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Mind Over Matter or Matter Over Mind: How Potential Role Conflict Affects the Psychological
Well-Being of College Student-Athletes

by

Jamie Bigby

Under the Direction of Tomeka Davis, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2021

ABSTRACT

Student-athletes have two priorities during their time in college. As a student receiving an education and an athlete that competes for the institution. The demands of the two roles have the potential for the student-athlete to experience role conflict. According to Hurley (1993), role conflict develops when two or more roles produce differing demands on a person to the extent that the individual is unable to effectively fulfill one or all roles. Role conflict can cause many problems for the individual that experiences it. One of the negative outcomes of a person perceiving role conflict in two or more of their roles is to their mental health (Brookins 2018). The objective for conducting this research study is to definitively parse out whether NCAA Division I college student-athletes experience role conflict and whether role conflict negatively impacts the psychological well-being of student-athletes.

INDEX WORDS: Role-Identity Saliency, Role Conflict, Student-Athlete, Psychological Well-Being

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2021

Mind Over Matter or Matter Over Mind: How Potential Role Conflict Affects the Psychological
Well-Being of College Student-Athletes

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August 2021

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, whom have always encouraged and supported me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to my Committee Chair, Dr. Tomeka Davis, for her direction and mentorship that has guided me through my graduate school experience. Thank you to Dr. Ainsworth and Dr. Reitzes for their work as committee members and reliable advisors.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The term, “student-athlete”, was coined in the early 1950’s by the first executive director of the NCAA, Walter Byer. The term was created to promote amateurism in college athletics. The term also served as a benefit to the NCAA and its member institutions in two ways because of its vague definition. College athletes were not just students participating in extracurricular activities, which would devalue their athletic responsibilities. Similarly, college athletes were not only full-time competitors at collegiate institutions, which would suggest that they were professional athletes for hire (Branch 2011). Even though the term was created to be intentionally ambiguous in nature, the NCAA (2017) outlined their definition of what is expected of student-athletes:

“Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an **avocation**, and student athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises (National Collegiate Athletic Association 2017:4).”

According to the NCAA, the premise of college athletics is supposed to be secondary to the college athlete’s academic experience. However, the NCAA expectations for student-athlete’s role in college athletics differs at the institutional and team level. Instead of a one-sided commitment towards their academic role as the NCAA preaches, student-athletes are expected to give equal, and in some instances even more, attention to their athletic role (Adler and Adler 1987). Many studies have focused on the relationship between athletic participation and academic achievement of student-athletes on the college level (Comeaux and Harrison 2011; Foster and Huml 2017; Harmon 2010; Lomax 2000; Rische 2003). Researchers have drawn mixed conclusions on the effect of the academic and athletic roles of student-athletes. Results of some studies have found that athletic participation has improved the academic achievement and

college experience of student-athletes (Coakley 2001; Curry and Weaner 1987). Others have concluded that athletic participation has a negative effect on academic achievement (Lally and Kerr 2005; Sack 2001; Sack and Thiel 1985; Sellers 1992). The present study is deviating from emphasis on how athletic participation affects academic achievement. The focus of the thesis is directed to whether college student-athletes' salience to their academic role-identity or athletic role-identity is more likely to cause them to perceive *role conflict* between the two role-identities. The perceived role-conflict of a college student-athlete has the potential to result in negative impacts on their psychological well-being. The study also examines the effect of salience of student athletes' role-identities by race and gender on the probability that a student-athlete will experience role conflict between their academic and athletic roles.

1.1 Background

Previous literature on role theory focused on the structural socialization of individuals that ascribe to a role or roles that shape their personal sense of meaning, resolve, and behavior. Researchers argue that each person has a role in society that is given to them based on the social group or organization that they are a part of (Getzels, Campbell, and Lipham 1968; Getzels and Guba 1957). Each role comes with demands and expectations that prescribe norms for role actors to carry out and conform to. For example, the role given to police officers is to serve and protect the community that they are a part of. The expectation is that the police officers will carry out their duties according to the law of the society and have the authority to uphold the law. Symbolic Interactionists disagreed with the notion that people did not have a choice in which social roles that they ascribe to (Biddle 1986). Researchers reconciled this issue with the introduction of *identity salience*. As people interact within a role or group, they internalize positional designations that signifies an individual's involvement in that role. This process is

known as the forming of an *identity* (Stryker and Serpe 1982). The active self is the organizing of a person's shared identities from interacting in roles in society. These shared identities are organized into a salience hierarchy that is dependent on an individual's perception of centrality, which is prominence or importance, of the person's identities in a variety of situations. The position of the identity within the hierarchy is considered the identity's salience to enact a particular behavior that aligns with that identity in a situation. Identity salience is defined as the probabilities of an individual invoking each of the different identities within a social role or situation. Through this process, an individual controls how they will identify within a role and influences how they perform certain roles (Stryker and Serpe 1994). McCall and Simmons (1978) and Callero (1985) employed the term, role-identity, to describe the close relationship of role and identity. The concept of role-identity differs from the classical framing of role in that it is not restricted to social expectations within a group. Role-identity also varies from identity in that it represents "an objective social position within a role and cannot be pure subjective experiences (Callero 1985)." Even though researchers have outlined the slight nuance between identity and role-identity, the way that both terms have been operationalized, in relation to salience, is the same. For this thesis, role-identity will be the term used to describe student-athletes' various identities that have the potential to be invoked within situations related to their academic and athlete roles.

A high school sport coach is an example of an individual with multiple role-identities in one job. High school coaches are typically required to coach a sports team and work as faculty member that teaches a class for the school. The role-identity salience of the high school coach towards the coach and faculty member role can affect the role-identity and behaviors invoked by the high school coach in role-related situations. In terms of student-athletes, two role-identities

that are typically invoked are academically and athletically based. The academic role requires student-athletes to stay academically eligible, based on the standards of the NCAA and the member institution the student-athlete competes for. To achieve this, student-athletes require time to study, attend classes, complete assignments for their courses, and other tasks. The athletic role of student-athletes is to compete for their respective sports team at an elevated level. Student-athletes participate in practices, weight-training, and other ventures to improve the athletic prowess, as well as intercollegiate competitions. Both roles that student-athletes must balance demand a vast amount of time and labor. Role-identity salience in favor of one role can diminish the time devoted to and achievement in the other role. Since student-athletes need to be successful in their academics to be eligible to participate in their respective sport, this can result in *role conflict*. Role conflict is the discord that develops when two or more roles produce contrary obligations on a person to the extent that the individual is unable to effectively carry out one or all roles (Hurley 1993). Role conflict can potentially have a negative impact on the psychological well-being of student-athletes. Brookins (2018) outlined the various outcomes of role conflict within a organization. One of the outcomes was related to an individual becoming stressed after becoming frustrated with their work (Brookins 2018). If a student athlete perceives that there is role conflict between their athletic and academic roles, the psychological well-being of the individual may decline.

