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The role of intercultural communication in recruiting and retaining student-athletes: A phenomenological study on understanding the sociocultural aspects of building non-revenue teams in intercollegiate sport

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The role of intercultural communication in recruiting and retaining student-athletes: A phenomenological study on understanding the sociocultural aspects of building non-revenue teams in intercollegiate sport

Submitted to Southeastern University

Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership

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Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership
Southeastern University

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titled

**THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN
RECRUITING AND RETAINING STUDENT-ATHLETES: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON UNDERSTANDING THE
SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF BUILDING NON-REVENUE TEAMS
IN INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORT**

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Abstract

Recruiting and retaining student-athletes at NCAA Division I and II member institutions is difficult. However, the coaches of non-revenue-producing sport have developed communication measures to assist in successfully fielding teams of culturally unique individuals that build an ingroup culture to compete despite limiting factors. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of non-revenue-producing sporting coaches' intercultural communication methodical variations in interactions with student-athletes as each coach adapts exchanges to serve as relationship-building elements to balance cultural norms with the acceptance of unfamiliar cultural behaviors. Relevant themes emerged from the data gathered during participant interviews, which were used to structure the information and guide the research. The resulting analysis supported the assertion that non-revenue-producing sport coaches use adaptive measures to foster intercultural communication opportunities to create comfortable spaces for interactions in unfamiliar cultural situations, resulting in positive ingroup relationships that benefit the institution and the overall team culture.

Keywords: intercultural communication, non-revenue sport, coach, student-athletes, NCAA

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Jason, who believed I could, and said I should. I am blessed to have had your unwavering support to chase my dream. You encouraged me often and never doubted that I would reach my goal.

To Sydney, you have listened to me talk for hours about theories, concepts, books, and articles so that I could find my understanding. Thank you for not only your patience but always supporting and encouraging me. Your belief in my ability helped me to know, “This thing was only a matter of time,” and now we get to play, “OK and congratulations,” again.

To Gavin, I am not sure if you understand the help you provided me on this journey. You have done so much to help me without complaining or even needing a thank you, but I need you to know that I am grateful, and I do thank you.

To Blaze, thank you for needing french fries with your breakfast. It is not often that we get to sit quietly and wait for answers, but on that day, I did. That moment started me on the path to fulfill a dream that I was not sure I could ever touch. Since then, you have stayed up late and been there with a hug anytime I needed one.

There is only one name on a diploma, but the world needs to know the names of just some of the people who stood alongside me and believed I could.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Each academic year, intercollegiate coaches begin recruiting efforts by discussing the benefits of attending a particular university with young student-athletes. At the same time, coaches hope to retain eligible student-athletes on the current roster. Intercollegiate, non-revenue-producing sporting teams' recruiting and retention processes are essential to creating a successful program. Therefore, a coach's ability to communicate with potential and current student-athletes is as crucial as their knowledge of a given sport (Kim et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017; NCAA, 2022).

The experience gained from communicating information with recruits and current student-athletes emanates from within the coach's unique cultural understanding built by commonality in relationships (Bell & Riol, 2017; Kang, 2021). Research indicates a direct connection between culture and an individual's ability to communicate with others, which interacts to effectively create a functional measure to understand subjective experiences during the interactions for recruiting student-athletes for respective sporting teams (Beattie & Turner, 2022; Budnick, 2018; Millar et al., 2017). Furthermore, the cultural composition of a population produces a unique insight into understanding the communication perceptions built on ingroup experiences within the common populace. Intercultural communication requires individuals to rapidly code and decode information within the established framework of an ingroup cultural structure of experience (Ajdukovic, 2019; Leung & Yu, 2020; Shan et al., 2021). The coach's experience in communication methods serves as a tool to recruit and retain student-athletes (Carroll, 2015; Millar et al., 2017). A coach uses communication tactics when interacting with stakeholders and outside influences as a grounding for cultural experiences with each recruited class of athletes while simultaneously retaining previous cohorts of student-athletes (Kang, 2021; Lin et al., 2017). Understanding the resulting consequences of the coach's intercultural communication efforts is important to provide insight that supports the expense of recruiting and retaining student-athletes each fiscal year (Hextrum, 2021; Perez et al., 2019).

Recruiting and retaining student-athletes within National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member institutions has an intercultural communicative component built on a social construct based on a given coach's cultural experiences (Anderson et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2020; Holliday, 2010; Moulin-Stožek, 2019). As of 2021, 60% of non-revenue-generating-sport student-athletes maintained a social identity as White, as did 85% of the NCAA coaches. Nevertheless, individual cultural experiences vary regardless of racial identity (Hextrum, 2021; NCAA, 2022; Perez & Barber, 2018; Wilson, 2020). Every individual derives cultural understanding from an ingroup with unique variations based on experiences. The experiences lead to cultural communication patterns consistent with value systems (Carroll, 2015; Yi, 2019). With that, cultural understanding plays an essential role in NCAA coaching as an effective measure to communicate information across cultural experiences to recruit student-athletes into a university system and maintain a well-managed team with a collective identity that supersedes individual cultural identity and leads the team to accomplish positive outcomes (Han et al., 2021; Sutherland & Yoshida, 2015). The literature highlights a need to raise levels of cultural understanding and awareness of coaches' communication methodology as a convergent process to create insights to achieve positive recruiting results (Barker, 2016; Cooper et al., 2015; Hextrum, 2021; King & Bailey, 2021; Tierney, 2016). As a group, coaches have unique recruiting methods with varying results based on situational experiences. The communication structure is the foundation for the relationship between coaches and student-athletes during the recruiting and retention process, potentially adding meaning and value to the interaction (Becker, 2009; Han et al., 2021; Hextrum, 2021; Treadway et al., 2014). Intercultural communication in relationships with others can benefit from a persistent framework supporting practical experiences in communication (Bodin et al., 2022; Sveinson et al., 2021).

The knowledge gained during opportunities involving intercultural communication factors in the conversation and relationship-building experience between a coach and student-athletes during the recruiting and retention process

may be meaningful in gaining insight (Behan, 2016; Behan et al., 2020; Kuhn, 2019; Olson, 2014). Investigating the recruiting and retention process will help uncover areas of experience relating to how intercultural conversations influence coaches to consider an individual as a prospective student-athlete from an outgroup to become a member of the ingroup despite underlining cultural differences in the structure of experience. Therefore, the current phenomenological research study focused on the lived experiences of intercollegiate coaches using intercultural communication between coaches in NCAA member institutions and the student-athletes they recruit or retain in non-revenue-producing university sporting teams through universally prescribed customs.

Statement of the Problem

Recruiting and retaining student-athletes has become increasingly competitive due to the rise in the competition for market share. As a result, university athletic departments spend millions of dollars on recruiting (Day et al., 2021; Henderson, 2018; Lin et al., 2017; Nixon et al., 2021). The process requires creating relationships with student-athletes by communicating the benefit of becoming a part of a particular ingroup through effective intercultural communication to produce individualized understanding (Berg et al., 2021; Treadway et al., 2014). Each student-athlete recruited or retained in an athletic department has a unique cultural experience that results in a different meaning for individual and societal norms (Dixon et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2017). An individual's cultural perspective comprises various elements or components for communicating with others (Munz & Colvin, 2018). Communication is a function of social understanding. Individuals use communication to animate a culture that is reflective of the people who create meaning when coding and decoding information in a conversation (Ajdukovic, 2019; Lee et al., 2017; Martin & Nakayama, 1999). Familiarity with intercultural communication assists individuals in assessing the social foundation of an individual to connect with others for security (Bell & Riolo, 2017; Lee et al., 2017).

In non-revenue sport, recruiting trips pair student-athletes and coaches within a structural social visit, providing an opportunity to create a transactional relationship. Because of the difference in social interaction, coaches learn individual communication methods necessary for the transfer of information to improve sociocultural connections. As they code and decode the conversation, the coach and the student-athletes attempt to understand the unique meanings behind the communication. The perception of the information in the dialogue between coaches and student-athletes influences the effectiveness of the interaction (Ajdukovic, 2019; de Graff & Rosseau, 2015; Draine, 2019; Manwell et al., 2021; Ugrenovic et al., 2020). The results of the interaction between the coach and the prospective student-athlete create an opportunity to continue to build insight into the verbal and nonverbal communication of the other, producing shared ideas to understand each other's communication guidelines further, enabling each person to decide whether to continue or withdraw from the recruiting process (Mehu & van der Maaten, 2014; Steyn & Solomon, 2017). Recruiting and retaining student-athletes in the intercollegiate system has unique challenges. The NCAA is an association of universities that created a foundation to unify intercollegiate athletics with a system of rules and bylaws recognized by its member institutions (Lin et al., 2017; NCAA, 2022).

