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“I wouldn’t change it”: An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of International
Student-Athletes in Canadian Interuniversity Sport

By

Jessica Cléménçon

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Kinesiology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Human Kinetics
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2014

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Student-Athletes in Canadian Interuniversity Sport

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of international student-athletes (ISAs) competing in Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). Guided by Ridinger and Pastore's (2000) theoretical model of adjustment to college for ISAs, which has since been validated and revised by Popp, Love, Kim and Hums (2010), this study explored the antecedents, adjustments, and outcomes of these lived experiences along with the wants and needs of ISAs. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with 13 ISAs competing in CIS during the 2013-2014 season. All categories from Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) model were supported, as were the components added by Popp, Love et al. (2010). Based on the findings, an adapted model of ISA adjustment was proposed. This revised model illustrates the triggering factors that initiated the thought process, along with the unique adjustment experiences, of the ISAs who participated in this study.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who has been supportive throughout this process. Mom and Dad, thanks for giving me the opportunity to be in Canada for the past five years. Florian and Sébastien, thanks for your support. Your constant belief in me drives me to keep making you proud. A special thanks to the Lancers Women's basketball family for being there no matter what I needed throughout this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have been by my side throughout this journey and without them, this would not have been possible.

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Chantal, your vision to make your players grow on and off the court has shaped the person that I am today. I thank you and your coaching staff for that.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIAAA – Atlantic Intercollegiate Athletic Association
IAAW – Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
AUAA – Atlantic Universities Athletic Association
CIAU – Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union
CIAW – Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
CIS – Canadian Interuniversity Sport
CWIAU – Canadian Women’s Intercollegiate Athletic Union
CWUAA – Canada West Universities Athletic Association
GPAA – Great Plains Athletic Association
IAAUS – Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States
ISA – international student athlete
NAIA – National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
NBA – National Basketball Association
NCAA – National Collegiate Athletic Association
NJCAA – National Junior College Athletic Association
OQUAA – Ontario-Quebec University Athletic Association
O-QWICA – Ontario-Quebec Women’s Intercollegiate Athletics
OSLAA – Ottawa-St. Lawrence Athletic Association
OUA – Ontario University Athletics
OUAA – Ontario University Athletic Association
OWIAA – Ontario Women’s Interuniversity Athletic Association
QSSF – Quebec Student Sports Federation
RSEQ – Réseau du Sport Etudiant du Québec
UBC – University of British Columbia

WIAA – Western Intercollegiate Athletic Association

WIAU Women’s Intercollegiate Athletic Union

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Intercollegiate athletics programs in North America are very popular. Even though student-athletes are at the centre, the experience provided by these programs impacts other students, coaches, staff, and the community. With almost 470,000 student-athletes participating in 2012-13 (Irick, 2013), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the “largest and most influential college sport governing body in the United States” (Staurowsky & Abney, 2011, p. 145). In Canada, Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) is the main governing body. It offers quality programs, national exposure, awards and honours, financial assistance, quality coaching and services, along with the country’s best facilities to its student-athletes (Canadian Interuniversity Sport [CIS], 2013a). Intercollegiate athletic programs are a product of North America. In other countries, the norm for participating in sport is usually through a club system that operates completely separate from the educational system. The unique combination of athletics and education, along with an experience abroad, can be attractive to foreign student-athletes.

Although research has been conducted within the NCAA concerning international student-athletes (ISAs) competing in the United States (e.g., Love & Kim, 2011; Popp, Hums, & Greenwell, 2009; 2010; Popp, Love, Kim & Hums, 2010; Ridinger & Pastore, 2000a; 2000b; Staurowsky & Abney, 2011; Trendafilova, Hardin, & Seungmo, 2010), this topic remains relatively unexplored in the context of CIS. Stokowski, Huffman and Aicher (2013) expressed that even though there are similar trends among domestic and international student-athletes, it is essential to analyze the differences between these two

groups to better meet the wants and needs of these two demographics. These authors also state that “it is important that the needs of the [domestic and international] student-athletes are being met and that they are constantly challenged and stimulated and feel secure” (p. 144). Meeting the wants and needs of the ISA population is essential for their retention (through the obtainment of a university degree), but also for the coach, team and university (for the development of a winning program).

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of ISAs competing in CIS, along with their wants and needs, in order to better accommodate them and ease their transition into university life. Guided by Ridinger and Pastore’s (2000a) theoretical model of adjustment to college for ISAs, which has since been validated and revised by Popp, Love et al. (2010) for use in the NCAA context, this study explored the antecedents, adjustments, and outcomes of these lived experiences. With respect to antecedents, this study attempted to understand how ISAs chose to come to Canada and what factors affected the choice of institution they enrolled in. Regarding the adjustment to life as a CIS student-athlete, this study attempted to identify which factors had the greatest impact on ISAs being successful in their transition to university life in Canada. Finally, this study explored the ways in which ISAs reflect on their experiences abroad and what they got out of them.

Researching the experiences of ISAs competing in CIS is an important first step towards understanding their motivations to come to Canada. Studying this population may facilitate the recruiting process for coaches. Furthermore, understanding the wants, needs, and challenges faced by ISAs will be useful for Canadian athletic administrators and coaches to help ISAs with their transition from their home countries, but also with

their retention. Popp, Love et al. (2010) observed that very little data exist regarding the “college selection process...or college satisfaction levels of migrant collegiate athletes” (p. 178). This study attempts to fill a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of ISAs in the Canadian context.

Literature Review

Although the term *student-athlete* does not appear in any English dictionary, “it is routinely used in the United States in reference to athletes who participate in secondary and post-secondary school sport programs” (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005, p. 103). This term was introduced into the language of sport in the United States as “an NCAA tactic in the 1950s to counter negative publicity and political pressure created by its newly instituted athletic scholarship policy” (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005, p. 103). Canadian Interuniversity Sport does not clearly define the term student-athlete other than as one who competes in CIS and meets all of the academic¹ and athletic eligibility requirements for participation in his or her particular sport(s). Concerning the NCAA, Article 12.02.9 of the *2013-14 NCAA Division I Manual* (2013a) defines a student-athlete as

...a student whose enrollment was solicited by a member of the athletics staff or other representative of athletics interests with a view toward the student’s ultimate participation in the intercollegiate athletics program. Any other student becomes a student-athlete only when the student reports for an intercollegiate squad that is under the jurisdiction of the athletics department.... (p. 58)

¹ Student-athletes competing in CIS must be enrolled in three courses in the term that they are competing, and successfully complete at least three full courses per academic year (CIS, 2013b).

Intercollegiate athletes are asked to navigate the dual role of being a student and an athlete successfully, despite time constraints and external pressures from both athletic and academic entities (Parsons, 2013).

In contrast with domestic student-athletes, CIS defines *foreign student-athletes*, also referred to as *international student-athletes* (ISAs), as student-athletes who are not Canadian Citizens or who do not have landed immigrant status in Canada (CIS, 2013c). In other words, a student born in a country other than Canada and whose family has since moved to Canada is not considered to be a foreign student-athlete. The NCAA (2013b) defines an ISA as "...a student-athlete who either: (a) is not a U.S. citizen; or (b) resides in an unincorporated or commonwealth territory of the United States; or (c) has participated in international-athletics activities or was associated as an athlete with an international-athletics organization" (p. 1). It is important to note the difference between foreign students and foreign student-athletes. As stated by Bale (1991), in the case of 'academic' foreign students, the 'donor country' usually provides the scholarships to the students studying in another country. Academic foreign students attend North American institutions to develop skills that will help the development of institutions in their home countries. Alternatively, foreign student-athletes are recruited to further the needs of the universities of the 'host country.' Most notably, ISAs are recruited to compete and perform athletically.

In a report published by the NCAA in 2010, the number of ISAs had increased more than 1,000 percent over the previous decade (Hosick, 2010). As of the 2012-13 academic year, 4.9% of NCAA Division I student-athletes were from outside of the United States (Irick, 2013). There is ample evidence to suggest that there is an increasing

number of ISAs competing within CIS in recent years as well. During the 2012-2013 season, 606 ISAs competed in CIS, representing 4.9% of the overall student-athlete population (Clémentçon & Dixon, in press). Unfortunately, a lack of historical records prevents us from knowing the rate at which the number of ISAs has been increasing over time within CIS. Although the increase in the number of ISAs may present a number of opportunities for athletic administrators and coaches alike, it also poses its share of challenges.

At present, the NCAA does not limit the number of ISAs competing on each team (Hunter, 2013). In contrast, athletic administrators in Canada instituted rules more than 25 years ago to limit the number of ISAs in the sport of men's basketball (CIS, 2013b). Commencing with the 2013-14 season, these rules also apply to women's basketball (CIS, 2013c), and beginning in 2014-15, they will be applied to men's and women's volleyball as well (Hunter, 2013). The argument in favour of these policy changes is that CIS is trying to reserve roster spots for domestic student-athletes.

Research on International Student-Athletes

Some of the earliest research on the experiences of ISAs was conducted by Bale (1987; 1991). In particular, Bale's (1991) book was written to help demystify the foreign student-athlete situation that had been relatively unexplored before his time. Bale examined the evolution of intercollegiate sport in the United States and considered the overall pattern of international recruitment of scholars and student-athletes. Bale's work has since influenced several researchers who have sought to better understand the experiences of ISAs, particularly in the United States.

Based on an extensive review of literature, including articles from such disciplines as business, education, and cross-cultural studies, Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) developed a theoretical framework that intended to "...contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of adjustment to college as it pertains to international student-athletes" (p. 9) competing in the NCAA. The three main components of their framework include: (1) antecedents of adjustment, (2) adjustment to college, and (3) outcomes that may be associated with the antecedents and/or adjustment to college (see Figure 1).

In terms of the *antecedents of adjustment*, four categories emerged from the literature: personal, interpersonal, perceptual and cultural distance. The *personal* dimension is defined by "the confidence to achieve athletic and academic goals as well as the technical competencies needed to perform the tasks required of an intercollegiate student-athlete" (Ridinger & Pastore, 2000a, p. 11). This dimension includes self-efficacy, which incorporates an academic and athletic element, along with technical competencies, which can be divided into academic aptitude, athletic aptitude, and English language proficiency. The *interpersonal* dimension includes activities and attributes that allow an ISA to interact with his or her teammates, coaches, and faculty/staff. The *perceptual* dimension includes factors that may influence the ISA's perception of the university and/or the athletic environment. For example, input by the athletic department and the university staff may help to smooth out the adjustment process for ISAs. Finally, the *cultural distance* dimension implies that the more distance between the campus culture and the home culture of the ISA, the more time and effort it will take to adjust (Ridinger & Pastore, 2000a).

The *adjustment to college* component was divided into five dimensions including academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, institutional attachment, and athletic adjustment. The *academic adjustment* dimension encompasses items that relate to the educational demands of the university. *Social adjustment* incorporates the interpersonal and societal demands of adjustment to college. The *personal-emotional adjustment* dimension is characterized by the ISA's response to stress along with psychological and physical health. The *institutional attachment* dimension addresses the bond between the student and the institution. Finally, *athletic adjustment* has to do with adjusting to a new role on the team after experiencing athletic success at the high school level (Ridinger & Pastore, 2000a).

Two dimensions were identified that relate to the outcomes or consequences of adjustment to college for ISAs. The *performances* of ISAs on the field and in the classroom are of prime interest for coaches and athletic departments. However, *satisfaction with college* was also included as part of the theoretical framework as a legitimate outcome for ISAs. Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) model suggests that satisfaction has a greater influence on academic performance than academic performance has on satisfaction. In their framework, performance and satisfaction are separate yet overlapping outcomes.

Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) theoretical framework was the first to be developed for the purposes of understanding the phenomenon of adjustment to college for ISAs. Since this time, most of the research that has been conducted on ISAs can be loosely categorized according to the three components identified by these authors: antecedents, adjustments, and outcomes.

Research on the antecedents includes Jones, Koo, Kim, Andrew and Hardin's (2009) study that examined the motives of ISAs to come to the United States to participate in collegiate sport. They also looked at the differences in motives based on selected demographic attributes (e.g., gender, types of scholarships received, types of sport participation, and region of the world). They found that there was a difference in motivation depending on the type of sport played (i.e., individual or team sport) and on the country of origin. Popp, Hums and Greenwell (2009) also focused on the motivation for playing intercollegiate sports and discovered that depending on the country of origin, ISAs viewed the purpose of sport differently. In particular, they found that "student-athletes from Western European nations rated good citizenship as a purpose of collegiate sport significantly lower than student-athletes from Eastern Europe, Central and South America, and the United States" (p. 93). Good citizenship was defined as believing that sport should help teach such lessons as loyalty, willingness to sacrifice for the good of the team, and respecting authority.

Finally, Popp, Love, Kim and Hums (2010) sought to test whether the antecedents developed by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) "were the best indicators of successful adjustment to college for international migrant athletes and to determine if other antecedent factors were also relevant to adjustment" (Popp, Love et al., p. 167). Based on their findings, these authors proposed a number of revisions to Ridinger and Pastore's original model of adjustments for ISAs (see Figure 2). In the *personal* dimension, Popp, Love et al. added two new sub-groups, labeled as sense of adventure and previous international travel experience. Having previous cross-cultural experience and a willingness to study abroad were common themes found in their study. However, unlike

Ridinger and Pastore's framework, athletic ability did not seem to be a main concern since most of the participants had been competing at a high level of competition in their home countries. Concerning the *interpersonal* dimension, the importance of having relationships with peers was critical. Peers from their home nation who had gone through the same process were mentioned as being critical during the decision making process. Other international students and US-born peers were also observed to be essential groups. The importance of faculty and staff relationships was not supported by the data collected, as none of the participants expressed a strong relationship with a faculty member. Another important factor that was added to Ridinger and Pastore's model by Popp, Love et al. was the influence of family in the *perceptual* category. Strong support by the family was expressed as a crucial element of the adjustment process.

