

PAY-FOR-PLAY IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF FORMER AND CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENT-
ATHLETES' PERCEPTION OF PAY-FOR-PLAY

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Abstract

The literature suggests the conceptual definition of amateurism set by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the increase in corporate athleticism within the NCAA has resulted in a controversial debate concerning the pay-for-play model, which would allow student-athletes to receive additional compensation. Numerous studies related to pay-for-play have been implemented, however, few have examined how student-athletes feel about the pay-for-play model. The purpose of this study will be to explore student-athletes' perceptions of pay-for-play. In order to understand student-athletes' perceptions of pay-for-play, a phenomenological research design was chosen. Three former and two current NCAA Division I student-athletes from Liberty University participated in the research. Each participant filled out a survey, completed an in-depth interview and participated in a focus group. The participants' results showed two were proponents of pay-for-play, two were neutral and one was an opponent of the model. The survey results showed no major commonalities were found amongst the subgroups of the student-athletes. The individual interviews and focus groups exposed the only commonality found amongst similar viewpoints was the personal research a participant has done about the pay-for-play model.

Keywords: pay-for-play, student-athletes, phenomenology, college athletics

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Chapter One INTRODUCTION

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) characterization of amateurism has become the foundation of determining eligibility in American college athletics. The NCAA, non-profit, volunteer has been regulating student-athletes from over 1,200 college level institutions since 1906, which is now distributed among three divisions: Division I, Division II, and Division III. The NCAA Manual (2016) indicated only amateur student-athletes were eligible for participating in college athletics. For a student-athlete to qualify as an amateur athlete, he or she must have never used his or her athletic ability for compensation in that particular sport, accepted a promise of remuneration, or signed a contract of any kind to play on a professional sport team (NCAA Manual, 2016). The NCAA's concept of *amateurism* is important to understand because amateurism has become a critical component in the pay-for-play model, which would allow student-athletes to receive compensation separate from his and her athletic scholarship for participating in intercollegiate sports.

The concept of amateurism was not delineated for Americans until the 19th century by the British, who at the time were the sport leaders of the world. When Americans first adopted the concept of amateurism, it held a negative connotation. The British and Americans sporting governing bodies used the word *never* to often indicate what amateurism was not (Smith, 1993). For example, an amateur athlete was someone who never competed for compensation of any kind or never competed with or against a professional athlete. However, many positive definitions exist, such as amateurism is a state of mind determined by the athlete's motives, therefore, the athlete participates merely for a love of the game. Smith (1993) suggested if amateurism is an attitude determined by the athlete, a problem develops for any positive concept of amateurism because knowing someone's true motives or attitude for participation is

impossible. Therefore, when an external evaluator decides upon the amateur status of an athlete, the judge who uses the positive definition of amateurism has great difficulty ruling objectively (Smith, 1993).

When discussing pay-for-play in college athletics, the term *amateurism* has become the staple defense of the NCAA participation model. However, many advocates believe the NCAA should discard the notions of amateurism and introduce systemic change allowing student-athletes compensation for intercollegiate athletic participation (Haden, 2001; Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012; Miller, 2012; Sanderson & Siegfried, 2015). Opponents of pay-for-play have declared paying college student-athletes is wrong because pay-for-play goes against the NCAA's amateur status and will inadvertently take away from the institution's primary focus of education, in addition opponents believe implementing the model would have negative repercussions on college athletics (Blackistone, 2014; Forik, 2015; Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012; Mondello & Beckham, 2002). Due to the current landscape of intercollegiate athletics, the debate of pay-for-play has only intensified over the years.

Over the past few decades, scandals have flooded numerous NCAA Division I programs. The NCAA has intensified the issue by hypocritically speaking of the importance of academics over money while its actions demonstrate the complete opposite to this message (Parent, 2004). For example, in 2013, Johnny Manziel, a football player from Texas A&M, was accused of allegedly receiving compensation for his autographs; Manziel was suspended for half a game even though the NCAA never found evidence of any wrongdoings (Payne, 2017). The NCAA bylaws, which govern amateurism and athletics eligibility, prevent student-athletes from directly or indirectly profiting off his or her sport achievements in any possible way (NCAA Manual, 2016). The exception, however, appears to be the NCAA itself. Immediately after the University

of North Carolina (UNC) won the NCAA March Madness tournament in 2017, Jay Bilas, a television basketball analyst, tweeted out an image of an ad featuring several UNC players atop an ad for Tar Heels merchandise (Payne, 2017). This is just one example of student-athletes' likeness being used to generate revenue for institutions, which has helped fuel the argument for the NCAA's hypocrisy. The pay-for-play model has become the driving force for exposing major issues and concerns within the NCAA Division I athletic programs, including numerous student-athletes potentially receiving an unfair return on investment.

Motivation for the Study

I am a former Division I college softball player who was awarded a full ride athletic scholarship, which is given to an individual based predominantly on his or her ability to play in a sport and covers tuition, room and board, books, and other fees. However, in college I learned a full ride scholarship did not mean all-expenses paid. While I received the maximum scholarship my university could offer, I still had to pay \$3,000 each year out of my own pocket. The scholarship covered my tuition, which I was an out-of-state resident, and room and board for the university's cheapest dormitory plan. Juniors and seniors residing on campus were mandated to live in campus apartments, therefore, I was required to pay the remainder of what my scholarship did not cover. The rest of the expenses I was required to pay were books and small fees, such as parking permits. The sum was around \$3,000. Fortunately, I had the help of my parents to cover the remainder of costs, however, I knew many student-athletes who were not as fortunate. At that time, employment was usually not an option for many student-athletes; working was not allowed during the sport's main season and many coaches prohibited his or her players from obtaining a job, especially those with a scholarship. As a result, student-athletes who could not afford the remaining expenditures severely struggled.

While the debate of pay-for-play has exposed some major issues within the NCAA, I do not think student-athletes should receive additional pay for his or her intercollegiate participation. However, I do believe there needs to be a change in the NCAA's rules and regulations. For example, when a student-athlete is told he or she will receive a full ride athletic scholarship, the scholarship must cover his or her entire college expenses; this is not only fair to the student-athlete, but demonstrates the institution supports of the student-athlete.

While advocates of pay-for-play have good intentions for student-athletes, implementing the model has many problems. Studies have shown student-athletes who receive an athletic scholarship focus more time on athletic performance than academics (Rubin & Rosser, 2014). I believe pay-for-play would not only solidify this notion, but pay-for-play would eventually eliminate the worth of academics in general.

The pay-for-play debate is fascinating because if the model was implemented, pay-for-play would completely change the dynamics within all aspects of intercollegiate athletics. The possible change of social dynamics amongst student-athletes and the structure of college athletics is what motivates me to conduct this research. I want to know how other student-athletes feel about the pay-for-play model, his or her experiences relating to the model, and what the student-athletes comprehend about the pay-for-play model. Understanding student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play is important because the insight will show how student-athletes will feel and react, if the model was implemented.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study will be to explore the specific phenomenon of current and former intercollegiate student-athletes' perception of the highly debatable pay-for-play model and the lived experiences that shape his or her views. Although numerous studies producing a

considerable amount of relevant information with regards to the reasons why or why not pay-for-play should exist and potential economic impact on institutions and the NCAA, few have examined how student-athletes feel towards the pay-for-play model. Not only would the dynamics of college athletics change, if pay-for-play was instituted, pay-for-play could possibly have a major effect on student athletes. Therefore, understanding student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play is imperative.

Significance of Study

The information gathered from this research will be used to determine possible implications for future study, as well as to provide a baseline of student-athletes' perceptions of pay-for-play and the potential impact of pay-for-play on student-athletes' college experiences. Specifically, this research will investigate how current and former college student-athletes perceive pay-for-play. The goal for this research is to give those who create NCAA rules and regulations a better understanding of what and how college student-athletes, both current and former, feel towards pay-for-play before implementing the model.

Research Objectives

Although indirectly proposed above, the research objectives that strive to guide this study are as followed:

1. To gain understanding of student-athletes' perceptions about pay-for-play.
2. To gain insight into student-athletes' perceptions of the potential impact of pay-for-play on student-athletes' college experiences.

Research Questions

The research questions that will be examined in this study are as follows:

1. What are student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play?

2. How do student-athletes perceive pay-for-play impacting student-athletes' college experiences?
3. How, if at all, do perceptions of pay-for-play differ among subgroups of student-athletes (i.e., scholarship/non-scholarship, gender, year in school, and sport)?

In order to answer these questions, I will administer an open ended survey, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Five NCAA Division I student-athletes from Liberty University will participate in this research. Amongst the student-athletes, two are current student-athletes and three are former student-athletes. These participants come from a variety of different sports and backgrounds which, in addition to the specific questions designed to gather information, will answer the above questions to his or her fullest potential.

Limitations of the Study

During this study a major limitation was found and was considered during this research. The sample size was dictated by the number of student-athletes who were willingly to volunteer for this study. In all, two current female student-athletes and three former male student-athletes volunteered for the research. While a small number of participants may be considered ideal and/or normal in phenomenological studies, this particular sample size may be considered too small and a limitation. Having a small sample size could alter the findings, making it more difficult to relate the findings to a larger group.

A large number of volunteers may attract more attention to the subject, as well as provide results which could be considered more solid and reliable. However, a sample size has the ability to be too large where the research is unable to thoroughly observe the experience as a whole. No matter the sample size, the voice of every student-athlete in this research was given the opportunity to express his and her experience with pay-for-play.

Chapter Summary

College athletics have been designed to be an amateur league, however, the pay-for-play model has the potential to drastically change the meaning and dynamics of college athletics. Therefore, understanding student-athletes' perceptions and lived experiences about pay-for-play before implementing the model is crucial. By conducting a phenomenological study, I will be able to answer the research questions which will allow myself to uncover and explore the perceptions student-athletes have about pay-for-play. These perceptions will give an insight on how college student-athletes could react, if an NCAA bylaw were to pass allowing student-athletes compensation in addition to athletic scholarships.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this research study is to identify student-athletes' perception from an NCAA Division I college regarding pay-for-play. The goal of this literature review is to examine research related to the conceptual concept of pay-for-play.

This chapter explores the notion of pay-for-play for student-athletes within the rules of the NCAA, while examining the concepts of amateurism, corporate athleticism and the issues of stipends for student-athletes. This material begins with a historical analysis of the beginning of amateurism within the NCAA. Followed by an analysis of corporate athleticism found in the NCAA. After a full understanding of amateurism and corporate athleticism within the NCAA, issues regarding athletic scholarships and stipends will be studied. To conclude, an examination of court hearings involving student-athletes and stipend issues.

History of Amateurism within the NCAA

The first time intercollegiate athletics attempted to define amateurism was when the NCAA first formed in 1906. The NCAA implemented a constitution for every institution to hold a high standard of amateurism. However, controversy over paying college athletes already existed years before the formation of the NCAA. Strong evidence suggest American colleges corrupted the English concept of amateurism by bringing a professional element into amateur sport (Smith, 1993).

American college athletics did not have an official governing body at the beginning. Due to lack of an official governing body, institutions were able to create and enforce its own rules and regulations. During the late 1800s, many institutions paid its athletes to compete, some of these athletes were not even enrolled at the institution (Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012). For

instance, a Midwestern university recruited seven players who were not enrolled at the university, in fact these athletes had normal daytime jobs: a blacksmith, a lawyer, a livery man, and four railroad employees (as cited in Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012). In addition, many institutions would persuade players to change schools by using direct payments. For example, in the early 1900s a baseball player from the University of Pennsylvania was persuaded by Harvard to join its team; Harvard offered the player money and a train ticket (Smith, 1993). Eventually, the freedom these institutions had in recruiting players started a movement towards the necessity of united rules and regulations.

By the 1890s, a couple conferences, such as Southern Intercollegiate Conference and Intercollegiate Conference of Faculty Representatives, formed and began steps to curb the payment off college athletes. However, despite the effort squelch player payments, the conferences were unable to initiate change (Smith, 1993).

College sports were deemed extremely brutal by the end of the 19th century. Between the years 1900 and 1905, numerous college athletes died while playing football (Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012). Immediately following these deaths, President Theodore Roosevelt summoned the presidents of Harvard, Yale and Princeton, and ordered them to modify the sport or else the sport would be banned (Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012). As a result, the NCAA was formed, which called for each institution to implement a high standard of amateurism. The 1906 NCAA Constitution created the framework for intercollegiate amateur sport proclaiming:

An amateur sportsman is one who engages in sports for the physical, mental, or social benefits he derives therefrom, and to whom the sport is an avocation. Any college athlete who takes pay for participation in athletics does not meet this definition of amateurism. (Bass, Schaeperkoetter & Bunds, 2015, p. 5)

Although the implementation of the new organization decreased the death rate, little improvements had been made in other aspects, such as recruiting methods.

While paying college athletes was commonly condemned by NCAA and its memberships, this problem was still a largely accepted practice in the 1920s (Smith, 1993). In 1929, a report from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on American College Athletics showed over 70% of the colleges investigated compensated its players (Cowley, 1999). The results led Dr. Howard Savage, a staff member of the Carnegie Foundation, to explore the issue further. Dr. Savage's report claimed college sports were not educational, instead largely financial and commercial (Cowley, 1999).

Dr. Savage's comments on the report led to the uncovering of a disconnection between different institutions and its faculty members when they tried to unify the NCAA (Barr, 1999). While athletic administrators remained divided, organizations, such as the College Football Association, tried to unify coaches and athletic faculty members. A reason for the disconnection between the NCAA members were due to differing opinions, especially the issue pertaining to paying college athletes. Some universities were pressured by alumni to continue in compensating its players, while other institutions wanted compensation to athletes completely abolished. In 1935, the President of University of North Carolina, Frank Graham, attempted to end amateurism in college sports. A Graham Plan was created and noted college athletes could not be compensated for athletic performance by the institution, alumni, or any other group or individual (Lumpkin, 1984). The conference presidents passed the Graham Plan, however, was removed the following year later due to alumni protests. The alumni were in favor of paying student-athletes because compensation allowed to recruit better players.

Even though the Graham Plan was not successful, the idea paved the way for the NCAA to implement the “Sanity Code” in 1948 (Lumpkin, 1984). The “Sanity Code” restricted financial aid for college athletes to tuition and fees, and required that aid otherwise be given based on need (Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012). However, several southern institutions were unsatisfied with the new regulation and threatened to leave the NCAA if the regulation was not revised. Therefore, in the early 1950s the code changed to allow athletic scholarships to cover tuition, fees, and a living stipend. This new revision was the first time the NCAA permitted universities to compensate student-athletes beyond basic institution fees for athletic participation. While athletic scholarships kept southern schools from leaving the NCAA, not all institutions could keep up with offering athletic scholarships. By the mid-1950s, some institution presidents decided to maintain the principles of amateurism and serve its mission for higher education. These universities now make up the Ivy League, which still remain steadfast in the decision to withdraw or suspend athletic scholarships (Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012).

