school players who already have a specific program identified as their first priority. In most cases, these student-athletes are not the most talented. Recruiting junior college student-athletes creates a “Catch 22 situation” in that these individuals have a desire to compete but they are not always the most academically prepared students for a Big 10 institution. A coaching staff is delayed in rebuilding a program completely until the sanctions are lifted, and in the interim, a process of maintenance is operationalized (Dougherty, 1999). The recruiting restrictions are the most difficult to endure and overcome compared with the additional sanctions. For example, in the Minnesota case, the nature and extent of the recruiting sanctions resulted in a seven-year rebuilding process that was characterized as “slow and agonizing” (Shelman, 2005).

## **Recruiting Sanctions: Conservative Recruiting Practices**

Recruiting restrictions lead to extremely conservative recruiting practices that limit the signing of high-impact players. Conservative recruiting is characterized

by an inability to “gamble” in the quest for signing highly sought-after recruits, which in turn yields the signing of “solid” players who are not necessarily the most talented. The decreased evaluation opportunities limit the amount of risk a coaching staff can take in recruiting impact players. Sanctions also affect the nature and size of the pool of prospective student-athletes who can be recruited.

Participants explained:

I think where it hurts the most is if you wanted to recruit that elite kid like everyone else. You wanted to be able to and at Minnesota you should be able to recruit those same kids that Michigan State is recruiting or Wisconsin. . . . We just couldn't. . . . We could . . . but we had to back out first. (Coach interview, May 10, 2005)

We had to settle for players, settle in our recruiting practices. . . . You just could not afford to go out with a list of 100 kids. . . . We had to have a list of 10-15 kids because we had to find kids who were going to be very, very interested. . . . We were at the poker table with just a few chips when everyone else had a stack full of chips. (Coach interview, May 10, 2005)

The available talent pool to recruit from who can compete at this elite conference is small and then having physical recruiting restrictions as well as perceptual obstacles to overcome. This greatly hurts your basketball program. (Coach interview, May 5, 2005)

## Recruiting Sanctions: The Virus

The final harmful outcome of the sanctions is experiencing and living with “the virus.” The virus is the coaching staff being perceived by prospective student-athletes as being infected with the disease of corruption. The stigma associated with corruption leads to associated guilt and discriminatory action by prospective student-athletes toward a coaching staff. The discriminatory actions employed by prospective recruits mostly consist of distancing themselves from the staff and limiting contact. These actions are evident during the first four years during postcorruption. A program becomes infected by the virus which appears to be incurable as it lies dormant within the program until another instance (positive or negative) occurs where the program experiences another “breakout.” For example, the 2004–2005 Minnesota team earned its first NCAA tournament appearance since the 1999 case of academic corruption. Although earning a tournament appearance is a much-celebrated accomplishment, nevertheless the program incurred a viral breakout. In the majority of media stories, the 1999 case of corruption was jointly mentioned with the 2004–2005 team's accomplishments (cf. Alonzo, 2005a, 2005b; Fuller, 2006). The Minnesota MBB brand was reconnected with the corruption due to countless headlines or stories in the media that pointed out “the scandal,” “losing seasons,” “sanctions” or “trying to rebuild from the academic fraud scandal.” Arguably, these breakouts essentially restrict a program from fully recovering from a severe case of academic corruption.

## Stakeholder Separation

Extreme academic fraud leads to immediate and long-term stakeholder separation. Separation occurs between two sets of stakeholder groups: (1) team members and the coaching staff; and (2) university stakeholders including academic counseling, faculty athletic oversight committee, compliance office, faculty members, boosters, and the coaching staff. Although the new coaching staff was not involved in any fraudulent activities, university stakeholders chose to disassociate with any individual placed in a leadership role within the program (i.e., members of the new coaching staff). The separation between the aforementioned stakeholder groups is generated by the betrayal, leading to emotional feelings of anger and hurt, which results in extensive distrust that is perpetuated systematically through the development and implementation of various reform policies and procedures and oversight committees.