Adjustment to college for ISAs has also been studied. Ridinger and Pastore (2000b) sought to determine how well ISAs adjust to college compared to domestic student-athletes and to their general student peers. Their findings showed that ISAs had the highest means scores for overall adjustment to college and academic adjustment. They also scored higher than their non-athlete counterparts on the social adjustment subscale. Despite the relatively small sample of ISAs in this study ($n = 16$), the results imply that sport may be an important factor in helping ISAs adjust better than their foreign non-athlete peers to university life in the United States. On the contrary, Popp, Hums and Greenwell (2010) observed that domestic student-athletes competing at 15 different NCAA Division I institutions adjusted better to college and were more attached to their institutions than ISAs.

In an alternative line of research, Stokowski, Huffman and Aicher (2013) found that ISAs were more intrinsically motivated from an athletic perspective than they were extrinsically motivated. Their results also demonstrated that ISAs were mostly motivated to participate in their sport by intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment (i.e., achieving a particular goal), followed by intrinsic motivation toward stimulation (i.e., to feel enjoyment). These findings may suggest that ISAs take pleasure and satisfaction from hard work and practice, and because they are more intrinsically motivated, they may be less likely to experience burn-out and be amotivated during their athletic careers. Lastly, Pierce, Popp and Meadows (2013), demonstrated that homesickness, adjustment to the American culture and adjusting to the English language were the most difficult aspects of the experience for the ISAs in their study. Moreover, the authors expressed that the most important elements to a successful transition for ISAs were a strong support system from teammates and coaches, along with support from friends and family in their native countries. Collectively, these studies highlight some of the challenges faced by ISAs to adjust to their new surroundings and suggest ways by which institutions and coaches can help to ensure that ISAs have a smooth adjustment to life as a student-athlete in the United States.

Although the on-field and in-class performance and satisfactions levels of ISAs ought to be relatively easy outcomes to measure, to date, there has been a limited amount of research conducted on these particular aspects of Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) theoretical framework. Trendafilova, Hardin, and Seungmo (2010) assessed the levels of academic and athletic satisfaction among ISAs competing in six different conferences in the NCAA Division I Football Bowl subdivision. Their findings revealed that ISAs were

generally satisfied with their overall athletic and academic experiences, although male ISAs were more satisfied with some external agents (i.e., the media, the local and university community) than females. Having a better understanding of the outcomes and satisfaction levels of ISAs could lead to potential adjustments and increase the popularity of athletes choosing to study abroad.

What has become apparent from this review of the literature is that *all* of the previous studies that focused on the lived experiences of ISAs have relied upon samples from the NCAA. Some have argued that translating findings of any sort from the USA to Canada is problematic due to the significant differences between the intercollegiate sport systems of each country (Curtis & McTeer, 1990). However, Miller and Kerr's (2002) findings challenge this assumption. Their study on the athletic, academic and social experiences of student-athletes in a Canadian context show that the lives of Canadian student-athletes revolve around three spheres, which are not dissimilar from their American counterparts; athletics, academics and socializing. The relationship between each aspect of student-athletes' lives were observed as competitive and they had to make sacrifices and negotiations to balance all the requirements of these three spheres. "The strong focus on sport...and the staggering time and physical demands of intercollegiate athletics" (p. 362) show similarities between the experiences of CIS and NCAA Division I student-athletes.

Even though CIS has been compared with NCAA Division I, it was anticipated by the researcher that there may be considerable differences in the wants, needs, and lived experiences of ISAs in each country. There are considerable differences in the sport and academic cultures of the USA and Canada, and despite marked improvements in the

competitiveness of CIS programs over the past decade, many NCAA Division I institutions are still a step ahead in terms of their facilities, media attention, and athletic scholarships, amongst other factors. International student-athletes may also be attracted to Canada, and not to the USA, for numerous other factors. As discussed earlier, Pierce, Popp and Meadows (2013) indicated that adjustment to the American culture and the English language were some of the most difficult aspects of the experience for the ISAs in their study. Given that Canada celebrates two official languages, English and French, this is expected to attract some ISAs who may feel less comfortable studying and competing in the United States, particularly for those whose first language is French. Moreover, Canadians are generally perceived as peacekeepers and part of a nation in which diversity prevails in terms of population more so than their American neighbours (O'Reilly & Seguin, 2009). With respect to intercollegiate athletics, the NCAA is seen internationally as being in the business of producing elite athletes and has been widely criticized in recent years for the exploitation of its student-athletes (Miller, 2012). However, CIS is perceived as a more caring system that is focused on developing the whole person. It was anticipated by the researcher that these and many other cultural differences may influence ISAs to study and compete in Canada instead of the United States. However, in at least some cases, Canada might have simply been a second option for those ISAs whose opportunities to pursue intercollegiate athletic participation in the United States did not work out.

Researching the lived experiences of ISAs in CIS and finding out why they chose Canada is necessary to better understand and accommodate this population. The current study is focused on exploring which antecedent factors are most important in ISAs'

decisions to come to Canada, along with which adjustment factors have the greatest impact on ISAs' transitions to university life. This study also explores how ISAs characterize the outcomes of their experiences. Finally, this study attempts to identify what triggered their decisions to pursue an international student-athletic career, a crucial element to target future potential participants.

Method

“Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2012, p. 4). Qualitative inquiries focus on participants' perceptions, experiences and on the process that is occurring as well as the outcome (Creswell, 2012). This study was designed to explore the experiences of ISAs currently enrolled at CIS institutions and to focus on their individual meanings.

With respect to epistemology, researchers with a social constructivist perspective believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2012). Based on these principles, the constructivist worldview was chosen for the study. As mentioned by Creswell (2013), qualitative research is interpretative research, which involves a range of “strategies, ethical and personal issues into the qualitative process” (p. 187). Being an ISA myself, I have a keen interest in the subject matter and had some advantages in carrying out this research, such as being able to understand and relate to the ISA population and their experiences. I have had a positive experience as an ISA studying and competing in Canada but this may not have been the case for some

participants in this study; participants may have had to face challenges that I did not experience along my journey. As a consequence, it was critical for me to be aware of my biases in carrying out this research so that they do not unduly influence the results and outcomes of this study (see Appendix A for an autobiography of the researcher).

Sample Selection & Recruitment

Telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of 13 ISAs (7 males, 6 females) competing in CIS during the 2013-2014 season. Sample size was not dictated by the principle of theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) due to the fact that the experience of each ISA is bound to be unique in some way or another. Nevertheless, considerable overlap and repetition of themes was uncovered within the participants' descriptions of their experiences. Participants were purposively selected based on factors that have been shown in previous research to impact the experiences of ISAs, including: continent of origin (Jones et al., 2009), sport type (Jones et al.), gender (Popp, Hums et al., 2010), university size (based on undergraduate enrollment), and CIS conference. Finally, only ISAs in their third year of eligibility and above were recruited to participate in order to ensure that they would be able to provide a more comprehensive perspective of what their experience in Canada has been like.

Nine interviews were conducted in English and four were conducted in French. The interviews were only conducted in French if it was the ISA's first language and/or he or she felt more comfortable speaking that language. International student-athletes from every CIS sport were interviewed except for curling and rugby due to a lack of ISAs in the case of curling, and the inability of the researcher to contact the few ISAs who

competed in CIS rugby. For a demographic profile of each participant in this study, please refer to Table 1.

Recruitment of prospective participants was primarily performed via Facebook. This method allowed the researcher to use a more direct approach than going through coaches and/or athletic departments to contact people within the ISA population. The researcher ensured via an initial introductory Facebook message that the person contacted was the intended recipient of the message and that he or she is an ISA, by definition. The researcher selected participants to be recruited based on the factors discussed above, with the aid of the team rosters available on each university athletic department's website. Fifty-one potential participants were sent a Facebook friend request, 27 of whom accepted the request. Of these 27 prospective participants, 14 did not fit the criteria due to their status in Canada; 12 had obtained Canadian citizenship, one had a resident permit, and one had diplomatic status. The remaining 13 candidates agreed to participate in the study but one of them did not follow-up and thus, was not interviewed. The last ISA was recruited via email since the university he attends has its students' email addresses publicly listed on its website.

Data Collection and Analysis

A semi-structured interview format was used to collect the data for this study, where key topics and potential questions were planned in advance and an interview guide indicating the questioning route was developed (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Telephone interviews allowed for the sampling of participants from institutions throughout Canada, and were more cost effective than conducting the interviews in person. Each interview included three parts that were each broadly intended to correspond with a section of

Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) theoretical model: the antecedents, the adjustments, and the outcomes (see Appendix B for the interview guide). The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis was performed using recommendations from Corbin and Strauss (2008) and with the help of a qualitative data analysis computer software program (i.e., QSR NVivo). Once in a workable format, the researcher became immersed in the data through multiple readings of the transcripts, memo writing, and coding. The data were coded in hopes of identifying themes that may have supported, refuted, or extended the use of Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) framework for understanding the adjustment of ISAs to studying and competing within the Canadian interuniversity context.

A pilot interview was conducted over the phone before the beginning of the study to test the clarity of the questions, the researcher's ability to ask them clearly and concisely, and to verify that the questions elicited the appropriate responses. Debriefing with the participant after the pilot interview also helped to verify these aspects of the data collection process.

Finally, prior to commencing this study, the researcher sought approval from the University of Windsor's Research Ethics Board (REB). Participant anonymity was not possible in this study since the researcher conducted the interviews over the phone and was aware of the participants' identities. Although participants' identities are not disclosed in the reporting of the results (i.e., alphabetic identifiers have been utilized instead), their confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the uniqueness of their backgrounds and the public nature of their participation in CIS athletics.

Results

Interviews generally ranged in length from 25 to 45 minutes. In most cases, students were very open to answering the questions and providing details on their experiences. In some instances, it seemed that those whose interviews were conducted in their first language provided more information. This could be due to their having a limited vocabulary in English. Most of the participants asked at the end of the interview to receive a summary of the results, which demonstrated their interest in the topic.

Participants mentioned several different triggering factors that started the thinking process to move to Canada and compete in CIS. As it relates to Ridinger and Pastore's (2000) model, from a chronological perspective, these triggering factors would be elements that occur prior to the antecedent phase. Multiple students were recruited by a CIS coach or an assistant coach, who was on a tour in the ISA's respective home country. For example, participant I stated:

En fait j'étais au Maroc puis je jouais avec mon école dans un championnat universitaire et l'assistant coach de l'université de [...] qui était au Maroc à cette époque là m'a vu puis on a eu une discussion avec lui et en fait c'était lui qui m'a encouragé à venir étudier au Canada.
[Actually, I was in Morocco and I was playing in a university league and the assistant coach of the University of [...], who was in Morocco back then, saw me and we talked and it's him who pushed me to come study in Canada.] (personal communication, April 28, 2014)

Hearing about Canada and CIS from a friend was often all that it took for other participants to start thinking about the possibility of studying and competing abroad. Another triggering factor was the impossibility to compete in NCAA due to eligibility restrictions. For instance, one participant who had competed in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) was not eligible to compete in NCAA:

With the OHL you get scholarship packages for school afterwards and, hmm, being American, once I finished playing in OHL you are no longer eligible to play NCAA hockey anymore. So, it basically came down to when the OHL was done, hmm, if I wanted to continue playing hockey while at school, CIS was the only route to do that. (Participant G, personal communication, April 23, 2014)

In its original form, Ridinger and Pastore's (2000) model does not account for the triggers initiating the thought process but they seemed to be crucial elements in the recruiting of the ISAs in this study.

One of the purposes of this study was to determine why ISAs decided to study and compete in Canada in the first place, rather than going to the United States, a country that is better known for its intercollegiate athletic activities. The ISAs interviewed in this study expressed several different reasons, but emphasized the unique characteristics of studying and competing in Canada. Some ISAs' first criterion was academics rather than athletics, and they viewed a Canadian education as being more valuable than one earned in the United States. Another factor had to do with the financial aspect. Attending a university in Canada is usually much more affordable than it is in the United States.

Several participants also indicated that the process to attend and compete at an American university is much more complicated, especially for those ISAs who have previously competed on semi-professional teams. In one instance, an American student-athlete was not eligible to compete in the NCAA because he had previously played hockey in the OHL. In contrast, CIS gave him the opportunity to continue playing his sport at an elite level while getting a university education. For another ISA who was hoping to transfer from a junior college to a university, she decided to study and compete in Canada due to the fact that she would gain an extra year of playing eligibility. Lastly, only one of the participants interviewed in this study was strongly interested in competing in the NCAA and saw CIS as a backup option once the American school that was recruiting him withdrew its offer. On the contrary, a few participants confessed to having only been recruited by Canadian universities, and did not explore American institutions.

Antecedents

Based on the comments of the participants in this study, all four antecedent components of Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) original theoretical model of adjustment for ISAs were supported, but with some differences. With respect to the *personal* components, technical competencies and self-efficacy were defined by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) to include academic aptitude, athletic aptitude, and English language proficiency. Most of the participants came to compete in CIS from youth teams or high schools where they excelled in their respective sports and/or had been members of their youth national teams. A few of the participants also had previous semi-professional experiences in their respective sports. In these cases, their athletic abilities or beliefs

about their capacity to excel in athletics were not an issue. In contrast, two of the students picked Canadian universities for the academic component and were not planning on participating in a CIS sport. According to Participant C, “Well, I didn’t come to Canada for competing. I came to Canada for studying and then I found this place did wrestling” (personal communication, April 10, 2014).