The 1970s and 1980s had a major effect on the NCAA and its member institutions, which ultimately changed the dynamic of intercollegiate athletics. The NCAA reduced athletic scholarships by contracting the \$15 a month living stipend, which many athletes used to purchase toothpaste, laundry, soap and other basic essentials. Regardless of the continuous protesting from student-athletes, the NCAA refused to restore the living stipends until 2015.

In 1972, Title IX was passed and completely changed the systematics of the NCAA. After the establishment of Title IX, the NCAA absorbed the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), which afforded the complete governing of women’s intercollegiate sports. Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination

under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (NCAA, 2014, para. 1). When applied to athletics both male and female must have an equal opportunity to participate. Title IX also mandated male and female student-athletes receive athletic scholarships proportional to participation. While the implementation of Title IX has had harsh repercussions for some men's sports and male student-athletes, Title IX tremendously increased the participation opportunity for female student-athletes. For example, the average NCAA institution currently has approximately 88 more female student-athletes compared to the academic year of 1981-82 (Johnson, 2014).

In the mid-1970s, the NCAA classified its members into three divisions: Division I, II, and III. Division I was comprised of high generating revenue producers and student-athletes could receive full athletic scholarships which covered tuition and housing. Division II student-athletes could receive partial athletic scholarships, and Division III student-athletes could not receive any type of athletic scholarship (Bass et al., 2015). In other words, NCAA members separated themselves across divisions based on funding for athletic programs, athletic scholarships for student-athletes, and the size of its fan base (NCAA, 2013).

The beginning of cable television in the 1980s was the final impact which led the NCAA to shift the primary motives. The NCAA used cable television to capitalize on the sport television market, generating \$30 to \$40 million annually from collective broadcasting agreements. Combined with the other major effects from the 1970s and 1980s, the NCAA shifted its distinct motive towards increasing revenue (Bass et al., 2015). While the NCAA has been concerned with generating revenue, they still claim to possess a level of amateurism within its organization.

The NCAA Manual (2016) contained 30 pages regarding amateurism and athletic eligibility. According to the Manual, the principle of amateurism clearly stated:

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. (p. 4)

The terms *amateurism* and *student-athlete* are interlinked. The term *student-athlete* was developed in an effort to make it so that student-athletes would not be considered university employees (Bass et al., 2015). The Manual claimed a student-athlete is enrolled with an institution because the student was solicited by a member or representative of the athletics department to participate on an intercollegiate athletics team. For any other student to be considered a student-athlete, he or she must report to an intercollegiate squad under the jurisdiction of the athletic department (NCAA Manual, 2016). Therefore, an individual loses amateur status and becomes ineligible if: (a) Used his or her athletic ability for pay in any form in that sport (directly or indirectly); (b) Accepted a promise of compensation even if compensation was to be received after the completion of intercollegiate athletics participation; (c) Signed a contract of any kind to participate in professional athletics, regardless of its legal enforceability; (d) Received compensation, reimbursement or any other form of financial assistance from a professional sports team based on athletics talent or participation (directly or indirectly), except what is allowed by NCAA rules and regulations; (e) Competed on any professional sports team per Bylaw 12.02.11, even if no compensation was received, except what

is allowed in Bylaw 12.2.3.2.1; (f) Entered into a professional draft, after enrolling full-time at collegiate level; or (g) Entered into an contract or promise with an agent (NCAA Manual, 2016).

Over the years, the NCAA made numerous attempts to work for student-athletes' best interests while operating within the notion of amateurism. The history of the NCAA showed the main issue involving amateurism was the outright compensation of student-athletes, which the NCAA wanted to completely avoid. By allowing student-athletes to receive athletic scholarships, covering tuition, housing and living stipends, and other government financial aids, one would believe student-athletes do not need additional income. However, since the 1980s when the NCAA shifted its main focus to generating revenue from lucrative television contracts and recent studies showing student-athletes with full-ride athletic scholarships are around \$2,000 short for institution fees, the debate for pay-for-play has tremendously increased.

Corporate Athleticism in NCAA

Broadcasting Rights

In the late 1980s, the dynamics of college athletics changed due to influx of revenue generated. The term *corporate athleticism* was created for this influx of revenue, which represented the increasing influence business ethics had on commercializing intercollegiate athletics (Hart-Nibbrig & Cottingham, 1986; Schneider, 2001). In 1988, the NCAA began receiving \$150 million annually from Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) to broadcast the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championships, also known as March Madness, which was increased to \$1.7 billion for exclusive rights in 1998 (Haden, 2001; Schneider, 2001). For March Madness in 2016, the NCAA raked in a record high of \$1 billion in revenue from media rights fees, ticket sales, corporate sponsorships and television ads anchored around the championship tournament. However, men's basketball has not been the only sport generating massive revenue

for NCAA. In 2012, the NCAA agreed to a 12-year agreement with CBS to broadcast the NCAA Division I Football Bowl Championship Series (BCS) for approximately \$5.64 billion (Hinnen, 2012). According to an NCAA report, in 2015 the 39 postseason Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) games distributed \$505.9 million to participating conferences and institutions, which was almost a \$200 million increase from the final BCS season (Russo, 2015).

Merchandise Agreements

In conjunction with these lucrative CBS agreements, NCAA member institutions have entered in multiple shoe, apparel, and sports drink agreements, along with other corporate entities that ordinarily produce significant revenue (Haden, 2001). Yet, material items are not the only platforms corporate sponsors use. The fastest growing platform for sponsors in today's age is the digital platform. In late 2012, Lowe's Companies Inc. partnered with IMG College, which included all of the 90 institutions for which it owned multimedia rights. The agreement contained presenting a status for a smart phone app, which offered real-time scores, stats, player biographies, photo galleries and other relevant information. Lowe's chief marketing officer, Tom Lamb, stated "Reaching fans through their schools' official social media channels, from apps to Facebook and Twitter, helps us join passionate conversations that are all about fun and memorable experiences" (Scanlan, 2012, para. 5). The reason behind the instant increase in digital platforms is because sport fans consume three times more digital content than non-fans (Scanlan, 2012). Since corporate sponsorships tend to benefit both parties, corporations have found a secure location within the NCAA.

Other Forms of Revenue

Broadcasting contracts and corporate sponsorships are not the only ways institutions are generating revenue. A majority of the institutions rely on donations, ticket sales, and subsidies

from university coffers. For example, ESPN reported in 2008 the University of Alabama's athletic department gross revenue was \$28,410,419 in ticket sales, \$29,860,400 in donations, and \$4,101,515 in university subsidy, which was almost half of the athletic department's total revenue (Hazell, 2014). The University of Alabama, in addition with its media rights fees and other contracts, generated in total \$123,769,841 (Hazell, 2014).

Luxury Suites

Corporate presence in intercollegiate athletics does not stop with television agreements and other corporate contracts, many arenas and stadiums have corporate sponsored luxury boxes. For example, in the late 1990s University of Texas was asking \$38,000 for a year rental of a 12-seat luxury box at Darrell K. Royal – Texas Memorial Stadium, while University of Wisconsin was asking \$35,000 a year for its new luxury suites at the Kohl Center (Castiglione, 2014). College stadiums have begun following the trends of professional sport stadiums, adding luxury suites, high tech services, and fan areas (Castiglione, 2014). When Baylor University decided to rebuild the football stadium, administration only desired roughly 45,000 seats; making McLane Stadium one of the smallest venues in the power five conferences. Baylor's prime focus was to produce more revenue than the old stadium by introducing a price seating chart: pay a little more to go from bench seats to chair backs, a bit more to club level, continuing this pattern up to premium suites which include private entrances, food and beverage services, and other perks of comfort. This new style of venue and pricing structure has been paying off, Baylor's first game at McLane Stadium was sold out, including 45 suites and 79 boxes, and tickets for the remainder of the season were sold at an unseen rate (Castiglione, 2014).

Coaches' Salaries

With these high generating revenue contracts, many coaches within men's basketball and football earn salaries well above \$100,000 with compensation packages totaling over \$1 million (Schneider, 2001). USA Today reported in 2016, over 120 coaches were earning more than \$1 million from the total compensation package (Berkowitz, Schnaars, & Dougherty, 2016). The highest paid coach for 2016 was University of Michigan's Head Football Coach Jim Harbaugh earning, \$9 million from the institution, excluding the previous year's \$2 million bonus (Berkowitz, Schnaars, & Dougherty, 2016). Dave Brandon, recently resigned athletic director from University of Michigan, noted in *The System* he knew his job security relied on the success of the Michigan football team because Division I athletic departments live and die by the financial revenue generated by football and men's basketball (Bass et al., 2015).

Scholarships and Stipends for Student-Athletes

Pay-for-Play Advocates and Opponents

Recently numerous articles have emerged regarding whether or not a college student-athletes should be paid for his or her athletic performances, since student-athletes already have the potential to receive an athletic scholarship, many people have become opponents of pay-for-play (Forik, 2015; Haden, 2001; Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012). Many mindsets of proponents have questioned the quality and worthiness of what student-athletes receive in return for his or her athletic participation. Therefore, advocates of pay-for-play brought up questions concerning what student-athletes actually received and what they should receive. According to Johnson and Acquaviva (2012), student-athletes' pay is the value of his or her education. Colleges provide education which is an irreplaceable and vital service to the community. "The fear of the NCAA, as it should be, is that the mere notion of paying college athletes undermines the university's

primary purpose – education, something far more valuable than a modest annual stipend proposed by many” (Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012, para. 11). Paying college athletes would only solidify the notion institutions’ main purpose is generating revenue, not higher education.

Advocates of pay-for-play claim there are two faults with athletic scholarships: (a) Student-athletes are not receiving a legitimate, quality education; (b) Student-athletes, who receive a full ride scholarship, still pay out of pocket for school fees (Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012; Miller, 2012). The term *student-athlete* indicates the individual is a student first and an athlete second (Saffici & Pellegrino, 2012, para. 1). However, since the NCAA has adopted corporate athleticism, many consider these individuals are now *athlete-students*. These athletes are pressured into easier majors and classes to keep his eligibility. Kulics, Kornspan, and Kornspan’s study (2015) revealed revenue sport student-athletes, students who play either football or men’s basketball, were more likely asked by their coach to switch majors and more prone to declare ineligible than non-revenue sport student athletes. This situation raises the argument student-athletes, especially those who play in football and men’s basketball, are not receiving a quality education because they are pressured into easier majors and classes in order to stay eligible to play (Miller, 2012).

Athletic Scholarship Limitations

Athletic scholarships are able to cover tuition, fees, books, room and board. However, full cost of attendance to a college also includes other expenses, such as travel (NCAA, 2015). The Collegiate Athletes Coalition (CAC) estimates that NCAA scholarships are around \$2,000 short of the actual cost of attending an institution. For example, the maximum athletic scholarship a softball player at the University at Albany, New York, in 2011 and 2012 could get was just over \$22,000. Yet, the total cost to attend the university as an out-of-state student, living

in an on-campus apartment was just under \$26,000. Therefore, an out-of-state student-athlete living in an on-campus apartment had to come up with the rest of the money to attend the university. The shortfall (out-of-pocket expenses) of athletics scholarships have become the driving forces for pay-for-play, fortunately the NCAA has worked on fixing this issue. In 2015, the NCAA allowed Division I institutions to cover the entire cost of attending its university, but this new policy is not mandated (NCAA, 2015).

Until recently, student-athletes who were offered an athletic scholarship would receive a 1-year scholarship that would have to be renewed each year (Hartman, 2014). The 1-year scholarship has been considered “the most evil thing about college sports” and “morally indefensible” (Hartman, 2014, p. 426). The pressure of the 1-year scholarships tends to have student-athletes focus more on his or her athletic performance since the scholarship is awarded on the student-athlete’s athletic ability. Not only does the 1-year scholarship create an immense amount of pressure, the scholarship also constrains student-athletes’ actions and options. For example, in 2010, Joseph Agnew, a former Rice University football player, sued the NCAA in federal court to have the 1-year scholarship banned because his athletic scholarship was rejected the summer before his senior year (Hartman, 2014). Although Joseph did not win, the case was a breakthrough for student-athletes because for the first time the 1-year scholarship received federal legal scrutiny.

With the rising debate and popularity on paying college athletes, the NCAA decided in October of 2011 to allow institutions to offer multiyear athletic scholarships. However, the new policy was met with severe controversy from the NCAA institution members. Some coaches claim the multiyear scholarships allow them less flexibility to release players, while other coaches like they are getting a four-year commitment from his or her student-athletes (Wolverton

& Newman, 2013). Since the implementation of the new multiyear scholarship policy, only a few schools have capitalized on it. A survey completed by *The Chronicle* reported only 35 of the 56 institutions from the six biggest conferences offer multiyear deals to its student-athletes. Among the 35 institutions, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has broken the mold; they have made the multiyear scholarship the default unless coaches argue otherwise (Wolverton & Newman, 2013). With keeping in the NCAA's principle of amateurism, NCAA rules have been designed to discourage programs from cutting student-athletes for athletic reasons (Wolverton & Newman, 2013).

Investment

Out of the entire NCAA Division I only 56% of student-athletes receive some form athletic aid (NCAA, 2016). On a Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) team a coach can only assign a maximum 85 athletics scholarships (contingent on funding), while a Division I men's basketball coach can only offer up to 13 athletic scholarships. In 2013, the National College Players Association (NCPA) and Drexel University released a study showing the fair market value of the average revenue sport student athlete; a football player was worth \$137,357 per year, while a men's basketball player was worth \$289,031 per year. Yet, the average student athlete only earned \$23,204 in scholarship money and shortfall of approximately \$3,222 (Huma & Staurowsky, 2013). The most significant finding was 85% of full scholarship athletes were living below the federal poverty line. For example, the fair market value of a University of Texas football player was \$513,922, yet they lived \$778 below the federal poverty line and had a \$3,624 scholarship shortfall (Huma & Staurowsky, 2013). University of Texas was not the only school who had this issue. University of Florida had the highest combined revenue between basketball and football, however, its scholarship football and basketball players were living

\$2,250 below the federal poverty line and had a \$3190 scholarship shortfall (Huma & Staurowsky, 2013).

Student-Athletes as University Employees

In order for a student-athlete to receive compensation apart from his or her athletic aid, he or she must be recognized as an employee of the institution. Courts have generally addressed this notion in the context of whether the student-athlete is eligible for workers' compensation benefits resulting from an injury sustained during his or her participation in intercollegiate athletics.

Overall, courts have typically denied student-athletes workers' compensation benefits because of student-athletes' tax exempt status under state workers' compensation statutes (Haden, 2001). However, a few exceptions have taken place. In the *University of Denver v. Nemeth*, the Supreme Court of Colorado determined a full-time enrolled student-athlete (a football player) was an employee injured in the course of his employment and was therefore eligible for workers' compensation benefits (Mondello & Beckham, 2002). The court's decision was not based on Nemeth's status as a student-athlete, but on Nemeth's job as a maintenance employee at the campus tennis center because his job was dependent on him playing football for the University. At University of Denver, particular jobs were reserved for student-athletes who excelled in his or her sport, therefore, in this case the availability of the job was directly connected to the student-athlete's performance in football.

