The Lone Coyote of the National Basketball Association: A Case Study on the

Organization Culture of the San Antonio Spurs

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ABSTRACT

THE LONE COYOTE OF THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION: A

CASE STUDY ON THE ORGANIZATION CULTURE OF THE SAN ANTONIO

SPURS

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Organizational culture exists within every professional sports team's organization and makes up the organization's DNA. The San Antonio Spurs are one such Professional Sports organization that innovates new global team building strategies that values the group as a whole over the individual. The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational culture of the San Antonio Spurs franchise in the National Basketball Association (NBA). The researcher used a best-practices guide to evaluate the San Antonio Spurs' corporate culture. This study found that the San Antonio Spurs are effective in their organizational culture practices, however, could focus their efforts more on appealing more to All-Star caliber free agents. To continue to have a positive corporate culture, the San Antonio Spurs should focus more efforts on gearing their coaching and player developmental programs to appeal to higher quality, more established NBA players in free agency and through the NBA Draft.

Keywords: National Basketball Association, organizational culture, professional sports, San Antonio Spurs, values

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Background of Study

      Globally, organizations are utilizing mission-driven corporate standards as a means of attracting team-first employees whose skill sets and values align with the organizational cultural values. Culture is defined as "a system of values--which are simple preferences for one state of affairs over another. This system is the power driver of every decision we make, our cultural playbook" (King, 2012, p. 690). Employees of any organization are strongly dependent on their circumstances, which are enhanced by the strength of the organization's cultural values, as well as the unity within the organizational culture. If the strength and unity of the organizational cultural values are questioned which means casualties will soon arise because of the unstable organizational leadership's inability to construct stable organization's cultural values. In sociological terms, cultural values "consist of all the socially invented ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that emerge in particular groups as people try to survive, meet their needs, and achieve a sense of significance with the process" (Sage, Eitzen, & Beal, 2019, pp. 10-11). Since cultural values impact the ability to encounter types of culture in organizations, naturally a majority of these applications can be applied to the world of sports. More specifically, Hoeber and Hoeber (2012) note that "as sport organizations continually strive for advantages over their competitors, an emphasis on innovation and creativity has materialized as a mechanism for increased performance on and off the field" (p. 215). Likewise, in professional sports, championship level organizations cannot be built

without first establishing a culture out of innovative and creative practices that push the organization to increased employee performance. Correspondingly, Hoeber and Hoeber's train of thought on sport departmental dignifying value practices can connect to the National Basketball Association (NBA)'s team development system from a front office perspective. The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational culture of the San Antonio Spurs franchise in the NBA.

Review of Literature

Research for this review of the literature was conducted at Robert E. Kennedy Library on the campus of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. In addition to books and other resources, the following online databases were utilized: Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, SPORTDiscus, and Google Scholar. This review of literature includes the following subsections: organizational culture, evaluation and the history of organizational culture in sports, as well as, the organizational culture within the NBA.

Organizational culture is a broad term that describes values and behaviors that contribute to the corporate workplace setting. Idowu (2016) described a more in-depth view of organizational culture by highlighting that,

> Organizational Culture as alluding to two critical elements structural stability and integration. The first element, structural stability, refers to a set of commonly held values and beliefs 'deep' within the organization, not easily identifiable when viewing surface behaviors and practices. These deeply held values and beliefs

distinguish one organizational culture from another and establish the

organization's identity. (p. 13)

In other words, "Organizational culture, in laymen's terms, is often described as the way

we do things around here or the values that hold an organization together" (Frontiera,

2009, p. 71). Entities have the freedom to dictate how they want the conditions within

their place of business to function. The rules that are put in place by organizations give

them the freedom to run the configuration the way they want the business to be run. In a

like manner, Flamholtz & Randle (2011) stated that corporate culture is defined as, "[the]

values, beliefs, and norms that influence the thoughts and actions (behavior) of people in

organizations" (p. 27). Just as each person's set of values differ from one another, so do

individual companies. These differences between companies influence the corporate

cultural set of values which influences corporate culture. Campbell and Göritz (2014)

identify the concept of organizational culture as being derived from research in the field

of organizational behavior characterized by the use of qualitative methods (p. 711). Thus,

a corporation's conduct was a key characteristic that makes up a corporation's culture.