The NCAA recruiting bylaws form a universal system of regulations to guide the recruiting process. Each year, coaches who interact with student-athletes during the recruiting process must take an exam to assess their structural knowledge of proper recruiting techniques (Eicher et al., 2021; NCAA, 2022). The coach's understanding of the bylaws involved in recruiting is essential for their compliance with university rules and strengthens their recruiting experience. Individual cultural interaction causes people to derive different meanings from words, phrases, or gestures based on social experiences. The analysis of the sociocultural differences experienced by coaches during the recruiting or retention process is lacking, presenting an opportunity to examine the phenomenon (Eicher et al., 2021; NCAA, 2022; Nichols et al., 2020). The intercultural communication dynamic between individuals varies as each coach encodes, disseminates,

receives, and translates information based on ingroup tendencies as they navigate the differences during the recruiting or retention process (Miles & Shiner, 2022; Taylor & Osland, 2012).

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to explore the experience of a coach's intercultural communication philosophy during the recruitment and retention of student-athletes of non-revenue-producing sport for NCAA Division I or II institutions. The active recruitment and retention of student-athletes is a competitive process (Day et al., 2021; Henderson, 2018; Lin et al., 2017; Nixon et al., 2021). Consequently, coaches work in a system that flourishes or stagnates based on adaptive team-building effectiveness and in the ability to establish a culture that conveys ingroup expectations by creating a socially influential intercultural communication pattern that directs behavior (Bell & Riolo, 2017; Kang, 2021; Kim et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017).

The goal of phenomenological research methodology is to capture diverse lived experiences of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016), which, for this study, were the diverse approaches that demonstrate the intercultural communication experience of coaches regarding recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Recruiting study participants involved contacting coaches of non-revenue-producing sporting teams in Division I and II universities by telephone to secure approximately five individuals to participate in the research. Coaches narrated a description of the intercultural communication process and their experience of recruiting and retaining student-athletes during semi-structured in-person or Zoom interviews. During the research analysis, I used all relevant connections in the communication methods of coaches to develop the informational pattern of the research coding. The coding process began with in vivo coding, then with process coding, and finally, values coding to frame the analysis of any developing pattern (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña, 2021; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016).

Research Question(s)

RQ1: How do coaches perceive the role of intercultural communication when interacting with student-athletes (Bell & Riol, 2017; Powers et al., 2016; Simien et al., 2019)?

RQ2: How do coaches adapt their communication based on perceived cultural differences (Carter-Francique, 2018; Fisher et al., 2017)?

RQ3: How do coaches perceive NCAA bylaws and institutional traditions influence cultural differences during recruiting and retention-based interactions (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)?

RQ4: In the recruiting or retention process, how has the coach's understanding of intercultural communication changed to benefit student-athletes (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)?

Significance of the Research

The study is significant to research in intercultural communication in an athletic setting because its findings may illuminate parts of the phenomenon with potential development in recruiting or retention for non-revenue-producing sport as an area of importance in university athletic departments. The study could also yield insight for coaches in examining any benefit of relationship building as affected by unfamiliar cultural understandings, as specific characteristics vary based on ingroup associations (Cardona, 2021; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015; Segev et al., 2022). Coaches could use the knowledge gained from the study to further their understanding of communication methodologies for better recruitment or retention of student-athletes within the team's cultural framework. Furthermore, the research could add insight into the subjective experiences regarding unfamiliar cultural viewpoints as an opportunity for an intercultural environmental foundation to create relationships to develop athletic skills and influence any adaptation to changes in cultural norms as athletes transition to a different ingroup (Collins, 2022; Martyn et al., 2019; Millar et al., 2017; Nixon et al., 2021). Additionally, understanding the existence of unfamiliar cultural patterns developed during daily interactions can help colleges better serve student-athletes with the challenges of athletic and academic performance

measures (Cardona, 2021; Millar et al., 2017; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015; Segev et al., 2022).

Conceptual Framework

The focus of the intercultural framework of the research was the social differences within the sociocultural context of communities within the United States. Many individuals understand intercultural communication approaches as international communication. However, that is not always the case. People from different communities process information differently from other Americans. Variations in sociocultural communication create differing factors based on components, such as regionality, socioeconomic divides, or lived experiences, which drive cultural normalcy (Cooper et al., 2015; Millar et al., 2017; Rhee et al., 2018).

As people interact with individuals from unfamiliar cultural groups, the act of communication can be labeled as an intercultural interaction. Culture is a universal standard that serves as a guide for communicational understanding (Berg et al., 2021; Kang, 2021), and that insight varies by community values and beliefs. An individual's cultural experience relates to the community's underlying social patterns that shape relationships. Culture, when used as a resource to regulate various social interactions, including group membership, benefits social connections and growth (Modiga & Avramescu, 2014; Sutherland & Yoshida, 2015). Cultural tolerance becomes a tool for ingroup membership patterns of acceptance derived from social behavior relating to a group structural ideology and creates a foundation for assumptions for a culture in which prescribed customs and values are allowed to guide interactions without thought (Dixon et al., 2022; Kerr et al., 2015).

Generalizations of outgroup members potentially create cultural practices, which lead individuals to judge groups from perspectives that may not adequately clarify the communication patterns of members from another culture (Delia, 2019; Kang, 2021). Failures in intercultural communication occur when individuals with differing cultural understanding fail to acknowledge sufficiently the differences created by cultural norms and assume a similar interpretation of word meanings

and symbols. Research on intercultural communication reveals that certain elemental structures within an environment influence behavior (Han et al., 2021; Kerr et al., 2015; Simons & Bird, 2022). Cultural traditions influence interactions by limiting the guiding principles of any cultural exchange. For example, the unique separation of communities within the United States results in differences in terrain, weather, historical understanding, economics, education, values, belief systems, and other categories across the nation (Dixon et al., 2022; Tomaselli, 2019). The differences create variances in cultural context, reinforcing disconnects in an individual's sociocultural understanding.

Intercollegiate coaches are technically skilled practitioners in a particular sport. However, one of the essential attributes of coaching is the ability to recruit and retain student-athletes for non-revenue sporting teams (McCaw, 2014). The coach-student-athlete relationship develops throughout the recruiting process. The sociocultural attributes of the recruiting process provide the groundwork for complex relationship building between coaches and student-athletes. Adaptation to ingroup behaviors requires foundational understanding to ensure communication has a proper context (Krikorian, 2014). The social influence of individuals residing in the same country still results in different contextual meanings when communicating during the recruiting process (Andrew et al., 2016; McCaw, 2014).

The intricacies involved in the recruiting process differ between institutions, coaches, and teams. Developing a social understanding of cultural differences yields a strategic advantage for coaches in developing coaching relationships with student-athletes. Research indicates that willingness to accept cultural differences through elements of social inclusion improves relationships by creating community systems that promote intercultural communication (Eicher et al., 2021; Sutherland & Yoshida, 2015).

Most individuals hired to perform intercollegiate coaching duties are proficient in the sport. A coach must communicate in a cross-cultural context to understand the approach to creating relationships among individuals within a group (Martyn et al., 2019; Steyn & Solomon, 2017). However, coaches, like

other individuals, regard values and beliefs as the beginning of normative cultural understanding and as the foundation for a successful team. Therefore, coaches must develop communication skills within the team culture to articulate a universal message of respect toward other cultures (Krikorian, 2014; Steyn & Solomon, 2017).

Researchers warn against the simplification of intercultural communication. The complexity of intercultural communication between individuals is foundational based on the speaker's meaning, but communication rarely occurs in isolation. Individuals of unfamiliar cultures ascribe different meanings to words and phrases, resulting in different meanings (Munz & Colvin, 2018; Negedu & Ojomah, 2021). Supporting the development of intercultural communication is not an essential measure of coaching ability but reflects the efficacy of team building (Bell & Riol, 2017). The ability to communicate across cultures is prone to difficulties because developing a cultural narrative is not a static concept. Culture evolves with every conversation (Perez et al., 2019). Communication plays a role in activating individual belief systems with accepted meanings of principles and definitions without consideration of information that counters beliefs. Communication between individuals is like translating foreign languages. Interpreting information involves understanding the nuanced meanings of words and phrases that may have no exact translation based on cultural norms. Communication between individuals has its difficulties. Fortunately, developing a means to address the complexity benefits relationships (Cohen, 1998; Cruz, 2013; Perez et al., 2019).