The court hearing of *Van Horn v. Industrial Accident Commission* had a similar line of reasoning. Van Horn was a student-athlete killed on a team flight, his widow and child brought suit for death benefits. Van Horn was a football player receiving a general athletic scholarship in conjunction with a supplemental scholarship in the form of monthly stipends. In determining

whether Van Horn was considered an employee of the institution, the court defined *employee* as "every person in the service of an employer under any appointment or contract of hire or apprenticeship, express or implied, oral or written, whether lawfully or unlawfully employed" (Haden, 2001, p. 675). The court examined the student-athlete's relationship with the institution by assuming any person providing service to another is either an employee or an independent contractor (Mondello & Beckham, 2002). However, the court did note that if Van Horn's services as a football player were voluntarily rendered without compensation, then there was no contract for employment, and he would not be considered an employee of the institution. Therefore in this case, Van Horn was considered an employee of the institution, based on the "inference... that [Van Horn] received the *scholarship* because of his athletic prowess and participation" (Haden, 2001). The court concluded the form of compensation was inconsequential.

More recently, in *Northwestern University v. College Athletes Players Association*, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), specifically the Regional Director of Region 13 of the NLRB located in Chicago, Illinois, found scholarship football players from Northwestern University are *employees* under Section 2(3) of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) (D'Aquila & Rudolph, 2014). The court also ordered for an election to be conducted so eligible football players, all those who receive athletic scholarships and have not exhausted his NCAA playing eligibility, can vote to form a union. Northwestern's central argument was that scholarship football players were not considered *employees* under the NLRA. However, according to the decision football players perform valuable services for Northwestern and the scholarships players receive is compensation for his athletic performances. The decision also noted Northwestern's football team is extremely profitable for the institution; between 2003 and

2012 the football team generated \$235 million in revenue (D'Aquila & Rudolph, 2014). With this notion in mind, the Regional Director declared Northwestern football players are indeed *employees* of the University.

Chapter Summary

When American college athletics began, institutions were essentially allowed to do whatever appealed them: pay athletes, recruit non-students, bribe other athletes, etc. However, college athletic programs did not expand until the NCAA was formed. The foundation of the NCAA rules and regulations came from the conceptual definition of amateurism; a student-athlete: (a) never used his or her athletic ability for compensation in that sport (directly or indirectly); (b) never accepted a promise of compensation in that sport; (c) never played or signed a contract of any kind to participate in professional athletics, regardless of its legal enforceability; (d) never received compensation, reimbursement or any other form of financial assistance from a professional sports team based on athletics skill or participation (directly or indirectly) (NCAA Manual, 2016).

While amateurism was the foundation of the NCAA, it did not prohibit the NCAA and its members institutions from conducting business with major corporations. The second growth within intercollegiate athletics came from the increase of corporate athleticism. The NCAA and its member institutions were able to gain large amounts of revenue from broadcasting rights, merchandise agreements, and sponsorships (Haden, 2001; Hart-Nibbrig & Cottingham, 1986; Schneider, 2001). When institutions started to generate millions of dollars in revenue, questions started to emerge about whether student-athletes were receiving fair compensation for his or her participation in generating the large revenues.

Due to the increase of corporate presence in college athletics, numerous court hearings have taken place to help student-athletes receive compensation apart from athletic aid. Courts have generally deemed in order for a student-athlete to receive additional pay apart from the athletic aid, he or she must be recognized as an employee of the institution and be eligible for workers' compensation benefits. Up till now, the courts have denied student-athletes workers' compensation benefits because of his or her tax exempt status under state workers' compensation statutes (Haden, 2001). However, the *Northwestern University v. College Athletes Players Association* case became a breakthrough for student-athletes. The Regional Director of Region 13 of the NLRB found scholarship football players from Northwestern University were in fact *employees* (D'Aquila & Rudolph, 2014). This case has caused significant change in many people's perception of the NCAA.

From the evolving dynamics of intercollegiate athletics, amateurism has remained the primary determinant for athletic eligibility. However, corporate athleticism and current case hearings have altered the American college athletics system, which has inevitably raised questions about amateurism within the NCAA, student-athletes' investment, and the economics involving the pay-for-play model. Substantial amount of research has been conducted on whether student-athletes should be paid in addition to scholarships, the economic repercussions of compensating student-athletes, and possible models for implementing pay-for-play, however, research lacks in the areas of how student-athletes perceive pay-for-play and how they may react to the implementation of the model. With the growing concerns of unfair treatment for student-athletes from, what many consider, the *greedy* NCAA, researching how student-athletes perceive pay-for-play has become imperative because his or her insight may help solve issues within the NCAA system (Haden, 2001; Johnson & Acquaviva, 2012; Schneider, 2001).

Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODS

Overview

This chapter discusses the study's design, setting of the research, the participants, procedures of the data collection, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

Phenomenological Research

In order to obtain qualitative information concerning the phenomenon of student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play, phenomenology was chosen as the research method. The research will explore the specific phenomenon of current and former intercollegiate student-athletes' view of the highly debatable pay-for-play model and lived experiences that shape his or her views. The information gathered will follow characteristics of a transcendental phenomenology design by conducting surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups concerning internal experiences of student-athletes regarding play-for-play (Moustakas, 1994).

With the evolving dynamics in intercollegiate sports, more people are considering the concept of pay-for-play. Through phenomenological research, information gathered from surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups have the ability to provide further understanding of intercollegiate student-athletes lives and how student-athletes could potentially react to change. Phenomenology attempts to eliminate everything that exemplifies a prejudgment or presumption; it requires to look at the phenomenon amenably and unbiased, while not disturbing the behaviors surrounding the world of the phenomenon. The challenge is to describe and explain the phenomenon as seen; therefore, a researcher must use bracketing, which allows the

transcribed texts to be viewed and analyzed from a clean slate (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994).

A person's meaning is created when an object appears in his or her consciousness, mingles with an object in nature: "what appears in consciousness is an absolute reality while what appears to the world is a product of learning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27). The act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related; the concept of intentionality refers to the internal experience of being conscious of something and the concept is connected to transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the reality of an object is inextricably related to one's consciousness of that particular object (Creswell, 2013). Overall, a phenomenological study defines the common meaning for a group of individuals lived experiences of a phenomenon, which will enable myself, the researcher, the opportunity to experience through the eyes and mind of the individual who initially experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994).

According to Moustakas (1994), interpretive form is connected with intentionality of consciousness because it "is the perception that enables the landscape to appear; thus the landscape is self-given; my perception creates it and enables it to exist in my consciousness" (p. 28). In this particular research, I will be seeking to explore and understand current Division I student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play. While pay-for-play has not been implemented as a bylaw in the NCAA Manual, the model has been a highly discussed topic within college sports for decades. Therefore, understanding the landscape student-athletes have created about pay-for-play is important. Knowing what and how student-athletes' perceive pay-for-play can aid in the decision of whether the model should be implemented and discover possible effects pay-for-play may have on student-athletes. In a phenomenological study, exploring and understanding the

“what” and “how” have become the foundations to a successful research (Creswell, 2013). Thus, when answering what the participant perceives and how he or she perceives it, personal intercollegiate experiences and the environment of the study will be taken into account.

Research Questions

The research questions that will be focused in this study are:

1. What are student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play?
2. How do student-athletes perceive pay-for-play impacting student-athletes' college experiences?
3. How, if at all, do perceptions of pay-for-play differ among subgroups of student athletes (i.e., scholarship/non-scholarship, gender, year in school, and sport)?

Site

The site for this research will be Liberty University, which is the largest private, nonprofit university in the nation, the largest university in Virginia, and the world's largest Christian university. Total enrollment for residential and online undergraduates and graduates exceeds 110,000, 95% of these students receive some form of financial aid. The university's demographics are 51% Caucasian, 15.4% African American and 33.6% other nationalities, such as Latino, Native American and Asian. Out of the residential undergraduate students 2.3% play a varsity sport. Liberty University was chosen for this research because of its successful athletic department. The athletic programs are a member of the Big South Conference; Liberty has been named the top program 12 of the past 19 years and has won over 140 Division I conference titles. The athletic department consists of 20 Division I sports and has a diversity among student-athletes, approximately 220 male athletes and 225 female athletes. The student-athletes at

Liberty University, as a total, have a higher Grade Point Average (GPA) than the general student body and more than 2/3 of the student-athletes hold a cumulative GPA over a 3.0.

Participants

The type of sample which will be used in this research is a purposeful sample, the participants will be purposefully selected to meet the research criteria of NCAA Division I student-athletes. The purposeful sample will be drawn from convenience sampling procedures, which simply means the participants will be chosen from convenient access (Peterson & Merunka, 2014). The participants in this study will be drawn from Liberty University's NCAA Division I athletic programs. There will be 2 current female student-athletes and 3 former male student-athletes, representing a variety of sports: men's tennis, men's soccer, men's track and field and cross country, women's field hockey, and women's swimming and dive. Out of the five participants, four student-athletes received some form of athletic scholarships, one student-athlete was upperclassman, one was a lowerclassman, three have already graduated and all five student-athletes play or played a non-revenue sport. The age of the student-athletes range between the years of nineteen and twenty-four.

Procedure

The first step in the research's procedure will be to email Liberty University's Senior Associate Athletics Director to seek support for this study (see Appendix A). I will obtain the Senior Associate Athletics Director of Academic Affairs email through the Liberty University athletic website, which is publically displayed. Upon receipt of the approval letter from Liberty University's Senior Associate Athletics Director (see Appendix B) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix C), I will proceed to contacting potential participants by directly emailing the Senior Associate Athletics Director of Academic Affairs, asking them to forward

the email to her student-athletes who fit the criteria for the research (see Appendix D). The email will contain a written introduction, purpose of study and ethical considerations (see Appendix E). Attached to the email will be the letter of approval from the Senior Associate Athletics Director and a consent form explaining background information, such as procedures, risks and benefits of the study and confidentiality (see Appendix G), which every participant must fill out before participating in the research.

Once the participants email back his or her consent forms to me, I will email the participant a website link containing a survey and schedule an in-depth interview with that particular participant at his or her earliest convenience (see Appendix F). The survey will consist of 10 open ended questions, some questions have multiple parts, regarding demographic and athletic information and will take the participants 10 minutes to complete. The in-depth interview will take approximately 25 minutes and will be conducted via phone or Skype whichever is the most convenient for the participant, and will comprise of 12 open ended questions concerning the student-athlete's attitude and perception of pay-for-play. Once all participants have filled out his or her survey and have been interviewed, all the student-athletes will be scheduled to participate in a focus group at a time that is the most convenient for them. The five participants will be divided into 2 focus groups, each focus group session will last approximately 25 minutes. The focus groups will be based on a semi-structured protocol with open-ended questions and minimal control, allowing the student-athletes to discuss all aspects of each topics. Each focus group will cover the same questions, and will start with an introduction and explanation of how the focus group will be conducted and directed. Every focus group will discuss the same 6 open ended questions concerning pay-for-play. After each question is read, the participants will be allowed to discuss his or her thoughts with one another and feed off each other's ideas. Each

interview and focus group will be recorded by a handheld device, and then transcribed. Once all focus groups have finished, analyzing the data will begin.

Data Collection

The data collection will include three methods: surveys, interviews and focus groups. By using these three methods for data collection, it will allow for data triangulation in the analysis.

Surveys

Qualitative surveys are used to study the diversity in a population. In this research, an open ended survey will be used to categorize the participants based on demographics and athletic background. The survey will be used as a baseline in this study to help answer research question number three: How, if at all, do perceptions of pay-for-play differ among subgroups of student-athletes (i.e., scholarship/non-scholarship, gender, year in school, and sport)?

Survey Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age and gender?
3. Please specify what your ethnicity is. If you wish to decline this question, please write "N/A".
4. What is your state of permanent residence?
5. What year of school are you in? (i.e., freshman, sophomore, etc.)
6. What sports have you played over your life span?
7. What sport or sports do you participate in at Liberty University? Please list all varsity sports you play for and specify whether men's or women's.

8. Have you played a college sport at another university or college prior to your term at Liberty University? If so, what university did you play for and what sport did you participate in?
9. Do you receive some form of athletic scholarship? Please specify whether it is partial, half or a full ride scholarship. If you do not receive any form of athletic scholarship, please state that you do not receive any athletic scholarship.
10. Do you receive some form of financial aid other than an athletic scholarship? Please specify what kind of financial aid you receive. If you do not receive any form of financial aid, please state that you do not receive any financial aid.

The survey questions, which focus on the demographics and athletic backgrounds of the participants, are designed to be relatively straightforward and non-threatening, and will serve as the basis for categorizing the participants. “Without the inclusion of such information, researchers risk assuming the stance of *absolutism*, which assumes that the phenomena of interest are the same regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, and SES (education level)” (Hammer, 2011, para. 3). Furthermore, a thorough description of the student-athletes will allow the readers and myself to determine to whom research findings generalize and will allow for comparisons to be made within the study (Hammer, 2011).

Interviews

When a researcher elects phenomenology as the design method for a study, interviews are the key component to data collection (Creswell, 2013; Hycner, 1985). The purpose of an interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and motivations of an individual on a particular matter. Interviews used in qualitative research provide a deeper understanding of a

phenomenon compared to methods used in quantitative methods. Therefore, when little is known about the study phenomenon, interviews are the most appropriate method to use in the research.

In this research, all participants will participate in a structured open ended interview. Incorporating questions that will provide information not seen in the literature review process is imperative. Therefore, the interview will consist of questions concerning the participant's knowledge, attitude, perception and beliefs about the pay-for-play model. Most importantly, the 12 questions chosen address the nature of this study, which will become the baseline for the focus groups and give a necessary insight into the proposed research questions.

Interview Questions

1. Can you please share with me the first time you heard or read the term “pay-for-play”?
2. How do you think most student-athletes learn about the pay-for-play model?
3. How would you describe the pay-for-play model?
4. What attributes do you like best about the pay-for-play model?
5. What problems do you foresee with the pay-for-play model?
6. Imagine you were in charge of designing the pay-for-play policy for NCAA, how would you design the policy? Where would the money come from, which student-athletes would it affect, etc.?
7. If the NCAA were to pass a bylaw allowing student-athletes to be paid, how do you think it would impact your college experience?
8. If the NCAA were to pass a bylaw allowing student-athletes to be paid, how would you feel?
9. What experiences or events have shaped your feelings on this?

10. What is your position on the pay-for-play model?
11. What experiences or events have led you to this decision?
12. What are your final thoughts on the pay-for-play model?

The interview will use a semi-structure designed, which combines a pre-determined set of open questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further (Putwain, 2006). A semi-structure interview will allow the researcher to remain in control of the study, but still give the participants the freedom needed to feel comfortable in the interview process (Putwain, 2006).