Moreover, "alternative patterns of norms and expectations are associated with

constructive, passive/aggressive, and aggressive/defensive organizational culture styles,

each associated with particularly healthy or dysfunctional organizational drivers of

performance" (Campbell & Göritz, 2014, p. 711). Some of these alternative norms and

patterns can be applied to ethical decision making. Lehnert et al. (2016) observed,

"Ethical decision making, at its very core, is personal. It may be enacted in an

organizational setting, but is, in essence, an individual struggle" (p. 500). Likewise,

ethical decision making in a corporate environment is a personal struggle for select

individuals because personal feelings about a specific subject matter can impair one's ability to arrive at a neutrally driven decision that is best for the organization. In a majority of cases, without ethical decision-making skills, any of the above mentioned alternative organizational culture styles can lead to negative, or positive work environment outcomes. In summary, the benefits of an ethical work environment can range from increased customer loyalty, enhanced customer loyalty, retention of good employees, and a positive overall work environment. In contrast, the detractions of unethical work environments can range from legal issues, adverse effects on employee performance, and a loss of credibility for companies. Thus, when describing what organizational culture brings to the business world, there are a variety of interpretations that can be observed. Balthazard, Cooke, & Potter (2006) note that "organizational culture has long been recognized as a critical component that can facilitate high performance in business" (p. 713). Similarly, making sure that a business's organizational culture is innovative serves as an influential factor in the company growing and surviving over the years. Kalyani (2011) explains:

> Innovative culture is the key to competitive advantage and a vital strategy for survival and growth of the firm. Today's competitive climate requires organizations to institutionalize the process of innovation- to plant the seeds of innovation can utterly transform a scenario, involves the destruction of old –and sometimes comfortable and perfectly good –ways of doing business. (p. 85)

Culture innovation leads to a more beneficial maintenance of the company. As far as leadership goes, various initiatives have to come into place for leadership to stabilize within an organizational environment that involved the cultural formation and cultural

maintenance. Alike, a cultural background that is formed through structured guidance aligns with more extended cultural maintenance period. In contrast, a cultural environment that is developed through ambiguous control has a much shorter cultural maintenance span of time. Trice and Beyer (1991) argue that cultural formation and innovation requires a transformational leader, while cultural maintenance requires a "consensus leader" (p. 163). In other words, the establishment of a robust corporate culture naturally grows out of the company hiring a transformational leader to help direct the business organization in a progressive direction. These transformative leaders secure not only the present time of an organization but also the future stabilization of the corporate environment. The leadership practices used in the corporate world can be applied to the professional sports spectrum.

When dissecting a professional sports team's organizational performance, profits generated by the team generally play an important role in deciding whether or not the team will be successful. Juravich, Salega, and Babiak (2017) further illustrated:

> For profit-driven professional sport organizations, organizational performance is argued to be measurable in two ways. One approach considers the financial performance of an organization over some duration of time by measuring the profits generated by a team, primarily through ticket sales and league-negotiated media contracts. (p. 466)

A baseline that was developed to frame and study the specific managerial roles within the corporate business is called the upper echelons theory. The theory was initially developed to better understand organizational outcomes predicted by strategic choices and performance levels made by managers. Likewise, Hambrick and Mason (1984) found,