The race and gender of student-athletes have also played a part in affecting the role-identity salience of student-athletes to their academic and athletic roles. The impact of race and gender on student-athlete role-identity salience to academics and athletics vary and intersect depending on the demographic of the student-athlete. Sport has generally been socially appropriated as a male activity. As a result of the implementation of Title IX, female

participation in sports throughout the United States has increased exponentially since the 1970s. However, female athletes have faced social stigmas that attack their femininity and overall athletic capability compared to men (Lance 2004; Sage and Loudermilk 1979). For many African-American, male student-athletes, they have been socialized since high school to prioritize athletics over academics (Benson 2000). A portion of this socialization is related to the stereotype that the physical prowess of African American athletes has affected what sports and positions they are concentrated in. African American student-athletes account for the majority of individuals that participate in revenue-generating sports in college athletics, such as football and basketball. The demand that revenue-generating sports place on student-athletes to compete requires an increased amount of commitment to the athletic role (Adler and Adler 1991). Because of this, African American student-athletes that participate in these sports may demonstrate greater salience to their athletic role-identity.

This research will make a number of theoretical and policy contributions to the field of social psychology, higher education, and college athletics. The intent of the NCAA for student-athlete's experience in college athletics is for their athletic role to act as a secondary support for their academic role. Conducting this research can act as a determinant on whether the organization's intentions are being realized from the student-athlete's perspective. The findings will also shed light on the potential negative effects on the psychological well-being of student-athletes that may develop from potential conflicts bred from performing the duties of two demanding roles.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Role Theory

Classical role theory is aligned with structural functionalist theory of the 1950s.

According to Parsons and Shils (1951), a role is a set of behaviors expected of an individual who holds a certain status within a social group or an organization within society. These roles come with expectations, which are actions or characteristics, that are to be carried out by an individual. When the person enacts these expectations, the individual is performing their role. An example of this would be a teacher. To perform their role as a teacher, the individual is expected to impart knowledge to their students and be the authority in their classroom. The behavior of the teacher should show their ability to teach and lead their students. When students misbehave during a class lecture, teachers are expected to resolve the situation through disciplinary actions or other methods to regain control of the classroom. The classical interpretation of role theory surmised that social groups and society in general rigidly dictated the behavior of individuals. In turn, the extent of an individual's agency, which is the ability of individual to act according to their own free will, was limited. Under this assumption, there was a one-way determination of action between the individual and the role that they were performing, in which they were influenced only by the roles they have within society (Biddle 1986). Nelson Foote (1951) argued that the one-dimensional interaction lacked the motivation of the individual to continue the behavior of performing their role. Even though individuals are influenced by the roles they perform in society, people also choose the extent to which they carry out their role.

2.2 Symbolic Interactionism and Role-Identity Salience

Classical role theory explicitly addressed the effect that social structures had on the individual but failed to examine how the individual chooses which roles to ascribe to. Classical role theory also fell short in explaining the extent to which the individual can contribute to the relationship with the role they are performing. Symbolic Interactionism's contribution to role theory is shown through development of the active self in the individual, which gives the individual more social agency and choice in forming a personal role-identity while performing their role (Biddle 1986). Just as identities are formed within performing various roles, the active-self forms by taking the collection of various role-identities to shape a shared social meaning (Stryker and Serpe 1994). Before understanding the extent to which the self develops in an individual and how it affects the roles they perform, one must understand how social interaction is "meaningful" and how people apply this meaning to themselves and the social world around them.

George Herbert Mead (1934) contended that people do not causally interact with the environment around them but apply meaning to things through the activity of problem-solving. The activity of problem-solving is the way individuals assume that an object or person will function. Each interaction or observation a person has with another person or object teaches them how the best way to interact with them (Mead 1934). For example, a student-athlete will learn how to speak to one of their teammates through past conversation and interactions they have had. If the student-athlete is meeting their teammate for the first time, the student-athlete would draw on past interactions with individuals that resemble their teammate as guidance for the current interaction. This ongoing activity prompts individuals to anticipate how they will act when interacting with other people or the physical environment around them. This anticipation is

moderated by individuals utilizing verbal, physical, or other actions to communicate with each other in their interaction. Through this process, we come to learn who other people and objects are based on what we learn from the social encounter with them. A person also develops their own sense of identity by discerning through the same social process. An individual can learn how to interact with another person or object through previous interactions but can choose to interact with them in a new way. With these multiple interactions, a person can develop an identity or identities that cater to the role or social group they are interacting in (Stryker and Serpe 1982).

The concept of the active self was described by Mead (1934) as a social process of formulating who and what we are through meaningful social interaction with other individuals. By role-playing, the individual begins to take on the attitudes and perspectives of the specific others in the role. The specific others are human beings that are also participating in the role. For student-athletes, this process would entail the role taking of other teammates and operating in a similar fashion to them to for a self-meaning with that role. However, this does not complete the process of an individual establishing the self. Mead explains that a person must also take on the perspective of the generalized other. The generalized other is the overarching social activity that the people carrying out the role participate in. The individual establishes the self by taking on the perspectives of the generalized other. In terms of student-athletes, college athletics as a social system has certain behaviors, expectations, and attitudes that are associated with participating in it (Mead 1934). In this instance, college athletics would be considered the generalized other. Individuals establish the self by internalizing the perspective of the generalized other in a role, but the individual also chooses how to interact in the role through the active self. Through establishing the active self, an individual has the capability of reflexive thought and self-

motivated action without a one-dimensional influence from their roles in society. Reflexive thought is the process of critically thinking of the experience and identities presented to an individual in society. The individual adjusts to social experiences in the future depending on the role-identity they choose to align with during interactions (Mead 1934). Because of this, an individual can formulate their own role-identity and actively affect the social structure they are performing their role in. A person can affect the social structure of a role by imbuing it with personal and subjective self-meanings that are significant to the individual (Stryker, Serpe, and Hunt 2005).

Role-identity salience has been used by researchers to measure the probability of a role-identity of being invoked within a role or social situation (Stryker 1968; Stryker and Serpe 1982). Callero (1985) applies the terms salience, importance, and prominence interchangeably to describe the representativeness of a role-identity in relation to the self as a means to show the significance of role-identity salience to the behavioral notions of blood donors (Callero 1985:204). McCall and Simmons (1978) also theorize a similar correlation between prominence of a role-identity to the behavioral outcome of an individual. Researchers have documented the application of role-identity salience to behavioral decisions, such as the amount of discretionary time a person dedicates to roles (Stryker and Serpe 1982) or to activities related to given roles (Nuttbrock and Freudiger 1991).