Questions 1 through 3 invite the participants to reflect on his or her knowledge and personal meaning of the pay-for-play model. Several studies suggest due to the limited benefits and time an individual has for learning new information, he or she will use various shortcuts and heuristics to understand information quicker, otherwise known as low information rationality (Andrew, 2016; Schneider, Marschall, Roch & Teske, 2016). Examining the student-athlete's knowledge of pay-for-play will help to discover a more complete picture of his or her perception, since research suggests individuals will use shortcuts to explain the limited understanding of a concept.

Questions 4 through 5 encourage the participant to look all aspects of pay-for-play. These are non-threatening questions, allowing the participant to talk more in-depth about the phenomenon of pay-for-play, without demanding him or her to be exceedingly vulnerable. However, the goal for these questions are to continue the interview process and allow the participants to expand on his or her ideas.

Questions 6 through 8 will put the participant in the role of expert on the pay-for-play model, which allows another unique outlook into the student-athlete's perception of pay-for-

play. These three questions will lead the participant into the following question that represents the basis of his or her perception on pay-for-play. Question 10 is a straightforward question, with a moderately low degree of vulnerability. Questions 9 and 11 are concerned with what events have shaped the participant feelings and attitude about pay-for-play. These questions are important because depending on whether the student-athlete has had a positive or negative experience, it could determine his or her attitude towards how he or she perceives pay-for-play.

The last question of the interview, number 12, is a one-shot question, which has been designed to give the participant a last opportunity to offer valuable insight (Patton, 2015). By ending on a one-shot question, the student-athlete is given the freedom to add to what has already been said and keeping him or her in the role of expert on the phenomenon of pay-for-play.

Focus Groups

The main goal of a focus group, used in qualitative research, is to have the participants understand the topic of interest to the researcher. Focus groups allow the researcher to collect an appropriate amount of data in a short time frame and offer a richness and flexibility in the collection of the data that are not usually achieved when applying an instrument individually (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins & Popjoy, 1998).

For this research, each focus group discussion will consist of 6 open ended questions. Only open-ended questions have been selected, questions in which give an option of only a 'yes' or 'no' have not been included. The focus group atmosphere will allow the participants to expand on each other's ideas, allowing the readers and myself to have a better understanding of the collective perspective of student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play.

Focus Group Questions

1. Can you please explain to me why you think or do not think the pay-for-play model will be implemented into the NCAA in the future?
2. What do you believe would be the repercussions, if the pay-for-play model was implemented into the NCAA?
3. What do you think would be the positive outcomes, if the pay-for-play model was implemented into the NCAA?
4. How do you think the pay-for-play model would impact the dynamics of college athletics?
5. If you were given the opportunity to discuss your likes, dislikes and concerns about the pay-for-play model with the NCAA Division I Board of Directors, what would you tell them?
6. What are your final thoughts about implementing the pay-for-play model in Division I college athletics?

Questions 1 through 3 are the only questions which will demand a relatively high degree of vulnerability, compared to the rest of the focus group questions, and will allow myself to gain insight on the student-athletes' attitudes and beliefs about pay-for-play. Preferably by this time in the research process, a good rapport will have been established; having a good rapport established is imperative or otherwise the participant may not feel comfortable in sharing personal information (Putwain, 2006). "The conclusions drawn from an interview-based research study will depend, in part, on the responses provided by the participants and these in turn can be influenced by the relationship between the interviewer and the participant" (Putwain, 2006, para. 37).

Question 4 creates the participant to think about the phenomenon on a larger scale; not just affecting them, but the entire dynamics of college athletics. Question 5 puts the participant in the role of expert on the pay-for-play model and will allow a different outlook into the student-athlete's perception of pay-for-play. This question will also help track the participant's consistency with his or her answers.

Question 6 is the last question in the entire data collection process. This question will give the participants a final opportunity to explain his or her thoughts on the phenomenon and close out his or her part in the study (Patton, 2015).

Data Analysis

Phenomenologists fear that by focusing too much on specific steps in a research method they will become reified as the researchers have in the natural sciences (Hycner, 1985). Keen (1975) stated "...unlike other methodologies, phenomenology cannot be reduced to a 'cookbook' set of instructions. It is more an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals" (p. 41). Although many researchers do not want to conform to a particular set of steps (Creswell, 2013; Hycner, 1985; Keen, 1975), Moustakas has developed an 8 step guideline to help analyze phenomenological data (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Moustakas' guideline for data analyzation will be used in this research.

Before the data analysis starts, I will bracket my preconception of the study. Bracketing refers to suspending as much as possible the researcher's meanings and interpretations and entering the world created by the interviewee (Hycner, 1985). The process will require me to write a complete description of the phenomenon and my personal experience with the phenomenon. When the researcher is able to bracket his or her response to separate parts of the conversation, an opportunity develops for the researcher to have an open attitude towards the

phenomenon, which allows the researcher to listen for the meaning behind the phenomena (Creswell, 2013). Also, by bracketing my own presuppositions and prejudice of the phenomenon, the readers will be able to judge for themselves whether I have focused solely on the participants' experiences in the description without bringing myself into the picture.

Moustakas' 8 Step Guideline

1. *Listing all relevant expressions (Horizontalizing)*: I will look over all the data, if some statements are irrelevant to the investigating phenomena and are repetitive or overlapping, I will delete these statements. After cleaning through the data, the remaining parts of the data are called *horizons*, which refers to the textural meanings or constituent parts of the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) stated that horizons are unlimited and horizontalization is a never ending process.
2. *Reduction of experiences to the invariant constituents*: I will cluster horizons into themes. Clusters of themes are usually formed by grouping units of meaning together and the researcher is able to identify significant themes (Creswell, 2006; Moustakas, 1994). The translated data will be divided into meaning units so that each of the themes has only one meaning. This step of the phenomenological reduction describes the phenomenon in *textural language* (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).
3. *Clustering the units of meaning to form themes*: I will cluster and thematize the invariant constituents, which are the horizons defined as the "core themes of the experience" of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).
4. *Comparison of multiple data sources to validate the invariant constituents*: The themes derived from participants' experiences collected by the interviews, will be compared to

the focus group discussions and literature to verify accuracy and clear representation across the data sources.

5. *Constructing of individual textural descriptions of participants:* “The textural description is a narrative that explains participants’ perceptions of a phenomenon” (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015, p. 12). In this step, I will describe the experiences of the participants using verbatim excerpts from his or her interview and focus group. Furthermore, I will explain the meaning units in a narrative format to help understand the participants’ experiences.
6. *Construction of individual structural descriptions:* This step will be based on the textural descriptions and imaginative variation. By using imaginative variation, I will imagine how experience of the phenomenon occurred and then, create the structures.
7. *Construction of composite structural descriptions:* After I write the textural description for each participant, I will incorporate the textural description into a structure explaining how the experience occurred. I will add the structures at the end of each paragraph in order to create structural description. This process will help to understand the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon.
8. *Synthesizing the texture and structure into an expression:* I will create two narratives for each participant, including textural describing “what” occurred and structural describing “how” it occurred (Moustakas, 1994). I will list the meaning units for each participant. After that, I will create meaning units common to all participants and create a composite textural and structural descriptions based on those shared meaning units. In the composite textural and structural descriptions, I will be able to eliminate individual meaning units in order to create the essence of the phenomena. I will write composite narratives from the

third person perspective representing the group as a whole. This final step is the synthesis of the all narratives for the participants as a whole (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). The composite structural description will be combined into the composite textural description to generate a collective description of the phenomenon. The purpose of this final step will be to reach the essence of the experience of the phenomenon (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

The legal and ethical issues presented in this research will be moderately low, but nevertheless, critically important. Since participants will be of legal age, parental consent will not be needed. However, before the surveys are conducted participants will be informed on the general purpose of the research, as well as be given a consent form for participation. Only participants who sign the consent form will be able to participate in the study.

Throughout the entire process of collecting data, the purpose of the study and explanations of how the participant's responses will be used, clarified and repeated. All comments from myself or the participant stated as 'off the record' will be omitted from the data. All surveys will be completed through a published instrument. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted through phone or online video chat, and I will avoid asking leading questions. Additionally, in order to preserve the integrity of the research, bracketing will be performed, which will allow the study to solely focus on the experiences of the participants.

Each participant will not be referred to by name in the study or transcriptions. Instead, once all information has been collected and put in order, the participant's name will correspond with his or her interview number (i.e., Jane Doe participated in Interview #1, therefore, the participant will be known as Interviewee #1). The only person who will know the participants' identity will be myself, the researcher. Data will be reported with the highest level of integrity

and honesty, regardless of the results. The participants will receive copies of final research upon request. This will ensure each participant will remain anonymous and feel secure about his or her confidentiality.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research demonstrates the evidence for the results reported are sound and when the argument made based on the results is strong. The trustworthiness of qualitative research has often been questioned by positivists, this is due to his or her concepts of validity and reliability which cannot be addressed in the same way as naturalistic work. Nonetheless, many researchers have demonstrated how qualitative research can incorporate measures to handle with these issues. An author, named Guba, has proposed four criteria he believes should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Shenton, 2004). The trustworthiness of this research will follow Guba's four criteria.

Credibility

The first criteria addressed by positivist researchers is internal validity, which refers to seeking to ensure his or her study measures and tests what it is actually intended for. Merriam suggested the qualitative researcher's equivalent concept deals with the question, "how congruent are the findings with reality?" (Shenton, 2004, p. 64). In addition, Guba argued ensuring credibility is one of the most important criteria when establishing trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). In order for this study promote trustworthiness, the following provisions will be made:

- 1) *Random Sampling*: A random selection of participants will negate charges of researcher biasness. Also, random sampling helps to ensure any unknown influences are evenly distributed throughout the sample.
- 2) *Triangulation*: Triangulation involves the use of different methods; in this study surveys, individual interviews and focus groups will be used for data collection. Although individual interviews and focus groups suffer from common methodological shortcomings since both involve interviews, they each have distinct characteristics that result in individual strengths. Guba suggested the use of different methods in concert compensates for his or her individual limitations and exploits his or her respective benefits (Shenton, 2014). Ultimately, triangulation will enable myself and the reader to verify the participant's viewpoints and experiences against others, and create a rich picture of the attitudes, needs and behavior of those under scrutiny which may be constructed based on the contributions from a range of situations and people.
- 3) *Tactics to Ensure Honesty*: In this study several tactics will be in place to help ensure honesty in informants when contributing data. These tactics include: (a) Each participant will be given opportunities to refuse to participate in the study in order to ensure the data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to partake; (b) Participants will be encouraged to be open from the beginning of each session, allowing myself to establish a rapport in the opening moments and indicating there are no wrong answers to the questions that will be asked; (c) It will be made clear to participants that he or she will have the right to withdraw, with no need of an explanation, from the study at any point investigator.

Dependability and Confirmability

The criteria of dependability and confirmability are similar, both are connected with reliability in quantitative studies. In the issue of dealing with reliability, positivist researchers would apply techniques to show if the work was repeated, in the same context, using the same methods and participants, similar results would be achieved. However, researchers suggest in qualitative studies due to the ever-changing nature of the phenomena, obtaining reliability is difficult. In order to address the reliability issue more directly in qualitative research, the processes within the study will be reported in detail, thereby allowing a future researcher to repeat the work. Also, in-depth coverage of the research design and its implementation, the operational detail of data gathering and reflective appraisal of the research will allow the reader to assess the extent of which proper research practices were followed (Shenton, 2014). This will enable readers of the research report to develop a thorough understanding of the methods and its effectiveness.

Transferability

The last criteria Guba suggested for qualitative researchers to consider is transferability. Positivist researchers often are concerned with demonstrating the results of the study can be applied to a wider population. Since the findings of a qualitative study are specific to a small number of particular settings and individuals, determining if the findings are applicable to other situations and populations is challenging. However, Shenton (2014) suggested each case may be unique since each case is an example within a broader group and, as a result, the prospect of transferability should not be instantly discarded. In order to analyze the trustworthiness of this study through transferability, information concerning the following issues will be given at the beginning: (a) Any limitations in the type of individuals who contributed data; (b) The number of

participants involved in the study; (c) The data collection methods that were applied; (d) The number and length of the data collection sessions; (e) The time period of when the data was collected. Ultimately, the results of the study must be understood within the context of the particular characteristics of the environment and individuals who participated.

Chapter Summary

This study is designed to explore and understand the specific phenomenon of current Division I student-athletes' view of the pay-for-play model and lived experiences that shaped his or her views. By using a phenomenological research method, the readers and myself will be able to fully understand student-athletes' perception about pay-for-play because phenomenology enables the opportunity to experience through the eyes and mind of the participant who initially experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994).

In order to obtain this knowledge, I will conduct surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups concerning the internal experiences of five current and former student-athletes from Liberty University regarding pay-for-play. These five student-athletes will come from a variety of sports and backgrounds, and will be chosen because he or she fit the criteria of the research. During the student-athlete's survey, interview and focus group, he or she will be asked numerous questions concerning his or her views and attitudes about pay-for-play and his or her lived experiences regarding the phenomenon. Once the data has been collected, the data will be analyzed by using Moustakas' 8 step guideline. The process employs phenomenological reduction, which includes bracketing, horizontalizing, clustering invariant qualities and themes, and constructing textural description (Moustakas, 1994). Using Moustakas guideline will enable myself and the readers to break down the phenomenon in order to fully understand the student-athletes' perception about pay-for-play.

Ethical consideration and trustworthiness for this research is extremely important. All measures will be taken to ensure and preserve the confidentiality of the participants and the accuracy, integrity and honesty of the data reports. To guarantee trustworthiness, this research will follow Guba's four criteria, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, which was designed for qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study (Shenton, 2004). Without ethical consideration and trustworthiness, this study would lose its credibility.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter discusses the results of the research questions intended for the focus of this thesis. The questions from the individual interview and focus group concentrate on the student-athlete's knowledge of the pay-for-play model, what the student-athlete have experienced with the model, how the student-athlete thinks he or she would be affected, and how the student-athlete perceived the model. The research led to several important findings: coaches and peers have a tremendous influence on the student-athletes' perspective of pay-for-play, student-athletes view pay-for-play as an employment opportunity, they have a shared notion the NCAA makes enough in revenue to compensate student-athletes, pay-for-play may place on pressure on student-athletes' academic and athletic performance, and student-athletes want pay-for-play to be fair and regulated.

Participant Information

The chart below explains the demographic of each participant used in this research.

Participant ID #	Gender	Year in College	Sport	Athletic Aid	Financial Aid	Academic Aid
1	Female	Upperclassman	Swimming & Dive	Yes	Yes	No
2	Female	Lowerclassman	Field Hockey	Yes	No	Yes
3	Male	Graduated '17	Track & Field, Cross Country	No	No	No
4	Male	Graduated '16	Soccer	Yes	No	No
5	Male	Graduated '16	Tennis	Yes	No	Yes

Coach and Peer Influence

Coaches and peers of the student-athletes have a major influence on student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play; his or her influence helped persuade the student-athlete to become an advocate or an opponent of the model. The results showed two main ways coaches and peers influenced the student-athletes' perception; learning and experiences. Majority of the research participants believed most student-athletes learn about pay-for-play through his or her coaches or peers. Interviewee # 1, #2, #3 and #4 implied in his or her interview answers how hearsay is the most common way student-athletes learn about pay-for-play.