"The theory was founded on the premise that organizational outcomes are directly impacted by the knowledge, experiences, and expertise of those individuals occupying prominent managerial roles in the organization" (p. 198). In other words, the upper echelons theory measures what drives or motivates each corporation's performance taking into account every department and job position within the organization. Juravich et al. proceeds to apply his upper echelons theory to the National Basketball Association (see figure 1).
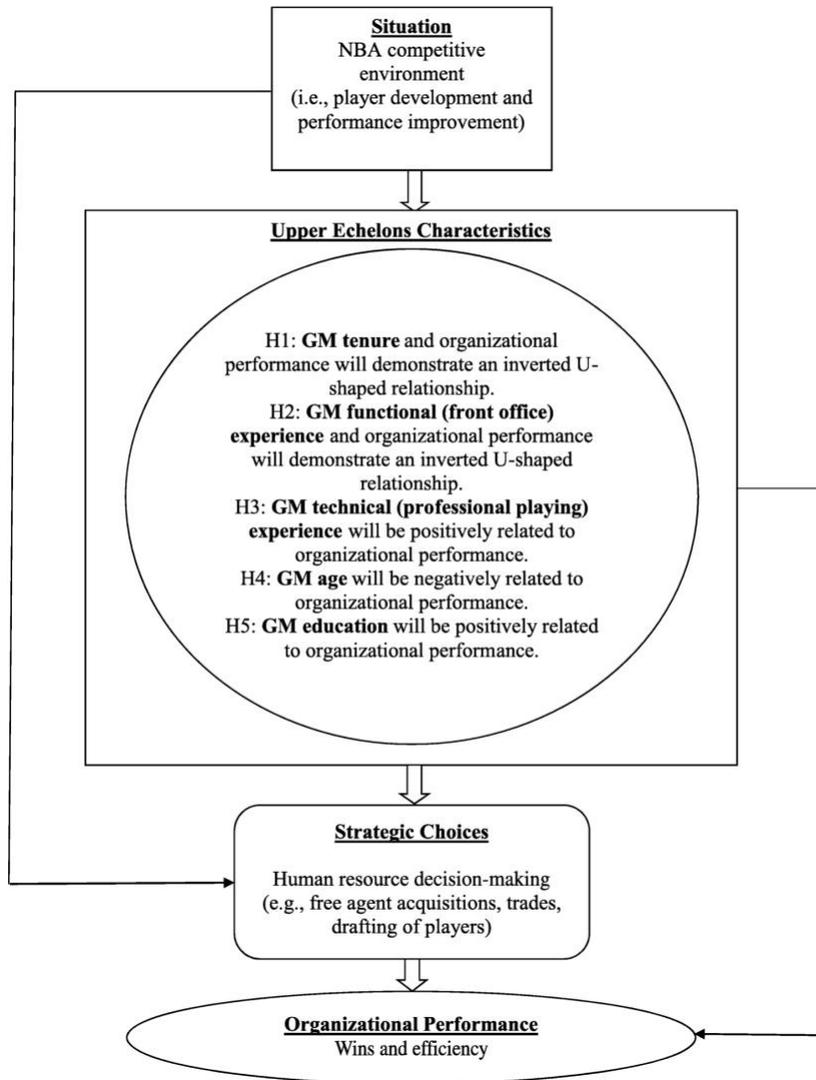
Figure 1: upper echelons theory applied to the NBA (Juravich et al. 2017, p. 469)

Correspondingly, chapter three of Hayduk's dissertation dives deeper into the role of the upper echelon theory's functional experience in sports. More specifically, Hayduk (2018) elaborates, "To date, upper echelon theory research in sport has focused on assessing characteristics of head coaches and general managers, and outcomes include those that are observable on the field of play" (p. 68). Likewise, Investigating the characteristics of ownership of the team on and off the field of play allows for a broader

investigating each franchise's top management team's functional background. This process eventually leads to improved franchise performance in the corporate setting, which smoothly translates over the athletic field of competition. The author continues to assert that, "recent findings indicate that in some situations, demographic and personal characteristics of a professional sports franchise's upper echelon can impact firm-level outcomes" (Hayduk, 2018, p. 69). For instance, if an appropriately experienced prepared coach of a professional sports team makes a playmaking decision that results in a team's successful outcome, the coach is immediately applauded.

Conversely, if an inexperienced, ill-prepared coach makes a playmaking decision that results in the team's failure outcome, the coach is ultimately scrutinized. In the same way, professional teams' GM and front office demographic and personal characteristics play a crucial role in deciding whether or not these teams will be successful. All in all, a professional sports franchise's upper echelon's demographics and personal characteristics play a pivotal role in deciding a sports franchise's winning percentage and stableness.

For now, organizational culture plays a significant role in the success of an organization and team. Regardless of the situation, organizational culture had multifaceted meanings across various spectrums. In sports, the evaluation and history of corporate culture has progressed rapidly over the years. A culture with a shared understanding amongst all of the pieces within the organization leads to open communication channels that equal an understanding of job roles which builds strong values within the given culture leading to the peak of employee satisfaction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational culture of the San Antonio Spurs franchise in the National Basketball Association.