The complexity of intercultural communication may not be considered an essential quality in intercollegiate coaching, as coaches accept the interpretation of the conversations without question (Cruz, 2013; Rauff et al., 2022). However, practical failures in communication pervade intercultural conversations as unfamiliar cultural groups may fail to achieve similar meanings of words and phrases. As individuals engage in a conversation, there is a mutual need to negotiate meaning in terms of cultural understanding (Eicher et al., 2021). Coaches and athletes interpret the world from their cultural perspective based on

the cultural ingroup connections and social network understanding and meaning they derive from unfamiliar cultures. A common cultural perception entails measuring specific human experiences to ensure proper emphasis on principles governing understanding (Berri, 2015; Dixon et al., 2022).

Coaches should deliberately employ an effective presentation to create the context for describing the team culture to influence outgroup individuals they are attempting to recruit. A variety of cultural components promote athletes' retention in various sport contexts. First, sociocultural support or a sense of community is a critical factor in student-athlete retention, which, when managed effectively, benefits the university graduation rate (Berg et al., 2021; Imbrogno et al., 2021; Kidd et al., 2018). A culture of accepting individual differences is essential to student-athlete retention. Next, a socially supportive coach is beneficial to escalating diversification in college athletic departments (Berg & Warner, 2019). Finally, cultural corroboration is vital to college athletes' well-being and retention (Warner & Leierer, 2015).

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to achieve an understanding of the coaches' points of view of the recruiting process and their perception of intercultural communication philosophy that influences the recruitment or retention of student-athletes in NCAA member institutions. I used a phenomenological research design to investigate and explain the relationships and dynamics involved in the communication processes between coaches and athletes. Researchers use qualitative research to observe a phenomenon and achieve an interpretive description of the practice to construct a visible pattern (Hayes et al., 2016; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). With phenomenological methodology as a research tool, I explored the extent to which non-revenue coaches use intercultural communication in individual interactions with student-athletes and used it as a frame of reference on how coaches create and explain team culture. Phenomenological research occurs in the natural environment with the researcher serving as the instrument in the interaction. Phenomenological researchers cited two significant purposes of a qualitative study: to identify the lived experience

and to describe and explain the insight gained (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016).

Furthermore, qualitative researchers approach a research question without a hypothesis or a question to prove or disprove; instead, they focus on understanding the phenomena and potentially creating new knowledge (McLean et al., 2004). I selected qualitative phenomenology as the methodology for this study to help explain the use of and investigate the coaches' understanding of intercultural communication factors that influence the recruitment and retention of student-athletes. Researchers suggested qualitative methods for researchers interested in sports because qualitative approaches enable one to depict the participant's experiences and identify complex behaviors. A qualitative approach is efficient for exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Maxwell, 1996; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). Maxwell (1996) constructed four reasons qualitative research suits sport-related research. They are:

1. Understanding the context of participant's actions and the influence that the cultural context has on their behaviors.
2. Identifying unanticipated cultural phenomena that influence social theories in sport.
3. Creating opportunities for understanding institutional processes that go unnoticed in everyday activity.
4. Developing cultural explanations for student-athletes and coaching interactions.

For this study, I used qualitative research, which, according to the literature, is an interpretive approach for gaining insight into research methodology that supports future understanding (Berg & Warner, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Maxwell, 1996).

Scope and Limitations

Phenomenological research has limitations. The current study involved creating a framework based on the participants' experiences, which limited the inquiry to the coach's understanding. NCAA member institutions publicly

identify the coaches of their sporting teams. I approached some coaches to participate in this study by phone calls and others by leveraging previous intercollegiate administrative relationships. The cultural viewpoints or belief systems of 10 coaches who committed to a 45-minute, semi-structured interview via Zoom or in person influenced the overall findings. The results may change as the research continues and additional coaches participate in interviews. The initial coaches interviewed may not accurately depict the intercultural communication framework of the 20,111 head coaches currently employed by NCAA member institutions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Maxwell, 1996; NCAA, 2022; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). I began the research by emailing and calling coaches of non-revenue-producing sporting teams to participate in the study. Athletes and coaches have unfamiliar cultural norms, and communication methodology differs as experiences influence meaning. Using coding methods such as in vivo and process coding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Culver et al., 2003; Maxwell, 1996; Poucher et al., 2020; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016), I gathered information from the interview, which was the foundation for explaining the intercultural communication between coaches and student-athletes.

University culture influences the atmosphere of an athletic program and may have affected the results. The geographical differences may also hinder the scope of understanding. Participants were not only from similar areas in North America but also competed for recruits. Limitations in the analysis may be due to excluding athletes with recruiting and retention experience and exclusively seeking to understand the coach's cultural perspectives when recruiting and retaining student-athletes in intercollegiate athletics. The participants in the study coach in the NCAA, limiting the potential for recording individual culture narratives influenced by university institutional culture. Participants carefully shared personal experiences of intercultural communication to shield student identities through stories or accolades. The foundation of this research was exploring the use of intercultural communication by coaches of non-revenue-producing sport from Division I and II member universities.

Definition of Terms

Intercultural Communication is the exchange of information between individuals whose cultural understanding causes linguistic expectations to differ in conversational meaning as a part of the social construct created by an individual understanding of a value system and worldview.

Recruiting is a method of interaction coaches and universities use to influence student-athletes to choose a college or university.

Retention is the continuation of an athletic relationship between a university athletic department and student-athletes who participate in a particular sport during the student-athlete's educational pursuits at the university.

Student-athletes are full-time university students who effectively agree to compete on an organized intercollegiate athletic sporting team, as they commit to the role of the student during the student-athlete tenure at university.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the governing body of intercollegiate athletics with 1200 member institutions. The NCAA establishes bylaws and policies governing student-athlete eligibility, recruitment, financial aid, and other issues related to NCAA member institutions.

Division I; Division II. The NCAA segmented institutional athletic department membership into divisions (Division I, II, and III). Division I institutions are at the top of a tiered hierarchal system designed to match recruiting opportunities. According to the NCAA member bylaws, Division I and II institutions offer athletically related scholarships to student-athletes based on university student size (NCAA, 2022

). In general, larger colleges or universities participate in Division I and smaller colleges in Division II. The current study was limited to Division I and II because, according to the NCAA (2021), Division III universities do not offer scholarships, and retention numbers could be more frequently affected by other factors.

Contact Period is a specific time when college coaches are permitted to have direct contact with college-bound student-athletes or the athlete's parents, observe student-athletes during competitions, visit the current high school of the student-athletes, and write or telephone student-athletes or the athlete's parents.

Summary

Accepting cultural differences is the foundation for overcoming variations and creating a relational context supporting non-revenue-producing sporting teams' foundational framework. The framework builds on the cultural interactions of an individual and the unique experiences of the athlete or coach to build the foundation on which teams develop cultural understanding. The relationship between athletes and coaches directly impacts team success. Establishing a cultural rapport within any sporting team will differ by the team's roster and the sport represented. Nevertheless, the study of cultural communication and the benefits derived are not germane to building team structure but not to having successful team members. For this research, I used a phenomenological model to investigate social factors and experiences of non-revenue sporting team coaches to reveal how negotiating sociocultural systems structure reality. Phenomenology reflects the social structures that form cultural experiences in the relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gunther, 2004; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016), which, for the current study, were made meaningful by the coaches' engagement in constructing a team that creates new cultural norms for experiences, which structure ingroup normalcy.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the experience of the framework created by the communication methods used by NCAA Division I and II coaches to convey information during the recruitment or retention process. By investigating the narrative behind the intercultural communications methods used by coaches of non-revenue-producing sporting teams, my goal was to explore the communication experiences and the subjective types of conversations coaches use to communicate information when recruiting or retaining student-athletes, as described in the literature (Bell & Riol, 2017; Berg & Warner, 2019; Dean & Reynolds, 2017).

