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**WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF AN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETES
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Daniel Gayle

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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**WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF AN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETES
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B.A., Sport Coaching, University of Central Lancaster, 2016

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Abstract

This paper explores the complete journey of International Collegiate Athletes (ICAs) that play basketball at a Division I or II National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) school. This study uses Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory to establish how these athletes navigate moving into college, moving through college, and moving out of college. Through semi structured interviews, the study gives insight into the unique experiences, obstacles, pressures, and successes of ICAs, and provides implications for how the experience of ICAs attending college in the U.S. might be improved. The most important aspect for the success of an ICA at their collegiate institution appeared to be the support from internal sources within their respective colleges (i.e., coaching staff and teammates) and external support from friends and family back in their domestic countries.

Keywords: NCAA, International collegiate athletes, transition

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Chapter 1

Introduction

With over half a million athletes playing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (NCAA, n.d) college sports play a huge part not only in the role of college campuses, but in American society. America's collegiate sporting system is one of the most lucrative sport organizations in the world, with basketball being one of the premier sports within college athletics, evidenced by its generating of \$1.18 billion dollars in revenue for the NCAA in 2019 (Novy-William, 2021). Revenue generated through the broadcasting of games, tv rights, advertising, ticket sales, tournaments, sponsorship deals and the continual sales of school apparel.

Within the NCAA DI and II levels there are over 20,000 international collegiate athletes (ICAs) playing over 26 different sports (NCAA, 2020), indicating that ICAs are a large part of college sports and play an integral role in the success of sport programs at schools across Division I and Division II athletics. According to NCAA figures in 2019, 496 ICAs across both Division I and II were recruited to play basketball. Despite the growing number of ICAs competing in collegiate sport, previous research has found that their experiences and adjustment to collegiate life differs to those of domestic student-athletes (i.e., Clift & Mower, 2011; Lubker & Etzel, 2007; Newell, 2005). Clift and Mower (2011), Lubker and Etzel (2007) and Newell (2015) all discussed in their respective articles pressures faced by freshmen, such as academic and performance pressures as well as issues with social adjustment. Additionally, the authors found that being in a foreign country, missing family and cultural support, the increase in academic workload and the pressure to perform at the collegiate level were daunting for ICAs.

There is a wide range of research that reports on the challenges that ICAs endure and must overcome (Lee, 2010). Lee (2010) conducted an online survey at a large undisclosed public

university on international students who were not athletes and explored their experience in college. Lee (2010) discovered that students from predominantly non-white countries faced greater segregation and felt less likely to be welcomed into American culture. Wu et al. (2015) also investigated the challenges that athletes face and the adjustment that is required of these athletes, elements like being away from their home and enduring new academic challenges. Pauline et al. (2008) discussed the factors influencing collegiate athletes, these include the facilities, playing against better competition and gaining a free education. These researchers and others all contribute to the understanding of the different elements in choosing a college, or emotions that can be experienced when an international student does attend college in the U.S., however, despite this work, there is limited research on the transitional experiences of ICAs within the sport of basketball.

This study explored the experiences of international basketball collegiate athletes (IBCA's) within Division I and II NCAA programs to grasp their overall experiences related to the transition into, through, and out of their collegiate sport using Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transitional theory. Specifically, this study will seek to understand how IBCA's deal with the travel and adjustment to life and play in the United States, the pressure of performing at a high level on the court versus how they manage to be successful academically, while dealing with limited support compared to their resources back in their own domestic country. This research will serve as a guideline to best practices in retention and support of IBCA's for current and future coaches, administrators, and collegiate academic and athletic support staff.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Within the NCAA alone there are 20,000 ICAs that participate in collegiate sports (NCAA, 2020). In 2019, 496 ICAs received scholarships to play in both division I and II. The NCAA does not allow for athletic scholarship in division III, however, but there are also ICAs that are awarded academic scholarships to play division III basketball. While there is no specific number or percentage within the report from the NCAA for basketball, it is noted that 33% of ICAs do not complete their college playing career (BeRecruited, 2014).

Previous Collegiate Athlete Work

Lubker & Etzel (2007) explored the phenomenon of first year collegiate athletes who dropped out of sport and the mechanism in which the athletes stated that they needed to be successful within the system while managing the new workload at college. The results from the study showed that collegiate athletes need a lot of support from their coaches, teammates, counselors and family members to deal with the changes within the first year of college and with the transition from high school to college. Collegiate athletes who don't get the necessary support tend to stop playing their sport. The research within this study explored the transition from high school to college, the disengagement from sport, and the psychological challenges that first year collegiate athletes face. Three hundred and seventeen male and female collegiate athletes were included within this study from a wide range of sports. The participants were identified into three different groups which were disengaged athletes (the individuals who were the athletes who discontinued playing sports), non-athletic high school seniors (these individuals did not play sports), and the last group was current first year college varsity athletes (these individuals were in their first year of playing college sports. This study encompasses a range of different sports,

however, it did not explore IBAs specifically and does not address commonalities between those that have completed their college career and those who did not.

Clift and Mower (2011) discussed an alternative perception to college sports and made the case that collegiate athletes can be seen as ‘workers’ who are merely tools of reform for the college and can be seen as laborers when considering Foucault’s (1975) theory. The study conceptualized Division I institutions and athletics as corporate entities that isolate their athletes or ‘workers’ from many college experiences due to the pressure and commitment that the college program puts on their athletes. This ideology presented in this work would account for the treatment of collegiate athletes as workers who are expected to perform regardless of conditions and emotional discord. According to work by Clift and Mower (2011) the college is providing the individual with a scholarship for education, housing, and food, in exchange for performance in the classroom and production in their sport. This study was conducted with eight first semester female collegiate athletes all from the same Division I program. This is important to highlight as future research will be ascertaining how ICAs felt about their experience within the college sport system.

International collegiate athletes.

The influx of ICAs has become more and more popular within college athletics over recent years (NCAA, 2019), as it was previously stated more than 20,000 international study-athletes competed within the NCAA in 2019 (NCAA, 2020). Within this increasing trend of educational migration, there are few theories as to why there is an influx of ICAs who have chosen to play collegiate sports. Pauline et al. (2008) stated that while there are a host of reasons why an ICA may attend a university in America (i.e., athletic success, offered classes, facilities, the division of the school and the geographical location of the school), the predominant reason given by their ten participants included the facilities and career prospects after college. It can be understood from

their research that ICAs desire to play in state-of-the-art facilities, huge arenas, and purpose-built gyms as they rarely have the same opportunities in their home countries. This research also suggests that ICAs believe that it is beneficial to study and play in America as they would have better prospects in ascertaining a professional contract in their sport (Pauline et al., 2008).

Popp et al. (2011) reported that ICAs' motivation for coming to America is the ability to compete at the highest level possible and receive a fully funded education. These findings were ascertained by analyzing the responses from 355 NCAA Division I athletes, which included 192 ICAs from 57 countries. This survey was taken from 15 different institutions. Like the work of Pauline et al. (2008), Popp et al. (2011) found that ICAs often believe that competing at a high level in college (the highest division and conference) will give them a greater opportunity for receiving more notoriety and exposure to scouting for professional teams. Yet, more research is needed to fully understand the ICA experience and motivations for attending and playing in the United States.