### Stakeholder Separation: Team

Stakeholder separation between a coaching staff and the team is caused by several factors including players experiencing the stepfather syndrome,<sup>8</sup> personality clashes between coaches and players, players having to adapt to a new coaching philosophy, player loyalty to the previous coach, players' sense of loss, player anger and player emotional hurt. The termination of the previous head coach and the hiring of a new coaching staff create tensions between the former coach's players and the new staff. The former coach's players will be hurt and angry by the nature of their former coach's dismissal and will experience a sense of loss, and thus are inclined to remain loyal to their previous coach (Kihl et al., 2008). Players experiencing the stepfather syndrome are reluctant to develop relationships between themselves and the new coaches due to the distress and resentment felt with the assignment of a new father figure. Simultaneously, the entry of a new staff results in a new coaching philosophy that leads to players taking a "wait and see" attitude and thus, during this period, players will not particularly "buy into" another coach's approach to program management. These dividing elements may create a negative team climate and dysfunctional relationships. These relationships between team players and the coaching staff ultimately impact recruiting, as the negative climate is felt by prospective student-athletes. One coach explained:

It was more about climate. They [the players] were upset when we would bring recruits in the fall . . . and kids can sense uneasiness. I mean your best recruiters are your players and it was just a bad climate that first six months. (Coach interview, May 12, 2005)

The onset of team and coach stakeholder separation is most acute in the first six months of a new staff's arrival. The distancing will gradually dissipate over approximately a two-year period, as a result of time, players leaving, and/or through cultivating relationships.

The nature of the disrupted team dynamics owing to academic fraud varies from a traditional turnover of coaching staff phenomenon. In addition to dealing with the coaching change, players' experiences of enduring an NCAA

investigation and resultant unique emotional feelings of loss, anger, associative guilt, distrust, and exhaustion make developing trusting relationships and forming a bond with the new coaching staff more challenging. A new coaching staff is perceived as an affiliate of the administration as they were hired by authority figures deemed untrustworthy by the players (Kihl et al., 2008).

## Stakeholder Separation: University Units

Feelings of shame, embarrassment, and disappointment will be felt among different university unit stakeholders. Consequently, they will dissociate themselves from individuals occupying the coaching staff positions. The identified university units in general will distrust all individuals on the coaching staff for an extensive period of time. In particular, individuals within academic counseling and compliance units will tend to mistrust the coaching staff. Individuals will covertly or subconsciously perceive that a program has a problem and thus will generally have doubts about coaching staff decision-making and operations. The current academic counselor and athletic administrator explained:

People don't trust them on campus. . . . They think automatically "cheaters" or trying to push limits . . . when they think of the MBB coaching staff and the reason why we have the distrust between academics and athletics at this campus is because of the fraud case. (Academic counselor interview, March 28, 2005)

That pisses off the head coach and a lot of people who say, "That means you do not trust me." I guess it does mean that I do not trust you . . . but we trusted the last guy and five people lost their job and we had a major scandal. (Athletic administrator interview, October 28, 2004)

The nature of the coaching positions therefore generates associative guilt and mistrust about anyone occupying a coaching role.

The mistrust created in intercollegiate athletic corruption also creates stakeholder separation through institutionalizing increased oversight. A problem as extensive and as intense as the one experienced at the University of Minnesota leads to wide-ranging reform policies and procedures within compliance, academic counseling, and faculty supervision. Increased bureaucracy detracts from relationship-building between the new coaching staff and the respective university units that work with the coaching staff.

Stakeholder separation as a result of mistrust generates much anger, stress, and conflict, and tends to generate a defensive attitude among the coaching staff. During observations, coaches displayed paranoia and reacted in an "everyone's against me" fashion (participant observation, 2005). As a result, a coaching staff can become guarded or insular as to who is allowed to enter into their inner circle. Stakeholder separation in the postscandal years is not as pronounced as new personnel are hired and time allows the building of trusting relationships, but the corruption and the university's history of athletic scandals creates a "raw nerve" for a program and the respective athletic department.<sup>9</sup> The frequent occurrence of malfeasant acts makes university stakeholders more sensitive to athletic corruption in general and thus less likely to show tolerance to any future dishonest acts.