Communication within a Sporting Construct

Social constructs can benefit from some familiarity, which is essential for proper structuring individual communication between people who lack experience with a particular sociocultural framing during an initial interaction. The exchange of information is a convergent process that aligns a group of individuals with a common objective and represents the primary social process, as communication plays a significant role in social construction (Perez et al., 2019). Social constructs lead to culturally adaptive measures in communication, which, to be effective, cannot be the responsibility of a single individual. Research suggests that communication with an idiosyncratic structure is a form of forced assimilation, potentially creating an antagonistic relationship as the social frame of reference and forcing outgroup individuals to deny the existence of any form of self-identity and cultural understanding. Identity is not a monolith; communication enhances cultural lens development through critical thinking during cultural interactions. Social communication involving unqualified assumptions supports the creation of adversarial interpersonal relationships (Delia, 2019; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Communication is a vehicle for conveying cultural structures to influence beliefs and advance relationships to humanize different worldviews by transmitting information for the mutual creation of meaning within a language

construct by creating a medium through which an individual expresses their lived experience. Encoding and decoding information occurs during encounters, social interactions, and experiences, giving rise to a mutual creation of meaning from the message. Ideally, communication happens in an ongoing feedback loop where individuals understand and accept the information given (Kauff et al., 2020; Perez et al., 2019). In sport competitions where an opportunity for a positive social construction of the current reality between individuals of diverse cultures is lacking, effective communication is hindered. As sociocultural changes impact the interactions between a coach and student-athletes, any differences in cultural norms could hinder the flow of information (Perez et al., 2019). The social context in communication development among coaches favors intergroup dialog, leading to biculturalism rather than assimilation because of the failure to recognize and respect differences in understanding. Being understood when communicating with individuals of unfamiliar cultural backgrounds strengthens relationship building techniques. For example, coaches communicate different positive aspects of focus and development in the teams' sporting culture to influence student-athletes' dedication to positive outcomes in education and sport (Kim & Kim, 2019; Lee, 2018).

Coaches also participate in various situational circumstances requiring purposeful information dispensation to increase recognition of various university cultural norms. Research indicates that university traditions lead to ethnocentric interactions if coaches fail to explore cultural differences in substantive ways in contrast to normative values (Allen, 2007; Maier, 2019). Ethnocentricity in communication develops into a mechanism that creates boundaries between groups when the ingroup communicates the framework of the cultural foundation through a series of historical clues, which produces a system that may distinguish the cultural narrative as a disruptive commodity and hinder ingroup connections established by outgroup individuals (Delia, 2019; Dirlik, 2008; Gorgulu, 2019).

Cultural differences can complicate communication efforts between coaches and stakeholders as the flow of information increases, and intercollegiate coaching requires a specific level of certainty of understanding for practical

implications. During essential conversations, individuals can use assumptions, but misunderstandings can lead to a perspective that does not convey adequate messaging. A common notion among intercollegiate coaches is that information dissemination is a simple mechanism for directing cultural differences in individual student-athletes, which they may regard as normal behavior (Dirlik, 2008; Maier, 2019). However, individuals process information differently to adapt communication to context and cultural understanding.

Communication problems are a central tenet of failed relationships and are considered a sociocultural issue. Coaches use an individual cultural perspective when exchanging information. Beliefs lead individuals to look at objectives through a limited framework. The information may be apparent from one perspective but may not convey the information intended. Conversational interactions result in foundational communication requirements, influencing the intercultural nature of the team's social context. Communication plays a significant role in the construction of team dynamics. The way language informs common characteristics affects the coach's ability to develop the team's communication foundation from cultural assumptions connected to value systems conveyed by the university and individual perspectives. As a result, requires coaches should consider the significance of individual assumptions when communicating information to student-athletes (King & Bailey, 2021; Kotzur & Wagner, 2021; Maier, 2019).

A coach's communication method has a culturally normative value resulting from previous interactions, creating a unique understanding of expected behaviors. Any adaptations to university tradition and NCAA bylaws affect how coaches communicate cultural norms to student-athletes. The resulting expectations increase the pressure to adapt to the overall traditions of the institutional culture associated with the given universities (Maier, 2019; Manwell et al., 2021). Verbal and nonverbal communication methods are symbols of specific cultural identities, and university tradition is no exception. Coaches should accommodate individual differences and adapt to behavior created by cultural differences. Openness provides a social context for individuals to accept

contractual changes to a system of beliefs reflective of a particular university's traditional cultural understanding (Gorgulu, 2019).

Institutional and Cultural Influence

Some researchers have defined *culture* as a set of behaviors distinctive to the physical standing, emotional connection, and intellectual understanding of a social group that encompasses the norms of a community and provides the base for sharing of knowledge on a social construct used as a factor to unite and guide the accepted community behavior model (Deardorff, 2019; Perez et al., 2019; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018). In research, a common perspective of culture is the reflective nature of a worldview. Many researchers see culture as a reference point used by communities to create connections within an ingroup as the foundation for the structure of psychological importance to create expectations for individuality (Buttrick & Oishi, 2021; Drummond & Orbe, 2010). In other words, culture frequently serves as a guide for individual perspectives for determining the basis for truthful ideals, but it is derived from assumptions based on individual experiences. Those experiences do not require physical presence, only the assumptions of a culture. The framing of specific behaviors remains within a standard rubric where situations are to follow expected patterns. Nevertheless, desirable social changes are possible. The most effective and simplest change is to dismiss any individuals who exhibit behaviors that confuse the social structure as defined by the team culture. Coaches have that option, but the system of NCAA bylaws hinders such measures, compelling coaches to maintain the roster or face penalties (Kauff et al., 2020; Pettigrew, 1998).

The NCAA uniquely affects the cultural system of influence in a coach's communication methodology because of the system of member institutions, bylaws, and socioeconomic market valuations. The system of compliance required by the NCAA creates an intercultural communication standard governed by the membership. Across non-revenue-producing sport, more knowledge of the factors that frame the intercultural communication patterns of coaches or how communication is affected by the NCAA governance structure is needed. The foundational culture of the coach factors in the derivative-related communication

that the NCAA mandates to support student-athletes who choose a particular intercollegiate sporting program. The student-athlete's experience is based on the institution's culture of the intercollegiate athletic department of the university they choose to attend and how they interpret the bylaws of the NCAA (Berg & Warner, 2019; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). The cultural complexity used in communicating expectations supports the competitive advantage of designing an internal culture that guides student-athletes to understand the coach's cultural communication patterns. The act of encoding information and interpreting the message is the foundation of intercultural communication, and it is instrumental to the transmission of information in a pattern understood by ingroup members involved in creating the team culture. Each coach's understanding of cultural norms influences their team's communication. Communication in relationships is built on the sender-receiver context that incorporates the transmission and receiving of knowledge between student-athletes and coaches. Understanding cultural norms requires evaluation within the challenges of the ideals of social normalcy built on the influences of the university and the NCAA (Berg & Warner, 2019; Kauff et al., 2020; Presbitero & Attar, 2018).

The cultural foundation created by the university athletic department serves as the framework for the values system that influences the decisions of the coach's identity valuations. Values are used as a guide for individual thought processes and a structure for social behaviors. The culture and tradition of a university must be explained to individuals in an outgroup capacity. Even with the best information, the explanation and experience differ in measure when cultural norms are defined to individuals outside of the ingroup construct (Rathwell & Young, 2018). Coaches introducing student-athletes to the university's culture is emblematic of the potential for cultural misunderstanding. The potential for cultural misinterpretation is a phenomenon created by advancing the assumptions that university culture is easily comprehended when coaches explain the expected lived experiences of student-athletes based on their inherent beliefs. Intercultural communication includes a potential for inadequate understanding of the culture between individuals, as culture vacillates based on experience (Apfelbaum et al.,

2012). Sport provides coaches and student-athletes a foundation to build a cultural connection and instruct student-athletes on the operational nature of the program's culture derived from the institutional development of the athletic department, which influences the actions of coaches and student-athletes. The relationship developed promotes sociocultural connections that support cultural communication patterns based on shared experiences (Lee, 2018). The changes in the cultural environment require individuals to adapt behavior to reflect new cultural expectations, as people notice differences when interacting with others. However, coaches expect athletes to be assimilated into the sociocultural structure of the team (King & Bailey, 2021).

Some psychological literature research suggests that in the face of cultural inconsistency, individuals tend to move toward resolving the discrepancies that do not align with known behavior in a phenomenon called cognitive dissonance. The differences sometimes cause individuals to change cultural values to match expected behaviors or accept changes in behavior to match stated commitments (Aronson, 1968; Bem, 1967; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Often, cultural adaptation is seen as an assimilation method forcing new ingroup members to adapt to the institutional culture. The university system operates under categorical generalizations created by the positivistic viewpoints of ingroup importance. The practice hinders athletic departments by limiting worldviews and creating systems that lack diversity of thought and experience (Cardona, 2021; Cobb et al., 2020).