When examining the impact that ICAs have on collegiate athletic programs there are a range of factors which impact their success or failure. These factors differ from their domestic counterparts such as cultural adjustment, language barriers, long distance separation from their families and time differences between their home country and the United States. Melendez (2006), and Clift and Mower (2011) found that first year students struggle to adjust to the academic demands that are asked of them and the task of independently managing their time in college. Research by Lubker and Etzel (2007) has shown that ICAs find it extremely difficult to cope with adversity while they are away from the support mechanisms of their home countries, demonstrating that being successful as an ICA can be challenging. Some of these challenging elements found by Lubker and Etzel (1007) for ICAs included home sickness, dealing with anxiety

and having someone to confide in, all of which are forms of emotional support. Social interaction, guidance and advice are forms of social support which these ICAs struggled with in their initial year (Lubker & Etzel, 2007).

Popp et al., (2011) highlighted the importance of ICAs having a relationship with athletic staff, primarily head coaches and assistant coaches. According to their research, the relationship that is built between the head coach and the international prospective recruit plays an integral role in that individual selecting the program (Popp et al., 2011). As stated in the works of Lubker and Etzel (2007), ICAs will require emotional support, which, in an environment where an individual does not have any family or friends means the ICA will most likely turn to their coaching staff for primary support. Czekanski and Barnhill (2015) surveyed 102 participants to assess how individuals selected colleges to attend. Of the 102 participants 52 were male, 43 were female and 7 declined to indicate gender. By assessing the data through the Influential Factor Survey for Student Athletes (IFSSA) along with the Student Athlete Decision Attributes in University Selection (SADAUS) survey and then applying the results to social exchange theory, the research confirmed the premise of ICAs using their head coach and/or members of the coaching staff as support systems. Demonstrating the rate of recruitment is higher in those individuals who are directly recruited by the staff of a program as opposed to those who are recruited via an agency.

ICA Compatibility and the right fit.

Not all ICAs achieve their goals within college, whether academically or athletically. Research above discussed that ICAs need multiple levels of support and nurturing, however, what happens when an athlete does not get that support? What happens when an ICA does not believe that they are getting the experience that they expected? Jara (2015) conducted a qualitative study where they interviewed 12 coaches and 10 ICAs from Division I and II colleges from the state of

South Carolina. In this study they focused on the various elements involved in finding the right fit for an ICA (i.e., the personality of the recruit, the personality of the coach, the recruitment of other players within the same recruitment class and the personalities of the team). Other factors included elements such as the surrounding environment, living conditions and a diverse community. This research by Jara (2015) stated that individuals are likely to transfer to other institutions if needs are not being met.

The NCAA also reported that there has been an increasing trend of collegiate athletes who transfer from two-year and four-year institutions. The NCAA states that both baseball and basketball have the highest transfer rates of collegiate athletes from both two-year and four-year institutions (NCAA^a, n.d.). The reasons the number of transfers have risen are due to the collegiate athletes' experience within the program and how they perceive their time at college. These findings are supported by the findings of Flowers et al. (2014). Flowers et al. (2014) used Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) Transitional Theory to investigate the cause for 12 male student-athletes to transfer and their experiences transferring from one institution to another. This research stated that the athletes predominantly transferred schools for athletic reasons rather than academic reasons, and felt like they could be more successful (athletically) in a different environment, and under different leadership.

With all these external factors and internal struggles, choosing the right school, level of competition, program alignment with individual needs, coach-athlete relationships, environment within the school and the wider community are imperative for student-athletes' success. Melendez (2006) discussed how individuals chose between the different programs and levels of NCAA programs, some reasons included playing for a university with state-of-the-art facilities, other

motivations included the prospect of playing at the highest level possible and the third most common reason was being able to get a scholarship that covered the cost of attending university.

Domestic versus international student athletes.

As more ICAs enter college athletics, the greater the strain on scholarship funds being available (as international students cost more to sport departments) for domestic collegiate athletes, impacting the number of opportunities available for domestic collegiate athletes (Caro, 2018; Stribling, 2018). Popp et al. (2009) stated that the most notable difference between how ICAs view collegiate sports versus their domestic counterparts were the views they shared on the level of competition; domestic collegiate athletes value the competition of college athletics higher than non-nationals. Their research continues to posit that ICAs are often able to go back to their home countries and compete professionally whereas many domestic collegiate athletes reach their pinnacle at the college level (Popp et al., 2011). Popp et al. (2011) also described the range of motivations for ICAs and detailed that a free education and experiencing American university were two of the leading reasons for migrating to America for their education.

These findings tie into the motive of the athletes which were previously discussed within this review but, having a wider understanding of an ICA's perspective as to why they would choose an NCAA Division I school over a Division II school or a Division I school in a remote location over a program in a big city is important to understand for both coaches, administrators, and practitioners alike. This study sheds light on these unique factors of the ICA experience, particularly with athletes competing in basketball at the Division I and Division II levels and further contributes to this area of the academic literature that has been understudied.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used to conduct this investigation was Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transitional theory. Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) work explains how individuals encounter a multitude of transitions throughout their lifetime where they must transition into, through, and/or out of situations. Schlossberg's (1995) theory explored the various forms of emotions and mental states individuals experience while in different transitional stages. Schlossberg's transitional (1981) theory defines transitions via three categories:

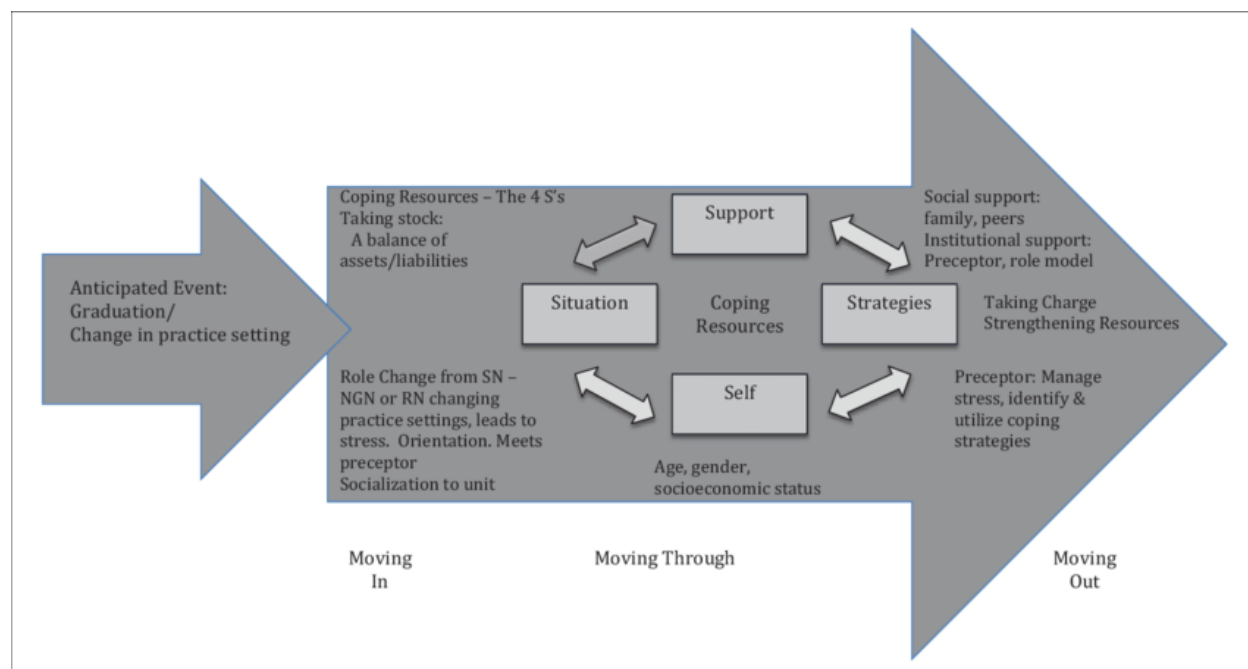
- Anticipated – This describes transitions that are planned, such as deciding to enter college or transferring to a new college.
- Unanticipated - This describes transitions that are unexpected and often occur spontaneously, such as injuries, losing a scholarship or changing coaches.
- Non-events – This describes anticipated events, but they do not happen, such as not getting any playing time, not having a season (maybe covid related), or not going to college.

Additionally, Schlossberg's theory (1995) explains that there are four major factors which determine how individuals deal with those transitions. The four factors are Self, Situation, Support and Strategies.

The factor of 'Self' would include elements such as gender, age, state of physical and mental health, personality, social economic status, and outlook on life. The 'Situation' factor would address; the timing of the event, was the event anticipated? Was there a change in role for the individual? Is this a permanent or temporary change? Is the individual in control of the change? The 'Support' factor relates to who the individual receives or doesn't receive support from: friends, family, colleagues, coaches, team members. This also includes the type of support

like financial, emotional, mental support, along with the amount of support that they receive. The last factor is ‘Strategies’, what strategies or coping mechanisms are used to deal with the event? Will these strategies change the event? Will these strategies control the outcome? Exploring these four factors will influence how an individual will deal with their transitions.

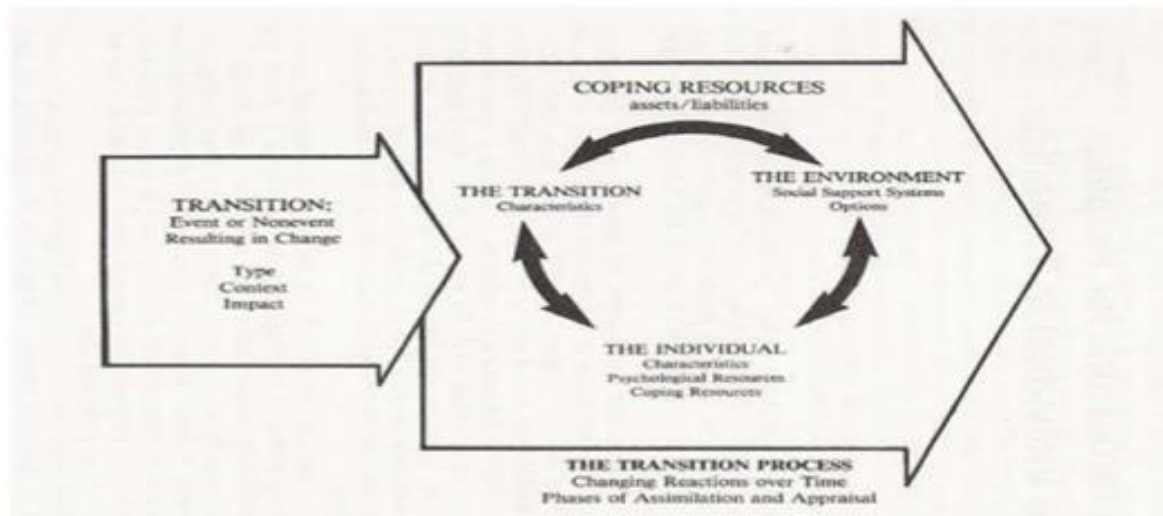
Fig.1. A modified diagram of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1984) by Schmitt & Schiffman, (2019)



(Schmitt & Schiffman, 2019)

Fig 2. Diagram of Schlossberg’s transition (1984) theory. First arrow shows the event or nonevent which leads to the elements in which it is dealt with in the second arrow (Suechowry 2011).

The Individual in Transition (Schlossberg, 1984)



Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory has been used in previous research articles focused on collegiate athletics (c.f., Flowers et al., 2014; Stokowski et al., 2019; Smith & Hardin, 2020). For example, Flowers et al. (2014) investigated transfer collegiate athletes' anticipated perceptions of transferring from one university to another. This article explores the three stages of the transition process to give deeper insight into what those 12 male student-athletes experienced. The research found that these individuals were heavily self-reliant and received support from their coaching staff and their family to help navigate them through their transitional changes. The student athletes in their study reported a limited amount of interaction with the wider college community and transferred institutions for athletic reasons rather than academic (Flowers et al., 2014). Research by Stokowski et al. (2019) used Schlossberg's (1981) transitional theory to ascertain how former athletes accounted for their transition into university and how that coincided with being a high-level athlete. This research was conducted via a twitter thread in the form of qualitative data. The study found through their 178 respondents that 57.3% of respondents

claimed to have a negative perception of transition and 42.7% claimed to have a positive perception.

A study by Smith and Hardin (2020) investigated the transitional framework between collegiate athletes in Division I and Division III. This research gives insight into the perceived differences between the two levels and the similarities that are faced by the two groups. This research found that all the participants were fully invested in the value of sports and the effect that it had on their lives, more so their personal identity. The Division I participants were predominantly distressed about the conclusion of their sports career, while their Division III counterparts seemed to be a lot more enthused with the prospect of starting a new chapter in sport. The findings suggest that colleges should do more to support those transitioning out of college sports, especially for those that have attended higher educational institutions.