Research Questions

1. What are the San Antonio Spurs' approaches when it comes to franchise values within the organization?

2. What are the franchise development measures employed by the San Antonio Spurs?

3. What are some ways the San Antonio Spurs promote the professional growth and development of all of their employees within the organization?

4. How effective are the San Antonio Spurs current practices when it comes to addressing franchise values within the organization?

5. How effective are the current franchise development measures the San Antonio Spurs have in place?

6. How effective are the current professional growth and development promotional strategies within the San Antonio Spurs organization?

Chapter 2

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational culture of the San Antonio Spurs franchise in the National Basketball Association. This chapter includes the following sections: description of organization, description of instrument, and description of procedures.

Description of Organization

A case study was conducted on the San Antonio Spurs. The San Antonio Spurs are a professional sports franchise in the National Basketball Association. While discussing the origin of this NBA franchise, Sports Team History (2019) mentioned: "The San Antonio Spurs began life as the Dallas Chaparrals of the original version of the American Basketball Association (ABA) in 1967" (paragraph 1). Weitzman (1999) further elaborated, that the Dallas Chaparrals moved to San Antonio in 1973, and the franchise became San Antonio's first official professional sports team. The San Antonio Spurs are owned by Spurs Sports and Entertainment Group (NBA Media Ventures, 2019). The San Antonio Spurs had 500 full-time employees. Their headquarters reside in San Antonio, Texas. Likewise, the San Antonio Spurs' arena is the AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas. The San Antonio Spurs' President of Basketball Operations is Greg Popovich; the team's General Manager is R.C. Buford. The San Antonio NBA Development League affiliate team are the Austin Spurs (NBA Media Ventures, 2019).

Description of Instrument

The instrument utilized in this study was a case study guide developed by the researcher (See Appendix A). The instrument was created after synthesizing aspects of organizational culture from the review of literature. The instrument displays various areas of practice, a description of each practice, and a section for additional comments. A pilot test was conducted on a similar NBA organization in order to test the instrument. After the pilot test, the researcher altered the instrument finding that the front office, coaching staff, and players sections into one franchise development area, and added an employee development section.

Description of Procedures

A case study was conducted on the San Antonio Spurs. The instrument utilized in this study was a case study guide developed by the researcher (See Appendix A). Research for this study was conducted during a two-week period during May 2019. Both quantitative and qualitative information will be used in order to explain all aspects of the practices. The researcher primarily used the San Antonio Spurs website to gather information on the organization. The 2018-2019 San Antonio Spurs Playoffs Media Guide was utilized to gather information on prominent San Antonio Spurs front office job positions (i.e. President of Basketball Operations, and General Manager). Likewise, the *Team* tab of the Spurs' website was used to access the 2018-2019 San Antonio Spurs Media Guide. Additionally, the 1999 video *Go Spurs Go San Antonio Spurs 1998-1999 NBA Champions* was utilized to find more detailed information on the San Antonio Spurs

franchise's origin story. Likewise, a third-party sports team history website was used to find more information on the Spurs' original American Basketball Association team, the Dallas Chaparrals. Another third-party website playgroundbizz.com was used to gather information on the Spurs' franchise values. Correspondingly, the Bloomberg Business Week News website and the AT&T Center website were also used to collect data on the Spurs Sports & Entertainment Group.

Chapter 3

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational culture of the San Antonio Spurs franchise in the National Basketball Association. A case study was utilized to examine the San Antonio Spurs. This chapter includes the following sections: franchise values, franchise development, and coaching development.

Franchise Values

The Spurs' front office firmly believes in trying to develop the right values and the sense of being part of something. Do not only think what your colleagues can do for you; imagine how you can create the perfect path to let express all their potentialities. Employing this tactic, the Spurs front office sees more dedicated people, fewer resignations, more flexibility, and team improvement.