Regarding academic aptitude, none of the participants were concerned about the challenges that university would cause them. The vast majority of the ISAs were aware of the need to be successful in university: “School-wise, I was an 80-85[%] average student. I was always a really good student” (Participant G, personal communication, April 23, 2014). Only one participant confessed that he was “...not dumb, but academically, basically, I just do what needs to be done” (Participant J, personal communication, April 18, 2014).

In terms of English language proficiency, six participants’ first language was English, while it was French for five of them, and was a different language altogether for the remaining two. All of the participants whose first language was English attended an English-speaking university. Only one of the participants whose first language was French attended an English-speaking institution, but he was able to speak English well at the time: “Coming here, I knew the language so that was a huge plus. So, I could actually talk to people” (Participant J, personal communication, April 18, 2014). The rest of the French-speaking students attended French-speaking institutions. As anticipated, language was noted as being a major barrier for some of the non-native English-speaking ISAs in this study. For example, Participant I stated “[Si mon université était une institution anglophone], non je n’y serai pas allé parce que je ne suis pas confortable avec

l'anglais.” [[If my university was an English institution], no, I wouldn't have gone there because I am not comfortable enough speaking English] (personal communication, April 28, 2014). Concerning the two other participants whose first language was neither English nor French, only one considered her level of English to be “pretty bad” (Participant B, personal communication, April 8, 2014) prior to moving to Canada and that it had been a concern for her.

Travel experience was added by Popp, Love et al. (2010) as an important antecedent in their revised model of adjustment for ISAs. All but one of the participants in this study had travelled internationally prior to coming to Canada. Despite not having travelled internationally, the lone exception had travelled a considerable amount domestically within the United States. Although some ISAs had travelled on their own or with friends or family members, the majority of them also had the opportunity to travel as a member of their respective youth national teams:

I played for the British national team and with that comes months of travelling away from home. So, when it came to me moving...it wasn't half as bad as it would have been if I would have never traveled years prior to that. (Participant M, personal communication, May 7, 2014)

It seems that previous travel experience and having been in contact with different cultures has at least some impact on a ISAs' decisions to study abroad and on their abilities to adapt to a new milieu.

Most of the participants admitted to knowing “barely anything” (Participant B, personal communication, April 8, 2014) about the university that they were going to

attend, which may be supportive of what Popp, Love et al. (2010) identified as a sense of adventure. In some cases, ISAs were willing to leave their home countries without really knowing what their experiences were going to be like: “Rien du tout. Vraiment rien du tout franchement j’ai l’impression que c’était un petit peu inconscient parce que je savais... je savais rien [à propos de mon université]...” [Nothing at all. I knew nothing at all [about my university]. It felt like I was reckless because I knew...I knew nothing] (Participant E, personal communication, April 14, 2014). Participants were willing to move to a new country and, in most cases, to a new continent without knowing much about the university that they would attend.

From an *interpersonal* perspective, Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) argued that relationships with teammates, coaches, and faculty and staff help ISAs in adjusting to their new environment. Before moving to Canada, only a few of the ISAs in this study had previously been in contact with their teammates, which mainly occurred through recruiting visits, during a team’s tour in a foreign country, or thanks to the initiative of a team captain to send a welcoming email: “Hmm, yeah, my captain at the time, before I came, he sent me an email just welcoming me to the school but other than that I didn’t talk to anyone besides the coach” (Participant A, personal communication, April 7, 2014). Those who were in contact with teammates before moving to Canada saw it as a benefit but it did not seem to be a crucial element.

However, participants confirmed the coach to be an essential element in this process. The vast majority of the ISAs interviewed for this study was recruited and saw the coach as liaison between them and the university:

I just turned eighteen before I came – so he did everything he could to make sure I felt comfortable, make sure I was with my classes and stuff, and he talked to the registrar...for that just to help me with my courses.

(Participant A, personal communication, April 7, 2014)

In most cases, the initiator of this communication was the head coach. However, under some circumstances it may have been one of the assistant coaches who got involved.

In their original model, Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) included relationships with faculty and staff as being an important antecedent factor for ISAs to study and compete on foreign soil. This particular component was later removed by Popp, Love et al. (2010) in their revised model. About half of the participants in this study mentioned getting important help and/or resources from centralized student support services such as an international recruitment centre, the registrar's office, or an academic advisor. In the case of one participant who happened to be studying at the graduate level, a particular professor also played an influential role in the decision making process: "I just picked the university based on research. I found a good researcher here who is my supervisor now and based on research I moved here" (Participant C, personal communication, April 10, 2014). Based on the responses of the ISAs in this study, perhaps faculty and staff may not be the appropriate term of reference for this component of the model, since individual professors seem only to be involved in the recruitment of ISAs who are studying at the graduate level.

The original model proposed by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) highlighted two components within the *perceptual* category, including realistic expectations and social

support. As stated previously, the vast majority of the ISAs interviewed in this study barely knew anything about the university they were going to attend and realistic expectations did not seem to be a big factor for their adjustment. In the words of Participant F, “I really didn’t formulate a perception because I didn’t know what it would be like living in a different country.... I didn’t really go into this kinda expecting anything. I was just going to see kinda how it unfolded” (personal communication, April 21, 2014). However, having little or no expectations did not lead to feelings of disenchantment associated with culture shock, as suggested by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a). Some students even expressed their thought process of coming to Canada for a year and then returning back to their home countries if they didn’t like it. As indicated by Participant E, “Ben à la base en fait c’est ça je me suis dit que oui je tentais l’aventure mais je gardais une petite liberté en me disant je viens pour un an et on verra après.” [Well, I told myself that I would try this adventure but that I would keep an exit strategy. I told myself that I was coming for a year and that we will see what happens next.] (personal communication (April 14, 2014).

In terms of social support (e.g., orientation programs aimed at new students and special academic support services for new student-athletes; Ridinger and Pastore, 2000a), only two participants mentioned programs put in place by the university to help ISAs with their transitions. One was an English as a Second Language program designed to teach English to first year international students whose English was not up to standard. The ISA that participated in this program provided a positive review of it. The other program that was mentioned was a mentorship program intended to prepare first year students for the challenges associated with being in university:

Ils avaient mis en place à la base un système de parrainage pour les étudiants étrangers mais le système de parrainage commençait comme a peut prêt un mois et demi après la rentrée scolaire. Du coup ben moi j'ai commencé plus vite à m'intégrer parce que je faisais partie d'une équipe athlétique et tout le monde avec qui je m'entraînais ben c'était plus eux qui m'aidaient que ceux qui étaient censés m'aider. [They put in place a mentorship program for foreign students but the program started about a month and a half after school started. So, I was already well adjusted because I was part of an athletic team and everyone I would practice with would help me more than the ones who were supposed to help me.] (Participant L, personal communication, April 28, 2014)

Popp, Love et al. (2010) argued that a key element missing in the original model proposed by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) has to do with family influences on the decision to study abroad. In this study, the majority of participants noted that it was essential for them to have the support of their families. In many cases, ISAs relied on their parents for financial support. Particularly for those ISAs from less-developed parts of the world, the cost of living and obtaining an education is higher in Canada than in their home countries. For example, a student from Morocco stated "ils ont bien apprécié l'idée que j'y aille pour continuer mes études alors ils m'ont encouragé surtout mes deux premières années ils m'ont encouragé financièrement." [They [my parents] really liked the idea of me going to continue my studies so they supported me, especially my first two years, they supported me financially.] (Participant I, personal communication, April 28, 2014). Participants also noted the emotional support and encouragement that they

received from family members. None of the participants interviewed for this study expressed that they faced resistance from their families.

The last antecedent component identified by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) was cultural distance. They argued that the more different an ISA's hometown culture is from that of the university campus, the more time and/or effort it will take for him or her to adjust. Their argument was supported by Popp, Love et al. (2010) who observed considerable differences between students from westernized countries and those from other parts of the world. Participants in this study had similar views on the issue. One participant from the United States argued, "I never really considered Canada as a foreign country just because they are so similar. So, it would have been different if I was kind of thinking about going in Europe for school" (Participant G, personal communication, April 23, 2014). Nevertheless, the American ISAs who took part in this study did mention a few cultural aspects that differed, and acknowledged the friendly rivalry that exists between Canada and the United States.

Differences between the cultures of Canada and the United States were also expressed by other participants in the study. One ISA loved Canada ever since she was a child and she had always wanted to study there. Another one of the participants was offered an athletic scholarship to attend a Baptist university in the United States, but decided not to go because she was worried about the religious aspects of the institution. In particular, ISAs from different cultures highlighted the multiculturalism and acceptance of immigrants, but also the weather, the friendliness of Canadians, and the traveling distances being way longer to what they were used to. For example, an ISA who had lived in Tunisia stated:

C'est un pays arabe à la base donc c'est sur que la mentalité est un peu plus différente puis ils sont pas habitués à avoir trop d'immigrants aussi donc ça peut être raciste dépendamment des endroits ou tu vas... au Québec les gens sont vraiment accueillants puis t'as beaucoup de possibilités, t'as beaucoup de... je dirai les gens sont pas fermés. [It's an Arabic country so the mentalities are a bit different. People are not used to seeing many immigrants, so sometimes they can be a bit racist depending where you go.... In Quebec, people are really welcoming and you have many opportunities. I would say that people are not closed-minded.]

(Participant L, personal communication, April 28, 2014)

International student-athletes also discussed how the systems of university education in North America are different in terms of the unique opportunity to combine academics and athletics. Participants highlighted that one of their parents' concerns was the opportunity for ISAs to pursue their academic goals abroad, which played in favour of CIS due to its emphasis on athletics and academics.

Adjustment

Both the original and revised models of ISA adjustment highlighted five components in the *adjustment* category; academic adjustment, athletic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment and institutional attachment. All categories were supported by the findings of the study. With respect to academic adjustment, most of the participants talked about an adjustment period of a couple of months. Some of the most difficult adjustments related to balancing one's academics and athletics, studying in a different language, and/or adapting to the schooling system or getting adjusted to the

course load. Balancing athletics and academics and getting adjusting to the course load are aspects that domestic student-athletes must also adjust to. However, domestic student-athletes have been brought up in Canada and may be more familiar with how the system works than their ISA counterparts. It might be more of a challenge for ISAs, foreign to the culture and university system. Some participants emphasized the larger classroom sizes and the availability of the professors as being particularly different:

Je sais pas si c'est spécifique à mon université ou à mon bac mais je trouve vraiment que les profs sont proches des élèves puis ils sont vraiment plus accessibles que ce qu'on a en France. Tu sais tu peux aller parler à ton prof. Je finis mon bac la cette année puis ils me connaissent par mon prénom quasiment tous, même les profs avec qui j'ai pas eu de cours. [I don't know if it's specific to my university but I find that the profs are close to the students and a lot more approachable than in France. You know, you can go and talk to your prof. I will [graduate from] my undergrad this year and most of them know my name, even the profs I didn't have.] (Participant E, personal communication, April 14, 2014)

Concerning athletic adjustment, participants discussed the high intensity of practices and competition, the well-organized programs along with the different schedules, the long traveling distances, and the quality of the infrastructures:

Entre le gymnase et mes cours il y a 30 secondes, tout est sur place puis tout est encadré pour que ça marche et au centre sportif les structures, c'est fou tout ce qu'on a alors qu'en France c'est plus difficile, on avait même

pas de vestiaires à nous dans l'équipe où je jouais. [It takes me 30 seconds to get from school to the gym. Everything is here. Everything is made for you to be successful, and the infrastructures; it's crazy what we have, while in France it's more difficult. We didn't even have our own dressing room with the team I used to play for.] (Participant E, personal communication, April 14, 2014)

Some participants also talked about an adjustment period for athletics, which varied between one and two semesters:

I wasn't used to so much traveling and traveling for the distances. But in terms of footwork as well, it was also a little bit different. But then, also, in terms of the coaching style, my coach here is actually so different compared to the coaches I had in the past. So, I had to adjust to a lot of things. (Participant J, personal communication, April 18, 2014)

The difference between social adjustments seems to be impacted by the participants' personalities. Participant F, for example, commented: "It wasn't too hard, I mean, personally. I'm a very approachable person. I like to make friends. I like to talk" (personal communication, April 21, 2014). However, Participant H had a different experience altogether:

I'm a typically shy person, so, when I was moving into residence I started with some friends but...I didn't really have a huge group of friends, but more smaller, but more rewarding in a way when we became closer. But it

was difficult when I was alone. I felt lonely and kind of depressed.

(personal communication, April 23, 2014)

All of the participants realized that being part of a team was a huge advantage for their social lives and that they didn't need to make much effort to meet people. Most domestic student-athletes, whether they compete close to home or far away already have a network of peers that they know in the university they are going to attend. In the case of ISAs, most come to their Canadian university without any personal connections, which is a reason why the social adjustment is an important aspect of their experiences. Some ISAs confessed that it was more challenging to make friends within their academic programs. One of the reasons for this was that they would not take part in social activities with their classmates due to their busy schedules. As suggested by Participant E

Je participe jamais aux activités sociales à cause du volley parce que en fait tout les jours on a tout le temps des pratiques, on est parties toutes les fins de semaines donc au niveau des cours c'était un peu difficile [de se faire des amis]. [I never take part in social activities because of volleyball; because every day we have practice, [and] we are gone every weekend, so at school it was a bit difficult [to make friends.]] (personal communication, April 14, 2014).