I think um initially most of them heard from their coaches and the people who actually knew about it were people that are receiving it. Um... because I think they broadcasted it, but I don't think they broadcasted it enough for people who weren't really receiving it would like hear about it as much. Um... I think most people heard about it from their coaches, but I think now that because it has becoming more of like a wide spread thing people are hearing it more from the news than initially in the beginning (Interviewee #1, Interview).

I would say probably through coaches and just like hearing about it. I don't think people really go out and research it all that much, unless it's really affecting them. But yeah... I would just say you kind of hear about it every once in a while. Umm... But no one necessarily addresses it (Interviewee #2, Interview).

Umm... I think a lot of them learn from their peers umm... As a college athlete people have talked about it and uh it's often time a topic of conversation amongst athletes. As a runner being out running with other guys umm... We would occasionally talk about it... (Interviewee #3, Interview).

Umm... most of them just learn from their friends and through social media and hearing other fellow student-athletes talk about, I don't want to say complain about it, but more discuss... have discussions with people, bring up the point they feel they deserve pay-for-play. Umm... especially people who go to bigger schools feel they bring in a lot of money for the schools. So, I would say for a lot of athletes that is how they hear about it, they hear about it through social media and regards it... (Interviewee #4, Interview).

While learning from peers and coaches had an influential impact on the student-athletes' perceptions, his or her experiences involving coaches and peers ultimately shaped the student-athletes' perceptions of pay-for-play. Interviewee #1, #3 and #4 all had a different phenomenon relating to pay-for-play with his or her coaches and peers. Interviewee #1 explained the first time she heard about the term 'pay-for-play' and it was positive experience.

...I think was either two or three years ago, because... three or four years ago, because that was when Liberty first started to do pay-for-play, and that's when I first started to hear about it because my coach started to talk about it. He was like super excited about it. He was like "We're now like a few universities that aren't in the big 5 program that are doing this", and so that was when I heard about it for the first time (Interviewee #1, Interview).

But not all participants' experiences were as positive as Interviewee #1. Interviewee #3 and #4 expressed how their experiences created more of a concern in how they perceived pay-for-play in the interview question 'What experiences or events have led you to this decision and your feelings about pay-for-play?':

Yeah, so as a track and field athlete again, I was kind of around a lot of people who had strong opinions about it umm... and just through talking to them umm... I have a... So, I currently umm... I'm a GSA for Liberty and I also... so, I have to deal with athletes and I also have to oversee a lot of research proposals. So, I see a lot of different people's research proposals and you would be surprised that out of 150 students, about 60 to 70 of them did pay-for-play. So, I am looking at their research as well. So, between my own research and then having to read 60 articles about it from students I have become pretty averse on the topic. Out of the 60 topics I would say that 55 were for pay-for-play and 5 were against. To be honest I would have to say the 5 that were against were way more compelling than the 55 that were for. Umm... so, through the use of other people's research and my own personal research because I have been interested in the topic, I just have developed a stance against what is typically known as pay-for-play (Interview #3, Interview).

I mean... I would say experiences are seeing, you see players in soccer and other sports, the select few get scholarships and stipends, things like that. You also see as an athlete, you see how other athletes who are on these scholarships and stuff use that money, and a lot of times it is used to buy the nicest stuff. So, they can have the nicest headphones and the nicest whatever it is. So, they kind of blow through their stipend and that's when you get in to the catch 22 of "Well I don't have any money to pay for food and I don't have blah blah blah". Well that can make the same argument of you could have lived on campus and not spend any money housing, and you could have used that money to buy groceries and

whatever else it is or you could have bought the meal plans on campus, and you could have had more money to spend on yourself. So, I would say from experiences of knowing people who are on scholarships and how they used their money, I think is kind of shaped how my mind set is because I understand where the money would go to if players were getting paid. Umm... Especially extra on top of already getting, depending on the team and the sport you can get \$1200 - 1400 in stipend, how much more are you trying to give them to live, when they could have the option to live on campus and save them \$1500 and they could spend that money elsewhere. I would say that is where a lot of my experiences come from and how my mindset has been shaped, just from seeing how players have used their stipend. I mean that is part of a stipend, being able to spend it on nice things, but you just blowing it away because you want to have the nicest things all the time, that is a little bit on you for not saving your money and using it somewhere else. I would say that is mainly how my concept has been shaped (Interviewee #4, Interview).

The sum of the participants' responses was coaches and peers played a major role in how a student-athlete learns about pay-for-play, and his or her experiences come from interacting and observing fellow student-athletes, especially with athletes that have some form of athletic aid. The more positive phenomenon a student-athlete had with his or her coaches and peers, the more the student-athlete accepted the pay-for-play model. Overall, the phenomenon each student-athlete had with his or her coaches and peers had a major influence on the student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play.

Employment

Balancing academics and a college sport is already considered a full-time job by most people. Several of the participants discussed how difficult getting a job is while playing a sport and being a full-time student. Pay-for-play would allow student-athletes to receive extra compensation and not have to worry about getting a job on top of his or her already busy schedules. Interviewee #1 and #5 explained how this experience shaped his or her feeling towards pay-for-play:

Um, I mean I think that as a student-athlete like... I would definitely be real excited to be able to get more money to do what I do uh because I kind of have seen how time and energy goes into you know being a Division I athlete and umm... and when I have time that is extra for anything, like my entire days are filled up and I have early practices in the morning. So, it's really tough to go out and get a job and experience in anything else, and so kind of being able to be paid by the university and kind of get like extra money to do what I am doing. It's definitely more of a motivational factor, adds a little bit more pressure, but like it is also kind of like an exciting new, you know you kind of feel grateful; you feel grateful for it because like...it is kind of just helping your experience there. You can come out of college to top and ahead of everything and not having so many loans and everything too (Interviewee #1, Interview).

Umm... Just my own personal experience as a student-athlete, probably. You know a lot of, while... we do receive compensation as a form of scholarship, you don't really recognized immediately the value of that. Even though you are on a scholarship, you still have bills to pay and still very real expenses that student-

athletes have and they have no way to account for that. They have no income to do that... So, while a bachelor's degree sounds great, I don't think it is enough for a student, so I do feel like my own experiences have definitely led me to believe it is pretty much a full-time job, and the NCAA say 20 hours a week, but I promise you most of these programs go well over that. So, it is pretty much a full-time job and I do believe that athletes should be compensated accordingly (Interviewee #5, Interview).

But Interviewee #1 and #5 were not the only ones who saw pay-for-play as a benefit when it comes to getting a job as a student-athlete in college. Interviewee #4 described the attributes he likes best about the pay-for-play model.

Well I mean I like the aspect that players are going be able to make money since athletes don't have the time to go get a full-time job. So, that's probably the most positive aspect about it, at least it gets you some extra money that you wouldn't normally be able to get, depending on busy you want to make your schedule. So, I would definitely say that is the biggest positive of the pay-for-play (Interviewee #4, Interview).

While making money seems to be a major benefit, there could be some repercussions.

Interviewee #3 explained during the focus group what some of these repercussions could be.

We would probably see something very different from what the current athlete experiences now. I mean as soon as athletes are getting paid, we are looking at part-time verses full-time, we could be looking at 40 hour weeks and if we are paying certain athletes to be full-time athletes and some of the bench players part-time. We could be potentially looking at strife between athletes... umm... like

there is in a normal business setting. If you think you deserve to be paid more than someone and they are being paid a lot more than you, there is going to be animosity towards that person. Just simply on the basis they are getting paid more, there is really no grounds to that animosity that other than a money structure (Interviewee #3, Focus Group 2).

NCAA has set restrictions on how much a student-athlete can work within a week. Interviewee #1, #4 and #5 explained through his or her personal experience the difficulties of getting a job while playing a college sport and being a full-time student. Without knowing, Interviewee #1, #4 and #5 came to an agreed notion student-athletes do not have time to get an outside job, and pay-for-play would allow student-athletes to make extra money to help out in everyday life.

A major concern with paying student-athletes to play a college sport is the concept of amateurism. NCAA has developed strict rules and regulations to keep student-athletes as amateur athletes. However, during the individual interview and focus group, two interviewees discussed issues of amateurism within college athletics.

The whole concept of amateurism I do think it is pretty much nonexistent in this day in age. If these athletes were truly amateurs, you wouldn't see these crazy amounts of money being associated with them (Interviewee #5, Interview).
... A college degree right now is not worth the same as when amateurism was first instituted in the NCAA (Interviewee #5, Interview).

While Interviewee #5 believes the amateur system failing within college athletics, Interviewee #4 has a different opinion concerning the concept of amateurism.

Yeah, I think to add on to that is what aspect of not only are there a lot of hoops to jump through but one of the biggest hoops is the aspect of amateurism and does that change your concept of amateurism with international players and different things along those lines. So, I think like that is the big hindrance right now, umm... just the aspect of amateurism could hinder how long it takes the NCAA to implement something like this (Interviewee #4, Focus Group 2).

Interviewee #5 and #4 contradict one another; Interviewee #5 believes amateurism has failed within college athletics and that is why pay-for-play should be implemented and Interviewee #4 contemplates the concept of amateurism will make it difficult for NCAA to create a pay-for-play model which will be passed. Either way, amateurism within intercollegiate athletics will have to change in order for pay-for-play to be implemented.

NCAA's Revenue

The revenue NCAA generates off of college football bowl games and the March Madness basketball tournaments has become one of the leading arguments for advocates of pay-for-play. As mentioned earlier, these advocates claim the NCAA is making money off of a student-athlete's image and athletic ability, which is unfair to the student-athlete whom is confined by the rules and regulations of amateurism with the NCAA. Throughout the interview process, several interviewees deliberated over the topic of NCAA's revenue.

... I do feel that just the digging into the revenue itself is a step in the right direction, just because it deals directly with the actual income the NCAA makes and the actual income that I feel that the students actually generate. So I do like, you know, the huge, the millions if not billions of dollars that's coming in. So, I do feel like the percentages of the TV deals and sponsorships, it's tough to come

up with a round number for percentage wise the athletes should get, but I do feel they should get some of it, yeah (Interviewee #5, Interview).

Every participant was asked to describe in his or her own words what the pay-for-play model was. All participants explained how pay-for-play was receiving compensation for playing a college sport outside the realms of an athletic scholarship. However, one participant went further into clarifying what student-athletes would be compensated for and challenged the idea of amateurism within college athletics.

The pay-for-play model is kind of rewarding or umm... compensating athletes for their likeness, for their name, for their marketing value, and umm... letting them utilize the talents and abilities they've been given in order to make money off their own personal abilities. The desire for that is kind of in order to use their own image and to be the beneficiaries of themselves and not allowing umm... kind of the college or institutional control effect their, umm... utilize their image rather than themselves (Interviewee #3, Interview).

In a much broader form, Interviewee #5 had a similar understanding as to what pay-for-play is as Interviewee #3.

Umm... Yeah, I think it works... just because a percentage of the revenue that is being made off of college athletes going towards the actual students is definitely helps. Like I said, scholarship alone, just depending on the university where the athlete goes to vary a lot, but everyone does the same amount of work and puts in the same amount of hours per week. So, taking a percentage of the revenue that come in from these huge indorsement deals and huge TV deals and taking some

of that to pay the athletes because essentially, they are the product. I do feel that it's right (Interviewee #5, Interview).

Interviewee #5 continued on about how he felt about paying student-athletes for his or her contributions to the athletic department.

Umm... I think the whole, the movement as a whole, I do think it makes, it's definitely progress, and I think the times have changed where revenue involved with college athletics has gotten to the point where athletes feel like they are being left out and not valued as much as they should be, as compared to the revenue they bring in for the university. So, I do think it is progress and I was very open to the idea of pay-for-play (Interviewee #5, Interview).

A game plan has not yet been created for how pay-for-play would enter college athletics. Numerous models have been debated on how pay-for-play should be implemented, but all the models in some way lack validity. One of the most notorious questions surrounding the pay-for-play model is "Where would the money come from to compensate the student-athletes?". In the individual interviews, all participants were asked to design the play-for-play model. When asked about where the money should come from, majority of the student-athletes claimed the institution should pay for it, but did not specify in detail about where the money would exactly come from. Only one participant explained where he thought the money should directly come from.

Umm... the money, where would it come from? I would say part of it would come from the school's ticket sales, uh I don't want to say ticket sales, but the school's income just from gate revenue and umm things like that. But once you get into, it would give you more incentive to make NCAA tournaments because I

think once you make NCAA tournaments, NCAA makes enough revenue, especially on football and basketball tournaments and TV revenue, that they can give back portions of that revenue back to the schools, and I would say that could go based off of how far your team goes. Just like for a conference, if you go to a bowl game in football, the conferences get a little bit of money to divvy out each team based off of how bowl games they go to and uh things like that. So, there are ways that even though the NCAA is a nonprofit organization there are ways that money can get dispersed to teams based off of performances (Interviewee #4, Interview).

Throughout the individual interview process, the topic of the NCAA's revenue was a major component to some of the participants' perception of pay-for-play. For some participants this component increased his or her advocacy for pay-for-play, while for other participants this component completely altered his or her perception of college athletics. Nonetheless, the revenue the NCAA generates from college athletics has become a key element of the pay-for-play model.

Student-Athlete vs. Athlete-Student

For some people getting paid has a tendency to add pressure and stress. As mentioned before, athletic scholarships have increased the pressure for a higher performance of athletic ability. For some student-athletes, this pressure has reduced his or her academic performance. Interviewee #1 revealed the pressure student-athletes could be facing, if pay-for-play is implemented into college athletics.

I think it might make it a little more business like almost more like intense because now the university is actually giving the student-athletes money, and expecting more things since they are putting more money into them, and I think it

is going to put more pressure on programs and coaching staff and expecting athletes to perform more because their like 'hey, we are giving all this stuff, we want you to do well'. Like we see in pro programs, we see people who aren't performing well they are just able to get rid of them. And I think that definitely there will be more of... like the programs that will be doing pay-for-play will be.... they are going to be having a lot more pressure (Interviewee #1, Focus Group 1).

The main reason for a person to attend university is to get a college degree. Student-athletes are first called 'students' and then 'athletes' because the NCAA and institutions want to imply academics come first and athletics are second. During the individual interviews and focus groups, several interviewees discussed his and her concern about how getting paid to play will negatively affect a student-athletes academic performance.

It is a large time commitment so I mean it's kind of like a job. So, I guess you could be paid to do it. I don't know... it's a tricky question. I mean personally I would be okay with it. But it's also you are going to school to go to school, it would put less emphasis on getting an education and more on your sport... I don't know... you are going school to get an education not necessarily to play a sport. So I guess it would just depend (Interviewee #2, Interview).