## **Reform Policies: University Restructuring and Increased Oversight**

The distrust created by academic fraud leads to extensive and strict reform policies along with a climate of suspicion. Reform policies are guided by the notion of reestablishing institutional control. Faculty-led reform is the critical factor in regaining institutional control as their embarrassment and shock will drive extensive restructuring of reporting lines and seeking control of athletic administration. Subsequently, critical changes to intercollegiate athletic governance will be instituted including university restructuring, reorganizing reporting lines, and increasing faculty oversight (Senate Consultative Committee, 1999, 2000). An academic counselor explained:

I would probably argue that the reason why we have an increasing amount of oversight on our department and it is still growing is because of the fraud case. (Academic counselor interview, March 28, 2005)

To regain control of athletic department operations, institutional stakeholder groups (i.e., members of the faculty oversight committees and compliance office) will become more involved in daily department operations. Additional oversight creates excessive bureaucracy, micromanagement, and perceived conservative NCAA rule interpretations, which is seemingly a permanent characteristic of postcorruption.

## **Reform Policies: Increased and Revised Academic Guidelines**

Academic reform policies and procedures in terms of reporting lines, redefining academic support, reappointing academic personnel, and reassigning designated study hall areas and equipment will typically occur within the first two months of the postcorruption period. During the implementation and evaluative processes of these provisional academic reform policies and procedures, coaches will be affected in four respects: (1) increased volume of academic policies, (2) limited degree of academic assistance, (3) limited timing of assistance, and (4) increased academic counseling staff turnover. Throughout the policy revisions, much instability and a lack of accountability for student-athletes' academic performance will be experienced. Consequently it is perceived that "the kids do not get the academic support they need" (Coach interview, September 20, 2004) because there is concern that the individuals who help student-athletes may be perceived as violating NCAA rules.

In the first 12 months postcorruption, the distrust felt among affected units generates much hostility, which in turn impacts relationships and productivity.

It was a very volatile situation. There was a lot of friction between them [academic counseling unit] and the basketball office because of the past. (Coach interview, September 20, 2004)

Accordingly, in managing the players' academic performance, a head coach will be forced to assume a "principal role," where one is more reactive in addressing



academic concerns rather than being proactive in providing timely and adequate supervision. As a result, it is difficult to hold student-athletes accountable for their actions and ultimately the staff loses some power with team members. One coach stressed:

These kids need the most help now, not less help. And it was like everybody was afraid to help them because they thought it was going to be a violation or too much. . . . It has taken us a while to get their (academic counseling) trust. . . . These guys [academic counseling] have the well-being of the student-athlete in mind . . . and so it was a very hard struggle that way. So, I just felt like all I was, was the principal in the situation. All I did is clean up after a kid messed up. I was never able to be proactive and help them with their academics because coaches can't really talk to them about it. (Coach interview, September 20, 2004)

Appropriate revisions of academic reform policies and procedures take approximately two to three years to be implemented, while maintaining stability of academic personnel can be an ongoing challenge.

## Managing Multiple Roles

A coaching staff will be required to manage multiple roles beyond their normal workload during postcorruption. The multiple roles the head coach and the staff will assume include publicly dealing with academic fraud, meeting academic and athletic expectations, managing day-to-day operations, and addressing the media's and public's scrutiny. The head coach will be assigned the main responsibility of addressing the various consequences of academic corruption. The public nature of a high-profile case of academic fraud and the immense expectations placed on staff to mend the reputation of a program increases the number of meetings, discussions, and communications about how a program will regain integrity and achieve athletic success. Managing multiple roles during postcorruption differs from situations when a new coaching staff is hired in a high profile program as the added pressure and publicity is often greater and more intense. Two coaches described their experience:

When I first got here, the biggest adjustment is that coaching is the last thing we do here. Dealing with everything else, there was just so much outside issues and everything so much of it is public. (Coach interview, September 20, 2004)