Head coach Greg Popovich created five pillars of strength that serve as a template for how he has coached and managed the Spurs for the past 23 years. Pillar number one is: own your own luck. To elaborate, in December 1996, after the Spurs won only three of the team's first 18 games of the season, the team's GM Popovich fired head coach Bob Hill. Hill was replaced with Popovich. Popovich increased his work responsibilities within the organization by going from having been the team's GM to being the team's GM and head coach. Right after Popovich took over head coaching responsibilities, his star player David Robinson severely injured his left foot sidelining him for the remainder of the season. With other key players on the 1997 team injured throughout the season like

Chuck Person and Sean Elliott, the Spurs finished the season with 20 wins, and 62 loses. The poor win/loss season was a blessing in disguise for the Spurs as they won the draft lottery, gaining the number 1 pick in the 1998 NBA Draft which ended up being Wake Forest center Tim Duncan from the U.S. Virgin Islands. This example illustrates Popovich's own your own luck pillar by saying Popovich got very lucky by having had the worst possible start of his NBA head coaching career. Going 20 and 62, not having any of his star players healthy, only to end up with once in a generational talent in Tim Duncan with the number 1 pick in that year's NBA Draft.

Next, pillar number two is: do your work. Popovich began his head coaching career in 1979 at a division 3 Southern California college named Pomona Pitzer. Pomona and Pitzer were two colleges that shared one athletic program. In Popovich's first year coaching the Sagehens (Pomona Pitzer's mascot), the team went 2-22. In response to the poor debut season, Popovich constructed lists of high school coaches and made hundreds of calls in hopes of identifying kids who were bright enough to get into Pomona or Pitzer and talented enough to help the team win, but not so talented that they would go elsewhere. Over the next seven seasons, Popovich built Pomona Pitzer into a respectable basketball team.

Moving on, pillar number three is: strategically unleash the anger. To illustrate a point, Popovich routinely expressed genuine, strategically controlled anger at his team when the team's performance does not match his standards. If Popovich gets ejected from a game, it will be because he was trying to motivate his team to play better, showing the players that he cared. Popovich's anger would never disrupt his level-headed thought processes.

In a like manner, pillar four is: widen your world. To open every Spurs practice, Popovich asked his team a question, who fought against the British in the First Boer War? As far as professional basketball coach go, Popovich is well versed in global literary studies. At his alma mater, Air Force Academy, Popovich majored in Soviet Studies. Popovich is an avid reader. Popovich believed that all of his players needed to stay grounded in studying other areas of the world, literature, and life outside of the game of basketball. As an example, before to the 2016-2017 NBA season, Popovich gave his players copies of *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi. All in all, the books and history lessons also provide players with common ground for more substantial relationships.

Lastly, pillar five is: know your people. A majority of NBA coaches want their players to play the game like an animal. On the other hand, Popovich wanted players to be human while playing the game of basketball. Popovich is more interested in getting to know players personally. Popovich overextended himself to his players, getting to know them as human beings. For instance, Popovich was one of the few NBA coaches that allowed player's families to fly on the team plane with the team to away games. This extra effort to get to know his players off the court was not just aimed to warm players' hearts; the act of generosity helped solve the essential problem of any collective struggle: getting people to subordinate self-interest to a common goal. In short, assistant coaches whose values aligned with Popovich's five pillars of strength would almost certainly find a spot on his coaching staff if there was an opening.

When it comes to finding players to field his team, Spurs' general manager R.C. Buford's mission is to find players who best fit the Spurs system. From outside of the

U.S. to inside of the United States, the Spurs always looked for talent where nobody else was searching. In the foreign landscape, the Spurs admired the diversity of culture that international basketball players brought to the Spurs franchise.

Franchise Development

Above all else, the Spurs front office's main job is to work behind the scenes to construct a competitive, successful product on the court that aligned with the team's organizational culture. Greg Popovich and his Spurs teams are not as consistently as successful as they have been over the last 23 years without the countless hours of work by the front office to put a competitive team on the court.

Over time, Greg Popovich has had a very progressive point of view when it comes to managing assistant coaches on his coaching staff. Popovich aims to continuously teach his assistant coaches his coaching philosophy and how he structures his specific organizational culture. In doing so after a particular amount of time, Popovich eventually empowers his assistant coaches to feel comfortable enough to move on and utilize his coaching lessons down the road when they become future NBA head coaches. This point is illustrated by current Atlanta Hawks Head Coach Mike Budenhilzer and Philadelphia 76ers Head Coach Brett Brown who previously served as assistant coaches under Greg Popovich and moved on to be successful NBA head coaches implementing pieces of Popovich's system with the Hawks and 76ers. Additionally, after working with the team for one year, on August 5, 2014, Popovich officially hired former WNBA player Becky Hammon to serve as an assistant coach on his coaching staff making Hammon the first female assistant coach in NBA history. In

response to Hammon joining the Spurs coaching staff, Popovich looked forward to the addition of her joining the team. Hammon having worked with the Spurs for one season before officially joining the coaching staff, Popovich was very impressed with her basketball IQ, work ethic, and interpersonal skills.