Intercultural Communication between Coaches and Institutional Framework

Intercultural communication is a complex way individuals or groups define language expectations and meaning based on the social constructs interwoven into their cultural understanding. An individual's cultural identity has a framework established by the norms created within the community that provide a social connection for security. Respect for individual differences is an integral part of the intercultural communication framework, and the practice of intercultural communication across cultural contexts helps coaches establish social groupings that encompass other individuals (Campo et al., 2019; Segev et al., 2022). Intercultural communications occur most often within the bifurcation

of a cultural context. The contextual framework applies equally to domestic or gender differences. Forced cultural assimilation of individuals from a minority group by individuals with collective social power hinders cultural understanding as members of the outgroup lack the opportunity to be honest (Campo et al., 2019; Modiga & Avramescu, 2014; Segev et al., 2022). Cultural traditions stem from experience and familiarity and do not require effort to understand (Williams et al., 2015).

Intercultural communication facilitates supportive measures in creating the informational meaning of words and phrases during the communication process. Ingroups require the mutual creation and interpretation of information to establish meaning across cultures. Social connections develop opportunities to discover how diverse groups analyze the meaning of messages sent to convey information in forming relationships across various situations (Bell & Riol, 2017; Draine, 2019). The differences resulting from unique sociocultural experiences of individuals lead to the need for intercultural communication to facilitate positive ingroup attitudes and intergroup relations. Cultures form communication patterns that are unique to the framework to develop a societal foundation connecting individuals to a group for security (Bodin et al., 2022; de Graff & Rosseau, 2015). The process of creating a societal structure serves as a device to catalog expected behavior that supports the symbolic interactionism negotiated through intercultural communication. The social construction offered to individuals who engage in intercultural communication improves cognitive and empathic awareness of the individual as outgroup interactions occur in different situations (Miles & Shinew, 2022).

Communication between individuals begins as the transmission of information. However, the information is only significant once there is a mutual creation of connotation. Language assists individuals in generating knowledge and assigning foundational value to influence belief systems. The linguistic benefit helps produce grounds for relationships and humanize different worldviews by transmitting information for the mutual construction of word meaning within the language construct by connecting a medium of expression to

an individual's lived experience to reference during interactions. Communication between individuals is a foundational element in formulating a relationship in which cultural differences between groups seeking to develop a supportive environment to exchange information related to knowledge sharing is recognized.

Negative feelings can persist in diverse types of interpersonal relationships with student-athletes from unfamiliar cultural backgrounds. Addressing cultural factors can cause tension in the team development process (Modiga & Avramescu, 2014; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). Discussion efforts by coaches represent a social shift in expected behaviors and their aim is to cultivate adaptive changes by student-athletes, even though communication is a joint agreement between individuals regarding the meaning of shared information (Cameron et al., 2019). Developing an understanding of the cultural differences within the culture is necessary to create a balance in accepting how ideas are communicated. The cognitive cost of intercultural communication is based on the approval that all cultural understanding adds value to the diverse social structure and lays a foundation to connect individuals to a group for security. Problems with individual cultural comprehension lead to assumptions based on individual cultural norms (Berg & Warner, 2019).

Distorted communication breaks down trust and can build a deceptive foundation for cultural understanding. Willingness to advance cultural knowledge and awareness, communication skills, and tolerance for ambiguity strongly impact the favorability of intergroup relations. A coach's willingness to allow intercultural communication to develop enhances collaborations. Context variances influence communication, and coaches must be aware of the ramifications, as teams have cultural structures (Tiferes & Bisantz, 2018).

Intercultural communication is a tool in coaching methodology that can assist in connecting positively to student-athletes' attention during the recruiting contact periods and in the retention processes of student-athletes eligible to return to the team. Anxiety and uncertainty affect intercultural communication effectiveness and further influence effective knowledge sharing (Nixon et al., 2021; Olson, 2014; Presbitero & Attar, 2018). The aim of intercultural

communication is to incorporate the complexity of human existence into inclusive behavior for people who represent outgroups—including during team building; in particular, communication strategies help create relationship foundations to bolster good communications. Another aim of intercultural communication is to construct adaptive cultural understanding to incorporate individuals not part of the ingroup. Recognizing communication across cultural differences requires a willingness to understand the humanity of others. In various situations, miscommunication occurs as people fail to consider the humanity of others (Cobb et al., 2020; Moulin-Stožek, 2019). Coaches who support building quality intercultural communication in relationships leverage control to create a team culture to bolster athletic outcomes. The complex relationships among knowledge, power, and discourse are often a point of discussion in intercultural communication feedback (Berg & Warner, 2019; Dixon et al., 2022).

Social Influence Theory

The theory on the idea of social influence is based on conceptual assertions to impact individual behavior and decision-making efforts. Coaches with the ability to diagnose and situationally adapt appropriate influence measures and tactics increase the level of effectiveness in recruiting methodology. Coaches able to adjust behavior to reflect the changing demands of intercultural communication measures have better opportunities to influence recruiting and retention behaviors. The conduct associated with adapting cultural norms inspires trust or effectively influences the responsive behaviors of potential student-athletes (Delia, 2019; Treadway et al., 2014). Coaches skilled in conveying expected cultural understanding are said to disseminate salient information that is received as credible. The effective presentation of university expectations is essential in characterizing specific cultural features in a positive context for recruiting student-athletes. Promoting positive cultural foundational behavior creates attentional focus on the information rendered during recruiting visits. The ability to effectively leverage traditional university features in a socially meaningful context enhances the intercultural communicative efforts of recruiting (Bissett et al., 2020).

Social influence helps present and leverage critical parts of the university to market benefits that may entice student-athletes to commit to the institution. Researchers have examined the impact of interpersonal communication on patterns of a society influences the culture and the perceived benefits to the student-athletes attending the university because they usually have an interdependent relationship. However, less effort is exerted to generalize a situational response than to develop an understanding of individual motives for behaviors or exercising moral agency in a university to remain more homogeneous with other respected institutional structures. The university's institutional traditions influence the implementation of the coach's development and impact the social support of the student-athletes.

A coach who views student-athletes' social well-being as an afterthought could misunderstand the connection between how athletes' feelings are fundamental to the intercollegiate experience and whether they stay committed to the university and sport. Social influence as a means of support should be available at a group level to strongly emphasize the need for all students to be integrated into healthy communities (Warner & Dixon, 2013; Warner et al., 2017). The communication method coaches use to construct a social context for a non-revenue sporting team is fundamental to the development of a social framework for the team culture to adhere. The structural implications of the coach's communication experience illuminate the need to research the role in student-athlete recruiting and retention efforts. The development of social capital accentuates the influence of sociocultural connections to the team and university. Coaches benefit from the experience of ideological exploration of communication efforts that affect the cultural understanding of the student-athletes of the sporting program (Bimper, 2016). Intercultural communications within the team social structure result in relationships that support the obligations and trust needed to effectively develop the foundational connections to recruit and retain student-athletes with a network of social ties to the coach and university.

The responsibility of coaches to develop the mental and physical nature of student-athletes while supporting the academic focus required to compete on the

intercollegiate levels is a potential benefit to the coach and the stakeholders (Becker, 2009; Bimper, 2016). The intercultural communicative development of the coach is contingent beyond their participation in sport and can directly impact the athletic departments the coach and student-athletes represented. The isolated nature of intercollegiate sport fails to appreciate the strong pull of the internal culture, within university athletic departments, where coaches suffer an appreciable loss of personal identity to reflect university culture and assimilate a cultural norm based on the institutional philosophy (Gay, 2002; Mann, 2019). Research indicates that effective coaching benefits from the knowledge of intercultural communication in a social context. Because of cultural normalcy, expecting student-athletes to adapt to the coach's cultural understanding is insufficient. Research indicates that culturally responsive coaching methods could provide the knowledge, skill, and practice coaches should use to serve the student-athlete's educational and sporting culture through intercultural communication (Bell, 2009; Gay, 2002).

Ingroup Membership

The NCAA has influence over the cultural values of the university and the coaches. Value orientation influences perceptions and behaviors of the idealistic conduct of a university. Ingroup membership is not a static social relationship. Ingroup changes necessitate openness in the foundation for equality as a crucial prerequisite for social adaptation to formulate the proper conditions to effectively create the circumstances for the institution to allow individuals into an ingroup. Ingroups exist to combat a common enemy, and coaches can utilize the formula to build team structures. Coaches can communicate effectively with student-athletes if they manage any anxiety associated with adaptations to cultural norms. Predicting the attitudes and behaviors of student-athletes accurately is difficult. However, coaches mindful of the sensitivity to unfamiliar cultural contexts and perspectives can moderate the relationship between anxiety and uncertainty through effective intercultural communication (Kim & Kim, 2019; Presbitero & Attar, 2018).