I don't think they [the administration] understood the emotional drain of everyone saying well what about this and what about that and what about the program. . . . (Coach interview, May 5, 2005)

It was also observed:

As a revenue sport, the program was always very careful about what it did and how it acted. The attention such a sport receives is understandably high. The Minnesota team, however, suffered from the additional scrutiny based on its history. The coaches knew the jobs they were taking were going to be

loaded with “abnormal” pressures to try and lead a team of its past shadows. There are times I would even characterize certain reactions or behaviors as being paranoid. Not only are these coaches trying to win games but do so with a team of athletes who behave themselves off the court, meet academic requirements for competition, and work toward building a new team/program images. There were times when crises arose that I saw the coaches react in an “everyone’s against me” fashion. Overall, the program has made considerable effort to keep to itself. (Participant observation)

Coaches consistently made statements that they “were very careful to not make the recruiting sanctions an excuse” for not winning or not signing a recruit (Coach interview, May 12, 2005). In their minds, making excuses was a “cop out and unprofessional” (Coach interview, May 10, 2005). Denying themselves a show of any emotion and justifying limited success only compounds the pressure and emotional strain experienced by a staff member. Managing multiple roles (i.e., meeting athletic expectations, addressing the media, and experiencing public scrutiny) places undue emotional strain on the coaches. The substantial emotional strain leads to increasing displays of insular behaviors that are typically demonstrated by a regular coaching staff.

## Discussion

The next process in the generation of our grounded theory was comparing the findings with the literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The four main consequences and resultant harmful outcomes are integrated into a comparative discussion with previous research in relation to explaining the core category of coaching staff suffering.

### Sanctions

The category of sanctions is comprised of two concepts: (1) unknown and (2) recruiting, which cause significant short and long term challenges for a new coaching staff after an instance of academic fraud. These two types of sanctions assist in generating a negative reputation and assorted recruiting hardships (i.e., negative recruiting, being behind the eight ball, altered coaching philosophy, conservative recruiting, and possessing the virus) that constrict coaches’ abilities in performing their responsibilities. Augmenting the corruption literature, academic fraud generates interlinking harmful outcomes—damaged reputation and recruiting challenges—that pose two questions: (1) to what extent can a newly hired staff fix the mess? and (2) what is the emotional costs for these sport managers in attempting to fix corruption’s mess?

Corruption literature suggests that the image punishment is far more pronounced than the justice punishment (Luo, 2004).<sup>10</sup> However, we theorize that both the image punishment and the justice punishment pose equally enormous short and long term challenges for a coaching staff. Sanctions harm an organization’s competitive advantage and cause various evolutionary hazards<sup>11</sup> that affect ongoing contractual ties with employees and customers. Companies that develop poor reputations among current and prospective clients limit their opportunities for future business (Luo, 2004; Neil, 2004). Unique to the context of intercollegiate athletics

and academic fraud, in recruiting talented players and fielding a competitive team, a coaching staff is faced with the immediate challenges of overcoming the destructive consequences of the unknown sanction, a negative reputation, and negative recruiting while simultaneously receiving similar treatment to individuals with a contagious virus.

While in both the short and long term, the recruiting sanctions create an enormous competitive disadvantage that requires the coaches to adjust their recruiting philosophy, which includes employing conservative recruiting practices. The inability to implement a “building a program” recruiting approach, the difficulty in managing the disease of corruption, and the concurrent limited scholarship opportunities diminishes the long term stability and strength of a program. Recruiting academically qualified and talented student-athletes is extremely difficult when operating under such a competitive disadvantage. The staff is compelled to signing incompatible players for the program, which generally results in high player turnover. From both short and long term perspectives, a coaching staff must prevail over the challenge posed by not being perceived as an “elite” program or that it cannot win unless it cheats. Overcoming this negative perception is achieved only through winning (i.e., earning NCAA tournament appearances and averaging 20-plus win seasons), which in turn is essentially accomplished through a culmination of factors: the expiration of recruiting sanctions, the recruitment of impact players, or a change in coaching staff. Coaches who experience a similar situation should consider hiring a staff who has extensive high-school contacts across the country and overseas to take advantage of out-of-state recruiting. Coaches should also work diligently with developing relationships with the local community to assist in signing local prospects. Research on athletic recruiting has shown why student-athletes select a particular program such as quality of program, ability to have games televised, stability of coaching staff, and playing time (Cooper, 1996; Doyle & Gaeth, 1990; Klenoksy, Templin, & Troutman, 2001). However, a lack of research exists about how imposed sanctions affect recruiting practices.