In terms of personal-emotional adjustment, most of the participants defined their experiences as being non-stressful. However, some of the aspects that were brought up related to the difficulties associated with being far away from home, and having to be responsible. For example, participant H stated,

It kind of hit me hard. I was kind of there by myself and I had to grow up at that time and do everything by myself. Hmm, when I started to get the hang of it, I started to calm down but it was still difficult sometimes.... You see your teammates or your friends going home for weekends and, well, I can't do that. (personal communication, April 23, 2014)

Financial stress was also mentioned as a difficult aspect of the participants' lives away from their home countries. Due to their busy schedules, the participants noted that they only have a limited time to engage in part-time employment. They also mentioned that scholarship funding cycles created some stress since scholarship funds would arrive only after tuition and other fees had to be paid. The tuition fees for international students in Canada are considerably higher than those for domestic students, possibly placing greater financial strain on ISAs.

Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) defined institutional attachment as "the bond between the student and the institution" (p. 15). One aspect that the participants of the study enjoyed was the feeling of belonging, and the support that they received from their student-athlete peers and fans. "What I enjoy the most is that bond; everybody is rooting for you" (Participant D, personal communication, April 17, 2014). It became clear that being part of a varsity athletic team created a sense of pride within many of the ISAs who participated in this study.

[What I enjoy] the most would probably be being part of something with the university; not just being a student, you're representing your university athletically at games. We were fortunate enough to go to nationals. That's

kind of cool that you are representing the [university that] you go to.

(Participant G, personal communication, April 23, 2014)

Outcomes

Finally, Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) identified three *outcomes* associated with ISAs' adjustment: academic performance, athletic performance, and overall satisfaction. All three categories were explored to assess the experiences of the participants. The vast majority of the participants in this study claim to be on track to complete their degrees, or have already obtained them, and have reached the personal goals they had set for themselves. Most participants expressed that being student-athletes will bring them an advantage over their competition when it is time to enter the work world. According to Participant L, "Je pense que les étudiants athlètes sont plus valoriser une fois dans le marché du travail parce qu'on est habitués à se concurrencer et on est habitué à travailler sous pression." [I think that being a student-athlete brings value once in the business world because we are used to competing and to work under pressure] (personal communication, April 28, 2014). The ISAs interviewed acknowledged that they had some challenges along the way, but argued that they will be able to get the career that they had hoped for and got valuable experience along their respective journeys. When asked about what the academic experience will bring him in the future, Participant K replied: "Ben un métier (rire). Non pas mal d'expérience déjà parce que peu importe le métier que je veux faire ça va m'apporter beaucoup d'expérience, beaucoup de savoir." [Well, a job (laughs). No, a lot of experience because no matter what job I will do, it will bring me tons of experience, a lot of knowledge...] (personal communication, April 29, 2014).

Most of the participants were satisfied with their athletic performance and many received some form of individual honour and recognition. Nevertheless, some mentioned that they were not completely satisfied with their respective team's performances, which brought a bit of disappointment. As noted by Participant E,

J'ai une flopée de prix... puis le fait de pas avoir atteint des objectifs élevés en tant qu'équipe, tu sais, on est allé au championnat canadien mais on a fait cinquième, de pas avoir atteint une médaille... c'est un petit peu insatisfaisant.

[I have a whole bunch of individual awards...but the fact that as a team we didn't reach high achievements, you know, we went to nationals but we finished fifth, and the fact that we didn't win a medal...is a bit disappointing.] (personal communication, April 14, 2014)

Those ISAs who were not completely satisfied with their individual performances agreed that they became better athletes from having competed in CIS. Some participants also discussed their hopes of competing professionally after their university careers were over, even though nothing had been finalized at the time of the interview.

All of the ISAs that took part in the study stated that they were satisfied with their overall experiences and recognized that they got a lot out of their journey from the standpoint of professional growth and development. They mentioned maturing and developing values that they will use in their next experience, such as being able to balance different aspects of their lives, being disciplined, being independent, being confident, learning to be on time, work hard, and be accountable. Participant G suggested, "Yeah, oh yeah, I wouldn't change it at all. It's been great.... The hockey has

been awesome; it's been so much fun. Happy I can still play" (personal communication, April 23, 2014).

Discussion

All categories from Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) model were supported by the results of this study, as were the components added by Popp, Love et al. (2010). In terms of antecedents, self-efficacy, technical competencies, travel experience, and sense of adventure all came into play in the *personal* category. Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) divide technical competencies into academic aptitude, athletic aptitude and English language proficiency. Though the only official language of the United States is English, Canada is a bilingual country. Thus, the notion of English Language proficiency ought to be changed to just "Language proficiency" when concerning ISAs coming to Canada to reflect that more than one language of instruction is possible, which is quite different from colleges and universities within the NCAA.

Pierce, Popp and Meadows (2013), expressed that the most important elements to a successful transition for ISAs were a strong support system from teammates and coaches, along with support from friends and family in their native countries. These aspects of the *interpersonal* antecedent category were supported by the results of the current study as well. However, it seems that for the large majority of ISAs in this study, the 'faculty/staff' component ought to be broadened to include all 'student support services.' This new term could include everything from the registrar's office to academic advisors, faculty members, and international recruitment officers. It was also observed that only the graduate student mentioned being in contact with a professor before moving

to Canada. Similarly, only a few participants mentioned being in contact with their future teammates, and most of them agreed that this kind of outreach did not make much of an impact on their decision-making.

In the *perceptual* category, family influence was crucial for most of the participants. The ISAs in this study did not know much about the university they were going to attend, which limited their ability to set realistic expectations in advance. However, it may be conjectured that participants' perceptions of Canadian culture has been shaped by information that they were able to obtain via the Internet and social media. Social support was only mentioned by a few ISAs, which might be due to the lack of programs in place within Canadian universities to ease the transition of first year and/or international student-athletes. *Cultural distance* was also an important factor for the ISAs interviewed for this study. Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) argument that the more different an ISA's hometown culture is from that of the university campus, the more time and/or effort it will take for him or her to adjust was confirmed by the participants. Pierce, Popp, and Meadows (2013) demonstrated that homesickness, adjustment to the American culture and adjusting to the English language were the most difficult aspects of the experience for the ISAs in their study. Though homesickness was not mentioned much by the participants of this study, adjusting to the culture was an important step for them.

In terms of adjustment, it is clear that the biggest challenge for ISAs had to do with balancing athletics and academics. Being a member of a team considerably eased the social adjustment for the ISAs in this study, even though it was mentioned that making friends in class was challenging. This finding supports the work of Ridinger and Pastore

(2000b), who found that ISAs scored higher than their non-athlete counterparts on the social adjustment subscale. Personal-emotional adjustments varied widely depending on the participants' personalities. Participants who saw themselves as being shy and very close to their families had a more difficult time moving away from home and making new friends than participants who saw themselves as easy going and open to meeting new people. Finally, institutional attachment was a new concept to most participants, and they generally enjoyed and took pride in representing their university.

Concerning the outcomes, all of the participants in this study claimed to be on track toward completing their degrees. With respect to athletic performance, most ISAs were satisfied with their individual performances, but experienced less than desirable team outcomes. Like in Trendafilova, Hardin, and Seungmo's (2010) study, the overall satisfaction of the ISAs was very positive, and all of them believed that they had learnt and developed values that they will be able to carry forward from their respective journeys.

Based on the findings of this study, an adapted model of ISA adjustment was created to illustrate the different impact of each component as they pertain to the experiences of the ISAs in this study (see Figure 4). Neither Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) nor Popp, Love et al. (2010) discussed which of the antecedent, adjustment, and outcome factors were proposed to have the greatest impact on the adjustment of ISAs. The adapted model proposed in Figure 4 attempts to account for this (to some extent) within the context of ISAs studying and competing in CIS through the use of all-caps. For example, it was evidenced that family influence had a tremendous impact on ISAs decisions to venture abroad. Likewise, communication with the coach was also an important and

reassuring factor for ISAs. The present research did not seek to quantify the relative importance of each variable of the lived experience of ISAs. However, future researchers may wish to quantify the necessity and/or importance of each element in the original and revised models of ISA adjustment by creating a survey and collecting these data from ISAs. In addition, this quantitative approach may also help to verify whether or not significant differences might exist between the wants, needs, and lived experiences of ISAs competing in the NCAA versus CIS.

Furthermore, neither the model created by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a), nor the revised version proposed by Popp, Love et al. (2010), account for any triggering factors that might come into play in the initial decision-making process of ISAs who wish to study and compete abroad. Many factors initiate this process and ought to be identified in the model since it is an important first step in ISAs' decisions to move to Canada or the United States. Based on the results of this study, some ISAs first considered studying abroad after meeting a coach, whereas others were attracted to Canada from a young age. Others still may have competed against a foreign university team in their home country, which may have initiated this thought process. These 'triggers' have been added to the adapted model in red font to help them stand out from the earlier versions, and is depicted in such a way that it precedes the adjustment factors identified by previous authors.

The number of ISAs competing in CIS is significant. From a practical standpoint, one of the purposes of the current study was to gather information that would help CIS coaches and athletic administrators to ease the transition of ISAs into university life in Canada. Based on the responses provided by the study participants, it may be worthwhile for coaches and athletic administrators to establish student-athlete mentoring programs

that ISAs could enroll in prior to their arrival on their respective campuses. To be effective, the mentor would likely need to be someone the ISA can relate to (i.e., someone with the same interests and within the same age category). In addition, sending digitally-recorded game and practice video footage to ISAs in advance of their arrival could also give them a clearer sense of what to expect. Finally, for ISAs whose first language is not English (or French), enrolling them in an English (or French) Second Language programs during their first semester could help them getting comfortable with the language.

Coaches and athletic departments hoping to recruit ISAs should also realize that some students would only consider coming to Canada if they got recruited. Some ISAs in the study did not plan on studying abroad until they were presented with the opportunity to do so. Coaches were often seen as a direct link and source of information for the ISAs. Athletic departments that may want to improve their international recruitment efforts could organize workshops aimed at educating their coaches on the visa application process, the availability of international scholarships, as well as the institutional policies and application procedures for international students. Given the previously mentioned importance of family influence on ISAs' intentions to study and compete abroad, coaches should also consider initiating contact with family members, and especially ISAs' parents, to reassure them and educate them on what the experience would be like. Modern video communication software such as Skype, Google Hangout, and Apple's Face Time would make a virtual meeting between the different parties fairly simple and straightforward, assuming that the technology is available to facilitate it. Finally, given that university courses are primarily delivered in French, institutions in the RSEQ should

consider recruiting ISAs from French-speaking countries, as some students whose first language is French see a lack of or poor English communication skills as a barrier to studying abroad.

The current study is not without its limitations, and these are important to identify. The fact that the researcher was the main instrument of the study is one of the primary limitations. Being an ISA myself, I had biases due to my personal experiences. These experiences may have blurred my knowledge and had an impact on the results. For instance, it is possible that I did not ask probing questions on elements that were important to the participants because they did not seem as important to me.

In addition, the method chosen for data collection, telephone interviews, also had its limitations. Not being able to detect the facial expressions or body language of my participants is a limitation to this method of data collection. It is possible that some of the participants used irony that I was not able to detect since I was not able to see them. Also, since all telephone interviews were conducted in English or French and the researcher's first language is not English, one concern was that this could pose a challenge communicating with other ISAs over the telephone, particularly with those whose first language may also be something other than English.

Lastly, the sampling criteria that necessitated the varying years of eligibility, country of origin, gender, sport type and university were established to attempt to diversify opinions and experiences. Although diverse perspectives were given, ultimately, only 13 ISAs were interviewed out of a potential 614 ISAs competing in CIS during the

2013-2014 academic year. This being the case, the results of this study cannot and should not be generalized to the rest of the ISA population.

Conclusion

This study was a first step in understanding the wants, needs, and lived experiences of ISAs competing in CIS. Attempting to fill a gap in the literature was also one of the goals and it was confirmed that the Canadian culture attracts several unique types of ISAs, who may not necessarily have an interest in studying and competing at NCAA institutions within the United States.

As noted previously, an important future direction for this vein of research could include a series of quantitative studies designed to identify which antecedents, adjustments, and outcomes have the biggest impact on ISAs' experiences in a foreign country. The ISA adjustment models proposed to date are rather static, and do not attempt to account for potential differences in the relative size and strength of each element and factor in explaining how well an ISA might adjust to his or her new environment. With the correct data, it may be possible to reconceive the existing models in such a way that each of the circles representing the antecedent, adjustment, and outcome components could take on a pie shape, with each piece of the 'pie' representing a different causal factor. Those factors that are deemed to have a greater impact on ISA adjustment could then be visually depicted as larger pieces within each 'pie.' It may also be possible to adapt the size of each 'pie' to represent the proportional strength of each component of the model in explaining, and eventually predicting, ISA adjustment. Finally, in the model's current state, the directional arrows indicate that the antecedent and adjustment

factors both contribute toward the ISAs' outcomes. What remains unknown is the extent to which adjustment factors might moderate or mediate the relationship between these antecedent and outcome factors.

A longitudinal study aimed to study the same participants within five to ten years after completing their CIS careers could provide valuable insight on what the experiences have brought to their personal, professional and athletic lives. At the time of the current study, the participants had plans, hopes and goals, which may or may not have come to fruition. Finding out how much of an impact their Canadian experiences had on them could be another future direction for research in this area.