2.3 Role Conflict

Role Conflict is the issue that develops when two or more roles produce differing impositions on a person to the extent that the individual is incapable of effectively fulfilling one or all roles (Kahn et al. 1964). Role conflict can cause various problems for the individual that experiences it. Rizzo et al. (1970) stated that, “when the behaviors expected of an individual are

inconsistent (one kind of role conflict) he will experience stress, become dissatisfied, and perform less effectively than if the expectations imposed on him did not (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970:191).” Rizzo et al. employed a role stressor scale to measure the level of stress an individual can experience when working for an organization that does not clearly express what an individual’s role in the organization entails. The researchers found that there was a positive correlation between role conflict and anxiety of workers (Rizzo et al. 1970). Scholars have found that role conflict can have adverse effects stemming from stress for people that experience it, such as mental health problems, headaches, loss of appetite or overeating, and loss of sleep (Brookins 2018). Laura Hecht (2001) examined gender differences in psychological well-being of women and men who associate the roles of parent, spouse, and worker together. Hecht found that the individuals that perceived feelings of role conflict in their lives showed a decrease in psychological well-being.

Role Conflict Theory also states that an individual must realize that there is a conflict between the set roles that are given in the group that the person ascribes to in order for there to be role conflict (Kahn & Katz, 1978). Even though the definition of role conflict suggests that an individual must have multiple roles for role conflict to occur, individuals vary in the degree in which they perceive the roles as different. Settles et al. (2002) examined the cases of married mothers as an example. The scholars described how a married woman with children may observe their roles as a mother and wife as two distinct roles, while another married mother may see the duties associated with a mother and wife as part of her singular family role (Settles et al.2002). Even though the argument can be made that being a student-athlete would be considered as one role for an individual, the individual can perceive their academic and athletic normative duties as two separate roles. The shared attention that both roles demand requires psychological and time-

based resources. The level of attentiveness that the individual displays between the academic and athletic roles can determine whether the perception of role conflict will develop or not.

2.3.1 Role Conflict and the Student-Athlete

The academic role and athletic role for student-athletes have various normative duties that conflict with each other. Accommodations are often made for student-athletes to remedy potential conflict between their academic and athletic roles. For example, the athletic department of NCAA member institutions typically have academic advisors and academic support to help student-athletes alleviate academic woes that may hinder their eligibility (Moses and Rubin 2017). The NCAA also placed limitations on the amount of time per week college student-athletes are allowed to spend in mandatory sports activities. The limitations are twenty hours during the competition season and eight hours during the off-season (National Collegiate Athletic Association 2017). However, the expectations of student-athletes sway towards the athletic role. Simon et al. (2007) discussed the significant amount of time that athletics demands of student-athletes. Even though the NCAA made regulations against coaches punishing their athletes for missing athletic functions for academic reasons, student-athletes still felt pressures to choose their athletic engagements over their academics. Student-athletes skipped class or opted to take make-exams to make time for their athletic engagements. The culture of intercollegiate athletics, especially on the Division I level, places an expectation on student athletes to apply a larger commitment to their athletic role than to their academic role. This has the potential to negatively impact their academic performance (Simons et al. 2007). Over time, the demand that college athletics has exerted on student-athletes has increased. During the 1970's, watching game film and weight training started to integrate into the routine of student-athletes (Oriard 2012:12). Even though the amount of time spent in a role does not lead to increased commitment or role-

identity salience, greater salience to a role-identity does have an effect on the amount of time an individual will spend interacting with others in or engaging in activities related to that role (Stryker and Serpe 1982, 1994). Scholars have found that student-athletes develop strong athletic identities that impact the emphasis they put into their college life (Adler and Adler 1987, 1991; Lally and Kerr 2005). The potential problem that can occur when two or more roles have differing expectations is role conflict.

One way the realization of role conflict for student-athletes between their athletic and academic roles occurs when the student-athlete must balance their academic and athletic schedules. The student-athlete must dedicate structured time for academics (classes, tutoring, meetings) and athletics (practices, weight training, competitions, rehab). The conflict occurs when scheduled duties for both roles overlap. The conflict that is created by the level of salience to their academic and athletic role-identities can have consequences that affect student-athlete's performances in both domains. Individuals may either fail to meet the expectations of both academic and athletic roles or devote energy toward and identify with one role, while consequently neglecting the other role (Figone 1994). Sack and Thiel (1985) conducted a national survey of collegiate basketball players analyzing conditions that cause role conflict in student-athletes. The primary factors they found that increased role conflict for student-athletes were NCAA division, gender of the student-athlete, hours committed to basketball related activities, scholarship status, and coach's demands. This study sought to expand on the subject of student-athlete's perception of role conflict in relation to all NCAA sports.

2.4 Race and Gender's Effect on Student-Athlete's Role Conflict

Race and gender are social structures that stratify individuals in society based on socially constructed ideologies regarding skin color and sex or gender identity (Omi and Winant 2015; Stoller 1968). Gender role is the social construction of behaviors, presentation of self, and identity of individuals in society that is expected, but not limited, of being male or female (Kessler and McKenna 1985). In society, behavior is shaped by gender norms of men and women. These norms and expectations are referred to as “masculinity”, for gender roles associated with males in a society, and “femininity”, which are gender roles associated with females in a society (Stoller 1968). Race is a social construction of categories that a society deems socially significant physical characteristics. Even though skin color and other physical characteristics are used to determine an individual's race, the classification of racial categories change over time. The unstable characterization of race in society allows for the expectations and norms for racial groups to change over time (Omi and Winant 2015).

2.4.1 Gender

The impact of social structure on sport and gender roles influences student-athletes in different ways. Sport is stereotyped and emphasized as a “masculine” activity, that helps to further socialize participants to male role norms and expectations (Coakley 2001). In recent years, female athletes have garnered more visibility, better-quality training and facilities. In spite of these long-overdue developments, female athletes still receive a litany of unclear messages of their involvement in athletics (Steinfeldt et al. 2011). The concept of gender role conflict is the perception of incompatibility between a person's gender roles that have a negative impact on the individual or on others. Gender role conflict arises when “rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles

result in restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self.” (O’Neil 2008:362). Male and female experiences with gender role conflict in sports vary.

For male athletes, gender role conflict is associated with the stigmatization of seeking help from others. Research has shown that men are less likely to seek professional psychological and physical help than women. Male student-athletes may signify a group that embraces negative views about seeking professional psychological help (Steinfeldt et al. 2009). Watson (2005) concluded that, when compared to college students, male student-athletes reported significantly lower affinity to seek professional help for their psychological well-being. Gender role conflict for female athletes is related to the perception that female athletes have to wrestle with the male gender role norms that are imposed by participating in sport, while maintaining gender role expectation that associated with traditional femininity (Steinfeldt et al. 2011). Female student-athletes tend to outpace male student-athletes in their academic achievement, such as test scores and overall GPA, and graduate at higher rates (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2012; Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999; Snyder, 1996). Female student-athletes still commit to excellence athletically during their collegiate athletic years. However, the tendency to have greater salience to their academic role-identities may take away from their emphasis on their athletic roles.