The aforementioned articles used Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory to understand the lived experiences of collegiate athletes playing in various levels of competition within the NCAA. These articles were able to account for the various stages in student-athletes' lives and compare the experiences of all athletes involved. This approach fits the purpose of this paper as this research investigated all the elements during the collegiate life span of the ICAs. This research discusses how ICAs received their scholarship, why and how they decided to attend their chosen institution in the moving in aspects of the Schlossberg theory (1981). The moving through aspect of this study explores ICAs' emotions while they were in college and adjusting to the new cultures and lifestyles, and then focused on the moving out or the conclusion of college, graduating and their overall thought process of being in college. Just as Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory described, the movement through the different stages of an individual's life, so

does this research as it focused on the experience of ICAs who participated in NCAA Division I and II basketball.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This research used a descriptive qualitative design approach which gave an in-depth and systematic description of the experiences of ICAs who are playing collegiate basketball at the NCAA Division I and II level. The descriptive qualitative design approach suited this study as the researcher allowed those being interviewed to describe their overall experience moving into, through, and out of college. Using the descriptive qualitative design approach was beneficial as qualitative research is preferred for ascertaining a deep understanding of participants' experiences. A descriptive qualitative design approach is also a preferred method for social scientists to assess natural behaviors or experiences without effecting the results (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Smith and Sparkes (2005), emphasized the need and use of the descriptive qualitative design approach within the genre of sports and physical activity. Within their article, they describe the need for researchers to understand the exploration of a particular phenomenon and the best methods to investigate this phenomenon (Smith & Sparkes, 2005).

Positionality

The motivation for this research came from the researcher coaching in a range of international programs that aided the recruitment of ICAs to collegiate programs in America. By exploring the experiences of ICAs and hearing their accounts on their experiences, the research produces a guide for being successful as an ICA within the United States collegiate system.

Participants

This study included former NCAA Division I and Division II players who completed at least four years of college and graduated. To recruit participants for this study, the researcher ensured the correct demographic were contacted. First, the researcher went to the NCAA website

to ascertain a list of Division I and II schools participating in basketball. After establishing a range of schools, the researcher checked the rosters from 2019 and older for graduated international players. Names were collected of the graduated players from previous rosters, and an attempt was made to contact those individuals via social media or by contacting their former coaching staff. Also, for the selection process the researcher contacted a network of coaches to recommend any former players that fit the description of participation in this research.

Thus, snowball sampling was used for this study. Snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling method which uses a former/existing sample participant to recruit or recommend future sample participants. These participants are usually associates or friends of the original sample participant (Goodman, 2011). Etikan (2016) stated that snowballing sampling is convenient for the researcher, however, it can be problematic as the participants can attribute the same qualities and thus, compromise the integrity of the data. To ensure the integrity of the study the researcher ensured that the sample participants were from different colleges and levels, that way their point of view and experiences described are different. It is also understood that some participants within the study could be reluctant to fully indulge in the interview, also some participants may have limited time and not be able to complete a full interview.

To ensure the consistency of the study the following groups were excluded: Junior college collegiate athletes, transfers, non-graduates, current collegiate athletes and athletes that have graduated no more than 5 years ago. Thus, 10 participants completed interviews and participated in the study. The average age of participants was 23, with eight participants identifying as male, two identifying as female, and eight competing at the Division I level and two competing at the Division II level. See table one below.

Measurement

According to Smith and Sparkes (2016) individual semi-structured interviews are an effective tool to use when collecting qualitative descriptive data. Using a structured set of open-ended questions allows the interviewer to ask relative questions to the study while allowing the interviewees the ability to express their experiences in full and without being restrained. Another advantage of using semi-structured interviews is the interviewee may discuss other elements that may aid the research in ways not initially considered, or they may highlight other areas of research to be explored.

To create the interview guide for the interview, the work of Kalu (2019) and Schlossberg et al. (1995) was used to direct and influence the questions in addition to the order of interview questions. Kalu (2019) highlighted the Emphasis-Purposeful Sampling-Phenomenon of Interest-Context Framework (EPPiC) which dictates that the contexts of the questions should be appropriate, specific to the research, be connected to the sample group, goal-oriented and connected to the methodology. As Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory is the theory that describes the transition of an individual during life experiences, from beginning a new venture to coping in that experience and transitioning out of it and into a new experience, questions were specifically created to follow these three phases (i.e., moving in, moving through, and moving out) and also explore the four factors of the theory: Support, Strategies, Self, Situation. The EPPiC framework and Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory both suit the parameters for this investigation, they were the founding frameworks leading the study.

Procedure

The interviews for this study were conducted via a recorded zoom call and the video focused on both the interviewee and the interviewer. As the interview format followed a semi-

structured approach, the interviewer asked twenty-five questions which covered the experiences of getting to college, the duration and experience of being in college and leaving college (per the three stages of Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory). As the questions posed were open-ended, this gave the participants an opportunity to fully elaborate their answers, also, the interviewer had an opportunity to ask follow-up questions to explore some responses which were relevant to the study.

Weller (2017) and Beck (2005) support the use of qualitative interviews via the internet highlighting the advantages of using modern technology to conduct qualitative interviews, however, Weller (2017) does mention that issues may arise when conducting interviews via the internet. Preemptive measures such as using a wired internet connection, using the internet when there is low internet use or using a phone line in addition to recording the audio if the internet fails are all methods that can be used to minimize disruption. Once these elements are put in place, it should reduce the challenges such as internet connection. The interviewer/interviewee rapport was addressed before commencing the interview and each interviewee was briefed on their rights within the parameters of the study. Each interview time was estimated to be between 45 minutes to 65 minutes in duration. Within the allocated time of the interview, the researcher was able to ascertain the most relevant information to the study.

Data Analysis

After conducting the interviews and storing the recordings, the researcher re-watched the interviews and transcribed each interview in its entirety verbatim. This process was completed to ensure that there is scribed evidence of the interview as well as the audio and visual recording (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). The transcriptions of the interviews were also needed so that the

researcher could code key phrases and reoccurring terminology found within the recordings (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017) which aided in identifying reoccurring themes.

The researcher engaged in both inductive and deductive coding processes through a third-party software (Nvivo), where open and axial coding were used to take the direct words and voices of the participants into account (Saldaña, 2021). Next, the researcher participated in a priori coding based on the theoretical framework of Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transitional theory (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). This coding process continued until codes were then organized into categories and condensed down to begin searching for themes, then these themes were reviewed in relation to the codes extracted. Finally, these themes were defined and named to tell the overall story of the participants, and quotes were pulled to illustrate each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019).

This rigorous process of coding ensured the rigor and trustworthiness of the data being collected and analyzed (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019; Werner, 1996). Also, to ensure transparency, it must be noted that the researcher has a history of helping ICAs who want to play basketball at the collegiate level, specifically being recruited to college in the United States. The researcher has also spoken in-depth to NCAA Division I and Division II college coaches about the process of recruiting international recruits. As this research will contain the accounts from personal experiences and real-life events, the participants within the study will remain anonymous and referred to as participant #1, participant #2, etc. As the data being used is secondary, there will be no need for the research proposal to be presented to the IRB, as the data was and is available via public domain on YouTube.