Finally, researching the perspectives of athletic administrators and coaches related to recruiting and having ISAs on their roster may also be another direction for future research. Identifying their views, expectations, perceptions and experiences with ISAs, as well as their specific wants and needs, could be of interest in facilitating both the recruiting process and the experiences of ISAs and the athletic departments in which they compete.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

An Introduction to Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate athletics is a major component of the sport industry in North America. In 2010, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) signed a 14-year television, Internet and wireless rights agreement with CBS Sports and Turner Broadcasting System Inc. for the rights to broadcast and market the Division I Men's Basketball championship for almost \$11 billion (NCAA, 2011). In October 2013, TSN announced it would broadcast every University of Kansas Jayhawks men's basketball game since Canadian player and potential first pick of the 2014 National Basketball Association (NBA) draft, Andrew Wiggins, was to begin his NCAA career (Toronto Sun, 2013). Moreover, in 2013, CIS signed a 6-year media rights deal with Sportsnet (a major Canadian sports cable network) (CIS, 2013a). These recently signed media rights deals are evidence of the significance and reach of intercollegiate athletics in North America.

A Brief History of Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States

In 1852, a crew race between Harvard and Yale universities was the very first intercollegiate athletic event in the United States. The event was sponsored by the Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad Company as a way to boost tourism and travel (Barr, 2012). In the late half of the 1800s, college sport was mainly student-run. Colleges and universities soon realized the growing interest, popularity and prestige of intercollegiate competitions, which led to a shift toward professional coaches and an emphasis on winning in the early 1900s (Staurowsky & Abney, 2011). In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt hosted two White House conferences on American football due to

the number of deaths and injuries that were occurring in the sport. These conferences led to the formation of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS), which was officially constituted with 28 members in 1906. Shortly thereafter, the IAAUS became known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 1910 (Staurowsky & Abney, 2011).

Although the first women's intercollegiate sport contest was a basketball game between the University of California-Berkeley and Stanford University played in 1896, no governing body for women's athletics existed until the creation of the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) in 1966. This organization then became the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) in 1971 (Barr, 2012). Ten years later, in 1981, the NCAA voted to incorporate women's championships into its competition. The AIAW eventually lost a power struggle with the NCAA over the governance of women's intercollegiate athletics and was dissolved in 1982 (Barr, 2012).

With almost 470,000 student-athletes participating in 2012-13 (Irick, 2013), the NCAA is the "largest and most influential college sport governing body in the United States" (Staurowsky & Abney, 2011, p. 145). According to NCAA President, Mark Emmert, the association's mission is to "be an integral part of higher education and to focus on the development of our student-athletes" (NCAA, 2010, ¶ 5). Emmert also stated that "the priorities are student-athlete well-being and protection of the collegiate model" (¶ 1). As of 2012, there were 1,066 active member schools participating in the NCAA, along with 95 conferences, and multiple sport organizations (NCAA, 2013d). The NCAA membership is separated into three divisions, referred to as Division I, Division II and Division III. Division I institutions that have football are further divided

into two subdivisions; the Football Bowl Subdivision and the Football Championship Subdivision. Colleges and universities also belong to one or more conferences that each has its own rules that govern the running of championship events, revenue-sharing, and athletic scholarships, amongst many other activities (Barr, 2012).

Other college athletic associations within the United States include, but are not limited to, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), which was created in 1940 for small colleges and universities, and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), which was created in 1937 to supervise a national program of sports for junior colleges (Barr, 2012). Collectively, intercollegiate athletics in the United States is a multi-billion dollar industry. Every year, the NCAA returns sixty percent of its revenue to the Division I conferences and member institutions. In 2011-2012, \$503 million (62 percent) was returned to Division I conferences and member institutions alone (NCAA, 2013e).

A Brief History of Intercollegiate Athletics in Canada

Intercollegiate athletics in Canada dates back to 1906 when the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) was created. At this time, the CIAU was comprised of universities from Ontario and Quebec. A break-up in 1955 divided the league into two associations, the Ontario-Quebec University Athletic Association (OQUAA) and the Ottawa-St. Lawrence Athletic Association (OSLAA). In 1971, these leagues reformulated into the Ontario University Athletic Association (OUAA) and the Quebec University Athletic Association (QUAA), which later became known as the

Quebec Student Sports Federation (QSSF). In 1989, the QSSF changed its name to the Réseau du Sport Etudiant du Québec (RSEQ) (CIS, 2013b).

In the Eastern part of the country, the Atlantic Intercollegiate Athletic Association (AIAA) was founded in 1910 and was renamed to the Atlantic Universities Athletic Association (AUAA) in 1968. In the West, the Western Intercollegiate Athletic Association (WIAA) was founded in 1920. In 1971, the WIAA was split into the Canada West Universities Athletic Association (CWUAA) and the Great Plains Athletic Association (GPAA). In 1985-86, Canada West offered playing privileges to men's hockey teams from the GPAA. Other sports soon followed and the two leagues merged again into the CWUAA. Basketball was the most recent sport to have merged between these two associations, having occurred prior to the 2001-02 season (Canada West Universities Athletic Association, 2013).

The Women's Intercollegiate Athletic Union (WIAU) and Ontario-Quebec Women's Intercollegiate Athletics (O-QWICA) were formed in 1923 to provide athletic competition for female students in Ontario and Quebec, respectively. These organizations merged in 1971 to form the Ontario Women's Interuniversity Athletic Association (OWIAA). In 1997, the OWIAA joined the OUAA to form Ontario University Athletics (OUA). On a national scale, the Canadian Women's Intercollegiate Athletic Union (CWIAU) was formed in 1969 with the mission of organizing national championships for women. In 1978, the CWIAU and the CIAU amalgamated to form one singular organization (CIS, 2013b).

In June 2001, the CIAU re-branded itself as Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) and adopted a new logo. Today, CIS is the primary governing body for university athletics in Canada. It offers quality programs, national exposure, awards and honours, financial assistance, quality coaching and services, along with the country's best facilities (CIS, 2013b) to over 11,000 athletes at 55 universities across the country (CIS, 2013c). Canadian Interuniversity Sport is based on four main values to inspire Canada's next generation of leaders through excellence in sport and academics: 1) Be student-athlete centred; 2) Excellence; 3) Teamwork, and; 4) Ethically driven (CIS, 2013d). Currently, CIS sponsors national championships in 12 sports, including: field hockey (women's), rugby (women's), cross country, soccer, wrestling, ice hockey, swimming, volleyball, track and field, basketball, curling, and football (men's) (CIS, 2013e).

Even though universities and colleges are similar in the United States, they are distinctly different institutions in Canada. Universities are institutions that grant degrees (e.g., bachelor's, master's and doctoral) that usually take between two and four years to complete, depending on the level of education being sought. Colleges tend to be more career-oriented, offering practical or hands-on training and usually only take students one year to get a certificate and two to three years to get a diploma (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2014). The governing body for college sports in Canada is the Canadian College Athletic Association (CCAA), which was founded in 1974. The CCAA represents 9,000 athletes competing in seven different sports at 100 institutions throughout Canada (Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association, 2013).

Instead of competing in CIS or the CCAA, Canadian colleges and universities also have the option of competing within the NCAA or the NAIA. Some institutions

compete in both Canadian and American associations. For example, some teams at the University of British Columbia (UBC) compete in the NAIA, while others compete in CIS (The University of British Columbia, 2011). However, CIS members are not permitted to compete in the NAIA for sports that are offered by CIS, unless they also compete in that sport within CIS (CIS, 2013e). In 2009, Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Burnaby, British Columbia became the first non-US institution to become a member of the NCAA. After completing a two-year provisional membership process to align with NCAA rules, SFU became the first international member and now competes at the Division II level (Tsumara, 2012).

International/Foreign Student-Athletes

Although the term *student-athlete* does not appear in any English dictionary, “it is routinely used in the United States in reference to athletes who participate in secondary and post-secondary school sport programs” (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005, p. 103). Canadian Interuniversity Sport does not clearly define the term student-athlete other than as one who competes in CIS and meets all of the academic² and athletic eligibility requirements for participation in their particular sport(s). Concerning the NCAA, Article 12.02.9 of the *2013-14 NCAA Division I Manual* (2013a) defines a student-athlete as

...a student whose enrollment was solicited by a member of the athletics staff or other representative of athletics interests with a view toward the student’s ultimate participation in the intercollegiate athletics program.

Any other student becomes a student-athlete only when the student reports

² Student-athletes competing in CIS must be enrolled in three courses in the term that they are competing, and successfully complete at least three full courses per academic year (CIS, 2013f).

for an intercollegiate squad that is under the jurisdiction of the athletics department.... (p. 58)

Intercollegiate athletes are asked to navigate the dual role of being a student and an athlete successfully, despite time constraints and external pressures from both athletic and academic entities (Parsons, 2013). A recent study conducted by the NCAA (2013f) on the self-identity of its student-athletes showed that the majority of NCAA student-athletes (62% of women and 53% of men) very strongly identify as *both* students and athletes.

In contrast with domestic student-athletes, CIS defines *foreign student-athletes*, also referred to as *international student-athletes* (ISAs), as student-athletes who are not Canadian Citizens or who do not have landed immigrant status in Canada (CIS, 2013e). In other words, a student born in a country other than Canada and whose family has moved to Canada is not considered to be a foreign student-athlete. The NCAA (2013c) defines an ISA as "...a student-athlete who either: (a) is not a U.S. citizen; or (b) resides in an unincorporated or commonwealth territory of the United States; or (c) has participated in international-athletics activities or was associated as an athlete with an international-athletics organization" (p. 1). It is important to note the difference between foreign students and foreign student-athletes. As stated by Bale (1991), in the case of 'academic' foreign students, the 'donor country' usually provides the scholarships to the students studying in another country. Academic foreign students attend North American institutions to develop skills that will help the development of institutions in their home countries. Alternatively, foreign student-athletes are recruited to further the needs of the universities of the 'host country.' Most notably, ISAs are recruited to compete and perform athletically. In fact, Jones, Koo, Kim, Andrew and Hardin (2009) argued that the

primary reason that coaches prefer to recruit ISAs is that they have experience competing at higher levels in their home countries before coming to North America. These authors also stated that some coaches find that ISAs are more mature and work harder for their goals than domestic student-athletes.

In 1987, 350,000 international students (non-athletes) were enrolled at universities and colleges in the United States. Of those 350,000 international students, half were undergraduate students, while all of the foreign student-athletes (known in this study as ISAs) were undergraduates (Bale, 1991). The number of ISAs participating in the NCAA has increased exponentially since this time. In a report published by the NCAA in 2010, the number of ISAs had increased more than 1,000 percent over the previous decade (Hosick, 2010). As of the 2012-13 academic year, 4.9% of NCAA Division I student-athletes were from outside of the United States (Irick, 2013). Although the increase in the number of ISAs may present a number of opportunities for athletic administrators and coaches alike, it also poses its share of challenges.

At present, the NCAA does not limit the number of ISAs competing on each team (Hunter, 2013). Criticism of ISAs training in the NCAA and competing for their home countries on an international stage has been made. According to Brown (2004), communication consultant for the NCAA, 40 percent of swimming medalists at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens were tied to NCAA institutions, and most were not competing under an American flag. Therefore, some Americans have asked whether or not it is in NCAA institutions' and coaching staffs' best interests to train potential champions from other nations (Brown, 2004). While this question was raised in the context of swimming, many other non-American elite athletes use NCAA facilities and

coaches to develop to their best level. This occurs to the detriment of domestic student-athletes who might potentially lose in major competitions (e.g., the Olympics) to these same ISAs. In the context of intercollegiate athletics, it can also be argued that some domestic student-athletes are no longer eligible to compete at the collegiate level because they have lost these coveted spots to ISAs.

There is ample evidence to suggest that there is an increasing number of ISAs competing within CIS in recent years as well. During the 2012-2013 season, 606 ISAs competed in CIS, representing 4.9% of the overall student-athlete population (Cléménçon & Dixon, in press). Unfortunately, a lack of historical records prevents us from knowing the rate at which the number of ISAs has been increasing over time within CIS. Nevertheless, CIAU administrators recognized the magnitude of this issue more than 25 years ago when they established rules that limited the import of ISAs in the sport of men's basketball. According to current CIS rules, men's basketball teams are only allowed a maximum of three ISAs. Commencing with the 2013-14 season, these rules also apply to women's basketball, with the exception of non-Canadian student-athletes who were listed on a team roster for the 2012-2013 season and have continued their participation uninterrupted (CIS, 2013e). Beginning in 2014-2015, CIS will also limit the number of ISAs on men's and women's volleyball teams (Hunter, 2013). The argument in favour of these policy changes is that CIS is trying to reserve roster spots for domestic student-athletes.