2.4.2 Race

Race plays a part in how student-athletes are socialized in college athletics. In the United States, racial stereotypes related to the physical prowess of African American athletes encourage young Black men to channel their energies into sports. Moreover, there is an additional stereotype is that African America athletes do not have the intellectual acumen to play more “cerebral” sports or playing position and are more suited to physical, skill-based positions

(Eitzen and Sage 2003). This racial stereotype within sports exacerbates the identity threat linked to the cultural stereotype that is associated to student-athletes, the “dumb-jock” stereotype.

Identity threat is the distress an individual experience in circumstances where their social group is marginalized, undervalued, or stereotyped in a disparaging way. The “dumb-jock” stereotype insinuates that student-athletes are less academically prepared, less academically motivated, and lower academic achievement compared to traditional college students. The acceptance of this racial stereotype can affect how salient they are to their academic role-identity. Harrison et al. (2009) conveyed how identity threat can have a negative effect on the psychological well-being of the individuals who the stereotype is directed towards:

“However, recent research indicates that targets do not need to interact with a biased individual for negative stereotypes to have a powerful debilitating effect on behavior. According to the theoretical framework guiding research on stereotype or identity threat (e.g., Steele, 1997; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002), when a negative stereotype about a group becomes salient as the criteria for evaluating performance, individual group members may become concerned that their performance will confirm the validity of the negative stereotype. The increased concern imposed by the identity threat adds an additional psychological burden to the task, which in turn reduces an individual’s ability to perform up to their potential (Harrison et al. 2009:80).”

There is an emphasis on athletics in NCAA Division I institutions due to the prevalence of revenue-generating opportunities for Division I Football and Men’s Basketball teams. The greater opportunity for monetary gain for these sports increases the expectations for student-athletes competing in these sports to perform well. African American student-athletes are highly represented in these sports (Hawkins & Lanter, 2013; McCormick & McCormick, 2006). According to Sack and Thiel, Division I college basketball male athletes have more of an issue reconciling their academic and athletic roles than athletes in other collegiate sports. Their research indicated that African American basketball student-athletes have a stronger athletic identity compared to their White counterparts (Sack and Thiel 1985). Harrison et al. (2013)

investigated the perceptions of Black and White intercollegiate football players on their racial and athletic identities. Harrison et al. found that, “African American student-athletes were more internally focused on their sport, felt that others perceive them only as athletes, and saw sport as the focal point in their lives” (Harrison Jr. et al. 2013). The increased necessity for student-athletes that compete in high revenue-generating sports to focus on their athletic role also shifts the level of commitment that student-athletes put into the role. The disproportionate amount of African American student-athletes in these sports may influence the likelihood of them being greater salience to their athletic role-identity and potentially experiencing role conflict.

3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The objective for conducting this research study is to definitively parse out whether NCAA Division I college student-athletes perceive role conflict between their academic and athletic role-identities. This thesis will seek to expound on this topic by exploring the following research questions:

1. Do student-athletes display greater salience towards their athletic or academic role-identities?
2. Do student-athletes that have greater salience to their academic role-identity or athletic role-identity spend more time in the role they show greater salience to?
3. Do student-athlete have a greater chance of perceiving role conflict depending on race and/or gender?
4. Do student-athletes that have greater salience to the athletic role-identity more likely to perceive role conflict than student-athletes that have greater salience to their academic role-identity?

5. Are student-athletes that display greater salience to their athletic role-identity than their academic role-identity more likely to report that their participation in college athletics has negatively affected their psychological well-being or vice versa?

I hypothesize that college student-athletes who have greater salience to their athletic role-identity are more likely to experience role conflict and mental health problems, such as stress, than student-athletes that have greater salience to their academic role-identity. The reasoning for this hypothesis is based on the requirements for being able to effectively perform the duties associated with the academic and athletic roles. For a student-athlete that demonstrates greater salience towards their academic role-identity, their achievement in their athletics does not affect their ability to carry out their academic role. For example, losing a game for their sports team will not affect their ability to participate in class. For a student-athlete that show greater salience to the athletic role-identity, the amount of discretionary time and achievement in their academic role does affect their ability to carry out their athletic role. If a student-athlete does not meet the academic standard set by the NCAA and their respective university, then the student-athlete will be unable to participate in their athletic role. Role conflict comes into play when the demands for both the academic and athletic start to overlap or contradict each other. Student-athletes are faced with the decision to have to choose to prepare for either role over the other. A student-athlete that displays greater salience to their academic role-identity will choose their academic scheduling over their athletic engagements. A student-athlete that demonstrates greater salience to their athletic role-identity will have to compromise more to fulfill the expectations that are placed on them from their academic and athletic engagements.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample and Data Analysis

To measure how role conflict affects student-athletes' psychological well-being, I utilized variables from the 2006 GOALS (Growth, Opportunity, Aspirations and Learning of Students in College) dataset conducted by Thomas Paskus of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The 2006 GOALS survey was administered to all college student-athletes at NCAA member institutions throughout the United States during the 2005-2006 academic school year. Even though the NCAA has conducted G.O.A.L.S surveys in later years, the 2006 G.O.A.L.S survey is the only version that contains a question that asked student-athletes about their psychological well-being. The study had a sample size of 19,967 student-athletes from 609 NCAA institutions across 24 NCAA sanctioned sports. The survey instrument for the GOALS study asked student-athletes question pertaining to academic engagement and success, athletics experiences, social experiences, career aspirations, health and well-being, campus and team climate, and time commitments (Paskus 2006).

4.2 Variables

I use three dependent variables. The first dependent variable, time in role, is a composite variable that consists of questions that ask student-athletes about the mandatory and discretionary time that they devote to activities related to their academic and athletic roles. I created this composite variable using questions related to academic and athletic time commitments during the season and offseason from Part 6 of the Time Commitment section of the GOALS survey. The time in role variable is the difference in the total number of hours the respondent reported engaging in academic activities minus the total numbers of hours in athletic activities (Paskus 2006). The difference in the allotted amount of time was recoded to indicate whether they spent

more time in activities in their athletic role, (1) *Athletic Time*, in activities in their academic role, (2) *Academic Time*, or the same amount of time engaging in activities for both, (3) *Same Time*. The second dependent variable, Role Conflict for Student-Athletes, is a composite variable that combines questions four, five, and seven from Part 4 of the Student-Athlete Experience section of the 2006 G.O.A.L.S Survey. The questions for this dependent variable focused on student-athlete's perceptions of whether their participation in athletics interfered with progress in their academics or not. The questions asked student-athletes whether their athletic participation prevented them from choosing certain majors, prevented them from taking particular courses, and affected their overall GPA. The original coding for the answer choices were (1) no, (2) yes, but I currently do not have regrets, and (3), yes, and I currently do have regrets. The merging of the three questions into the scale gave a range of 3.00 – 9.00. Student-athletes that reported a 3.00 did not perceive role conflict, 4.00-6.00 perceived role conflict as positive, and 7.00 – 9.00 perceived role conflict as negative. For the third dependent variable, I use a variable that assesses the psychological well-being of student-athletes. Specifically, this question asked student athletes about the effect that athletic participation had on their mental health. The psychological well-being question used a seven-point Likert scale as answer choices with the range (1) *Very Negative* to (7) *Very Positive*.