Suffering caused by sanctions is distinct between a coaching staff’s suffering and student-athletes’ suffering. Expunging records and banning postseason play were the sanctions that mostly upset team players (Kihl et al., 2008). Kihl et al. (2008) assert that the suffering experienced (e.g., anger, hurt, distrust, and disappointment) is the outcome of the players feeling as though they are being unfairly punished for fraudulent activities carried out by other individuals. In this study, managing the unknown and official recruiting sanctions, specifically the negative reputation and the various recruiting challenges (i.e., negative recruiting, being behind the eight ball, altering their recruiting philosophy, using conservative recruiting practices, and handling the virus) significantly produce mixed forms of suffering for a coaching staff. Program administrators therefore must learn to effectively manage the consequences of the sanctions to allow them to perform their duties, in particular recruiting qualified personnel and developing working relationships with key institutional stakeholders.

## Stakeholder Separation

The concept of stakeholder separation as a result of corruption has not been extensively studied in sport management; however, it is implicit in the broader

fields of business and educational corruption (Hargreaves, 2002; Miller et al., 2005; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2005). Betrayal (including corruption) destroys the fabric of relationships that maintain organizational operations (Reina & Reina, 1999). Reina and Reina (1999) contend that betrayal is a deeply felt issue that affects an individual's capacity to trust others, and the more the people trusted the individuals involved in the failing of pivotal expectations the more intensely the betrayal is felt (Robinson, Dirks, & Ozelik, 2004). An extreme breach of trust has a significant emotional impact on institutional stakeholders wherein they will experience deep feelings of disappointment and injustice toward those individuals with whom they once shared a trusting relationship (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson et al., 2004). Betrayal causes professional harm where stakeholders will lose trust in the organization and the profession as a whole (Miller et al., 2005) that can encroach on organizational effectiveness and overall performance. In addition, betrayed individuals will pre-judge others without fully understanding or having developed working relationships with them that ultimately damages overall organizational performance (Reina & Reina, 1999). Stakeholders will protect themselves from the hurt and embarrassment felt from betrayal by disengaging from individuals whom they deem untrustworthy (Hargreaves, 2002). Hargreaves (2002) found that teachers who experienced intense betrayal dealt with their hurt by evading physical and psychological interactions with those colleagues. Kihl et al. (2008, pp. 294–295) theorized that in instances of intercollegiate athletic academic corruption, university and athletic administrators will cope with their betrayal by imposing negative treatment (i.e., lack of communication and support) toward student-athletes not involved in fraud but toward some members of the team who deceived the university. As result of the negative treatment, student-athletes will distrust university and athletic administrators, yet “they will also show a tendency to continue to trust authoritarian figures (to a certain degree) on their word even when they believe they had been previously betrayed.”

In this study, we conceptualized that stakeholder separation will occur between the coaching staff and the players, and between different university units and the coaching staff. In cases of academic fraud, it is theorized that professional harm manifests with university stakeholders mistrusting any individual serving in a coaching capacity (even though the individuals in question were not involved in malfeasant acts). University stakeholders will feel extreme embarrassment and experience emotional hurt from the instance where fraud surfaces. Any individuals affiliated with the coaching staff may be considered ‘guilty by association’ by the university stakeholders. Student-athletes will avoid interactions with individuals serving in an MBB coaching capacity, subsequently causing the coaching staff to disengage. Furthermore, degradation of the work environment—unhealthy team environment and disruptive team dynamics—will affect team morale, but contradictory to PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP's (2005) findings, the dysfunctional relationships minimally impact team productivity and staff motivations. To overcome such emotional hurt, it is important for the coaching staff to develop trust with campus units and take the time to develop player relationships. Relationship building of this nature, and allowing for opportunities for the staff to demonstrate that they are reliable when it comes to fulfilling their

contractual obligations, is a lengthy process (Holmes, 1991; Lewiciki & Bunker, 1996; Reina & Reina, 1999).