Research on International Student-Athletes

Some of the earliest research on the experiences of ISAs was conducted by Bale (1987; 1991). Bale (1987) adapted Brown and Moore's (1970) and Roseman's (1971) approaches to studying human migration to develop a framework on a locational decision making model for foreign student-athletes. Specifically, Bale looked at the ways in which decisions are made "about migrating to the United States and selecting particular institutions at which to study, along with the ways in which foreign student-athletes react to sojourn in an alien institution and adjust to new athletic, academic and social milieux" (p. 81). Surveys were sent to a non-random sample of 200 European athletes who had been or were still student-athletes in American universities. The results showed that "many athletes see the home environment to be unsatisfactory for the pursual of serious sport in the sense that it possesses a number of barriers to their sporting aspirations" (p. 83). Furthermore, when recruited by several institutions, the factor impacting the choice of institution the most was climate, followed by having friends going to the same institution. The overall experiences (i.e., scholastic, athletic and social) of the European students surveyed in this study were positive. On a scale of 0 to 100, with scores over 50 revealing a 'warm' or positive feeling towards the experience and scores under 50 reflective of a 'cool' response, all but four of the 200 respondents scored over 50, with a mean score of 87. Of the 17 problems experienced by the European student-athletes in this study, the most common related to personal finances and dealing with their respective coaches. Also, personal depression, adjusting to the climate, lack of motivation for their academic studies, and dealing with the college administration were near the top of the list. The findings of this study were fundamental to our early understanding of the lived experiences of ISAs within the context of American intercollegiate athletics.

Bale's (1991) book was written to help further demystify the foreign student-athlete situation that had been relatively unexplored before his time. Bale examined the evolution of intercollegiate sport in the United States and considered the overall pattern of international recruitment of scholars and student-athletes. He also looked at the college experience as a whole including the sporting, educational, and social experiences of being a foreign student-athlete. Bale's work has since influenced several researchers who have sought to better understand the experiences of ISAs, particularly in the United States.

Based on an extensive review of literature, including Bale's (1991) work and other articles from such disciplines as business, education, and cross-cultural studies, Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) developed a theoretical framework that intended to "...contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of adjustment to college as it pertains to international student-athletes" (p. 9) competing in the NCAA. The three main components of their framework include: (1) antecedents of adjustment, (2) adjustment to college, and (3) outcomes that may be associated with the antecedents and/or adjustment to college (see Figure 1).

In terms of the *antecedents of adjustment*, four categories emerged from the literature: personal, interpersonal, perceptual and cultural distance. The *personal* dimension is defined by "the confidence to achieve athletic and academic goals as well as the technical competencies needed to perform the tasks required of an intercollegiate student-athlete" (Ridinger & Pastore, 2000a, p. 11). This dimension includes self-efficacy, which incorporates an academic and athletic element, along with technical competencies, which can be divided into academic aptitude, athletic aptitude, and English language proficiency. The *interpersonal* dimension includes activities and attributes that

allow an ISA to interact with his or her teammates, coaches, and faculty/staff. The *perceptual* dimension includes factors that may influence the ISA's perception of the university and/or the athletic environment. For example, input by the athletic department and the university staff may help to smooth out the adjustment process for ISAs. Finally, the *cultural distance* dimension implies that the more distance between the campus culture and the home culture of the ISA, the more time and effort it will take to adjust (Ridinger & Pastore, 2000a).

The *adjustment to college* component was divided into five dimensions including academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, institutional attachment, and athletic adjustment. The *academic adjustment* dimension encompasses items that relate to the educational demands of the university. *Social adjustment* incorporates the interpersonal and societal demands of adjustment to college. The *personal-emotional adjustment* dimension is characterized by the ISA's response to stress along with psychological and physical health. The *institutional attachment* dimension addresses the bond between the student and the institution. Finally, *athletic adjustment* has to do with adjusting to a new role on the team after experiencing athletic success at the high school level (Ridinger & Pastore, 2000a).

Two dimensions were identified that relate to outcomes or consequences of adjustment to college for ISAs. The *performances* of ISAs on the field and in the classroom are of prime interest for coaches and athletic departments. However, *satisfaction with college* was also included as part of the theoretical framework as a legitimate outcome for ISAs. Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) model suggests that satisfaction has a greater influence on academic performance than academic performance

has on satisfaction. In their framework, performance and satisfaction are separate yet overlapping outcomes.

Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) theoretical framework was the first to be developed for the purposes of understanding the phenomenon of adjustment to college for ISAs. Since this time, most of the research that has been conducted on ISAs can be loosely categorized according to the three components identified by these authors.

Antecedents

Jones, Koo, Kim, Andrew, and Hardin (2009) examined the motives of ISAs to come to the United States to participate in collegiate sport. They also looked at the differences in motives based on 'selected demographic attributes' (e.g., gender, types of scholarships received, types of sport participation, and region of the world). The authors realized that four factors were at stake in terms of ISAs' motivations to participate in intercollegiate sports: intercollegiate athletic attractiveness, school attractiveness, desire for independency, and environmental attractiveness. They also observed that there was a difference in motivation depending on the type of sport played (i.e., individual or team sport) and on the country of origin. International student-athletes participating in individual sports were more motivated by intercollegiate athletics attractiveness and environmental attractiveness than ISAs participating in team sports. Also, ISAs from Africa were more motivated by intercollegiate athletics attractiveness than ISAs from America, Europe and Oceania. Knowing why ISAs want to compete in the United States, along with which profile of ISA is more likely to do so, can help coaches and institutions develop specific recruiting plans to attract these athletes.

Concerning the purpose and motivation for playing intercollegiate sports, Popp, Hums and Greenwell (2009) realized that ISAs rated the competition aspect of college athletics significantly lower than their domestic peers. Popp et al. suggested that, “because elite university sports are seen as the highest level of athletic participation for many domestic student-athletes, perhaps university competition takes on a higher priority for United States-born athletes than for international student-athletes” (p. 103). On the contrary, ISAs familiar with the club system might focus on different aspects of their university experience than their domestic counterparts. These authors also realized that “student-athletes from Western European nations rated good citizenship as a purpose of collegiate sport significantly lower than student-athletes from Eastern Europe, Central and South America and the United States” (p. 93). Good citizenship was defined as believing that sport should help teach such lessons as loyalty, willingness to sacrifice for the good of the team, and respecting authority. Popp et al. suggested, “perhaps, the sport systems in place in Eastern Europe or in Central and South America place greater emphasis on certain attributes of sport participation such as discipline, sacrifice, and loyalty” (p.105). Comparing the experiences and perspectives of ISAs coming from different parts of the globe can offer valuable insights into the way that youth sport policies might impact intercollegiate athletes.

Popp, Love, Kim and Hums (2010) sought to test whether the antecedents developed by Ridinger and Pastore (2000a) “were the best indicators of successful adjustment to college for international migrant athletes and to determine if other antecedent factors were also relevant to adjustment” (Popp, Love et al., p. 167). To do so, they conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 13 ISAs (four males and 9

females) at four public NCAA Division I institutions in the United States. Based on their findings, these authors proposed a number of revisions to Ridinger and Pastore's original model of adjustments for ISAs (see Figure 2).

In the *personal* dimension, Popp, Love et al. (2010) added two new sub-groups, labeled as sense of adventure and previous international travel experience. Having previous cross-cultural experience and a willingness to study abroad were common themes found in this study. However, unlike Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) framework, athletic ability did not seem to be a main concern since most of the participants had been competing at a high level of competition in their countries. Concerning the *interpersonal* dimension, the importance of having relationships with peers was critical. Peers from their home nation who had gone through the same process were mentioned as being critical during the decision making process. Other international students and US-born peers were also observed to be essential groups. The importance of faculty and staff relationships was not supported by the data collected, as none of the participants expressed a strong relationship with a faculty member. Another important factor that was added to Ridinger and Pastore's model by Popp, Love et al. was the influence of family in the *perceptual* category. Strong support by the family was expressed as a crucial element of the adjustment process.

Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) model was based on an extensive review of literature. Popp, Love et al's (2010) application of their theory showed that the model was valid but that some modifications based on real life experiences were necessary. Most of the antecedent factors presented by Ridinger and Pastore had some impact on ISAs' adjustments; however, the list was not exhaustive. Others factors also emerged as

being important. Popp, Love et al. argued that their research does not “seek to quantify the relative importance of or frequency with which these various dimensions impact” ISAs (p. 179). Rather, they stated that further research would be necessary to do so.

Adjustment

Following the development of their theoretical framework, Ridinger and Pastore (2000b) sought to determine how well ISAs adjusted to college compared to domestic student-athletes and to their general student peers (i.e., international student non-athletes). Their findings showed that ISAs had the highest means scores for overall adjustment to college and academic adjustment. They also scored higher than their non-athlete counterparts on the social adjustment subscale. Most of the significant differences found in this study involved international non-athletes. The authors noted that while the ISAs in their study were primarily from Europe, the international non-athletes were mostly from Asia. The results from this study imply that sport may be an important factor in helping ISAs adjust better than their foreign non-athlete peers to university life in the United States.

Popp, Hums and Greenwell (2010) were interested in the difference in social adjustment and institutional attachment between domestic and international student-athletes. Student-athletes competing at 15 NCAA DI institutions were selected to fill out a questionnaire. Domestic student-athletes indicated better adjustment to college and closer institutional attachment than ISAs. One of the explanations given by the authors is that ISAs may not be as involved as domestic student-athletes in their universities’ social offerings, outside of their athletic pursuits.

Interested on ISAs' motivations, Stokowski, Huffman and Aicher (2013) based their research on self-determination theory. *Self-determination theory* is a method used to understand human motivation that focuses on the direction of motivation and factors that influence behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It strives to discover the nature of motivation and why individuals become involved in an activity and then choose to continue or discontinue their participation (Ryan & Deci). Motivation is evaluated on a continuum that ranges from extrinsic (i.e., external regulation, interjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation) to intrinsic (i.e., to know, stimulation, and accomplishment). "The higher on the continuum an individual is situated, the more self-determined he or she is considered to be" (Stokowski et al., p. 137). Based on Stokowski et al.'s research, ISAs competing in the NCAA DI were more athletically intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated, while amotivation provided the lowest source of motivation for them. Their results also demonstrated that ISAs were mostly motivated to participate in their sport by intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment (i.e., achieving a particular goal), followed by intrinsic motivation toward stimulation (i.e., to feel enjoyment). These findings may suggest that ISAs take pleasure and satisfaction from hard work and practice, and because they are more intrinsically motivated, they may be less likely to experience burn-out and be amotivated during their athletic careers. The findings could be beneficial to coaches recruiting ISAs. Being aware of what motivates ISAs is important to have them perform to the best of their abilities.

According to Pierce, Popp, and Meadows (2013), it has also been shown that homesickness, adjustment to the American culture, and adjusting to the English language were found to be the most difficult aspects of the experience for the ISAs in their study.

Moreover, the authors expressed that the most important elements to a successful transition for ISAs were a strong support system from teammates and coaches, along with support from friends and family in their native countries. Collectively, these studies highlight some of the challenges faced by ISAs to adjust to their new surroundings and suggest ways by which institutions and coaches can help to ensure that ISAs have a smooth adjustment to life as a student-athlete in the United States.

Outcomes

Although the on-field and in-class performances and satisfaction levels of ISAs ought to be relatively easy outcomes to measure, to date, there has been a limited amount of research conducted on these particular aspects of Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a) theoretical framework. Trendafilova, Hardin, and Seungmo (2010) assessed the levels of academic and athletic satisfaction among ISAs. In this study, data were collected via questionnaires that were sent to ISAs competing for institutions from six different conferences in the NCAA Division I Football Bowl subdivision. Their findings revealed that ISAs

...are satisfied with the dimensions measuring satisfaction, including academic support services, personal treatment, team social contribution and medical support. International student-athletes are satisfied with their overall academic and athletic experience. In addition, male athletes are more satisfied with external agents (i.e., media, the local and university community) than female athletes. (p. 348)

The fact that male ISAs were more satisfied with external agents than female ISAs could be explained by the fact that men's teams usually receive more media exposure than women's in the United States. In order to improve the level of satisfaction for female ISAs, the authors suggest that greater efforts should be made to provide enhanced media coverage and attention for female sports.

The Migration of International Athletes

Although considerable research has been conducted on the migration patterns of professional athletes, relatively little has been done on the migration of ISAs. Adler (1975) focused on the transitional experience of one who sojourns outside his or her own country. Without being specifically related to ISAs, his study and findings can apply to this population. Adler defines five stages of the transitional experience. The first phase, *contact*, is the phase in which the individual is still integrated in his or her own culture. The individual feels excitement to meet a new culture and focuses on similarities with his or her home culture rather than the differences. *Disintegration* is a phase of confusion and disorientation. Part of this phase is a growing feeling of being different or isolated. *Reintegration* comes next. It is defined as rejecting the second culture through stereotypes or judgmental behaviours. *Autonomy*, or the understanding of the second culture is the fourth phase in which the individual considers herself or himself as an expert of the second culture. Finally, *independence* is the last phase in which

...the individual is fully able to accept and draw nourishment from cultural differences and similarities, is capable of giving as well as eliciting a high degree of trust and sensitivity, and is able to view both

him- or herself and others as individual human beings that are influenced by culture and upbringing. (p. 18)

Even though his research is not specific to ISAs, his findings may apply to this population. However, the particular context created by intercollegiate athletics and being a member of an athletic team may necessitate some changes to Adler's original model.

Based on a review of the sport-related literature, Maguire (1996) developed a five-category typology of athlete migration that may also be applied to the lived experiences of ISAs. The first category of athlete migrant, referred to as *pioneers*, relates to athletes that have "...an almost evangelical zeal in extolling the virtues of 'their' sports" (p. 338). Secondly, *settlers* not only bring their sport with them, but they also settle into the new society that they compete in and appreciate its culture. *Mercenaries* are those who are motivated by short-term gains and have little attachment to the local environment where they live. *Nomads* are "...interested by a cosmopolitan engagement with migration. They use their sports career to journey and embark on quests in which they seek the experience of the 'other'" (p. 339) -- the one who belongs to a different culture. These athletes are open to meeting and experiencing new cultures. The last category involves the *returnees*, who move back to their native country where they feel they belong.