The primary independent variable, Academic versus Athletic Role-Identity Salience of Student-Athletes, is a scale variable that consists of questions from the 2006 GOALS survey that ask student-athletes subjects related to salience to their academic and athletic role-identities. Stryker and Serpe (1994) measured role-identity salience by asking college students about “subjective estimates of behavior that would take place in described circumstances (Stryker and Serpe 1994:26).” Here, the questions that I use from the G.O.A.L.S survey measure role-identity

saliency for student-athletes are a composite of responses from questions that focused on the student-athlete's decisions to invoke behaviors related to their academic or athletic role-identities (Paskus 2006). The composite is comprised of three items from the survey that were measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Table 1 outlines the questions that were used for scale. The responses for Questions 12a and 12b in Part 4: Student Athlete's Experience were reversed coded to keep a consistent line of reasoning for student-athletes display greater saliency to their academic and athletic role identities. The combination of the three items gave the scale the range from 3.00 – 18.00 with lower scores indicating saliency to their athletic role identity and higher scores indicating saliency to their academic role-identity. The Role-Identity Saliency Scale was recoded into a dichotomous variable based on the overall score of the scale, (1) *Athletic Role-Identity Saliency*, (2) *Academic Role-Identity Saliency*. In addition to these dependent and independent variables, I use race and gender as well as a set of control variables that include scholarship status (full or partial), primary sport (Basketball, Football, Baseball, or other), whether the students were at a Division I, II, or III school, and year/classification. Table 1 provides a more in-depth description of the survey items that were used to create the variables for analysis.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	<u>Variable</u>	<u>G.O.A.L.S Question</u>	<u>Scaling</u>
<u>I.V.</u>	Gender	Part 7: Background Information Question 2 - “what is your gender?”	Male (1); Female (2)
	Race	Part 7: Background Information Question 4 - “how do you describe yourself?”	White (1); Black (2); Other (3)
	Role-Identity Saliency of Student-Athletes (Role_Identity_Saliency)	<p>Part 4: Student-Athlete Experience Question 1 - (Statement 1d.) “I spend more time thinking about my sport than academics”</p> <p>Question 12 - (Statement 12a.) “I would have gone to a 4-year college somewhere even if I hadn’t been an athlete.” and (Statement 12b.) “I would be willing to sacrifice my athletics participation for academics.”</p>	<p>The scale will be based on the 18 answer choices for Questions 1d, 12a, and 12b.</p> <p>1d. Strongly agree (1); Agree (2); Somewhat Agree (3); Somewhat Disagree (4); Disagree (5); Strongly Disagree (6)</p> <p>12a. Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Somewhat Disagree (3); Somewhat agree (4); Agree (5); Strongly Agree (6)</p> <p>12b. Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Somewhat Disagree (3); Somewhat agree (4); Agree (5); Strongly Agree (6)</p>
<u>D.V.</u>	Time in Role	<p>Part 6: Time Commitment Question 1 and 2 – (Question 1) “While school was in session during the season, picture the weekday (Monday to Friday) that most felt like your ‘typical’ day on campus. On that day, how many hours did you spend on each of the following activities?”</p> <p>(Question 2) “While school was in session during your season, picture what your weekends were like. In total (that is, adding up your commitments for Saturday and Sunday), how many hours did you spend on each of the following activities during a typical weekend on campus?”</p>	<p>The answer choices for student-athletes in Question 1 are based on number of hours spent doing an activity ranging from 0 hours (0) to 8+ hours (8)</p> <p>The scale for Question 2 is 0 hours (0), 1-2 hours (1), 3-4 hours (2), 5-6 hours (3), 7-8 hours (4), 9-10 hours (5), 11-12 hours (6), 13-14 hours (7), and 15+ hours (8)</p>

	Psychological Well-Being	Part 5: Health and Well Being Question 6 - “How positive or negative has the overall influence of your college athletic participation been on your current mental health?”	Very negative (1); Negative (2); Somewhat negative (3); Neither positive nor negative (4); Somewhat Positive (5); Positive (6); Very positive (7)
	Role Conflict	Part 4: The Student-Athlete Experience Question 5, 6, and 10 - (Question 5) “Has athletics participation prevented you from majoring in what you really want?”, (Question 6) “Has your athletics participation prevented you from taking courses in which you are interested?”, and (Question 10) “Do you believe that your athletics participation has had an effect on your overall grade point average?”	The scale will be based on the 9 answer choices for Questions 5,6, and 10. Question 5: No (1), Yes, but I currently do not have regrets about my choice of major (2), and Yes, and I currently do have regrets about my choice of major (3) Question 6: No (1), Yes, but I currently do not have regrets about those course choices (2), and Yes, and I currently do have regrets about those course choices (3). Question 10: No – I believe sports participation has had no effect on my GPA (1), Yes – I believe that my GPA would be higher if I was not participating in a sport, and Yes – I believe that my GPA would be lower if I was not participating in a sport (3)
<u>Controls</u>	Primary Sport Team	Part 1: College Athletics Experience Question 1 – “What is the main sport that you are currently playing in college?”	(1) Baseball; (2) Football; (3) Basketball; (4) Other Sports
	Scholarship Status	Part 1: College Athletics Experience Question 3 – “This year, did you receive an athletics scholarship of any kind in your sport?”	No Athletic Scholarship (1); Partial Athletic Scholarship (2); Full Athletic Scholarship (3)
	Academic Year	Part 2: College Academic Experience Question 1 – “What is your current academic standing?”	Freshmen (1); Sophomore (2); Junior (3); Senior (4); Graduate Student (5)
	NCAA Division	The division the student-athlete competes in is identified by the institution they attend.	Division I (1); Division II (2); Division III (3)