It would be even more of a job. Right now we have regulations on it to only allow 20 hours a week. I think if you bring in pay, umm... the departments can start arguing for full-time student-athletes umm... and it would kind of directly go from student-athlete to athlete-students. They wouldn't be there to be serious about their studies, so you might as well not even send them to school...

(Interviewee #3, Interview).

...Right now they are listed as student-athletes, but once we start paying them to be full-time and part-time, we are going to see the shift to athlete-students rather than student-athletes (Interviewee #3, Focus Group 2).

I do think if a bylaw were to be passed, I do think they would have to be stricter academic requirements. I mean if these athletes do get paid, they are always going to be seeking the best deal. Just like any capital market. So, I do feel that academic standards will need to increase, because that is the first thing that will slide even more. But I do think it would be a step in the right direction. But there will have to be more laws passed just to maintain the integrity of the whole student-athlete experience as well. It will definitely affect their college experience because a lot of these athletes put a whole lot of work into their sport that they don't really have time to seek employment outside their sport... (Interviewee #5, Interview).

The NCAA requires particular academic standards for student-athletes to remain eligible for his or her sport, even student-athletes who have athletic scholarships are required to follow the academic standards. While pay-for-play does not have a set format, rules and regulations about academic eligibility will most likely be similar to the rules and regulations that currently exist. Interviewees #2, #3 and #5 all expressed the inevitable pressure from being paid to play may make a student-athlete feel more like an athlete-student.

Fair and Regulated

The most common theme throughout the individual interviews and focus groups was student-athletes wanted the pay-for-play model to be fair and regulated. While each participant

had his or her own interpretation of how he or she wanted the model to be fair and regulated, four of the interviewees wanted all sports to be included. The participants independently agreed not every student-athlete would receive extra compensation or the same amount, but they all agreed compensation should not be just for revenue sport student-athletes.

... Um, I think that all sports should get it. I think that, you know, I think that a big one that people look at is football being deserving of it, but I think that there are definitely other sports are deserving of it too because uh even if they are not as big of revenue sport, I think that umm... I mean, it is also determined to the university, if they can afford to do that, but I think that it definitely should be something that is opened up to all sports, and to be given equally opportunity to all student-athletes on campus because if you just give it to football, you're just going to be like, football is not a women's sport and you would be umm... you would be kind of like, you know, women want to go to school too and they would definitely benefit from extra... extra pay, so I think that they should definitely give it to all sports. And if they do it only to football, to include some women's sports as well (Interviewee #1, Interview).

I would even say that if you are going to do this for student-athletes, make it where every athlete on a team can have their books paid for or something like that. Instead of paying the high playing people, at least let everyone get books or something. Put the money towards something where it's like... yeah it's awesome. I think we should be getting paid and stuff, but I think there a lot of quality members of teams that will never actually be players who are first on the field or umm... or on the scoring roster. But they are still contributing to the team

in significant ways and have the same work ethic as someone who is performing well, but doesn't have the same level of skill (Interviewee #1, Focus Group 1).

Umm... like I just said just a seconds ago. It comes down to athletes, how do you tier the money? Because you're top tier athletes who get the Heisman or teams who are on national championship teams, those players are going to feel that they deserve more money verses people who go to a smaller school or compete at the highest level. You run into the problem for schools who don't have the funding to be able to pay their athletes, where is the money coming from, if the schools can't afford it. Here at Liberty we have a lot of money compared to other schools in our own conference. So, it's one of those scenarios where it comes down to how do you tier who gets the most money? Now I'm not saying everyone deserves the same amount of money, but you can't say 'well the top tier football players and the top tier basketball players get the money because they bring in most of the money for the school', but someone who puts in just as much work on the cross country team or tennis don't have a chance of getting any kind of money, even though they have a better chance of getting a conference championship, depending on the school you go to. I would say that is the biggest problem that is going to arise with this concept, how do you make it equal with certain schools and programs and conferences, umm... things like that (Interviewee #3, Interview).

... As far as compensation goes, the one thing that I do feel all at least starting players in all programs should receive a full scholarship. Umm... so that's where the dollar amount will be different depending on the university. That's where I do

think it should start. Umm... but I do feel the revenue should be split equally among all the sports, but more so towards the revenue producing sports, such as football and basketball, umm whatever it may be. It would be tough to, I also do feel it needs to start where athletes are able to generate revenue off their likeness; essentially that is their product, that is their own image and they should be able to profit off of it... (Interviewee #5, Interview).

Out of the participants, Interviewees #1, #2, #4 and #5 that claimed pay-for-play should be fair to all sports since all athletes put in the same amount of time; not necessarily all sports receiving the same amount of money, but still receiving some compensation. While Interviewee #2 agreed with the other three participants, she had her own idea on how stipends should be regulated.

...But yeah, I do think the financial stipend or whatever kind of money they are going to use for pay-for-play should be checked way better than it is (Interviewee #2, Focus Group 1).

...I think it should go more broadly across teams. Like I know, especially on our team some girls do have it and some don't. And I think a lot of the money goes to foreign students, so they will get a lot of the money compared to like the American kids... like aren't getting as much, so it should be more broad and like everyone should receive. But I also think that it should be able to change based on your performance in the sport and school. Because I feel like some people are getting paid and they are doing poorly, and there are some people who are doing very well but aren't getting paid anything. So I think it should be able to be renewed each year.... But yeah... I think it should be a little more broad and

based on performance.... As for revenue and non-revenue sports, yes revenue sports should receive more since they are bringing more of a profit in for the school (Interviewee #2, Interview).

While each participant had a different idea how the pay-for-play model should be structured and regulated, a common concern emerged amongst the participants which entailed the model be regulated. Money management for young adults can be difficult, many people question if a student-athlete can handle the pressures and requirements of earning an income.

...if you are not as responsible with the money, you can use it ways that would not benefit you... (Interviewee #2, Interview).

...People can maybe use the money not for school related purposes and just kind of you spend it where ever they want and uh you know just shenanigans and kind of like waste their money. Umm, I think that could be a problem, some people could probably say like that student-athletes don't know how to like use their money wisely, and so they are just going to like waste it all on like useless gadgets. I think that could be a problem (Interviewee #1, Interview).

However, spending money wisely is only a small part of money management. In the American society, if a person receives an income, that person is required to pay taxes on his or her income. Since no official plan for the pay-for-play model has been designed yet, one can only stipulate that student-athletes will have to pay taxes on the compensation he or she receives. Some opponents of pay-for-play do not believe student-athletes will be capable of paying taxes on his or her own. When asked "What problems do you foresee with the pay-for-play model?", Interviewee #3 explained his concerns about student-athletes paying taxes.

... Also, athletes would have to worry about being taxed on their uh likeness and image and right now they don't have to deal with those taxes. Umm... and so because of the whole taxation problem... I mean I... I don't think we could trust student-athletes in that type of situation. Having being around them currently, I don't think that it's a good idea to give some of these young adults the responsibility for filing for taxes, all that good stuff (Interviewee #3, Interview).

Out of the participants, four of them agreed independently pay-for-play should be an opportunity for all sports. Interviewee #1, #2, #4 and #5 also agreed not every student-athlete should receive the same amount of money, depends on the sport and student-athlete themselves. With wanting pay-for-play to be fair, the participants also wanted pay-for-play to be regulated. Interviewee #1, #2 and #3 expressed his or her concerns about trusting student-athletes' money management skills. Creating rules to regulate student-athletes' spending habits may be the solution for money management issues.

Student-Athletes' Perception of Pay-For-Play

Finding student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play was the basis of the entire study. Understanding what and how student-athletes perceive the pay-for-play model can give insight into whether pay-for-play should be implemented and if so, what are student-athletes wanting in the policy. The participants were divided on where he or she stood for the model: two were advocates, two were neutral and one was entirely against the pay-for-play model. The two advocate participants perceived pay-for-play as positive and beneficial.

I think it is something that is very beneficial, um to student-athletes, like of course there are you know some room for errors, like room, like some room people like... people could definitely like... it could definitely be negative if some

people are kind of using it and like holding above people's heads; like you know I am paying you now for this, like... you have all this money, like you have to go out there and do this... But I think that it is definitely something that is positive and can benefit a lot of student-athletes...um... on more than just an athletic standpoint because it would help them to fly home to see like their families and buy things that are extra that are not necessarily provided by the school. Uh so I think it is something that is super beneficial, might looked down upon some people, but as an athlete I can totally see the benefits of paying for it and... I think some people might think that their work is like you know worth more than what they are getting from the school, and I think this will definitely like help, to be like here is extra help, we care (Interviewee #1, Interview).

Yeah, I would say I am definitely for it just because you know the model does attempt to split up the whole revenue producing sports and in relation to the other sports. Umm... I do feel like it makes each sport for what it is. Like I said there will always be a need for improvements made, if something like it were to be passed. But I would definitely be for it (Interview #5, Interview).

The two neutral participants understand the potential positive and negative repercussions of the pay-for-play model. Depending on how the policy is designed would determine which way the neutral participants would agreed with. However, one common feature both neutral participants would like is fairness.

I am more for it than against it. Then again, I may just be neutral... I am not... I don't know... I don't have a strong position on it... I feel like it can be a negative and a positive. The extra money does provide an incentive for you to want to keep

playing and... I don't know...like work harder... like it makes it more of a responsibility, I guess... So, that is also a good thing... Umm... and then if you do get a little bit of extra money to spend or to save, so I feel like that is a good thing as well... In a way that I think it could be good, I also think it could be bad...umm... and so if you are getting paid you also... like if you like already have that responsibility, some people might like see it as an reward and they kind of not necessarily work as hard for it, unlike someone who is not getting paid to play... It could kind of make you complacent and then... umm... if you are not as responsible with the money you can use it ways that would not benefit you (Interviewee #2, Interview).

...I think that the most talented athlete should get money and there are a lot of people, I know there a lot in our program need it and don't have and they struggle. It's hard, really hard for them to feel as though they can continue with the program but they really want to. Some of them have the strongest work ethic on the team and they can't figure it out... (Interviewee #2, Focus Group 1).

...So, I don't fully know where I stand on it, but I get both concepts and I would say probably steer more to, until they can figure out how to help out the other sports and not just give football and basketball more since they are already getting free school and a stipend. I would say it's not a good idea because it's going to cause uproar from other sports and other conferences and stuff. I think it's a good thing, but I think it can be more harm done, if you do too prematurely and you haven't thought out all the flaws or tried to figure out as many flaws as possible in it and work on those. So, I can see both concepts (Interviewee #4, Interview).

Unlike the other four participants who perceive majority positive outcomes in the pay-for-play model, Interviewee #3 is completely against pay-for-play and views receiving extra money as the only benefit of the model, everything else is a negative repercussion.

I've come to the point where I am against the pay-for-play model. So, I don't agree with it. Yes, it compensates for mutual likeness, but I don't think it's best for the athletic department as a whole, top to bottom. There are some people who would benefit from it, your star basketball players, your star football players and maybe some of your baseball players umm... I think would benefit from it. It would be helpful for some of those athletes uh to kind of support their families, and if they are coming from less privileged environment, then it may help them that way. But I think overall, pay-for-play as a whole concept I am really not a proponent of it (Interviewee #3, Interview).

Yeah, I mean, I would just be worried just how some of these athletes' kind of handle that. Because if we are requiring athletes, I am assuming we will be requiring these athletes to be paying tuition because they are not going to be getting scholarships anymore. So, we are probably going to have to look at getting them financial advisors because we are looking at giving 18 year olds way more money than typical 18 year olds make. Umm.... It's not common for an 18 year olds to be making the amount of money that is being proposed. Umm... So we are going to have to look into ways to help keep some these guys responsible, maybe more financial staff and have an apartment available for the student-athletes. Now obviously, they will have to make the initiative themselves. But we will probably see a lot of athletes have to drop out of college because of the way they spend

their money, spending it in especially a negative way. So, we got that and also, where does the money come from? Because this money is going to go through the roof. It's just... I don't want to see them raise tuition and student fees for general students so they can pay the student-athletes (Interviewee #3, Focus Group 2).

How each student-athlete perceives the pay-for-play model is completely different from one another; the participants each come from a different background and have different experiences. Examining the phenomena each student-athlete has with the concept of pay-for-play can help determine the success rate of implementing the pay-for-play model in college athletics.

Student-Athletes' Perception of Pay-For-Play Impacting College Experiences

Considering if a policy is right for student-athletes, understanding how the policy would affect student-athletes' college experience is an important factor to take in. Interviewee #1, #2, #4 and #5 explained positive and negative repercussions of how pay-for-play would impact student-athletes' college experience.

Yeah, I think the repercussions for student athletes to uh just be able to have like a better college experience. Like they would able to afford like more things other than just like... a lot athletic scholarships will just cover tuition, but there's a lot of extra things that come into it, like buying books and yeah know living off campus or an apartment, or like sometimes they'll have bills like cell phone bills or needing to buy a computer... there's a lot of like, there are a lot of things that go into the college experience that... just like college tuition and like being able to fly home or like drive home...like there's a lot of other things that go into it. And like if like a student athlete isn't like going out and getting like a job and getting paid somewhere else like they're not going to be able to do it. Like college

athletes put a lot of time and effort into the university and to like performing... like yeah, it's 20 hours that the NCAA requires, but a lot of times it's being more than the 20 hours because they'll have 20 hours just of like working out, but there's a lot of times getting up early and before and that above and beyond that student athletes do. That... that I think it would really have positive implication for student athletes give them a little bit more like, I don't know.... like yeah to compete, but also on the other hand too it would make being an athlete more like a job than maybe lose some of the love for the sport. (Interviewee #1, Focus Group 1).

... I see positive repercussions uh for the student athlete because like you mentioned I think for the quality of life it would be uh definitely like improved because I would that umm... independence is kind of one of the biggest things umm from our parents cause uh financially I know that financial burdens are something that are like super real umm... and like if financial strain can be in any way alleviated umm... quality of like just increases that much more because stress levels go down and you're able to actually like okay like feel like wow you know you're starting this you're starting like independence. And it helps your parents, it kind of helps the whole system work and run smoother, and I think that yes... financially and just stress levels and I just think umm yeah definitely positive but I can see how it would be a job. Kind of feel more like a job, so that's maybe a more negative repercussion. Also, I think that could in some ways be positive because I think yeah... that sometimes umm know what people are being the pay for play model it already kind of feels like a job I feel like umm. Often times,

being a student athlete it can already feel like a job but because of the amount of time and you touched on how its way more than the 20 hours they require, and that's kind of what is technically allow, but it's more than that because the things you put in behind the scenes; the time you are watching film and the time you are doing other things that are off the books, so to speak. I think that it often times can feel like a job, but in the long run they are kind of paying you. So yeah, it's kind of is a job. So, I guess I can see both sides (Interviewee #2, Focus Group 1). I would say it would impact it for the better. Umm... it would, it definitely going to add more arrogance to players' minds and things like that. But I think it's going to impact it more positively, especially for players if there is a way to tier the money to where all sports have a chance to receive a little bit, especially for the players don't necessarily get stipend money. I would say it's, it's going to impact it in that players are going be able to feel like they have, like that they have money when they get out of college, unless they don't blow it all. But I definitely think it would impact them in that regards because you know a player on the football team with a full ride don't have to pay for anything, that money can be used for after college and they can kind of start off with a little bit of money in their pocket verses someone who is on the cross country team and doesn't have a full ride scholarship. Well then, that money they've been able to get over their 4 or 5 years, maybe can go to help them pay off school tuition loans and things like that. So, I think it's going to impact players in the long run because it gives you opportunity to make money. Like certain students in college go and get a job, part of the reason is for work experience, but it's also to help possibly pay off student

loans and things like that. So, I think that's where I think most impact will go and effect students in the long run, if you were able to do pay-for-play. But it's one of those things, it does come down to, it's going to increase arrogance of certain players, and it still comes down to how they use the money if this happens; how would they use the money for themselves in the long run anyways (Interviewee #4, Interview).