Student-athletes are socialized into the team's cultural structure by coaches first. The learned behavior affects the ability of a student-athlete to achieve cultural understanding through verbal and nonverbal exchange and interaction with coaches and other student-athletes. Assimilation into ingroup membership development is posited based on the perspective of positive behavioral qualities generalized by group members. The similarities of group members emerge as a group resource for building social relationships distinctive to the group social structure (Cobb et al., 2020). Coaches often create rituals to influence sporting teams of various cultures to form communication patterns that are unique expressions of ingroup membership. However, communication is not strictly functional but allows coaches some individuality and societal complexity (Campo et al., 2019; Dixon et al., 2020).

Research indicates that changes in group dynamics may negatively impact intergroup relations and threaten social cohesion (Cobb et al., 2020). Changes to underlying ingroup traits can increase feelings of detachment among intercultural groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cobb et al., 2020; Soyer, 2019). There is a cumulative effect of becoming culturally adaptive to the dominant ingroup. Orientation around cultural values creates a primary lens for viewing individual actions or the action of others. Value systems produce the framework of how people communicate with others appropriately, forming the basis of how individuals interpret the behavior of others. Value orientation influences perception and behavior. Generalizing creates difficulty and creates diverse value systems and heterogeneous cultures. The social mobility of intercultural communications is an individual's ability to fluctuate between ingroup and outgroup individuals to develop relationships that do not require coaches to alienate student-athletes. Researchers posit that social mobility occurs in two forms. First, membership in a particular culture shapes characteristics of the mutual understanding of current representatives. Second, individuals adopt cultural membership characteristics while maintaining prior associations (Dixon et al., 2020; Soyer, 2019).

The ecological systems theory addresses the influence of the cultural environment on individual behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cobb et al., 2020; Soyer, 2019). The environmental effects that coaches experience influence the development of the values and cultural systems they understand. Cultural development is directly impacted by the many interactions of coaches in a wide range of factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Soyer, 2019). The departmental ecosystem can be used to examine cultural identity's role in intercollegiate athletic environments. Knowledge of the system could be a valuable component of the intercultural communication methods coaches develop for creating the team culture. Groups formed based on changing cultural characteristics often engage in social mobility as membership in the group changes due to graduation and injury. A social mobility strategy based on recruiting prospects and coaches adopting rationalized ideals of cultural norms in their coaching methodologies bolster legitimacy and athletic prospects (Williams et al., 2015). Research on sport coaching behavior has been used to conceptualize different leadership styles to determine the viability of the methodology on successful outcomes. Nevertheless, sociocultural methods are distinct in providing institutional influence to support team cohesion, relationships between coaches and student-athletes, team influence, and other behavioral paradigms, but not the coach's knowledge of the sport that created the relationship foundation to form the sociocultural connections of the team (Kim et al., 2017; Sethi et al., 2022).

The sociocultural origin of ingroup sporting behavior is not a student-oriented practice, as student-athletes are a transitory part of the team-building process. In establishing an athletic department, each university creates a sociocultural environment to transition through the student-athletes with a coach to guide the adaptation to the university. However, universities sometimes fail to anticipate intercultural communication methodology and sociocultural fluctuation. Changes in the cultural understanding of the community ingroup members occur because of graduates, coaches who recruit and retain different student-athletes, and coaches who adapt to cultural variations (Gates, 1993). The increasing

economic cost and market benefits of athletes to universities support the use of intercultural communication methods to increase retention and enhance recruiting.

Compared to regional, socioeconomic, or gender differences, cultural differences are a factor in recruiting and retention, improving the educational opportunities of ethnically diverse student populations (Gay, 2002; Weinstein et al., 2004). Individuals develop thought processes to support a given value system, and those opinions result from firsthand experiences in intercultural interactions. In the NCAA, many university coaches need more intercultural context in subjective experiences to guide the understanding of cultural differences. As intercultural differences in student-athletes culture normalcy expand, coaches in the NCAA endure a continuously adaptive experience. Adaptations occur as the coaches of intercollegiate athletic sporting teams acknowledge cultural differences and experience the challenges of creating an ingroup. However, in terms of intercultural communication, many prefer athletes to adapt to the university's culture created by the coach's understanding of cultural norms (Gates, 1993; Hammer et al., 2003; Taylor, 2020; Parris & Peachey, 2012).

The foundation of the university athletic system is monocultural, and the cultural underpinnings are ingrained in the structure of the university social identity of the group. Coaches, athletic systems, and stakeholders understand that the NCAA governing process cannot maintain a progressive worldview with an ethnocentric mindset. Coaches willing to embrace a sociocultural process create relationships to ensure knowledge is passed to individuals desiring to adapt to the team's culture based on the group ideology. The intercultural communication system of a coach in an athletic department requires adherence to an approach influenced by bylaws and membership in the university culture. The coach's obligations to the university athletic and educational system should provide the foundation for a cultural value system and departmental philosophy to assist in the recruiting and retention principles to field a successful team (Edley, 2014; Gay, 2000).

The one-dimensional view of culture can hinder the ingroup system growth the athletic departments hope to achieve in recruiting and retention (Gay,

2000; Moodian, 2009). The cultural foundation of a university reflects the history of the monocultural structure of sporting teams, established to identify with the ethnocentric connections created to ensure cultural assumptions throughout the athletic department (Hammer et al., 2003; Parris & Peachey, 2012). Because of the cultural framework universities produce, many coaches lack experience with unfamiliar cultural understanding to determine the appropriate response to an interaction (Gay, 2002; Mann, 2019). In sport, the social stratification of hiring in coaching limits the intercultural framework and the understanding of culturally responsive coaching techniques to address the divide between coaches and the team culture, hindering some ingroup connections. Effective methodologies to address cultural issues have lacked in intercollegiate sport (Bell, 2009; Bell & Riol, 2017; Gay, 2002). Since 1983, researchers have outlined cultural failures in producing a system to create avenues for educational and sporting programs to foster a system of improvement to understand the importance of differences (Bell, 2009; Bullough; Gay, 2002; Edley, 2014; Taylor, 2020). In each iteration of reform in the NCAA, the lack of cultural understanding of the coach's social identity hinders a student-athlete's ability to adapt competitively for the team's benefit. The university athletic systems have produced trends that enhance opportunity. However, research indicates that implicit bias persists, reinforcing different forms of inequality. The lack of experience with individuals of unfamiliar cultures slows the production of adaptive environments in sport (Savage et al., 2013; Taylor, 2020). Creating an inclusive environment is an essential step toward the goal of accepting differing social identities as a characteristic of group membership coaches can use to create a cultural foundation for a positive outcome in sporting teams. (Gay, 2002; Taylor, 2020).

Intergroup Relations

Transformation is a core competency in creating a team culture that adapts to the differences of the individual members. When coaches recruit student-athletes, differences play a limited role in scholarship offers, and intergroup commonalities tend to be stressed but overlooked for the benefit of the talent the teams need for positive outcomes (Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014). The ongoing

recruitment often results in implicit divisions in group culture (Brewer, 1997). Any grouping of team culture forms conflict in intergroup relations, and coaches should be careful not to create divisive group differences (Cobb et al., 2020; Dovidio et al., 2009; Moshman, 2011; Yogeewaran et al., 2021). Allport's (1954) posited that contact between social groups effectively reduces future social assumptions as ingroup-outgroup distinctions become increasingly noticeable, and intergroup knowledge often emerges among group members (Allport, 1954; Cobb et al., 2020). Coaches willing to create a culture of behavior that includes knowledge sharing influence the cognitive belief in the ability of another student-athlete to understand given information from an ingroup or outgroup individual.

Research indicates that tension develops when information is articulated or experienced as a counter to the belief system of the team. University culture forces the coach to instruct the team to become bicultural, that is, to understand the foundational team culture and that of the university. When cultural norms restrict feelings of acceptance, challenges can persist in interpersonal relationships with coaches of diverse cultural backgrounds than the student-athletes recruited or retained for the team. Distinct cultural factors can cause friction in the team development process (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). Culturally based discourse, whether athletic or socially cognitive, is entrenched with the power of language and representation of the coach, which influences intercultural communication, relationships, and coaches as they work with student-athletes to identify the sporting talent of each recruit to cultivate successful team outcomes. Changes in social communication significantly impacted the distance between cultures, allowing individuals once held in separate gender or geography to interact in the team setting (Dirlik, 2008). The sporting relationship shaped the team's cultural norms by generating patterns of creating a decentralized ideology based on a coach's value system and the social relationships created by the impact the university placed on intergroup communications. Intergroup relationships provide framework elements for coaches to create a system of culture that survives the changes that occur naturally in intercollegiate sport (Dirlik, 2008; Vaughan et al., 2021).