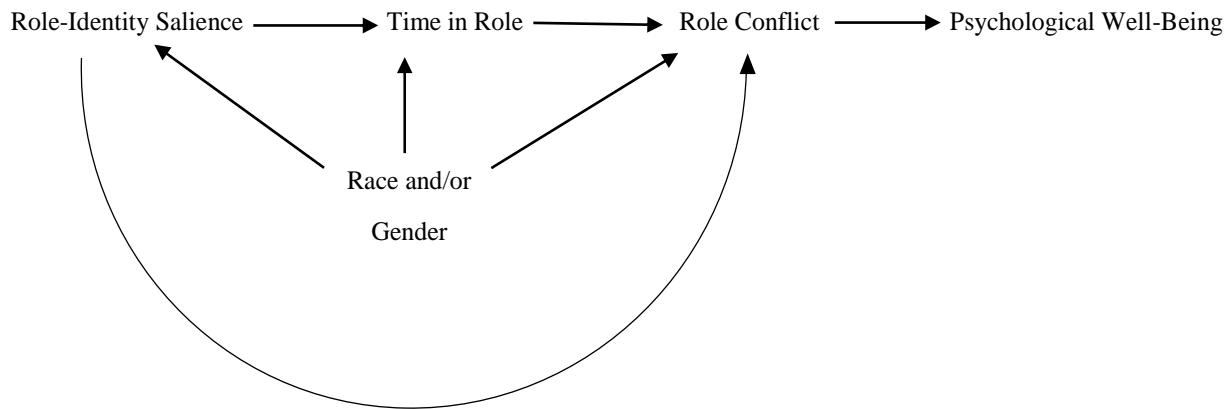


Figure 1: Causal Model

4.3 Methods

First, I composed an analysis of descriptive statistics (Table 2) for a general overview of the student-athlete responses, mean and standard deviation of each variable. Results from the descriptive statistics for the independent variable, Academic or Athletic Role-Identity Saliency of Student-Athletes, will allow me to conclude the salience of collegiate student-athletes and determine the outcome of my first research question. The second research question was addressed using Cross-tabulation with Pearson Chi-Square (Table 3). The statistical analysis will test if there is a statistically significant difference of student-athletes time in academic and athletic roles based on whether they show greater salience to their academic and athletic role-identities. Chi-square is limited in the fact that it only tells us about the significance in the relationship between the two variables, but it is unable to determine how strong the relationship

between the variables were and the type of relationship that that the variables have. For the third and fourth research questions, I employed the multinomial logistic regression (Table 4) as a means to measure the effect that the independent variables, race, gender, and role-identity salience, on the ability of student-athletes to perceive role conflict. To answer the fifth research question, I utilized the ordinary least squares regression (Table 5) to confirm if there is a significant relationship between the effect of student athlete's greater salience to their academic or athletic role-identities and the psychological well-being of the student-athletes. Figure 1 displays the theorized causal model that displays the effects of race, gender, role-identity salience, and Time in role has on a student-athlete's perception on whether their participation in athletics and duties related to their academics creates role conflict. It also shows the theorized affect that each of the variables can have on a student-athlete's psychological well-being. Typically, OLS regression is utilized when the dependent variable that is analyzed is a continuous variable. The psychological well-being variable is considered an ordinal variable based on its categorical answer responses in Likert scale form. However, researchers have concluded that Likert scale ordinal variables that have five or more answer categories can be used as a pseudo-continuous variable that is viable for OLS regression (Artino et al. 2014; Johnson and Creech 1983; Norman 2010).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive and Bivariate Results

Table 2 shows the response rates for each variable by student-athletes as well as the mean and standard deviation for each variable. For the independent variable, Role-Identity Salience, Table 2 shows that 3346 (24.1%) of student-athletes were salient to their Athletic Role-Identity and 10,538 (75.9%) of student-athletes were salient to their Academic Role-Identity. Based on the analysis of the descriptive data, student-athletes overwhelmingly report greater salience to their academic role-identity compared to their athletic role-identities with at least 3/4 of the student-athletes reporting this.

Table 3 is a bivariate table assessing the relationship between student-athlete's salience to their academic or athletic role-identity and the amount of time they spend engaging in activities related to their academic and athletic roles. Table 3 indicates that 7077 (67.1%) of student-athletes salient to their academic role-identity spent more time in their academic role as opposed to 1831 (54.8%) of student-athletes salient to their athletic role-identity spent more time in their athletic role. For the relationship between role-identity salience and Time in Role, the chi-square test resulted in a value of 647.315, which also had a p-value greater than or equal to .000.

5.2 Multinomial Logistic Regression Assessing Role Conflict

I used multinomial logistic regression to measure the effects of race, gender, and role-identity salience have on the perception that student-athletes have of role conflict between their academic and athletic role-identities, if any. Table 4 details estimates from this analysis. As previously stated, I use the variables X, Y, and Z to create a single composite variable to measure role conflict. The composite, as are the variables used to create it, is categorical.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic

Variables		Descriptions	%	Mean
<i>Independent Variables</i>				
Gender	Male		55.6	.44
	Female		44.4	
Race	White		78.3	1.33
	Black		9.9	
	Other		11.8	
Role-Identity Saliency	Athletic Role-Identity Saliency		24.1	.76
	Academic Role-Identity Saliency		75.9	
<i>Dependent Variables</i>				
Time in Role	Spends more time in activities related to Athletic Role-Identity		36.5	1.66
	Spends more time in activities related to Academic Role-Identity		61.3	
Role Conflict	Spends the same amount of time in activities related to both		2.2	
	Student-Athletes perceive no Role Conflict		22.9	1.90
	Student-Athletes perceive Role Conflict as Positive		63.9	
Psychological Well-Being ¹	Student-Athletes perceive Role Conflict as Negative		13.2	
	Student-Athlete's participation effect on their Mental Health			5.51
<i>Controls</i>				
Sports Team	Baseball		11.5	3.26
	Football		12.3	
	Basketball		14.7	
	Other Sport		61.5	
Scholarship	No Scholarship		53.8	1.62
	Partial Scholarship		30.5	
	Full Scholarship		15.7	
Academic Year	Freshmen		29.7	2.32
	Sophomore		26.7	
	Junior		25.9	
	Senior		17.2	
	Graduate Student		0.5	
NCAA Division	D1		37.7	1.97
	D2		27.3	
	D3		35.0	

Note. N=13884. ¹Seven-item Categorical Likert Scale variable ranging from 1 = Very Negative to 7 = Very Positive.

The categories assess whether the student-athlete perceives no conflict between their athletic and academic roles, conflict between their academic and athletic roles as positive, or conflict between their athletic and academic roles as negative. No role conflict was designated as the reference category. The final interpretation model determines which of the independent variables, time in role, and control variables significantly predict whether a student-athlete perceives role conflict, positive or negative, (i.e. the comparison groups) versus perceive no role conflict (i.e. reference group).