So, being able to pay them it will not only help their lives you know in day-to-day college stuff, but they can also you know help out their families or wherever they come from. So, I think that will be the biggest positive as well (Interviewee #5, Focus Group 2).

While Interviewee #1, #2, #4 and #5 focus on the student-athletes first-hand experiences, Interviewee #3 described the changes that could happen with the dynamics of college athletics.

You see some of these, you see huge schools grab whomever they want. We see it today where umm... you have a good coach you can basically recruit whomever you want, but it's going to shift umm... from schools with a good background to schools with the most money. Which might not be not be the same thing right now. Umm you can see some random school, like in New York City, there is really no great team in New York City, but you can see a school like NYU or Manhattan start grabbing teams because of how much money they make off their students or something like that. I don't know if those two are great examples, but umm... some of these bigger cities will definitely be able to have a bigger draw. Also, if we are paying these athletes, you will have to look at their market value as well because they will be able to get those sponsorship deals, I'm sorry those

indorsement deals. They will be able to make money off their own image. So, just like in professional sports, being in New York or L.A., it is going to be much more beneficial than being in a place like Lynchburg (Interviewee #3, Focus Group 2).

These changes within the dynamics of college athletics would completely change a student-athlete’s experience in college. A student-athlete would most likely become more worried about the compensation he or she would generate verses the education he or she would receive. Therefore, the student-athletes objective in college would be about how much money he or she could make, not a college degree.

Differences of Perception

The last research question for this study was “How, if at all, do perceptions of pay-for-play differ among subgroups of student-athletes (i.e., scholarship/non-scholarship, gender, year in school, and sport)?”. As mentioned before, two student-athletes were advocates of pay-for-play, two were neutral and one was an opponent of pay-for-play. Within the survey data collected, no major commonalities were found amongst different subgroups of the student-athlete and his or her perception on pay-for-play.

ID #	Gender	Year in College	Sport	Athletic Aid	Financial Aid	Academic Aid	Position on Pay-for-Play
1	Female	Upperclassman	Non-revenue	Yes	Yes	No	Pro
2	Female	Lowerclassman	Non-revenue	Yes	No	Yes	Neutral
3	Male	Graduated ‘17	Non-revenue	No	No	No	Against
4	Male	Graduated ‘16	Non-revenue	Yes	No	No	Neutral
5	Male	Graduated ‘16	Non-revenue	Yes	No	Yes	Pro

The only commonality found amongst the participants which changed the perception of the student-athletes was his or her knowledge about the pay-for-play model. The more personal research a participant has done about the pay-for-play model, the more hesitant he or she has become about implementing the model.

I would definitely would have to do more research on my own to be aware of it. So, I think as for college athletes, I think there needs to be more information about it just for them to form their own opinion. Because I haven't really heard about it all that much, so just more publicity on the topic so people can better make an opinion. But other than that umm.... I don't know, but the definite pros and cons need to be weighed before a decision is made. Just getting more opinions from other student athletes as well, but making sure they are knowledgeable about it first I think would help (Interviewee #2, Interview).

... it's not going to be a good idea for long term. I was once for it when I was naive and young and didn't really know the whole background to it. But once I did some own personal research on the topic and I've been able to identify it, even as a former student-athlete I think it's a bad idea (Interviewee #3, Interview).

Yeah, and like I said if you would have asked me 4 years ago while I was an athlete, I would have said 'Heck yeah!'. Like I would want my money, like I didn't see any problem with it. But now that I am a little bit older and I have been able to kind of understand the concept of just being able to see... like this player is... all this money and they are blowing through it left and right in this way. You are kind of be able to understand it a little bit more, now that you are not in the mindset of an athlete now that we are out of it. I think our minds have kind of

opened up a little more to this concept and we are actually able to think about it a little more too (Interviewee #4, Focus Group 2).

Completely understanding all the positive and negative repercussions from research and studies about pay-for-play, not just learning the model from hearsay, can majorly impact a person's perception of pay-for-play. From the participants in this study, the more personal research a participant has completed the more he or she became hesitant about implementing the model into college athletics.

Chapter Summary

The participants' results showed two were proponents of pay-for-play, two were neutral and one was an opponent of the model. The survey results showed no major commonalities were found amongst the subgroups of the student-athletes. The individual interviews and focus groups exposed the only commonality found amongst similar viewpoints was the personal research a participant has done about the pay-for-play model. The more research a student-athlete has completed, the more hesitant he or she became about implementing pay-for-play. While every participant had a different phenomenon relating to pay-for-play, common themes were found through the data analyzing process: coaches and peers have a tremendous influence on the student-athletes' perspective of pay-for-play, student-athletes view pay-for-play as an employment opportunity, they have a shared notion the NCAA makes enough in revenue to compensate student-athletes, pay-for-play may place on pressure on student-athletes' academic and athletic performance, and student-athletes want pay-for-play to be fair and regulated.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Overview

The information gathered completely answers the research questions for this study and gives the researcher and participants' confirmation as to how student-athletes perceive pay-for-play and the ways in which pay-for-play can impact his or her college experience. The research also provides information regarding influences a student-athlete's perception and student-athlete's major concern with implementing the pay-for-play model. In addition, information gathered during the research process shows items of interest that may be considered for future research and/or inclusion within NCAA bylaws.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this research was to explore the specific phenomenon of current and former intercollegiate student-athletes' perception of the highly debatable pay-for-play model and the lived experiences that shape his or her views. Data was collected through three different techniques: survey, individual interview and focus group. The questions of the survey focused on the demographics of the student-athletes, while the individual interview and focus groups concentrated on the student-athlete's knowledge of the pay-for-play model, what the student-athlete have experienced with the model, how the student-athlete thinks he or she would be affected, and how the student-athlete perceived the model.

Amongst the participants, two were advocates of pay-for-play, two were neutral and one was an opponent of the model. The survey results showed no major commonalities between the different subgroups of the student-athletes; class year, gender, athletic aid, financial aid, academic aid, nor sport had any effect on how a student-athlete perceived pay-for-play. The

individual interviews and focus groups exposed the only commonality found amongst similar perceptions was the personal research a participant had conducted about the pay-for-play model. Interviewee #2 stated she had not completed enough research to take a position on the pay-for-play model. Interviewee #4 claimed he used to be an advocate of the pay-for-play model until he started doing personal research on the topic; Interviewee #4's research ultimately changed his perception about the model and would only be an advocate, if certain criteria are implemented into the model. Interviewee #3 has completed a wide variety of personal research about pay-for-play, which led him to become an opponent of the model.

Nevertheless, the individual interviews and focus groups also uncovered several important findings relating to the student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play. The first finding was coaches and peers have a tremendous influence on a student-athlete's perception of pay-for-play. The participants stated majority of student-athletes learn about pay-for-play through his or her coaches and would discuss the topic with his or her peers. Interviewee #1 explained the first time she heard about the term *pay-for-play* was through a positive interaction with her coach. Whether Interviewee #1 knew it or not, her positive experience altered her perception of pay-for-play. The positive influence Interviewee #1 received from her coach became the baseline of how she perceived the model.

Another important finding was student-athletes view pay-for-play as an employment opportunity. Interviewee #1 and #5 explained how difficult having a job is while being a student-athlete; a student-athlete is required to put in 20 hours a week into his or her athletic team and many student-athletes tend to go over the 20 hour limit. While NCAA has created rules and regulations to limit the amount of hours a student-athlete has for practicing with his or her team, majority of student-athletes go over the 20 hour a week limit. These NCAA rules and regulations

apply to all student-athletes, whether the athlete has some form of scholarship or not. Therefore, pay-for-play could potentially help those student-athletes who struggle financially.

While majority participants of this research view pay-for-play as a great employment opportunity, many contemplated on where the funds should come from to compensate the student-athletes. Many advocates believe the time has come for the NCAA and institutions to pay student-athletes because of the revenue generated off of football bowl games, March Madness basketball tournaments and other major television contracts. Interviewee #5 is a firm supporter of this ideology, claiming college athletics is ready to pay student-athletes based of the revenue the NCAA has made over the years. Interviewee #4 stated the money needed to compensate student-athletes should come from the profit the institution makes off of athletic events.

Paying student-athletes for his or her athletic ability would ultimately alter the purpose of attending a university. The main reason for a person to attend university or college is to obtain a college degree. Student-athletes are first called 'students' and then 'athletes' because the NCAA and institutions want to imply academics come first and athletics are second. Interviewee #1, #2 and #3 explained his and her concerns about the pressure of pay-for-play will make student-athletes focus more on his or her athletic ability instead of academics. The participants fear pay-for-play would change 'student-athletes' to 'athlete-students'.

The most common finding within the data collection was student-athletes want pay-for-play to be fair and regulated, if the model becomes implemented into college athletics. While only Interviewee #1 and #5 were advocates of pay-for-play, Interviewee #2 and #4 would only want pay-for-play implemented if the model can be given out to all teams, just not to revenue sports; also, if the model can have regulations pertaining to money management to control

unnecessary spending, such as alcohol. These four interviewees understand and agree with that not all student-athletes would receive compensation nor would they receive the same amount, but what the participants want is equal opportunity for men and women sports, both revenue sports and non-revenue sports.

Understanding how a student-athlete perceives pay-for-play can give insight in how pay-for-play would impact a student-athlete's college experience. While Interviewee #1, #2, #4 and #5 see pay-for-play impacting student-athletes' college experience in mostly a positive manner, relieving some financial burden of themselves and his or her parents, the participants do perceive some negatives aspects as well. Arrogance and strife amongst teammates and other student-athletes may become more common and the pressure of being paid for athletic ability may make a student-athlete's sport unenjoyable. Meanwhile, Interviewee #3 believes pay-for-play will change the entire dynamics of college athletics; a student-athlete would no longer value a college education, compensation for his or her sport will become the leading factor.

Overall, a student-athlete perceived pay-for-play as an employment opportunity with the ability for a little financial security, but may ultimately devalue the worth of a college education. A participant's perception was not affected by his or her class year, gender, any type of financial aid, nor sport, however, the amount of personal research done on the topic of pay-for-play played a major role in whether a student-athlete was for or a proponent or opponent of the model. The only major concern the participants had was they wanted, in some way or another, for the pay-for-play model to be fair and regulated.

Discussion

This research study has several contributions which could potentially shed new light on pay-for-play within college athletics and open new doors for future study, which could offer

greater understanding to this highly debated topic within intercollegiate athletics. The findings of this research show the answer to the guiding question, “What are student-athletes’ perception of pay-for-play?”, is extremely complex, relevant, and existential. In chapter five, many student-athletes had differing opinions on what his or her position on pay-for-play was, why pay-for-play should or should not be implemented, how the model would impact student-athletes’ college experience, and what experience or experiences have led the participant to his or her decision. Nonetheless, the participants generally agreed for pay-for-play to be implemented into college athletics the model needs to be fair and regulated. However, when the student-athletes had to describe how he or she perceived pay-for-play, it revealed the complexity, relevance, and existential nature of this phenomenon. Some student-athletes stated he or she saw both sides of the argument and would lean one way or another depending on how the pay-for-play model was designed; therefore, for these student-athletes the meaning of how a student-athlete perceives pay-for-play was lost because his or her answer was interchangeable. Pay-for-play is merely a model allowing student-athletes to be paid for his or her contribution to his or her sport. Since no official game plan has been set for this model, many theories of how the model should be and reasons why the model should and should not exist have been thrown out to the public. However, other student-athletes held a strong position as to why or why not the pay-for-play model to be implemented and explained his or her experience concerning the topic. For purposes of this research, the essence of college student-athletes’ personal perception of pay-for-play has emerged to simply be an overall positive contribution to college athletics, but only if the model can include all sports and be regulated so student-athletes cannot purchase harmful materials, such as alcohol. This research study will contribute to the overall body of research that is available on paying student-athletes in college athletics.

One way this research expands on the available body of research is by moving the focus from numbers to the individual. The empirically numerical analysis of pay-for-play is well reported (Schneider, 2001; Maloney, 2013). Yet, few scholars have attempted to analyze the data collected from these quantitative studies to expand the research to the individual in more depth. Even though pay-for-play is not implemented into college athletics, the popularity of the debate over the model continues to grow every year with the increasing status of college athletics (Blackistone, 2014; Forik, 2015; Haden, 2001; Mondello & Beckham, 2002). This research is most likely caused by simply keeping up with the changes in the ever growing debate of pay-for-play by numerically analyzing the position of large populations rather than anticipating the impact pay-for-play would have on the population at hand: student-athletes. These student-athletes would be effected in major ways, some positive and some negative. In this research four participants saw more than one positive benefit if pay-for-play was implemented into college athletics. However, due to a lack of viable information, student-athletes are unable to make a justifiable opinion on the matter. Pay-for-play has the ability to change the entire structure of college athletics and even the structure of the university. Student-athletes may no longer care or want a college degree, if they are being paid to play a sport. University graduation rates among athletes could possible drop. Thus, the divide between college athletics and academics may continue to grow. This research allows to bring the focus back to the student-athlete and seeks to understand his or her unique perception on pay-for-play in college athletics. By being able to move past the limitations of quantitative research, this research was able to use in-depth, existential qualitative research to the fullest. Qualitative research allowed the voices of the student-athletes to be heard by directly going to them for the answers. Unlike quantitative

research, this study was able to reveal the complexity that exists within the student-athlete population; even though they each had different experiences, they shared common perceptions.