In a routine fashion because of the franchise's success over the years, the San Antonio Spurs were going to be drafting players at the end of the draft, rather than the beginning. It was of utmost importance that the Spurs found players who understand the culture that Popovich had been building and cultivating over the last 23 years as the Spurs head coach. If the Spurs can find team-first players, who care more about the collective group over themselves, that is a good starting point. Kawhi Leonard, Manu Ginobili, and Tony Parker are the best examples of All-Star caliber players who were picked by the Spurs Management while other teams were looking someone with more talent, with more athleticism, with more offensive skills. By doing this, they were losing the focus: Do not find the best player among everyone, but the best for your system.

Coaching Development

From a coaching standpoint, the San Antonio Spurs are a world class organization that strives to teach and prep the organization's coaching staff for future NBA head coaching opportunities down the road. The professional development of the Spurs basketball operations department and coaching staff begins with Popovich. The Spurs assistant coaches gain valuable experience under Popovich who puts them in positions to be successful. Thus, the opportunities for professional growth to grow as a coach in the Spurs organization are unlimited. Whether they are working in the basketball operations department, film room, or coaching the team's NBA Summer League team, the situations

Spurs assistant coaches exposed to are invaluable. As case in point, current Spurs assistant coach, Will Hardy, in his eighth season with the NBA franchise, began his San Antonio Spurs employment career as the team's video coordinator in 2013 before earning a seat on the Spurs bench six years later before the start of the 2018-2019 NBA season. In a like manner, 76ers head coach Brent Brown before he received a spot-on Popovich's bench ahead of the 2007-2008 NBA season, he served as an unpaid employee in the Spurs basketball operations department of the organization during the NBA's 1998-1999 lockout-shortened season and the director player development from 2002 to 2007.

In comparison, Mike Budenhilzer started his NBA coaching career assisting Popovich from 1996 to 2013. During Budenhilzer's 17 years as Popovich's assistant coach, he moved his way up the ladder to the Spurs' top assistant coach position before receiving his first NBA head coaching job with the Atlanta Hawks ahead of the 2013-2014 NBA season. In a similar manner, Charlotte Hornets head coach James Borrego kicked professional basketball employment career as an assistant video coordinator with the San Antonio Spurs the Summer of 2003 before quickly being promoted assistant coach just before the beginning of the 2003-2004 NBA season. For six seasons Borrego served as assistant coach on Greg Popovich's coaching staffs that lead the Spurs to NBA championships in 2005 to 2007 before moving on to serve on Monty Williams coaching staff with the New Orleans Hornets ahead of the 2010-2011 NBA season. Borrego would eventually return to the Spurs to once again serve as Pop's assistant for three more years from 2015 to 2018 before landing his first official NBA head coach position with the Charlotte Hornets ahead of the 2018-2019 NBA season. All in all, the Spurs organization

as a whole has been a one of a kind of franchise that has encouraged professional growth

and development with their employees within the organizational structure.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The San Antonio Spurs are a world-renowned professional basketball organization that acts as a model for other NBA organizations. Their cultural practices are one way they can influence other NBA franchises. This concluding chapter includes the following: a discussion of the findings, limitations, conclusions based on research questions, implications of the findings, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The San Antonio Spurs value a culture of competitiveness and caring that cultivates trust, and a commitment to work together as a team. When the Spurs have a specific group of players and management that value what is best for the team over themselves, the building blocks for a successful team foundation has started to take shape. Thus, the front office and coaching staff can begin to coach and guide players through the organization's unique, highly competitive, caring performance system. The team's unique structure creates a system of organizational norms by which the Spurs can operate through smoothly as a functional entity. More specifically, organization norms have a relatively great impact on individual and organizational outcomes and are potentially indicative of environments that support organizational learning and knowledge management (Balthazard et al., 2006, p. 713).