Magee and Sugden (2002) adjusted Maguire's (1996) typology based on semi-structured interviews that they conducted with foreign professional football players in England. Based on their findings, they removed the returnees category and added the ambitionist, expelled, and exile categories of athlete migrants. For these authors, the

ambitionist can be someone who has the wish to improve his/her career by moving to a better league. He or she may have a strong desire to play professionally, or compete in a specific location. The *expelled* is forced (for athletic reasons) to migrate because he/she is unable to compete in his/her own country, while the *exile* (for athletic, personal or political reasons) chooses to leave his/her country of origin and play abroad. In this case, leaving one's country typically involves a combination of behaviour problems and high media exposure. In the context of students migrating to North America for the sake of competing as an ISA, some of these categories may overlap.

Elliot and Maguire (2008) also focused their research on the labour migration of professional athletes. These authors suggested that “when considering the migrations of athletic labor globally, it is important to move beyond monocausal explanations to capture the motivations and experiences of the migrant” (p. 485). In the case of professional athletes, these authors argued that they are seen as ‘following the money,’ yet these decisions are connected with a broader series of processes. In the case of professional athletes, political, ethnic, economic, and cultural factors can impact the decisions to migrate. Drawing on their arguments, in the case of ISAs, there may be multiple factors at stake in the process of migrating to North America to participate in intercollegiate sport.

Finally, Love and Kim (2011) focused specifically on ISAs' motivations for coming to the United States to participate in intercollegiate athletes. Their study, which was built upon on Maguire's (1996) and Magee and Sugden's (2002) research, showed that ISAs see advantages in being ‘the other.’ Based on interviews with 12 ISAs from a range of nations, Love and Kim adapted the typologies of Maguire and Magee and

Sugden to reflect the experiences of international migrant college athletes. This adapted typology includes six distinct types of international migrant college athlete, including: *mercenary*, *settler*, *returnee*, *nomadic cosmopolitan*, *ambitionist*, and *exile*. For a definition of each type of migrant-athlete, please refer to Figure 3. International student-athletes have slightly different motivations, incentives and are at a different stage of their careers than professional athletes and Love and Kim's adapted typology reflects these nuances.

Summary

What has become apparent from this review of the literature is that *all* of the previous studies that focused on the lived experiences or migration patterns of ISAs have relied upon samples from the NCAA. Some have argued that translating findings of any sort from the USA to Canada is problematic due to the significant differences between the intercollegiate sport systems of each country (Curtis & McTeer, 1990). However, Miller and Kerr's (2010) findings challenge this assumption. Their study on the athletic, academic and social experiences of student-athletes in a Canadian context show that the lives of Canadian student-athletes revolve around three spheres, which are not dissimilar from their American counterparts; athletics, academics and socializing. The relationship between each aspect of student-athletes' lives were observed as competitive and they had to make sacrifices and negotiations to balance all the requirements of these three spheres. "The strong focus on sport...and the staggering time and physical demands of intercollegiate athletics" (p. 362) show similarities between the experiences of CIS and NCAA Division I student-athletes.

There is a general belief that CIS competition most parallels NCAA Division III competition because Division III institutions do not offer athletic scholarships. However, Miller and Kerr (2010) demonstrated that this comparison may not be accurate. They argued that Canadian student-athletes may share more in common with their peers competing in Division I (Miller and Kerr), particularly now that athletic scholarships are made available to student-athletes within CIS. Since 2006, CIS institutions have been able to award athletic scholarships to their athletes (Orth, 2008). Currently, “there is no restriction on the number of athletic financial awards that a student-athlete may receive in one academic year, except that they may not aggregate to more than the value of tuition and compulsory fees of the student-athlete” (CIS, 2013e, p. 6). It can be argued that the limit on the quantity and dollar value of available athletic scholarships is still a substantial difference between CIS and NCAA.

Moreover, in November of 2013, CIS members approved a five-year pilot project, which will allow CIS women’s hockey programs to offer athletic scholarships that extend beyond the current limits associated with tuition and compulsory fees to offset other costs such as room, board and books. However, each team will still have to respect the current cap applicable to every team; the number of awards available per team is based on a benchmark of 70% of the playing roster. For example, a hockey team that has 20 spots on its playing roster will have 14 (70%) award units available to be distributed to players on the team (CIS, 2013d). The ultimate goal of this pilot project is to develop the best women’s university hockey system in the world (CIS, 2013d). The NCAA’s popularity and reputation throughout the world attracts a high number of ISAs every year in a

multitude of sports. By improving the level of play in women's hockey, the same outcome is anticipated by CIS and its member institutions.

Even though CIS has been compared with NCAA Division I, it was anticipated by the researcher that there may be considerable differences in the wants, needs, and lived experiences of ISAs in each country. There are considerable differences in the sport and academic cultures of the USA and Canada, and despite marked improvements in the competitiveness of CIS programs over the past decade, many NCAA institutions are still a step ahead in terms of their facilities, media attention, and athletic scholarships, amongst other factors. International student-athletes may also be attracted to Canada, and not to the USA, for numerous other factors. As discussed earlier, Pierce, Popp and Meadows (2013) indicated that adjustment to the American culture and adjusting to the English language were some of the most difficult aspects of the experience for the ISAs in their study. Given that Canada celebrates two official languages, English and French, this is expected to attract some ISAs who may feel less comfortable studying and competing in the United States, particularly for those whose first language is French. Moreover, Canadians are generally perceived as peacekeepers and part of a nation in which diversity prevails in terms of population more so than their American neighbours (O'Reilly & Seguin, 2009). With respect to intercollegiate athletics, the NCAA is seen internationally as being in the business of producing elite athletes and has been criticized for exploiting its student-athletes (Miller, 2012). However, CIS is perceived as a more caring system that is focused on developing the whole person. It was anticipated by the researcher that these and many other cultural differences may influence ISAs would to study and compete in Canada instead of the United States. However, in at least some

cases Canada might have simply been a second option for those ISAs whose opportunities to pursue intercollegiate athletic participation in the United States did not work out.

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Figures

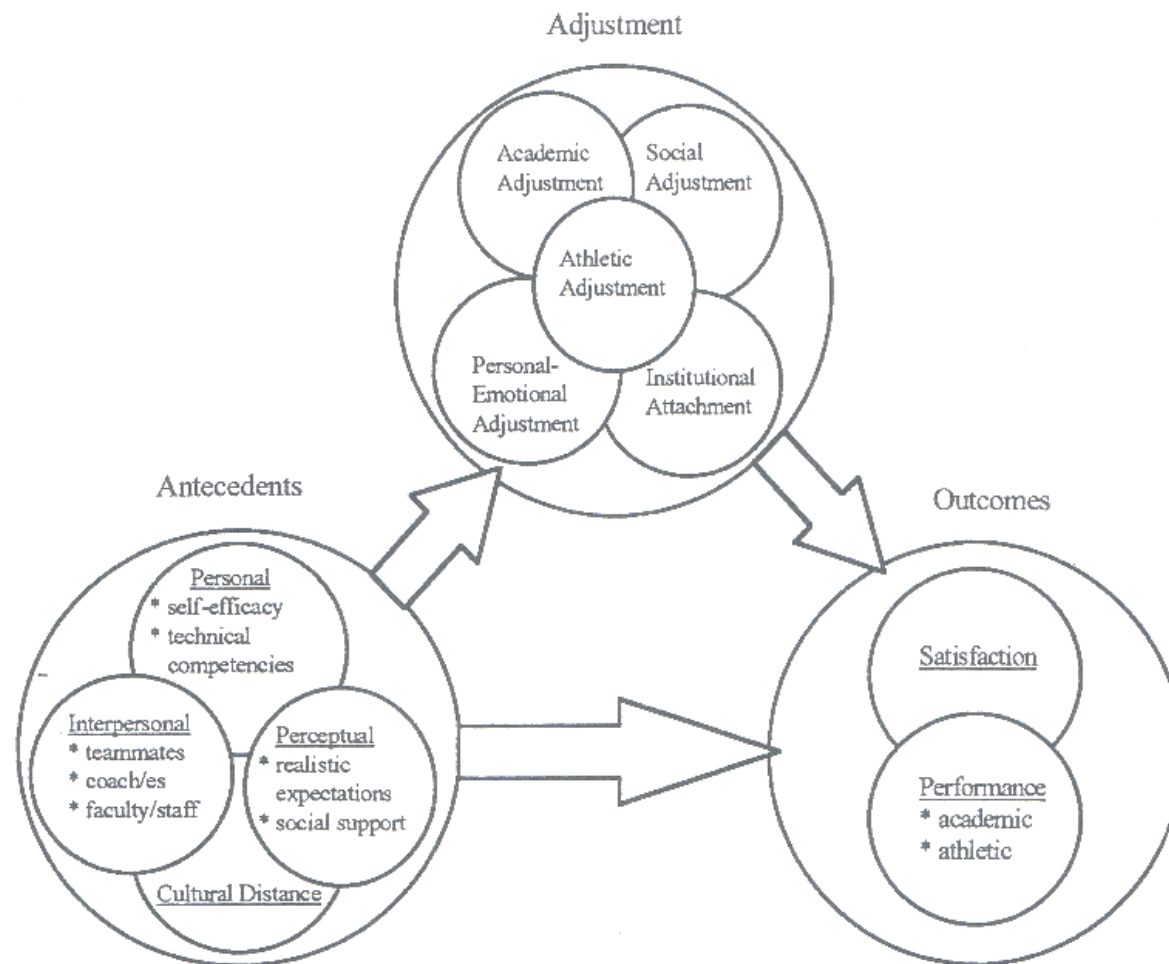


Figure 1. Ridinger and Pastore's (2000a, p. 8) theoretical model of adjustment for international student-athletes.

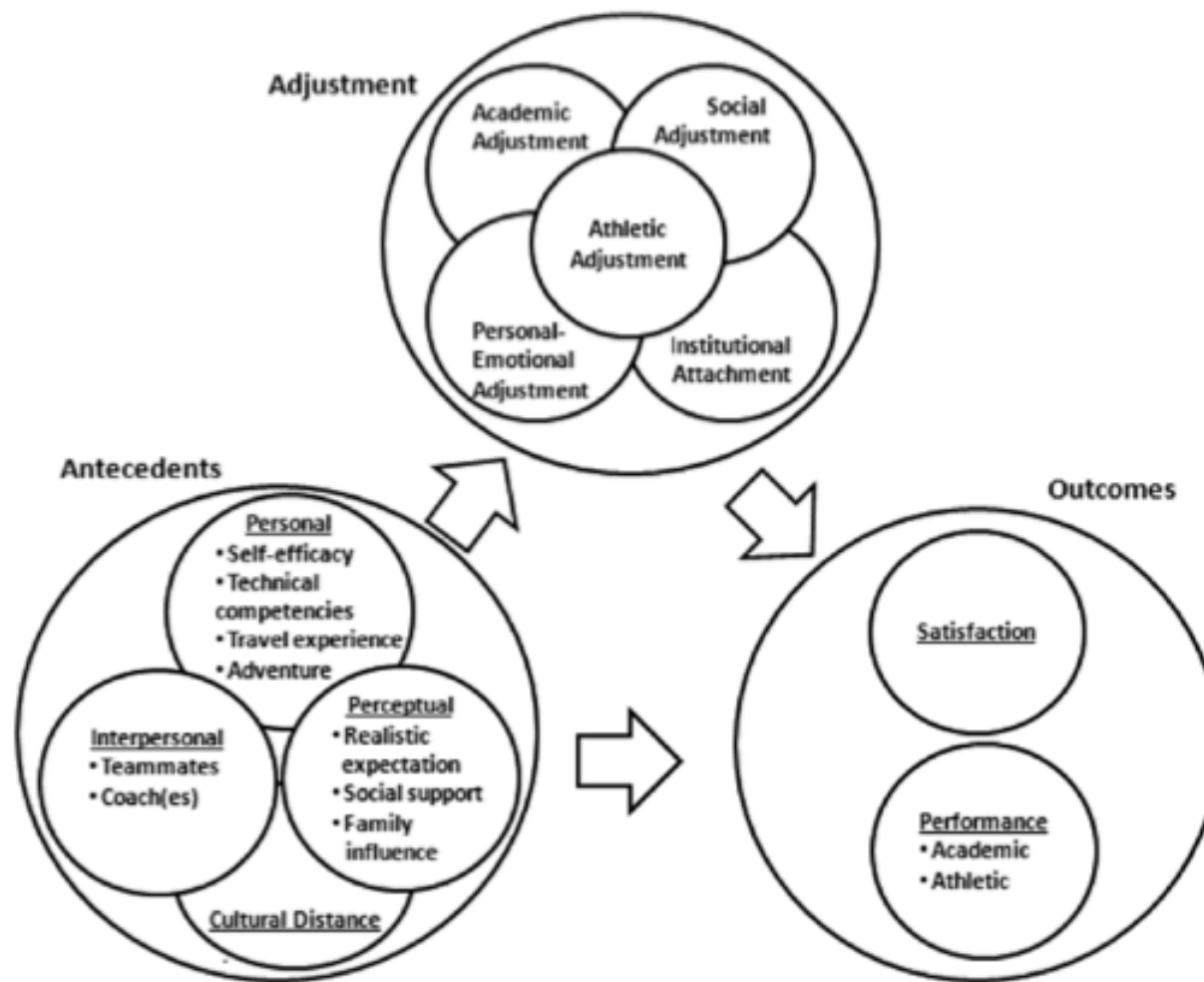


Figure 2. Popp, Love, Kim and Hums' (2010, p. 168) revised model of adjustment for international student-athletes.