Being able to understand experiences and perceptions as meanings from a phenomenological perspective is normal since the voice and word of the participant is followed as fact and allow the findings to be described as they unfold (Goulding, 2005). By allowing the empirical aspect of this research to follow this direction, a researcher is free to explore the best way to phenomenologically analyze the data. Since no studies found sought to understand pay-for-play from an existential aspect, this study followed Moustakas' phenomenological methodologies, which allowed quality phenomenological research: the necessary creativity and flexibility to expand the known research of the pay-for-play model. Through this process, the reader is left with an understanding of how student-athletes' perceive pay-for-play in college athletics. The existential nature of a student-athlete's college experience is impacted by several elements within the pay-for-play model. By allowing the student-athlete to freely express themselves in the interview and focus group and using the Moustaka's phenomenological methods, readers are able to fully grasp the experience of the student-athlete as if the experience was his or her own.

Implications of the Study

Limitations of this research have allowed for several implications for further research; the implications of this study were predominantly related to the extent of the research elements covered. While the number of participants appeared small, five participants, the study still fell within the confines for empirical phenomenology (Crewsell, 2013). Therefore, the sample size could be a limitation for the study. The majority of the participants were male and former student-athletes, which could be another limitation. Furthermore, all participants were drawn

from Liberty University: a religiously affiliated NCAA Division I institution. Participants' responses could be more of a product of his or her academic and athletic environment than a reflection of his or her self. In other words, student-athletes from secular institutions, who have faculty and staff with different views on pay-for-play, may offer different perceptions on the pay-for-play model.

Based upon the findings of Schneider (2001), the findings of this research are not unique to the environment of the participants. Schneider (2001) found 71.5% of surveyed student-athletes believed student-athletes should be paid; 55% believed the student-athletes were generating the money for institutions, 44% of surveyed student-athletes claimed a scholarship was not enough and 21% thought it would reduce cheating within college athletics. Therefore, the seemingly unique perspectives of the participants in this research regarding his or hers perception of pay-for-play may not be so exclusive or different. It could be assumed the negative results of the current NCAA model have continued to push student-athletes to be in favor of the pay-for-play model.

In addition, the revelation in this research are limited to what the participants deem as his or her experience from his or her personal perspective. These perceptions of pay-for-play must be taken as fact, but can be influenced by other outside elements, such as coaches, peers, NCAA bylaws, social media, and other similar elements. While phenomenology requires interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, which has been completed in this study, other perceptions of pay-for-play may be possible, such as coaches, university faculty, and parents. These perceptions could express a more holistic essence of student-athletes' phenomenon with pay-for-play. Nonetheless, the problem with this approach is it would increase

the scope of understanding, but threaten to lose the existential truth of the student-athletes experiencing the phenomenon.

The final implication of this research is the basic phenomenological foundation for which this research followed. Phenomenology was not intended to establish conclusions. Due to the nature of the methodology, more questions will arise than answers after the conclusion of the thesis. Inexperienced readers and researchers of phenomenology may find this frustrating, the lack of conclusion is inherently desired because phenomenological methods seek understanding of the phenomenon of note rather than an explanation of the note (Creswell, 2013; Dukes, 1984). The benefit of these newly arose questions from a dimensional phenomenon of lived experiences is that other researchers can take the primitive understanding and use it in other research methodologies that allow a deeper and more specific explanation (Dukes, 1984).

Recommendations for Future Research

As mentioned previously, phenomenology by nature offers more questions than can be answered. In conjunction with the previously discusses limitations, future research studies should seek to understand the influential components of those in contact with student-athletes concerning the pay-for-play model. Many of the student-athletes in this research spoke of coaches and peers being a critical part of his or her experience with pay-for-play. Following up with coaches, peers, faculty, and parents could prove to provide a valuable dimension to the lived experiences associating student-athletes and pay-for-play because the student-athlete may not be aware of another's influence them.

Another recommendation for future research would be to interview participants from multiple schools and conferences across the country. A student-athlete from a specific class year, gender, sport, college, or conference could differ in his or her experience. By opening up the

pool of potential participants, researchers could begin by aiming to isolate populations and explore his or her phenomenon to determine if these isolated groups vary from the norm of the masses.

The final recommendation for future research would be to explore the phenomenon of others who would be impacted, if pay-for-play was implemented into college athletics. This recommendation is not the same as mentioned before about exploring those who influence student-athletes perception of pay-for-play. The general student population and university faculty would inevitably be effected, if pay-for-play was implemented into intercollegiate athletics. Comparing the differences between the three subgroups, student-athlete, general student and faculty, can give insight into how a university in its entirety would be affected. Pay-for-play would not only change the dynamics of college athletics, it could change the entire structure for college itself.

Summary

Payment of college student-athletes has been a heavily debated issue surrounding intercollegiate athletics. Due to the evolving landscape of college athletics, the debate for pay-for-play has seen an increase to both sides of the argument. This debate has caused a variety of populations to speak out about the issue. However, a study needed to be conducted to gain a better understanding of how student-athletes perceive pay-for-play and how the model could potential impact student-athletes' college experience. The purpose of this study was to explore the specific phenomenon of current and former intercollegiate student-athletes' perception of the highly debatable pay-for-play model and the lived experiences that shape his or her views.

An email was sent out to all current student-athletes and graduate assistants that were former student-athletes of Liberty University asking them to participate in this research. Only

five student-athletes willingly volunteered. All five participants answered ten survey questions, twelve individual interview questions, and six focus group questions. To analyze the data collected, Moustakas' method was used. From the results, two participants were advocates of pay-for-play, two were neutral and one was an opponent of the model. While each participant experienced a different phenomenon concerning pay-for-play, common themes were found throughout his or her experiences: coaches and peers have a tremendous influence on the student-athletes' perspective of pay-for-play, student-athletes view pay-for-play as an employment opportunity, they have a shared notion the NCAA makes enough in revenue to compensate student-athletes, pay-for-play may place on pressure on student-athletes' academic and athletic performance, and student-athletes want pay-for-play to be fair and regulated. Overall, the participants perceived pay-for-play a positive and beneficial contribution to student-athletes and his or her college experience, however, the participants only want the model implemented if it will be fair and regulated.

While wrapping up this research, many answers have still been left to be unearthed by future research. An important take away from this research is phenomenology was not intended to establish conclusions, this style of research has a tendency to leave the reader with more questions than answers because phenomenological methods seek to understand the phenomenon of note rather than an explanation of the note (Creswell, 2013; Dukes, 1984). While these five participants shared his and her perspective and lived experiences concerning pay-for-play, they also left several questions for future researchers: Do revenue and non-revenue sport student-athletes have similar perspectives? Is there a difference between student-athletes from different institutions and conferences? What influences impact student-athletes' perceptions the most? These questions are just as important to understand as the arguments for the debate of pay-for-

play entering college athletics. Understanding how student-athletes perceive pay-for-play and his or her lived experiences can provide valuable insight into the success or failure of the model.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER TO SR. ASSOCIATE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Dear Kristie Beitz,

I am conducting research to examine student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play in college athletics. With the increasing debate pay-for-play has caused, it is important to understand student-athletes' perceptions regarding this issue. I am writing to alert you about this valuable study and also asking for a letter of support.

This study will provide valuable information understanding how student-athletes perceive the pay-for-play model and the potential impact of pay-for-play on student-athletes. The study could allow for more research to be done on pay-for-play and the possible implementation into college athletics.

I have attached a copy of the survey, interview and focus group questions for you to view. The survey will be emailed to volunteer participants and will take less than 10 minutes to complete. The personal interviews and focus groups will take place over Skype or FaceTime. All responses will be completely anonymous. I have also attached a copy of the consent form for you to view, which explains the research in more depth.

Would you please write a letter of support for this study? Your letter of support will be included with the cover letter. Your letter will not only indicate you are aware of this study, but also reinforce the valuable information it will provide for those associated with intercollegiate athletics.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this study. Upon completion of the research, you will receive a copy of the results. If you have any questions about this study feel free to contact me through email at bmdobson@liberty.edu. If you have any questions you would like directed to the advisor of this study, you may contact Dr. Laura Hatfield by email at lmhatfield@liberty.edu or by phone at (434) 592-5659.

Again, thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Brittany Dobson
Graduate Student
Department of Sport Management
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

APPENDIX B
APPROVAL LETTER FROM SR. ASSOCIATE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR



September 21, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

Academic Affairs for Athletics a division of Liberty University's NCAA Division I Athletics Program, recognizes and supports research within academia. Understanding and participating in studies at the collegiate and professional level, enable better dialogue and overall opportunity for growth and development. Pay-for-play is a topic with varying opinions and impacts a variety of different constituents.

Collaboration among departments and colleagues is vital to education. Therefore, Academic Affairs for Athletics supports Brittany Dobson's efforts to conduct thesis research on Pay-For-Play in College Athletics: A Phenomenological Study of College Student-Athletes' Perception of Pay-For-Play with the understanding that all participants and their responses will remain confidential.

The Liberty University Academic Affairs for Athletics Department looks forward to reviewing the research findings once it is published.

Regards,

Kristie Beitz

Kristie Beitz
Sr. Associate AD
Academic Affairs for Athletics
434.582.2105
kmbeitz@liberty.edu

APPENDIX C
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 27, 2017

Brittany Dobson

IRB Approval 2989.102717: Pay-For-Play in College Athletics: A Phenomenological Study of College Student-Athletes' Perception of Pay-For-Play

Dear Brittany Dobson,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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APPENDIX D
LETTER TO SR. ASSOCIATE ATHLETICS DIRECTOR- ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Hello Ms. Beitz,

I am writing to you to request assistance in identifying 20 NCAA Division I student-athletes to participate in a research study examining student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play in college athletics. This study is being conducted for my master's thesis through the Department of Sport Management at Liberty University. I have attached the letter of support you gave me and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter.

The student-athletes can be male or female and from any grade level, but they must be between the ages of 18 and 23 years old and play an NCAA Division I sport. I am unable to visit Liberty University's campus to ask student-athletes in person if they would like to participate in this study due to geographical constraints. Therefore, if you are willing to assist me with this research, I will send you an email to directly send to the student-athletes who fit the criteria. I am not asking to you provide me with student names or contact information.

If a student-athlete agrees to be in this study, I will send him or her a link for a short survey. After the survey has been completed, he or she will be scheduled for a 25-minute interview through Skype, FaceTime, or phone. Once the survey and interview have been completed, the student-athlete will be scheduled for a 25-minute focus group session, which will be conducted through Skype.

If you know any student-athletes who fit the criteria provided above, please email me, and I will provide the wording of the email that you will send to the student-athletes. If you have any questions, please contact me at bmdobson@liberty.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Brittany Dobson
Graduate Student
Department of Sport Management
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

APPENDIX E
LETTER TO STUDENT-ATHLETES

Dear Student-Athlete,

As a graduate student in the Department of Sport Management at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's degree. The purpose of my research is to explore student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are an NCAA Division I student-athlete from Liberty University, are between the ages of 18 and 23 years old, and are willing to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- 1) Fill out a 10-minute online survey.
- 2) After your completion of the online survey, you will be scheduled for a 25-minute interview through Skype, FaceTime, or phone.
- 3) After both the online survey and interview are completed, you will be scheduled a for 25-minute focus group session through Skype.

The study should take approximately 60 minutes for you to complete all three procedures. However, the study will take approximately two to three weeks to complete all 60 minutes. This will depend on your availability for the interview and focus group. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as a part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate in this research, please read the letter of support from the Senior Associate Athletic Director and consent document attached to this email. The consent document has additional information about my research. Once both attachments have been read, fill out and sign the consent form and return it to me at bmdobson@liberty.edu. After I have received your signed consent form, I will send you an email containing a web link for the online survey and schedule your interview at your earliest convenience.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact me at bmdobson@liberty.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Brittany Dobson
Graduate Student
Department of Sport Management
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

APPENDIX F
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO STUDENT-ATHLETES

Hello Mr. /Ms. X,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study about student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play in college athletics. Below is the link to the online survey for you to fill out. The survey consists of 10 questions concerning your demographic and athletic background, and it should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

You may decline to answer any question(s) during the survey. If you choose to decline to answer a question, please write "N/A" in the textbox. If you have any questions during the study, please do not hesitate to ask. Also, please remember that if you need to withdraw from the study, please inform me immediately; withdrawing from the study will not affect your relationship with Liberty University.

I would like to schedule your in-depth interview. The interview will consist of 12 questions relating to the pay-for-play model in college athletics and should take approximately 25 minutes to complete. Are you available between (DATES) at a time that is convenient to you? Also, what would be the most convenient way to conduct this interview with you: Skype, FaceTime, or phone? To schedule your interview, please email me at bmdobson@liberty.edu as soon as possible with the date, time, and method that is best for you.

Please remember that the survey must be completed before you start your interview.

Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/GXSLZVL>

Thank you again for participating in this research. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Brittany Dobson
Graduate Student
Department of Sport Management
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

**APPENDIX G
CONSENT FORM**

Pay-For-Play in College Athletics:
A Phenomenological Study of College Student-Athletes' Perception of Pay-For-Play
Brittany Dobson
Liberty University
Department of Sport Management

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play. You were selected as a possible participant because you fit the criteria for this study: NCAA Division I collegiate student-athletes between the ages of 18 and 23 years old. Please review this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Brittany Dobson, a graduate student in the Department of Sport Management at Liberty University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the specific phenomenon of current student-athletes' view of pay-for-play policy and the lived experiences that shape their views.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- 4) Fill out a 10-minute online survey.
- 5) After your completion of the online survey, you will be scheduled for a 25-minute interview through Skype, FaceTime, or phone.
- 6) After both the online survey and interview are completed, you will be scheduled a for 25-minute focus group session through Skype.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

There is no more risk in participating in this study than is encountered in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are the advancement of societal knowledge on the student-athletes' perception of pay-for-play. The study could allow for greater research to be done on pay-for-play in college athletics and the potential impact it may have on student-athletes.

Compensation:

Student-athletes will not receive compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In the case of publication, no personal or identifying information about individual participants will be shared. All research data will be stored securely, and only I, the researcher, will have access to the records. More specifically, all

audio files and transcriptions of surveys, interviews and focus group interviews will be saved to a personal laptop. The laptop will contain a personal username and password that is known only to myself, and I will be the only person able to access the laptop. The data will be stored for a minimum of two years and then permanently deleted from my laptop's hard drive. If a participant withdraws from the study after the interview, no transcription will be done, and the audio file will be deleted. I will ensure participant confidentiality by numbering each participant and eliminating all names.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question(s) or withdraw at any time without providing a reason and without affecting those relationships. If you decide to withdraw from this study at any time, contact the researcher immediately. Data collected from participants who have elected to withdraw will be deleted.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Brittany Dobson. If you have any questions concerning this study, you may contact me through email at bmdobson@liberty.edu.

The advisor for this study is Dr. Laura Hatfield. If you have any questions you would like directed to the advisor, you may contact her by email at lmhatfield@liberty.edu or by phone at (434) 592-5659.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher or advisor, you may contact the Institutional Review Board through email at irb@liberty.edu or by phone at (434) 592-5530.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I, _____, have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study. I understand that I am participating in an online survey, an audio-recorded interview session through Skype, FaceTime, or phone, and an audio-recorded focus group session through Skype, and hereby give my consent to the above documentation.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____