As the Spurs President of Basketball Operations and Head Coach Greg Popovich does a great job of empowering subordinates around him by giving them the tools to perform given tasks that they were assigned. The San Antonio Spurs have an organizational Structure in place that empowers a collaborative open environment that encourages innovation and trust between the players, coaches, and front office. The Spurs organizational frame of mind encompasses Kalyani (2011) philosophy of creating an environment and organization structure that empowers employees and promotes the collaboration required to generate and implement new ideas (p. 85). Cultures consisting of openness, collaboration, trust, authenticity, proactive, autonomy, confrontation, and experimentation aides in the productive innovation of an operational culture. In other words, Popovich in managing the Spurs' organizational structure creates an environment that empowers people around him to collaborate on important basketball operations related decisions regarding the team that builds an open, positive, trustworthy, authentic collaborative culture within the organization. Therefore, an improved operational innovative culture is formed.

The San Antonio Spurs are a highly recognizable professional sports team example of how smart team management can supersede any restrictions caused by their city's small market population size, television exposure, and name brand recognition. These incoming revenue streams are important because the team's ability to bring in more highly sought-after coaches, players, front office personnel, and renovate outdated arena or practice facility infrastructures are very dependent on the financial revenue they receive from television contracts and team ticket sales. Juravich et al. (2017) affirmed, "as these profits are typically reallocated to acquire and retain human resources (HRs)

and utilized to make infrastructure improvements in some cases, a case can be made for quantifying performance in this manner" (p. 466). Professional sports teams rely heavily on the financial revenue flowed into the organization through television contracts and ticket sales to be able attract more high quality human resources that improve the team's performance on the court and in the front office. These probable short comings in TV revenue and ticket sales can impact the number of limitations in this study.

There were a number of limitations that could have impacted this study. Only utilizing one NBA franchise to evaluate organizational culture could limit the large scope of organizational culture for the researcher. In addition, the San Antonio Spurs website and other pro Spurs databases were the primary resources used to evaluate the organization's practices, which could have lead to bias towards the team based on the information made available. Finally, the researcher could have been influenced by a personal bias in favor of the Spurs due to personal sports fan allegiance to Greg Popovich, Tim Duncan, and the Spurs team. Despite these limitations, the study provided valuable information about the San Antonio Spurs team culture and their practices.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. When it comes to franchise values within the organization, the San Antonio Spurs value the development of learning and building relationships.
2. The San Antonio Spurs coaching staff and front office have done a diligent job over the years of continually finding particular areas of current and

potential Spurs players' games that fit in with the Spurs system that have the potential to be very beneficial for the team in the long run.

3. The San Antonio Spurs promote professional growth and development within their organization by holistically developing younger, more unknown coach and player prospects that are not necessarily well known throughout the rest of the league.

4. The San Antonio Spurs' current practices are based on the development of learning and building relationships within the organization from players to coaches and from coaches to the front office has brought the team 5 NBA Championships in 20 years and 22 consecutive playoff appearances.

5. The current franchise development measures the San Antonio Spurs have in place has successfully advanced previously unknown coaches and players like Brett Brown and Tony Parker into more successful coaching and player talents.

6. The current professional growth and development promotional strategies within the San Antonio Spurs organization has distributed Greg Popovich's brand of basketball coaching and operations development to more NBA teams as more of Popovich's assistant coaches land head coaching jobs elsewhere around the league.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. To separate themselves from a team that is good enough to contend to a team that can compete for a championship again, the San Antonio Spurs can find ways to make their system more appealing to NBA superstar caliber free agents.

2. Once Greg Popovich retires, the San Antonio Spurs can find a new head coach that will continue to build off of the organizational culture infrastructure that Popovich has firmly established over the past several years.

3. The San Antonio Spurs can adapt their playing style to compete with and beat the more up-tempo, guard-oriented, three-point shooting emphasized offensive play style of the teams that are most successful in today's NBA game.

4. The San Antonio Spurs can modify their NBA Draft approach to find more refined basketball players that can impact their franchise in more profound ways.

5. Future research should analyze the organizational culture of successful NBA franchises versus unsuccessful NBA franchises.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Instrument

Area	Description of Practice	Additional Comments
Franchise Values		
Front Office		
Coaching Staff		
Players		
Franchise Development		
Front Office		
Coaching Staff		
Players		
Coaching Development		
Professional Growth		