Table 3: Cross-Tabulation of Student Athlete Role-Identity Saliency with Time in Role

Time in Role	Role-Identity Saliency of Student-Athletes		
	Athletic Role-Identity Saliency	Academic Role-Identity Saliency	Total
Time in Athletic Role	1831(54.8%)	3241(30.7%)	5072 (36.5%)
Time in Academic Role	1431(42.8%)	7077(67.1%)	8508(61.3%)
Equal Amount of Time in Both Roles	81(2.4%)	223 (2.1%)	304(2.2%)
Total	3343(100.0%)	10541(100.0%)	13884(100.0%)

Note. N=13884. Pearson's Chi-Square = 647.315, p-value \leq .000

First, I wanted to determine if race and gender had a significant effect on student-athletes' perception of role conflict between the academic and athletic role-identities (of course while controlling for other relevant confounders). Compared to no role conflict, the only race or gender category that significantly predicted perceived positive role conflict between academic and athletic roles was being African American (White is the reference), and its value negative ($B = -.260$, S.E. = .078, $p \leq .001$). This indicates that for every 1 unit increase on this variable, the log-odds of African American student-athletes perceiving role conflict as positive (in reference to perceiving no role conflict) is predicted to be .260 units less than White student-athletes. The odds ratio of .771 shows that the odds associated with an African American student-athlete to perceive role conflict as positive was less likely (and more likely to perceive no role conflict) as compared to White student-athletes. With regards to the role conflict perceived as negative section of the multinomial logistic regression table, race and the gender were both statistically significant. African American had a negative value ($B = -.223$, S.E. = .105, $p \leq .05$). This suggests that the log-odds of African American student-athletes perceiving role conflict as negative (in reference to perceiving no role conflict) is predicted to be .223 units less than White student-athletes. The odds ratio of .800 depicts that the odds associated with African American student-athletes to perceive role conflict as negative was less likely (and more likely to perceive no role conflict) as compared to White student-athletes. The Other race category had a positive value ($B = .213$, S.E. = .092, $p \leq .05$). The indication given by the coefficient suggests that the

log-odds of student-athletes designated in the race category of Other perceiving role conflict as negative (in reference to perceiving no role conflict) is predicted to be .213 units more than White student-athletes. The odds ratio indicates that the odds associated with student-athletes designated in the race category of Other were 1.237 times more likely to perceive role conflict as negative (and less likely to perceive no role conflict) than White student-athletes. Gender was positive and the most statistically significant ($B = .266$, $S.E. = .076$, $p \leq .001$) independent variable in the Role Conflict Perceived as Negative section of Table 4. The log-odds of female student-athletes perceiving role conflict as negative is predicted to be .266 units more than White student-athletes. The odds ratio shows that the odds associated with female student-athletes were 1.305 more likely to perceive role conflict as negative (and less likely to perceive no role conflict) than male student-athletes. The results indicate that race and gender do have a statistically significant effect on student-athletes perception on role conflict with controlling for relevant confounders. The effect was more pronounced when accounting for a student-athlete's perception of role conflict being negative.

Table 4 also shows the effect that student-athlete's salience toward their academic and athletic role-identities had on the likelihood that they perceive role conflict between the two role-identities. The role-identity salience predictor was only statistically significant for predicting whether student-athletes perceive role conflict as positive, and its value was negative. The role-identity salience predictor was also negative ($B = -.141$, $S.E. = .053$, $p \leq .01$). The coefficient implies that log-odds of student-athletes that are salient to their academic role-identity perceiving role conflict as positive (in reference to perceiving no role conflict) is predicted to be .141 units less than student-athletes salient to their athletic role-identity. The odds ratio of .869 reveals that the odds associated with student-athletes that were salient to their academic role-identity to

perceive role conflict as positive was less likely (and more likely to not perceive role conflict) in comparison to student-athletes that were salient to their athletic role-identity. This means that student-athletes that show greater salience to their athletic-role identity were more likely to perceive role conflict as positive than student-athletes salient to their academic role-identity.

For the variables (Time in Role, Primary Sport, Scholarship Status, Academic Classification, and Division), the majority of their related categories were statistically significant in both role conflict sections. The only categories that are not statistically significant in both role conflict sections are student-athletes that participated sports in the Other Sports category and graduate students that participated in college athletics. The categories for student-athletes that reported spending the same amount of time engaging in activities related to the academic and athletic role and student-athletes that compete on the D2 NCAA Division level are not statistically significant in the perceiving role conflict as positive section of the MLR, but were statistically significant in the perceiving role conflict as negative section.

5.3 Ordinary Least Squares Regression Assessing Psychological Well-Being

Table 5 outlines the results of the OLS regression on whether there is a significant relationship between the independent variable, Role-Identity Salience, and the dependent variable, Psychological Well-Being, with the addition of the variables, such as race, gender, and relevant confounders. Role-Identity Salience was statistically significant with a p-value $\leq .001$. The unstandardized B value for Role-Identity Salience variable was $-.174$. This means that if a student-athlete is salient to their academic role-identity, we can expect $.174$ decrease in their response to whether their participation in college athletics has an effect on their psychological well-being. The unstandardized B for Gender was statistically significant and negative. This can

Table 4: Multinomial Logistic Regression for the Impact of Race, Gender, and Role-Identity Salience on Perceived Role Conflict

Variables	Full Interpretation Model			
	B	Std. Error	Wald	Exp(B)
Role Conflict Perceived as Positive				
Race (Reference=White)				
African American	-.260***	.078	11.210	.771
Other	-.028	.068	.167	.973
Gender (Reference=Male)				
Role-Identity Salience (Reference=AthleticRIS)	-.141**	.053	6.972	.869
Time in Role (Reference=Athletic Time)				
Academic Time	-.212***	.048	19.352	.809
Same Time	-.032	.148	.046	.969
Sports Team (Reference=Baseball)				
Football	.214*	.088	5.985	1.239
Basketball	.258**	.094	7.500	1.295
Other Sports	.061	.075	.651	1.062
Scholarship (Reference=No)				
Partial	.219***	.063	12.251	1.245
Full	.208*	.083	62.44	1.231
Academic Standing (Reference=Freshmen)				
Sophomore	.244***	.054	20.222	1.276
Junior	.325***	.057	32.946	1.384
Senior	.341***	.065	27.359	1.407
Graduate Student	-.012	.305	.002	.988
NCAA Division (Reference=D3)				
D1	.568***	.064	78.324	1.765
D2	.056	.065	.747	1.058
Role Conflict Perceived as Negative				
Race (Reference=White)				
African American	-.223*	.105	4.511	.800
Other	.213*	.092	5.351	1.237
Gender (Reference=Male)				
Role-Identity Salience (Reference=AthleticRIS)	-.144	.074	3.822	.866
Time in Role (Reference=Athletic Time)				
Academic Time	-.582***	.067	75.321	.559
Same Time	-.668**	.234	8.108	.513
Sports Team (Reference=Baseball)				
Football	.602***	.129	21.788	1.825
Basketball	.517***	.140	13.562	1.677
Other Sports	.135	.116	1.351	1.145
Scholarship (Reference=No)				
Partial	.473***	.089	28.150	1.605
Full	.594***	.108	30.499	1.812
Academic Standing (Reference=Freshmen)				
Sophomore	.696***	.087	64.191	2.005
Junior	1.032***	.086	143.407	2.808
Senior	.953***	.097	96.562	2.593
Graduate Student	-.182	.474	.147	.834
NCAA Division (Reference=D3)				
D1	1.317***	.099	177.049	3.732
D2	.311**	.107	8.481	1.365
Model Fit (Chi-Square)	1099.017***			

Note. B = Coefficient; Std. Error = Standard Error of individual regression coefficients;

Wald = Wald chi-square test; Exp(B) = Odd Ratios.