Most coaches understand nonverbal communication and cultural norms based on tradition and community cultures (Carter-Jones, 1993). Institutional leaders operate based on generally accepted principles and assume that coaches do similarly. In sport, countless principles centered on a monocultural precept are the pervasive norm in the culture (Parris & Peachey, 2012). Coaches within an NCAA member institution experience sociocultural pressure from outside stakeholders' experiences, and often those encounters include distinct cultural understandings (Parris & Peachey, 2012). A coach's lack of familiarity with cultural differences equates to insufficient awareness of differences. Coaches who lack intercultural knowledge fail to develop a more nuanced understanding of student-athletes on sporting teams (Gay, 2002; Mann, 2019; Parris & Peachey, 2012). Developing intercultural competence by coaches is foundational to creating the connection required to adapt to unfamiliar cultures. Willingness to understand various cultures changes team values and habits and positively impacts relationships and team behavior (Huang et al., 2012).

The social cognitive theory holds that knowledge segments are related to observing people during social interactions, subjective experiences, and different media platforms. Most coaches abide unthinkingly by the realities of the social structure. They merely follow traditions and deny others the right to individuality. Less effort is exerted in generalizing the expected behaviors of others than in individual sporting motives for behavior. A coach's prejudgments limit their ability to evaluate individuals based on hearsay or information from previous experiences. Normative reconstruction of social identity by coaches of the individual student-athletes frequently occurs between individuals or elements of cultural difference beyond group divides, which may enable coaches from different social groups to interact with team members positively (Hässler et al., 2021). The positive contact creates cultural norms for intercollegiate teams' foundation experience. The coach may support a methodology reflecting a monocultural society with similar cultural norms. However, intercultural miscommunication transpires when there is a communication failure between individuals of unfamiliar cultures and ethnic groups due to cultural differences

(Hässler et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2012). Culture is an immeasurable force in language, because social identity encompasses communication structure and ways in which individuals create meaning within a group. Relationship building to address differences supports ideological variations and helps bridge miscommunications (Huang et al., 2012; Taylor, 2020).

Coaches recognize the stress student-athletes endure to achieve a stable relationship with the NCAA bylaws, other student-athletes, and the education requirements of universities on the operations standards. However, another unintended consequence of the student-athlete's success is the need for more connection between the coach and the university (Parris & Peachey, 2012). Universities create an institutional vision but receive direction from the NCAA and university initiatives and mandates, creating a barrier to cultural responsiveness required in an intergroup connection (Parris & Peachey, 2012). The frequent changes to educational requirements leave coaches needing more time to adapt to changing laws and cultural understanding. An articulated and consistent vision to build a path to a productive sporting atmosphere and a relationship between culture and the requirements is conceivable, if prioritized by the university and the coach (Huang et al., 2012; Huiszoon et al., 2018; Parris & Peachey, 2012). Cultural norms prevent the creation of an atmosphere where cultural responsiveness is expected. Unfamiliarity creates difficulty in relationship building for coaches. (Gay, 2000; Huang et al., 2012). The quality of coaching contributes to diverse knowledge. Coaches become culturally responsive in universities that ensure the methodology is learned and followed (Parris & Peachey, 2012). Coaching is an art form motivated by shared expectations and dictates that steer the team. The student-athletes on the team have cultural experiences that may differ from the coaches. Experiences shift communication variations for using language, as definitions are appropriate for the team culture. The culturally responsive approach addresses the need for open communication to accept differences brought about by choosing cultural understanding (Huang et al., 2012; Richards et al., 2007).

Cultural openness is essential to build the willingness to advance intergroup cultural understanding and enhance relationships between coaches and student-athletes (Parris & Peachey, 2012). The foundation of the ingroup bias governing coaching methodology is understanding the attitudes and values that favor a preferred behavior set by student-athletes. Intergroup bias fosters behavior that creates negative relationships that affect student-athlete recruiting and retention. These labels are commonly used to express or identify unwanted behaviors inconsistent with conventional expectations. The negative connotations created by labeling misunderstood cultural behavior harm intergroup relations because of the enhanced bias (Carter-Jones, 1993; Kotzur & Wagner, 2021). Cultural influences can distort the reasoning around the behaviors and actions of student-athletes because of cognitively influenced understanding of behavioral norms (Carter-Jones, 1993; Gay, 2000). Culturally, coaching should empower the student-athlete needs of a diverse student population (Gay, 2002).

Conformity to the coach's ingroup expectations forces student-athletes of unfamiliar cultural backgrounds to agree to team standards and values despite conflicting expectations from differing belief systems. Modifying in-group values to include the student-athletes' cultural understanding creates relationships based on compassion and respect. Acculturation with the coach's cultural understanding enhances relationships by creating an awareness of expected behavior. For example, student-athletes tend to elevate conversational tone levels in a group. A coach who lacks intercultural communication skills may become angry at the noise level. However, that loud conversation culturally signifies feelings of freedom (Ancis, 2004). Student-athletes want to have a voice to express themselves without condemnation. A language pattern is adapted to the current cultural understanding of the coaches but without a culturally responsive coaching method, student-athletes and stakeholders can miscommunicate despite speaking the same language (Gay, 2000; Huang et al., 2012).

Some intercollegiate athletic programs have coaches who effectively use intercultural communications in acknowledging university student-athletes' shifting cultural demographics. The increased cultural understanding in the

student-athlete populace underscores the demand for programs that prepare coaches with skills and strategies derived from sociocultural learning theory and enable them to recruit student-athletes with varied cultural, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Gay, 2000; Huang et al., 2012).

Social Relations

Building relationships requires coaches to develop an understanding of the intercultural competency process. Differences in culture surprise individuals who lack experience with outgroups, as they regard ingroup behavior as proper (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015). Coaches deem ingroup methodology superior for the betterment of the team. As individuals tend to believe in overgeneralizations, they do not challenge the information, as any connection to biased belief systems seems plausible. However, building social relations requires trust as a part of the intercultural construct to motivate behaviors that increase connections and relationships to reduce transactional relationship behaviors in a culture. Generalizations and assumed responses hinder positive relationships because they prevent individual understanding (Cooper et al., 2015; McEvoy et al., 2013; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015; Weiss & Robinson, 2013). Disseminated information is only valid once put into context, as a function of the individuals hearing the information.

Relationships undergo a development process. The process includes the social construction of a communication paradigm to create a contextual foundation for word meaning (Stojanović & Robinson, 2021). Positive intergroup contact benefits relations between coaches and student-athletes because research indicates that communication diminishes bias. Coaches need to understand that student-athletes' primary culture affects an athlete's sporting language and linguistic differences, which involves the potential for intercultural miscommunication. A culturally diverse team of student-athletes requires openness to cultural understanding as a source of sociocultural understanding (Gay, 2000; Huang et al., 2012). When coaches cannot decode or understand unfamiliar nonverbal communication, misunderstanding can break down relationships, causing culturally different student-athletes to express displeasure

with behaviors deemed unexpected, which could affect recruiting and retention efforts (Carter-Jones, 1993; Gay, 2000; Kotzur & Wagner, 2021). However, with opportunities to interact with student-athletes of different cultures, the issue becomes less idiosyncratic.

Previous research indicates that coaches notice perceptual differentiation in student-athlete behaviors but fail to acknowledge how differences in social interactions could affect retention or recruitment. Intercultural adaptation leads to intercultural understanding or changes in behavioral expectations as a common philosophical consequence of the value of group differences (Banwell & Kerr, 2016; Cobb et al., 2020). The social application of the cultural framework is one way to manage the diversification of sporting teams. The coaches create a foundational interest by establishing a relationship among student-athletes of differing cultural norms. Team discussion in athletic settings must conform to the coach's understanding of cultural normalcy, making team communication comprehensible. Intercultural relations are an enduring and contested phenomenon with important implications for transforming intercultural sporting relationships (Martínková, 2020; Yogeewaran et al., 2021). The connection to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of student-athletes can influence knowledge sharing of common philosophical sporting beliefs. Researchers acknowledge that diverse types of motivation can enhance feelings of worth in social groups, providing security in intergroup relationships. Behavioral models must resemble the patterns associated with a known understanding based on individual knowledge of expected conduct in team sporting situations (Yogeewaran et al., 2021).