## **Reform Policies**

One of the major consequences of fraud is the evolutionary hazards wherein organizational reform involves major restructuring and implementation of a series of operational policies (Luo, 2004). The concept of reform policies presented in this paper relates to restoring institutional integrity and prevention of further occurrence. The increased oversight and extensive reform policies and procedures create extensive bureaucracy and the staff perceiving that university stakeholders distrust them. As a result, coaches endure adversarial relationships with their colleagues (Cialdini et al., 2004) as well as displaying stress, conflict, anger, and insular behaviors.

Policy changes also unintentionally hurt individuals within the program and / or restricted employees from effectively performing their work responsibilities. Corruption usually leads to dismissal of personnel (Luo, 2004; Zahra et al., 2005), however we posit that the dismissal and turnover of academic assistance personnel produces instability and uncertainty about staff's roles and responsibilities regarding providing MBB student-athletes with academic support. Consequently, the uncertainty and instability hinders communication about student-athletes' performance between academic counseling personnel and the coaching staff. Adjusting to the revised policies and procedures and restructuring is typically a timely and costly process (Luo, 2004).

## **Managing Multiple Roles**

Managing multiple roles is a general expectation of being an intercollegiate coach and transitioning into a new coaching position. Coaches assigned the responsibility of fixing the mess left by academic corruption, in addition to their normal duties, are required to effectively manage the magnitude of issues related to the consequences of the sanctions, reform policies, media criticism and scrutiny, and the scandal itself. These added challenges will affect a coaching staff's working conditions and their relationships with fellow coworkers within their respective athletic department units, athletic administration, faculty oversight committees, and among the student-athletes. The stress brought on due to managing multiple roles occur within a male hegemonic culture (Eitzen, 2003) wherein showing one's feelings and making excuses for not meeting performance expectations tends to be looked down upon (Brannon, 1976). Disallowing themselves to show emotions and feeling required to justify their shortcomings only compounds the pressure and emotional strain coaches endure. Research suggests that one of the sources of stress for intercollegiate coaches is the pressure associated with carrying out various roles and responsibilities (Frey, 2007; Humphrey, Yow, & Bowden, 2000; Richman, 1992). Coaching is a highly stressful profession (Frey, 2007; Pastore & Judd, 1993) and managing multiple roles during postcorruption only compounds the suffering experienced by the coaches.

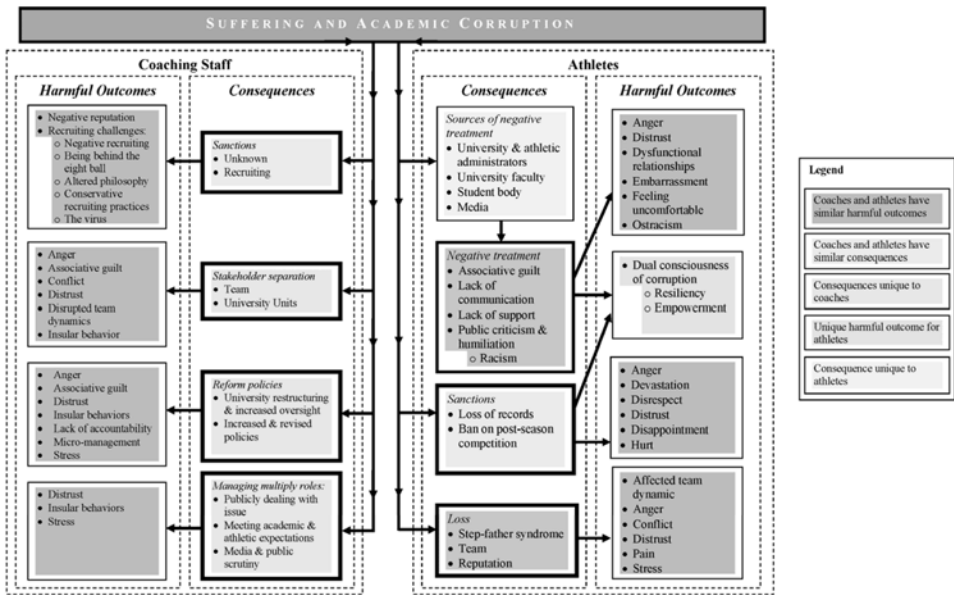
## **A Grounded Theory of MBB Coaching Staff's Suffering as a Result of Academic Corruption**