Chapter 5

Results and Discussions

From the data collected there were four distinctive themes or areas of discussion and two subthemes which related to the three phases of Schlossberg's Transition theory (1981, 1984, 1995). The *moving in* phase of Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory refers to the type of change to the individual, the impact the change has had on the individual, and how this change has happened. This is reflected within the data collection with responses related to the theme *Moving In: Entrance and Adopting to the US* discussing the reasons participants gave for choosing their school, scholarship implications, travel experience to the United States, and new experiences within the states. The moving in stage of Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory was also noted within the subtheme *Overcoming Obstacles to Play in the United States* which addresses how individuals dealt with adversity while within America, dealing with distractions such as, excessive socialization, alcohol, drug use and spending excessive time with a romantic partner. There will also be a highlight within this theme of the participants' personal traits and characteristics which influenced the ways in which they approached adversity and distractions.

Moving through is the second phase in Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transitional theory matches the theme of *Moving Through: Internal and External Support Systems* explaining that participants' time during college entailed adjusting to their new environment and the way they transitioned through this period in their life. This is reflected within this research by addressing the participants' internal and external support systems required by ICAs. More specifically, the attributes within this theme included support from their coaches and school officials. In the second theme, *Moving through: Positive and Negative Academic & Athletic Pressures*, the participants discussed the encumbrance to succeed academically whilst producing as a collegiate athlete and

dealing with a college fanatics. In relation to the *Subtheme: Forming Friendships Relieved Pressures*, participants detailed the role that teammates and other international students played who attended the same school versus support from home from family and friends. Also, in the moving through phase, the subtheme highlighted the importance of fitting in with the team and fitting in to the school community.

The third and final stage of Schlossberg's Transitional theory (1984) is the *moving out* stage. This stage and theme *Moving Out: Advantages and Advice to Playing Collegiate Basketball* looks at the reflection from the individual about their experience, advice as it pertains to improving the ICA experience and the next steps to other phases in their lives. This theme specifically focuses on exploring the advantages and advice given by participants related to playing collegiate basketball in the United States. This includes elements such as their perspective of America and the college system, their regrets during their time in the United States, their views on the college experience, the vast differences between their domestic life and life in the United States and reasons as to why they would or would not stay in America.

Moving In: Entrance and Adopting to the US

All the participants within the study were asked their reasons as to how and why they chose their college. Whilst there was a range of answers, there was a common similarity in the answers from the participants focused on not being heavily recruited in the United States and how they chose to take the offer from their particular school due to their limited scope of offers in general. Participant 10 stated,

“I chose (redacted) because, they were one of the few schools that really recruited me heavily. They really showed interest in me. One of my best friends went to school there, so he could give me some insight about the coach and about the campus. And, I also wanted to go to a really good educational school. That was very important for me.”

While Participant 9 stated “I didn't have many offers. I didn't really explore that option because I committed on the phone immediately when the offer came and I talked to the coach.” Participant 3 similarly discussed taking the first offer they received and even detailed how they accepted this offer without seeing the campus or visiting first. They said,

That's how I got my division one offer. I never took a visit or anything, which was something that is out of the ordinary. Usually, when you're in the States, when you graduate high school in the States, you always are entitled to go and visit the school beforehand, see if you like it or not. But with the situation, the fact that I was from Europe, it was a last-minute thing. I didn't have an opportunity to go on a visit, but that was fine with me because I was ready to jump in the dark. As long as it was what I was dreaming for, I was like, okay, I'm going there.

All three participants (3, 9 and 10) mentioned that the reason for attending their school was due to the fact they had limited offers and opportunities to play college basketball with a full scholarship. This particular finding is similar to the findings of Pauline et al. (2008) where their research found that the primary reason for IAs wanting to go to America is to play collegiate basketball at a high level while receiving a free education.

Despite their limited recruiting experience, ICA participants explained they chose to move into the NCAA collegiate system and the United States. All the participants within this study received a full scholarship to attend college and acknowledged that they were aware of how important it was to have adequate grades to give them the opportunity to be eligible to get and keep a scholarship. This was stated simply by Participant 9, “I was fortunate to get a full ride. I was offered a full scholarship at (redacted) college, which is again a DII school that had very, very high academic standards.”

This sentiment was echoed by Participant 8 who said,

I got a full ride for sport. Academically, coming from Italy, my grades were good enough for me to be, I guess, accepted because with my SAT. Between my SAT and my grades. because grade in Europe works a little different than in America I don't remember my SAT score, but it was close enough for me to be accepted at (redacted) because I wanted to have a certain level, coming in my freshman year.

There was one anomaly within the study as it pertained to receiving a scholarship. One participant did not meet the required grade point average but was still accepted into the college via an appeal.

Participant 8 expounded on this process stating,

We looked at so many different ways as to how I could get in, because it wasn't anything I did maliciously to hurt my eligibility. It was just something that I just didn't know. So, we had filed a hardship waiver, and that's not anything that I'm ashamed of or anything like that. So, we filed a waiver to the NCAA saying this is how I grew up. This is half the reason why I left the country. I didn't have the right information. This is my background. This is where I come from. This is everything I am, in every shape or form, in the rawest possible image, and they accepted it with the stipulation of me not being able to play my freshman year.

Another common factor participants discussed which supported the decision in choosing NCAA division I and II colleges was the initial relationship that they cultivated with the coaching staff during their recruitment. All the participants within the study commented on the relationship that they had with the coach that aided in them choosing that institution. Participant 3 recalled,

I had an offer from a school in Kentucky and that was maybe one of my options that I considered. And then that option from Florida came in for D2. And I made my decision

to go there. I just talked to the coach. He seemed interested. He wanted to know my situation. I told him about the injuries. He spoke with my physical therapist that we would stay. That he was trying to see where I was standing, as of recovery, blah, blah. He gave me the opportunity visit. So, I actually visited that school. I went on a two-day visit. They take you around campus. They work out with you. They do a lot of things. They put me on a boat. I went on a boat ride!

Participant 6 further supports this finding asserting,

He (the coach) believed that I was a good embodiment of that. He was a starting coach, a new coach, I would be part of his first recruiting class coming in. So that was immediately a great click, and then I think the biggest thing too is that he was actually there in person to talk to me and I could look him in his eyes and I could feel like most people are able to tell when you talk to somebody face-to-face when they truly mean what they're saying, and there's no acting involved.

Participant 6 continues his thoughts about the importance of the connection with his coach stating,

I got to campus, and through the conversations with coach McClain, he's somebody I wanted to play for from the get-go, just because of how he spoke. Anyone who knows me, knows that when I play, no matter what, I'm going to give it my all, my energy, my enthusiasm, it's going to be at an all-time high all the time.

These comments by Participants 3 and 6 reflect previous research by Jara (2015) who found that when collegiate athletes find a connection with the coach themselves, they feel more comfortable in selecting that school. This connection leads to the athlete feeling a sense of belonging and that they are cared for, which leads to motivation to play for that coach.