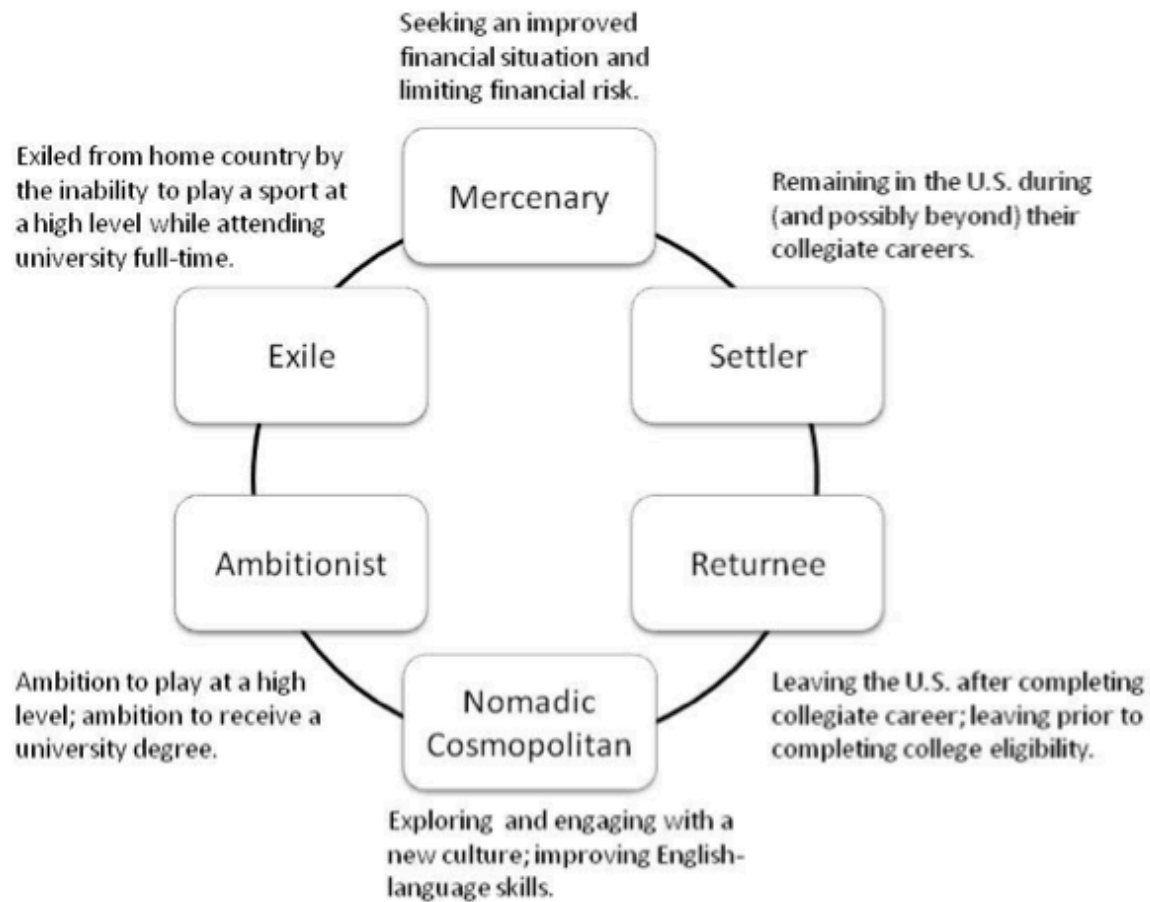


Figure 3. Love and Kim's (2011, p. 98) typology of international migrant college athletes.

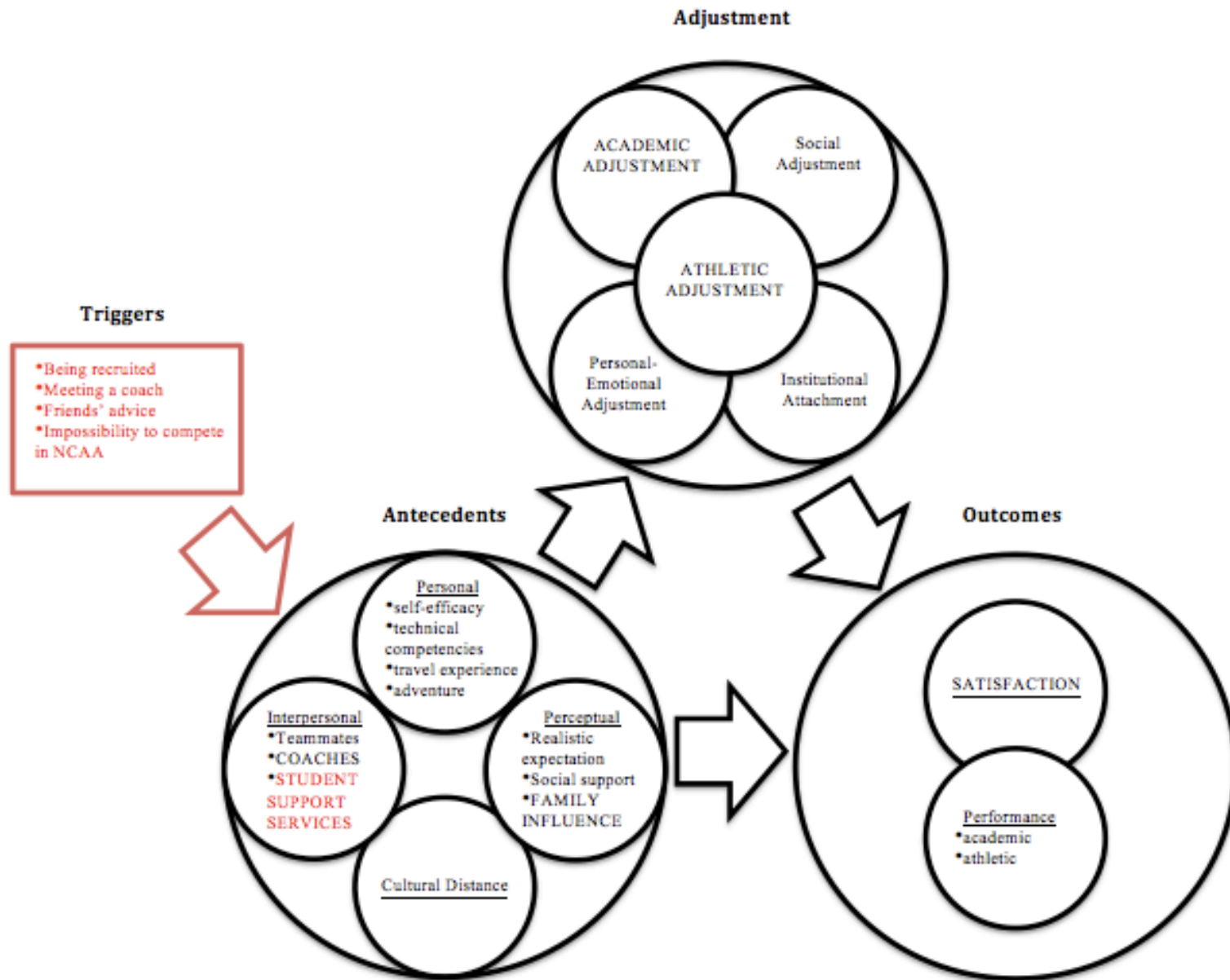


Figure 4. Adapted model of adjustment for international student-athletes in CIS

Tables

Table 1. Demographic breakdown of study participants.

Participant	Sport	Conference	Country of origin	Year of Eligibility	Interview Language³	Gender	First language
A	Basketball	AUS	Australia	4	English	Male	English
B	Ice Hockey	AUS	Germany	4	English	Female	German
C	Wrestling	CWUAA	Iran	3	English	Male	Persian
D	Track & Field	AUS	Cayman Islands	3	English	Female	English
E	Volleyball	RSEQ	France	3	French	Female	French
F	Football	CWUAA	USA	4	English	Male	English
G	Ice Hockey	OUA	USA	3	English	Male	English
H	Field Hockey	OUA	Bermuda	3	English	Female	English
I	Soccer	AUS	Morocco	4	French	Male	French
J	Basketball	CWUAA	Cameroun	4	English & French	Male	French
K	Swimming	RSEQ	France	5	French	Male	French
L	Track & Field	RSEQ	Tunisia	3	French	Female	French
M	Basketball	OUA	England	5	English	Female	English

Notes: AUS: Atlantic University Sport, CWUAA: Canada West Universities Athletic, Association, OUA: Ontario University Athletics, RSEQ: Réseau du Sport Etudiant du Québec

³ Quotes from Participants E, L, K and I were translated from French into English by the researcher.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Researcher Autobiography

As outlined by Creswell (2013), qualitative research is interpretative research and therefore, it is important for researchers to identify their biases, values and personal backgrounds that may shape their interpretations formed during the study. Having been an international student-athlete (ISA) competing in Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) for the University of Windsor, my experiences shaped the way I approached this study. Coming from France, a country in which sport is club-based from the youngest age, the idea of competing in intercollegiate athletics and being able to combine athletics and academics was appealing to me. Before coming to Canada, I played for a second division team in France while going to university. I knew that if I wanted to play professionally at some point in my future that I would have to put my education on the side or consider online education, which is challenging when practicing twice a day and travelling several times a week to compete.

Apart from the educational factor, I had always been attracted to the North American culture from a young age. With respect to the antecedents, several factors impacted my decision to come to Canada. I had commenced my undergraduate degree in English and I wanted to go abroad to improve my oral communication skills in English. I have been asked countless times why I decided to study and compete in Canada rather than in the United States. One element was that the French university that I was attending had an exchange program with Ontario. For my first year in Windsor, I was an exchange student and it was not until my second year that I transferred my credits and became an

international student at the University of Windsor. While being an exchange student, I paid my tuition to the French university, which was a huge financial advantage. Going on an exchange to the United States would have been a more tedious process and not as financially advantageous.

In terms of deciding which Canadian university I was to attend, the most important criterion for me was to be in a province in which English was the first language. Therefore, Quebec and its RSEQ conference was not an option. Since my school had an exchange program with Ontario, it also limited my options. Windsor was the top destination on my wish list because the women's basketball program was in first place in Ontario University Athletics (OUA) at the time, it was also the most southern city in the country, and it was close to the United States. The support of my family was critical in my decision to move to Canada.

When I arrived in Canada, the language was a big adjustment. I knew how to speak English and understand it properly but it was still a big step and the first three months were a bit challenging in this area. Athletically and academically, I did not have much trouble. I was a starter from my first year and was given a lot of responsibilities, which I enjoyed. School was never an issue for me and I was able to manage my workload while playing basketball. Being away from home was difficult but I came with the mindset that I would learn a lot from the experience and that if I really did not like it I could always go back home. The support of my family and friends was essential but it was challenging to communicate with them especially because of the six-hour time change. I was a bit surprised to discover the pride of my teammates and athlete peers in representing our university. The idea of having rivals was not new to me but playing for a

club that represented a mascot was unheard of. Walking around campus and seeing non-athlete students wearing gear with the athletic team's logo was even a bit strange at first but I got to like the idea.

I have had a great time over my five years in Windsor and I know that my athletic and academic successes had a lot to do with it. I have won multiple individual awards (e.g., CIS Rookie of the year, CIS women's basketball player of the year, CIS athlete of the year) and four consecutive national championships. Academically speaking, I completed my undergraduate degree in English and got a chance to pursue a Master's degree in Human Kinetics, specializing in the field of Sport Management. From a social standpoint, the University of Windsor is a midsize institution and being an athlete, it was easy to make friends, especially among my teammates.

I think that the experience of every ISA is unique. I am aware that I had great opportunities and the right people around me to succeed. I didn't expect all the participants that I interviewed to have had a similar experience. Being able to identify what had an impact on my choices and experience was necessary before starting the interviewing process.

Appendix B: Interview guide

I) Focused life history

Tell me how you came to be an ISA.

- Why did you decide to come to Canada?
- Did you have any personal ties to Canada (or elsewhere in North America) prior to moving to Canada?
- Did you have an interest in competing anywhere else?
- What travel experience did you have before coming to Canada?
- Before coming to Canada, what was your perception of living and studying abroad?
- How important was the support from your friends and family?
- How did you pick your university?
- How much did you know about your institution before going there?
- Tell me about your academic and athletic level before moving to Canada.
- How similar or different is your home country from Canada?
- How helpful was the university staff (e.g., athletic department personnel, coaches, faculty) during the recruiting phase?

II) The details of the experience

What is it like to be an ISA?

- How difficult was it to adjust to your new environment?
- How different were the practices and the competition compared to your homeland?
- Tell me about your experience in school.
- How challenging was it to make new friends?
- How stressful was your experience?
- What are some of the aspects that you enjoy most and least about being a student-athlete at your university?

III) Reflection on the meaning

What does it mean to you to be an ISA?

- Are you satisfied with your experience as an ISA?
- Were you satisfied with your academic performance?
- Did you reach your personal academic goals as an ISA?

- What did you get out of the experience academically?
- Were you satisfied with your athletic performance?
- Did you reach your personal athletic goals as an ISA?
- Were you a starting player on your team?
- What did you get out of the experience athletically?
- What did you get out of the experience personally?
- What is next for you?
- Is there anything else that you would like to elaborate on, either related to a previous answer or simply something that you feel is pertinent to this study?

VITA AUCTORIS

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