Relating the findings to the literature assisted in the generation of a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) that explains how academic corruption leads to a coaching staff's suffering. An intercollegiate MBB coaching staff hired to repair the mess left after widespread academic fraud will be subjected to four main consequences—sanctions, stakeholder separation, reform policies, and managing multiple roles. These consequences result in coaches experiencing various harmful outcomes—negative reputation, recruiting challenges, disrupted team dynamics, anger, stress, distress, conflict, insular behaviors, and micromanagement—that causes extensive forms of and ongoing suffering. In general, the consequences restrict a staff from effectively carrying out their roles and responsibilities and cause adversarial relationships, while the recruiting sanctions primarily severely restrict the long term growth and development of a program. Repairing corruption's mayhem is understood as a long process requiring extensive clean-up measures. Effectively managing the various consequences, while also repairing and overcoming the harmful outcomes is a daunting task for the staff to overcome.<sup>12</sup> The suffering experienced during the repair process is most acute in the first two years of the coaching staff's appointment and tends to diminish its intensity over time. The "corruption and its effects nevertheless remain dormant until it is triggered by another event, positive or negative, (such as NCAA tournament appearance, recruiting an impact player, firing of a coach, negative media, or poor team record), which causes the suffering to resurface" (Kihl et al., 2008, p. 283). Next this theory of coaches' suffering is combined with our theory of student-athletes suffering to formulate a general theory of team personnel's suffering and dealing with academic corruption.

## **A Theory of Suffering and Academic Corruption**

The environment where corruption occurs, along with the type of corruption displayed, produces specific consequences for organizational stakeholders not involved in the malfeasance activities (Luo, 2004). In particular, in the context of intercollegiate athletics and the occurrence of extreme academic fraud team personnel (i.e., student-athletes and coaches) who were not involved in the corruption are subject to, and endure, enormous and assorted forms of suffering that is produced by various consequences and subsequent harmful outcomes. The respective consequences and harmful outcomes on team personnel are depicted in Figure 2.<sup>13</sup> The nature and degree of suffering experienced will vary in relation to one's role on the team, time elapsed after the corruption is exposed, who initiated the suffering, and the various consequences of the corruption itself. The players and coaching staff will generally experience distinctive consequences (e.g., players—negative treatment, and loss [Kihl et al., 2008]); coaching staff—stakeholder separation, reform policies, and managing multiple roles). These consequences however, appear to produce both similar forms of suffering as reported in Kihl et al. (i.e., distrust, anger, conflict, disrupted team dynamics, and stress) and unique forms of suffering (e.g., players experience devastation, embarrassment, ostracism, feelings of discomfort, stereotyping, pain, and disappointment); where coaches experience associative guilt, insular behavior, micromanagement, and a lack of





**Figure 2** — A theory of suffering and academic corruption.

accountability. For example, on the one hand, the coaches experienced stakeholder separation where different university units and players showed a reluctance to trust the MBB staff, which can lead to stress and dysfunctional team dynamics. On the other hand, the players received negative treatment because of associative guilt—“you are all cheaters”—which leads to embarrassment and anger (Kihl et al., 2008, p. 285).