Lastly, in the moving in transitional phase, participants discussed the difficulty with the logistical travel and jet lag that accompanied traveling to and from the United States. For example, Participant 4 said, “It's five hours difference from the UK for most of the year, at some point it's four hours, but it's only a short amount of time. Jet lag. I'm not good at sleeping on the plane so I usually would just suffer, you know, I would just get there and then try and adjust.” This was also confirmed by Participant 6 who stated, “I never had any trouble with going from Europe to the US, but always going from US to Europe was the one that really got me. And I've heard from several others that that's always usually the case.” Additionally, Participant 1 described the jet lag and time change that accompanied coming to the United States to play detailing,

It's a nine-hour difference from Czech. From England, it's eight hours and then to get off your jet lag. When you go there from Europe, it's fine. I think I adjusted pretty fast. When you go from LA to Europe, then I think I was messed up for like two, three nights. But then obviously there's different hacks that you can do like sleep on. You just have to figure out what time you're going to arrive into Europe or the destination that you fly into.

Participants were also asked to about all their experiences travelling to the United States and if there were any issues or apprehension travelling from their native country to America. Although the participants seemed to take a trivial approach to the question, the response was similar across all participants despite them attending colleges in different geographical locations. Flying to the United States seemed to be perceived as an unpleasant requirement but the task had no overall negative bearing on their experiences. However, this is something that has yet to be discussed in previous research related to ICA and thus, this finding does shed light on the extra coordination and effort taken by ICAs arriving at their new campuses in comparison to their domestic peers.

Subtheme: Overcoming Obstacles to Play in the United States. While entering into college and going through the college experience, all the participants had to go through a range of adversity and distractions. Adversity events included injuries, lack of playing time, failing classes, being home sick and time management. Participant 1 recalled the experience of trying to navigate both academics and athletics when he first arrived at his college in the United States. They said,

I have a picture that I slept in the locker room because I was trying to save that 10-minute walk to the practice facility in the morning. Yes. Because I was like, man, I'm doing homework till 4:00 AM and we got practice at 5:30. I got to be on the floor at 5:30. Man, I'll sleep in the gym.”

Participant 4 recounted the initial obstacle of trying to learn the system and expectations on their new team stating,

Most of the coaches I had knew me trusted me even when I was on the national team. They'd know me for a while, then when you get to college. It's like, there's, you know, so many girls on the team, your coach can't only be focused on you. They're not always having conversations with you unless you're the type of kid that's always in coach's office. I felt at times, like I wasn't sure what they were wanted for me at the very beginning, and they probably weren't sure what I was thinking, because I wouldn't communicate that well.”

For Participants 10 and 6 overcoming obstacles meant being tempted with drugs, parties, and alcohol when they first arrived to the United States. Participant 6 explained, “From being overseas, the only picture you have is from the movies, crazy college parties and girls and you think it's over at the top in the movies, but it does get pretty crazy like that.” Participant 6 discussed actually getting caught with drugs early on in their career stating,

I actually got in trouble with some drugs once, me and another teammate, dumb dumbest decision I made in my career. We just wanted to. I'm not like I never, I've never smoked weed in season, whatever, but my teammate was injured, and we had like a week off a something. So, we was like, okay, like, let's smoke some weed.”

It is also evident from the results that there are a range of distractions that these ICAs must navigate, many for the first time. This often included underage consumption of alcohol, excessive socializing, and overindulging in romantic relationships. There seems to be no current studies regarding deviant behavior by ICAs however, this research suggests that there may be a need for future research in this area as all of the participants have had to overcome distractions while being away from their domestic support system.

Even though all the participants within this study graduated from their respective programs, they all faced adversity and distractions upon entrance and through their experiences. This was a unanimous amongst all the participants within the study and discussed in several of the supporting literature, particularly work by Clift and Mower (2011) which found similar elements of difficulty for individuals transitioning into the college experience. Similarly, Flowers et al. (2014) explored factors which caused male collegiate athletes to transfer programs such as lack of support, being unhappy with playing time or disconnection with the staff. Thus, further work is still needed to understand this large transition into college, especially for ICAs who are not only transitioning to a new educational system, but also new culture.

Moving Through: Internal and External Support Systems

Studies by Popp et al (2011) highlight the importance of creating an initial bond between the potential ICA and the head coach of the program. Being able to build this initial bond makes the transition period easier for the individual. While navigating the new environment, ICAs require

support from a range of different groups such as coaches, team members, advisors, lecturers, and the student community. Despite being in a different country, ICAs will continuously seek council and support from friends and family in their home country. Participant 5 discussed their academic support stating, "Go talk to professors. They have office hours and I will highly recommend anybody that is either struggling with grades or just trying to keep a high GPA to just go see your professors as much as possible." Participant 6 also discussed the importance of internal support from their coaching staff explaining,

If you have something on your mind, talk to them. If, if something is bothering you, talk to them, don't just go with the flow and think it's normal, you know, like, don't think like, okay, I'm experiencing this right now. Probably every single guy is experiencing this, nine out of 10 times.

Similar to Participant 6, Participant 9 described the need to lean on the internal support system within the team through teammates,

Like people have mental breakdowns from that statistics class man. Like, so yeah. I just think again, like it's, it's quite cliché, but at the end of the day you get out what you put in. If you seek the extra help and, and, and it also like you ask your teammates how they, how they're, you know, some of them might share classes or have had similar teachers or professors ask them how they work or talk to your coaches and tell them like, look, I'm really struggling in this class. They might reach out to that professor and organize, you know, tutoring or one to one sessions and things like that."

Participants not only discussed the importance of internal support systems, but also external support systems outside of athletics, particularly their friends and family abroad or those serving in those capacities while they were in the United States. Participant 8 recalls the importance of

being assigned a host family which served as a support network that they could confide in. They said,

Each international student, they got, they got an opportunity to, to, to meet with them with the family there that was specifically for that person. And we were able to, you know, have some lunches or, you know, every once in a while, and talk about, you know, maybe some issues, if, if I got homes sick, you know, I could call and I could meet with them.

Participant 1 joyfully reminisced about an occasion when some friends visited the United States and the time they spent exploring,

Four of my close friends flew out to see me one summer and I took 'em on a road trip all the way around America, like five different states, just like it was a crazy time. But yeah, we went, we ended up going to Mount Rushmore as well.

Lastly, Participant 6 discussed a time when their father actually surprised them and attended a game demonstrating the lengths and bounds of their external support system. They said,

My dad had been everywhere, and my dad's been through the mills in terms of health and everything like that. I had a pretty big personality and a pretty big persona, character in college. And everyone knew me and people would always be shouting. There was Fatheads in the crowds and everything like that. I got used to it, but then one game, I looked over and my dad was standing up clapping. That was something I never going to forget. An emotional and physical feeling that I never experienced before. So yeah. It was definitely a tear shed moment.

All these comments are admissions of how important support networks are for ICAs. The internal support network is just as important as the external support network for some of the

participants. These excerpts support the work of Popp et al (2011) and studies by Lubker and Etzel (2007) in stating that collegiate athletes are more likely to be successful in their sport and academically when they have access to various channels of support systems.