N = 13884; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

a. The reference category is: No Role Conflict.

be interpreted that female student-athletes have a .190 decrease in their response to whether their participation in college athletics has an effect on their psychological well-being. The race category, African American was also statistically significant and negative by an unstandardized B of -.093. For student-athletes that spend more time in activities related to their academic role, the unstandardized B was statistically significant and positive. Student-athletes that participated in Basketball as their primary sport were the only sports teams that were statistically significant. The unstandardized B was -.187, which indicates that for student-athletes that played basketball have a .187 decrease in their response to whether their participation in college athletics influences their psychological well-being. Student-athletes that compete on the D1 level of the NCAA have an unstandardized B of -.115 and statistically significant. Role conflict perceived as positive, and negative were also added to the regression as confounders. Both categories for role conflict were statistically significant at the .001 critical level and negative. The OLS Regression model as one entity is statistically significant on a .001 critical level in its estimation of Psychological Well-Being based on the F-statistic, 52.431, and the p-value is .000. The R² is .067, which shows that 6.7% of the variance in psychological well-being is explained by all the variables in the model. The overall regression is statistically significant.

6 CONCLUSION

The increased popularity and scope of college athletics in the United States has created a large demand for student-athletes to perform in their academic and athletic roles. The focus of this research study was to utilize the understanding of role-identity salience between a student-athlete's academic and athletic role-identity and whether greater salience to either role-identity caused student-athletes to perceive role conflict between the two role-identities. Perception of role conflict can be positive or negative. When perceived in a negative manner, role conflict has

Table 5: OLS Regression of Student Athlete's Psychological Well-Being Regressed by Other Variables

Variables	Model 1
Gender (Reference=Male)	-.190(.026)***
Race (Reference=Black)	
African American	-.093(.039)*
Other	.033(.034)
Role-Identity Salience (Reference=AthleticRIS)	-.174(.026)***
Time in Role (Reference=Athletic Time)	
Academic Time	.081(.024)***
Same Time	-.112(.076)
Sports Team (Reference=Baseball)	
Football	-.046(.045)
Basketball	-.187(.049)***
Other Sports	-.044(.039)
Scholarship (Reference=No)	
Partial	-.031(.032)
Full	-.019(.039)
Academic Year (Reference=Freshmen)	
Sophomore	.004(.029)
Junior	.135(.030)***
Senior	.239(.033)***
Graduate Student	.397(.158)*
NCAA Division (Reference=D3)	
D1	-.115(.033)***
D2	-.029(.035)
Perception of Role Conflict (Reference=No Role Conflict)	
Perceives Role Conflict as Positive	-.204(.027)***
Perceives Role Conflict as Negative	-.948(.039)***
R ² = .067	

Note. N=13884. Dependent Variable: Influence of Student-Athlete's Participation on Mental Health
Unstandardized regression coefficients shown (Std Error). F-statistic = 52.431***

* p≤.05; **p≤.01; ***p≤.001

the potential to have negative effects for the individual, namely towards the individual's psychologically well-being. The study used various forms of data analysis that examined a large, nationally represented dataset provided by the NCAA. The five research questions from Section 3 provided the necessary structure to guide the data analysis process.

The results from the data analysis showed that student-athletes displayed greater salience to their academic role-identities in comparison to their athletic role-identities. The results also showed that student-athletes that showed greater salience to their academic-role identity spent

more time engaging in activities related to their academic role-identity than student-athletes that reported greater salience to their athletic role-identity. Race and gender do have a statistically significant effect on student-athletes perception of role conflict. Both female and student-athletes designated in the racial category of other were more likely to perceive role conflict as negative compared to male and White athletes. African American student-athletes also were more likely to perceive no role conflict than White student-athletes. In addition, student-athletes that showed greater salience to their athletic role-identity were more likely to perceive role conflict between their academic and athletic role-identities. However, it was only statistically significant when student-athletes salient to their athletic role-identities perceived role conflict as positive. This finding suggests that student-athletes that are salient to their athletic role identities are more likely to welcome the role conflict between their academic and athletic role-identities. The final analysis showed that student athletes that are salient towards their academic-role identity are more likely to report that participation in athletics has a negative effect to their psychological well-being.

One surprising result from the data analysis was that student-athletes were more likely to show greater salience to their academic role-identity as opposed to their athletic role-identity. The possible explanation for this result is the sheer number of student athletes in non-revenue generating sports, such as tennis and track and field, far exceeds the number of student-athletes in football and basketball. Because athletes in revenue sports tend to receive much more attention than those in nonrevenue sports, they are under more pressure to perform athletically in ways favorable to the university, and as a result, they may have greater salience to their academic identities. The overrepresentation of athletes in non-revenue generating sports may explain this result. The literature related to college student-athlete's experience that counters this notion

typically look at only revenue-generating sports and neglects the non-revenue generating sports (Adler and Adler 1991; Comeaux and Harrison 2011; Harmon 2010). It is understandable why this is the case; however, the overall experience of college student-athletes should be more widely examined.

The limitations in this dataset are linked to the age and focus of the survey that was utilized for the data analysis. The NCAA conducted the initial G.O.A.L.S survey in 2006. Even though the sample size is large for dataset related to college athletics, the data is 15 years old and the perceptions and roles of student-athletes has changed over the years. Also, The NCAA was focused on acquiring information on how student-athletes felt about their general experience as a student-athlete. Even though the data set was ripe with variables that aligned with key aspects for data analysis, there could have been more questions that were related to exploring role-identity salience and potential role conflict. Also, the question linked to Psychological Well-Being were limited in scope based on its focus solely on athletic participation and disregard to academic participation of student-athletes effect on psychological well-being. However, I do believe that the findings from this research study can set the groundwork for analyzing how greater salience to student-athlete's academic or athletic role-identities can impact their perception of role conflict between the two role-identities and how role conflict can influence psychological well-being. Further research into the subject can utilize survey questions that focus on role-identity and role conflict.

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