In general, sanctions and media scrutiny will affect both stakeholder groups; however the penalties and public examination will impact them both through different means, which subsequently generates contrasting forms of suffering. “The suffering is most acute at the exposure of the academic fraud and during the subsequent 12-24 months” (Kihl et al., 2008, p. 283). In time, the “intensity of the anguish felt by the athletes dissipates” and to some degree the coaching staff’s lessens; however, the consequences of corruption (i.e., negative treatment, stakeholder separation, and reform policies) appear to linger well into the postcorruption period where the coaches and players will continue to experience distrust, ostracism, and embarrassment. While individuals are able to cope and deal with their suffering, it appears that coaching staff hired to fix the mess can never restore the program to its original health.

## Conclusion

In summary, this article presented a second grounded theory explaining how individuals who are hired with the responsibility of mending the damage following academic fraud within an intercollegiate MBB program will experience several



challenges that lead to various forms and degrees of emotional suffering. A general theory of team personnel suffering was also posed. Suffering is the core category that derives from the consequences and harmful outcomes related to academic corruption. The major categories in this theory can be interpreted as a tentative means for informing athletic administrators of the potential consequences and harmful outcomes that can be expected when a new coaching staff is brought in to manage a postcorruption program. Further research of this theory is warranted to expand on our concepts. Thus it is recommended that future empirical investigations examine how different types of corruption affect sport organizational stakeholders as well as how specific types of corruption affect individuals in various sport programs.

## Notes

1. In this article, the terms coaches and coaching staff refers to the head coach and his three assistant coaches.
2. The grounded theory presented in this article was developed from one empirical study that used the same literature and research design written in Kihl et al. (2008), thus we have chosen to provide a brief overview of the related literature, research design, and research context.
3. Elimination of 6 scholarships from 2000 to 2004 academic years; reduction in the number of in-person recruiting contacts for each prospect from 5 to 4 until 2003; limitation of official visits from 12 to 6 and home visits from 5 to 4 from 2000 to 2004; loss of 25% of off-season evaluation days from 2000 to 2004; restricting the number of coaches on the road recruiting at one time from 3 to 2; and expungement of results and records of the tournament teams of 1994, 1995, 1997, and 1999 seasons (NCAA Infractions Committee, 2000). A detailed account of the Minnesota case is outlined in Kihl et al. (2008).
4. A detailed list of NCAA and institutional penalties is listed in the NCAA Infractions Committee Report (2002) and in Kihl et al. (2008).
5. The new assistant was hired as a result of one of the assistants accepting a head coaching position at another Division I institution.
6. In 2002, the women's basketball program committed major NCAA violations pertaining to extra benefits, recruiting, ethical conduct, and institutional control where, in addition to specific program sanctions, the NCAA extended the University's overall probationary period for an additional two years (NCAA Infractions Committee, 2002).
7. The majority of the participants were male, however the females interviewed included two faculty, three athletic administrators, and two ACSS staff.
8. "The stepfather syndrome is defined as athletes losing their coach (father figure) and having to deal with a "stepfather" (the replacement coach) and his children (new coaches' recruits)" (Kihl et al., 2008, p. 291).
9. Unfortunately, the University of Minnesota has a history of scandals. Between 1969 and 2006 the institution was involved in eight NCAA major infractions cases (NCAA, 2006).
10. Image punishment refers to the negative impact that corruption has on an organization's reputation. Justice punishment in this paper means the fairness of the penalty imposed based on the corrupt activity (i.e.,s) committed.
11. An evolutionary hazard is a long term effect of corruption in terms of obstructing form growth and business development, mainly in terms of risk effect, cost effect, punishment effect and image effect (Luo, 2004).

12. Ten years postcorruption, the Minnesota MBB team had their worst record in the history of the program with a record of 9–21 (Campbell, 2007). The head coach resigned seven games into the 2006–2007 season (Katz, 2007). A high profile coach was hired in March 2007 to rebuild the program (University of Minnesota, 2007a, 2007b).
13. Combined Kihl et al. (2008) with current work.

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