Moving Through: Positive and Negative Academic & Athletic Pressures

As it has been discussed, internal support from the school and external support from outside sources are required to help give ICAs the best opportunity to succeed in their college career. The participants within the study discussed the various areas of success and failure during their time in college along with the pressure to produce on the basketball court and academically. Particularly, ICAs detailed the difference in style of play and greater expectations from coaches within the NCAA collegiate basketball system. Participant 5 recalled the elevated level of play in comparison to Europe, “This is where it started actually move up to like real professional levels where it's kind of cutthroat in that, you know, if you don't win, if you don't get results, things just kind of slide down.” Participant 2 expressed very clearly the pressures they felt when trying to find their role on the team. They said,

You really have to just earn your spot and work for everything every day. Those coaches are watching. They're charging stats. They're charging practice. Every rebound, every assist, every turnover. Oh my God. We ran so much for those turnovers. You really have to dig down deep and be like, okay, what's my strengths? What's my weaknesses? How can I help the team? Because the coaches are always looking, are you team guy? Are you're selfish? Are you this or that? It just depends how the theme is structured and then you got to find your spot.

Both Participants 9 and 6 discussed the reality of not playing the minutes they were used to in comparison to their home countries and teams. Participant 9 explained,

I was always playing 35 minutes, 30 minutes on the court and in the closing minutes of the game. I was always on the court and now I was not, not in the starting five. I was not even the close I had to find a way to get involved in the games, how to make an impact, you know, as much as I could, which, again, I ended up cheering a lot.

Participant 6 added and expanded on the thoughts of participant 9 stating,

You start at the bottom of the totem pole man. It is though, I was able to flip that switch pretty quickly, but I mean, if you think about it, especially with kids that are highly recruited, they get all this attention, they're hyped up by all these coaches. And then obviously it's hard to not kind of buy into that, but then as time goes on, you adjust and I earn to compete against whoever.

In comparison, Participant 3 explained the pressures that they put on themselves to perform athletically,

Most of the pressure was from me. I talked to another sports psychologist here in the UK, and it was mostly the pressure I was putting on myself. You know, you feel like people home or family members only see your stat line, maybe, maybe they're not watching the games and they're like, oh, how many points are you averaging? Oh, you know, you didn't get that many minutes in that game that coach doesn't know anything. You know, those types of things can really mess with your mind. So, I think talking about those things and also talking to, if it's your family about how that makes you feel is helpful.

This level of internal or external scrutiny and monitoring from the ICAs themselves or their coaches could lead to continuous pressures leading to stress and anxiety. Thus, as alluded to in the previous theme, support systems are necessary and crucial for ICAs.

Not only did participants detail athletic external and internal pressures, they discussed a difficulty with moving through the collegiate experience was the pressure to perform and maintain in good academic standing. Participant 1 illuminated the pressure from an academic standpoint that they felt stating, “Grades do play factor in that, in that if you drop below a certain average, you might lose your eligibility to play.” Participant 9 stated in relation to the academic expectations that their coach ensured his players knew that, “We we're student athletes not, athlete students. That was something said by my coach (redacted), who was is one of the winningest coaches in college history in the United States. He was really, really, hard on us about our academics.” Participant 6 fully understood what academic expectations were required from themself stating, “If you don't have your grades in order, that opportunity just won't be there, because you have to be able to take care of your academics.”

Understanding that the individual might not be able to play basketball when that was a core reason for traveling to the United States, might promote pressure to produce qualifying grades. From this research it is a common theme that ICAs understood this pressure from the start of the recruitment process. The concept of taking away playing privileges to promote academic success can also be deemed as negative reinforcement. Fosters and Bono (2017) discussed the use of various motivational approaches that coaches use to influence participants to behave in a particular manner. This would explain the athletic infraction on collegiate athletes with unacceptable grades.

Lastly, participants discussed the atmosphere of playing basketball in America and the fandom of sport in the United States. For the participants, this was a bit shocking and did come with some external pressures to perform well athletically. However, the participants also pointed to the enjoyment of collegiate basketball in the United States due to the notoriety they received in their communities. Participant 5 commented on the culture of sports in America stating, “American

people love sports. They that's one of the first things I noticed when I got to college or when they even got to the states is they just love talking about sports.” More specific to the atmosphere and celebrity like treatment that many athletes receive, Participant 7 encapsulates the whole experience by saying,

I'm talking about, it goes from the fans, the community, it's like, you're living like a rockstar lifestyle. I'm not even kidding. Cause like in a way, like obviously you've got school and stuff, but you're going on the road to games, you're getting fed, you know, all your food, you're getting fed everything, you got two, 3000 people at your games, you know, like signing autographs and stuff at this young age. Like it's all the things that like you kind of, I was just in a perfect situation. I'm very fortunate.

Participant 9 recalled the experience of being highly recognized and also playing in front of sell out crowds stating,

You're seeing all your students, you're seeing all the community. You're getting stopped in the street. Like, yeah, there's no complaints. And then you just really appreciate it when you go to away games and you're getting treated the best, I mean, when we was on top, they would always sell out. Like these would be the big attraction, this would be their, sell out game.”

Similarly, Participant 2 recollected the differences between playing basketball in Europe and the United States explaining,

15,000 people at the game, you don't get that unless you're playing in the Euro league in here (overseas). The atmosphere at the games, I guess just the atmosphere around sports in general. You're like a superstar in there (in America). Here (overseas) you walk on the street, and nobody even talks to you or looks at you. You walk around campus over there

and everybody's like, oh, you play basketball. You experience pretty much a pro-life as a college player.

Subtheme: Forming Friendships Relieved Pressures. As participants continued to navigate through their collegiate experience and the pressures felt from their dual roles in academics and athletics, they discussed the importance of leaning on friendships with other international students. The participants claimed that they felt solace in the fact that there were other international students and collegiate athletes around them. This experience of feeling a connection with other international students was explained by Participant 9, “I wasn’t the only international, we had people from everywhere, one of my teammates was from your country, do you know (redacted) from Manchester? We had other international athletes from Europe, Australia, it was nice to have a group of us together.” Echoing the sentiments of Participant 9, Participant 1 also enjoyed socializing and connecting with other international students,

As an international, I was always good friends with other internationals from other sports. I was very good friends with the soccer players and some of track and fields. You know, the players and athletes from Europe. You know, and if, you know, they're kind of on the same schedule or, you just text them like, Hey, you want to go do this, do that.

Participant 6 talked about sharing their playing experiences with other international student athletes, “We had a great group. We were multicultural as well. Uh, me, I was there, the guy from, from Manchester (redacted). We had a guy from Spain (redacted) we had a guy from Prague that played with me.” The social aspect of being an international student athlete appears to play a very important role during this *moving through* phase of the individual's time in college. The evidence of this is displayed by understanding how important support is for these international student

athletes as well as the comments made by the participants regarding fitting in as a player, fitting in as a student, and the overall enjoyment as an international student athlete.

ICA participants did not the connection and ease of discussing the unique experiences of being an international student and athlete with their ICA peers, but several of the participants also noted the importance of creating friendships outside of their teams to expand their networks and create some relief from their lives as athletes. Participant 10 stated,

Most definitely for me, it was also nice to sometimes, hang out with non-athletes, you know, just a change of scene in a change of topic. You know, because you see your teammates all the time and you're with them all the time.

Participant 4 advised that getting outside of their team allowed them to meet and explore new cultures and create connections outside of basketball. They said,

Just because you're in a team, it doesn't mean that those should be your only friend in school. Just go out there, meet some new people, meet some people on the golf team or just meet somebody that you never even talked to before. It doesn't matter. You should expand your connection outside of basketball.”

While some participants managed to have separate groups of friend's others managed to have social friendships with teammates outside of the basketball court and managed to other activities. Perhaps this research points to the importance of these social friendships and circles to assist ICAs and even perhaps collegiate athletes at large with navigating and mitigating their athletic and academic pressures as they move through their collegiate experience. As defined by Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory describes the use of coping mechanisms to navigate anticipated, unanticipated and non-events. It is shown by the results in this study that during the

moving through phase of the college experience, the ICAs' used a wide range of support systems to help them navigate the pressures, social inclusion and overall balance in their college life.

Moving Out: Advantages and Advice to Playing Collegiate Basketball

The participants within the study were asked to retroactively reflect and account for some of the decisions they made throughout their college experience. They addressed their overall perception of America, the advice that they would give to others that are about to embark on the same experience and the regrets that they may have had over that period. Participant 3 explained that coming to America allowed them to experience and find a new community. They said, "The best part for me personally, is all the people I got to know... for me, just the whole experience of attending school there and being part of that community." For Participant 6 it was important to visit and explore a new city during their time in America. They stated, "I really like San Diego. Okay, I really like the city of San Diego. Los Angeles I mean, you have to go to Hollywood once, you know, just have to see it. It is, is unbelievably nice. Other participants also discussed both the mannerisms of the public and landscape of America. The experience of different restaurants which are exclusive to that state or region, the visits to big cities and popular tourist destinations are items that the participants noted they enjoyed and now miss. The participants overall found America to be a great destination although every state has its own uniqueness about it.

The athletes expressed that there is a lot of fanfare for sport all over the country. Local supporters were extremely supportive of their home team which was accounted for by the participants within this study. The local fame and recognition were two attributes that all the players noted that they enjoyed and now miss being back in their respective countries. As they reviewed their time in America, participants recalled moments of regret such as not indulging in

social activities outside of their team, not embracing the facilities that they had at their disposal, and even personal relationships. For example, Participant 4 confessed,

I would probably, consider staying for the extra year because, I know I would be giving the team more than I did, more than what I could, but I wasn't at that level. And that's something I regret a little bit.

Similarly, Participant 2 explained the importance of taking advantage of the finite amount of time to play basketball stating,

I always got told like, girls are always gonna be there. They're there whatever country you're in, whatever you're doing, there's always gonna be a girl there but, the opportunity that you have in front of you and with basketball is a limited time on it.

Echoing the importance of giving their all to basketball, Participant 8 expressed,

Go all out, go, you know, invest your time and it's gonna pay off because you will have such a broad plate of full of opportunities in states, you know, where to work, who to talk to, where to play at, where to play next and don't get, disappointed when something bad happens.

Participant 3 reviewed the prospect of giving more attention to academics as a regret and piece of advice to future ICAs. They stated,

I think if I could have applied a little bit more of that to my academics, I might have done a bit better. Not that I didn't do well in school, but it was like, I picked basketball over academics at first.

Lastly, Participant 4 highlighted the advice to stay dedicated and disciplined in order to be successful in the collegiate experience. They advised,

Even if it's for practices or if it's for studying or whatever it is. You need to have a desire to excel at what you're doing. You need to have the desire to be early for practice. You need to stay late after the practice is done. Or you need to manage your time. You need to have that discipline for you to be able to wake up early in the morning and do schoolwork or just go do an individual practice and then find time during that day to get your schoolwork done for tomorrow or for the whole week.

This work suggests that although the participants enjoyed their time in college, they seemed a little underprepared for what they encountered, they all possess a wide range of memories and positive thought but lacked the necessary foresight to maximize their experience.

Throughout out the findings it can be stated that, as an ICA, *Moving Into* collegiate sports can be extremely daunting in one aspect in trying to ascertain the right grades to be eligible to receive a scholarship, finding a suitable school with a coach that they connect with and has a welcoming culture. Many ICA participants struggled with the initial adjustment to adversity such as not playing many minutes on the team, struggling with academic assignments and being homesick. In *Moving Through* the college experience, it was consistently discussed that support for ICAs is absolutely paramount for success. The participants stated the need for financial, emotional, and mental support. Although the ICAs could communicate with friends and family back in their home country, the time difference and schedule posed a problem. Being supported by coaches, teammates, professors, and the general school population are all important for ICAs. During their college experience ICAs alike will endure a range of pressures such as maintaining their grade point average, being accepted by the team, being accepted into the student community, and facing the oppositions supporters.

In the *moving out* stage of the college experience, it was seen that there were a wide range of regrets and thoughts on how these individuals could have spent their time more effectively. Although these participants graduated from college, they felt like there was more they could have done with their time at college, whether it was better grades or better performances on the court, they all had areas they wish they could have improved on. The participants noted that America is a sports enthusiastic nation and fanfare proves that sports are seen as more than a game, it's a way of life. As basketball is not revered highly in their domestic countries it was a culture shock to the participants, been noticed in public, getting first class treatment and overwhelming support at games. The advice that the participants gave to other student athletes included making the most of their time, engaging in various different social settings and cherishing their experience.

Conclusion

The research within this paper establishes the importance of supporting and nurturing ICAs' development to, through, and out of NCAA basketball at division I and II . This research explores the timeline of ICAs' journey under the framework of Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transitional theory. The research discusses the need for the ICA to adapt to changes in coming to America, dealing with adversity and having to resist deviant distractions, this is known as the *moving in* phase in Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory. The *moving through* phase addresses the importance of support systems for the ICAs, as well as highlighting the pressures in college such as being accepted to the team, college community and academic success. The third phase in Schlossberg's (1981, 1984, 1995) transition theory is *moving out*, the research features accounts of regrets, and provides advice for future ICAs.

Limitations

As this research is reliant on the retroactive accounts of participants there are a few limitations to be considered. The first limitation is the accuracy of the participants' accounts as there is a possibility that they could have forgotten the exact details, or they could falsify their account to make themselves look better than the original accounts. The second limitation to this study is that the participants had to have graduated, the outcome of the research might have been different if the sample was completely random or focused on ICAs currently moving through the transitional stages of collegiate athletics.

Future Research

For future research, it may be beneficial to conduct a study on individuals who did not graduate from college or complete their basketball career in college. This would allow for some comparison between the two studies and give some insight into the other demographic. Additionally, future research should look to understand the experiences of coaches that recruit ICAs and the ways in which they bring ICAs into their culture and collegiate system. Lastly, future research should explore how academic and athletic support staff assist in the transitional processes of ICAs, as many other members outside of the coaching staff influence the ICA experience.

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