Language facilitates social exchanges between coaches and student-athletes by connecting lived experiences to new knowledge. Sport becomes comprehensively relevant to student-athletes as the coach introduces culturally significant information to the student-athletes (Taylor, 2020). Coaches' responsibilities to the university and the student-athletes, as evidenced across sporting research, show that using intercultural communication can address problems in communication and behavioral elements caused by a lack of

experience with a different culture. Relationship building offers social identity to student-athletes in a non-revenue sporting team experience (Gay, 2000; Kotzur & Wagner, 2021), and having practical experiences with outgroup members may be essential to addressing student-athlete feelings and behaviors concerning outgroup members, thus, providing a foundation for social relationships with outgroup team members and changing intergroup contact opportunities (Kotzur & Wagner, 2021).

In various coaching methods, student-athletes' cultural norms are ignored because their aim is to assimilate student-athletes into the team culture; changes can support adaptations (Huang et al., 2012; Kotzur & Wagner, 2021). Evidence shows that coaches resolve to understand the student-athlete's culture; respecting individual cultural differences is a cornerstone of effective coaching in an intercultural environment (Gay, 2000; Huang et al., 2012). For student-athletes who lack experience with a culture's nonverbal patterns, communicating and maintaining the unique cultural identity within the team is not straightforward (Carter-Jones, 1993; Moodian, 2009). In addition, studies support a correlation between intergroup contact opportunities and reductions in generalizations, increasing positive outcomes in recruiting and retention. Coaches who support cultural differences create a framework for increased opportunities for successful outcomes (Gay, 2000; Kotzur & Wagner, 2021).

In expanding a coach's cultural understanding, coaches should model a culturally responsive standard in an easily adapted format to spread the benefits of intercultural communications to student-athletes (Huang et al., 2012). Researchers have argued that intercultural miscommunication occurs due to cultural misunderstanding when coaches do not adapt individual speech patterns or rules when communicating with student-athletes of another group or culture. As a result, individuals have trouble decoding an environment (Carter-Jones, 1993; Huang et al., 2012). Coaches using previous experiences to respect different value systems and other problem-solving methods could be foundational for expanding cultural understanding. Culturally responsive coaching is a straightforward adaptation to facilitate positive outcomes in recruiting and retention (Carter-Jones,

1993; Gay, 2002). Given that most non-revenue sporting teams are primarily homogeneous in cultural makeup, developing a cultural knowledge base would be a viable skill set for coaches to learn and would increase recruiting options for sporting teams (Gay, 2002). Coaches use various tactics to learn individual student-athletes' abilities, build university culture, adjust practice scheduling for academic instruction based on NCAA bylaws, and adapt elements of the sport because of player personnel. The transition to a culturally responsive component is an appropriate measure to increase the economic value of the team structure (Gay, 2002; Taylor, 2020). Responsive coaching efforts symbolize a desire to affect the evolving ethos of all student-athlete cultural requirements, regardless of an athlete's gender, religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background. Therefore, creating a more complicated and insightful development of cultural values matches the overall move toward establishing cultural parameters reflective of policies and standards that support the idealized image of an institutionally relevant phenomenon (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; Taylor, 2020).

Quality coaching allows student-athletes to connect to the teams' intergroup culture and experience in sporting activities with a power dynamic that could increase successful outcomes in academics and sport. Openness to unfamiliar cultural practices as normative enhances relationship-building opportunities and may strongly affect positive intergroup contact (Kotzur & Wagner, 2021; Taylor, 2020). A specific focus on coaches' engagement in intercultural communications may be more critical for improving sporting achievement among student-athletes than focusing on outside development practices by creating an opportunity for a meaningful understanding of student-athletes' culture (Gay, 2000, 2002). Research indicates that student-athletes receive engagement clues from the coach to adapt to cultural differences to garner favorable acceptance by the ingroup. Culturally responsive coaching methodology provides space and opportunity to improve recruiting and retention of student-athletes (Gay, 2002; Taylor, 2020). Culture influences how coaches think, believe, and behave. Because coaching is an instructional form of communication, Taylor (2020) suggested that communication patterns occur in four

measurements: personal, community, instructive, and authentic. The communication between coaches and student-athletes enables cultural understanding enhanced by experience (Gay, 2000; Taylor, 2020).

Communication with student-athletes is the core of a coach's responsibilities and a benefit of sporting communication to facilitate relationship building within the athletic community. Each positive intergroup encounter reduces biased behavior when coaches and student-athletes have frequent positive outgroup contact (Kotzur & Wagner, 2021; Taylor, 2020). Improving communication methods based on a culturally adaptive foundation helps foster better outgroup relationships within all interactions. As communication is enhanced, so is a student-athlete's opportunity to be recruited and retained by the coach (Gay, 2000; Taylor, 2020).

Intercultural Communication in Student-Athlete Recruitment or Retention

The connection between shareholders and the economic value of student-athletes influences a university's market share and brand recognition, making the recruitment and retention of student-athletes a valuable resource in athletic departments. Because of the commercialization of university athletics, the finances of the university and the athletic department are impacted in many ways (i.e., the name, image, likeness [NIL], television network contracts, and donor contributions). The economic structure of an athletic department plays an essential role in influencing the strength of university brand awareness in sport (Eicher et al., 2021; Fort, 2016). University athletic programs now play a vital role in the university's economic structure, and the recruitment and retention of student-athletes influence how the university performs in the marketplace (Andon & Free, 2019; Klenosky & Troutman, 2001). The economic value of sport recruiting practices of a university and student-athlete retention has risen sharply due to market pressures. The ability to recruit and retain student-athletes who add value to non-revenue-producing sporting teams is an essential component of an athletic department's ability to provide a solid brand structure to support positive market benefits (Fort, 2016; Hammond, 2021; Hoffer & Pincin, 2016).

The university is the primary institutional stakeholder for an athletic department, and the strategic direction and culture of the institution are based on its traditions. The resulting framework serves as the foundation for the operational structure and culture of the departments within the university's business structure, including the athletic department, even though athletic departments operate as independent commodities (Hextrum, 2020; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). The athletic department aligns its business objective with the sociocultural construction of the university's strategic plan (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Each university athletic department fields athletic teams based on university preferences, as different sporting teams appeal to various parts of the social structure. Each team has a coach chosen based on the university's belief that the coach's ability is superior to that of other available coaches in a particular sport. Each institution expects coaches to support the university's core values and overall mission, but each coach arrives on campus with a unique understanding of cultural norms. The cultural knowledge of each coach influences the communication they use in building the team structure and creates the culture student-athletes understand as typical (Fort, 2016; Gurney et al., 2017; Hammond, 2021; Wicker et al., 2016). The high cost of recruiting has led athletic departments to regard intercollegiate athletes as valuable commodities and marketing tools with the capacity to elevate a school's reputation, boost the public appeal, and ultimately secure supplemental monies for the institution (Fort, 2016; Gurney et al., 2017; Hammond, 2021; Taylor & Hardin, 2016; Treme et al., 2011; Wicker et al., 2016).

Universities rely on coaches to create successful sporting programs. Programs that appeal to student-athletes and the market are structured around the university's core marketing strategies. However, essential coaching techniques support team structure and do not reflect a coach's ability to create experiences that foster a thriving team culture or build a socioeconomic foundation to boost the university market share. Many universities believe that college coaching staff and facilities influence culture but do not monitor individual tactics or create universal methods to influence intercultural communication practices (Fort, 2016;

Zvosec & Baer, 2022). The structured connections between coaches and student-athletes are fostered by their commitment to a long-term relationship based on cooperative interactions, creating a sociocultural dynamic to support team development and enhance behaviors suited to achieving athletic and educational goals. Student-athletes must balance building a system of athletic responsibility, changes in cultural communication, and academic success. Coaches create a representative community culture built on the dynamic process of creating intercultural conceptualizations to balance university expectations, student-athletes, and market expectations (Gould et al., 2020; Sheehan et al., 2018; Simons & Bird, 2022). Individual coaches direct intercollegiate sporting teams on behalf of the university, and those coaches influence the culture of the athletic program (Kim et al., 2017; Lee, 2018). The relationship between coaches and student-athletes is essential to creating the team's social identity and culture. That culture increases adherence to behavioral expectations, certain outcomes, and specific communication patterns. Coaches are responsible for mentally, physically, and culturally developing athletes, but the underlying sociocultural relationship must align with the university's cultural norms. The relationship begins with the coach's ability to communicate expectations (Lens, 2018; Maier, 2019).

Intercultural communication abilities affect recruiting and retention, as they depend on coaches' value systems and cultural understanding of information related to cultural norms for sporting teams. Values uniquely connect to individual priorities, and coaches employ a system of values that result from systematic self-authentication measured as a part of the cultural development that is the product of experiences (Shan et al., 2021; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015). Cultural differences in the value system influence the thought process of individuals and are the core characteristic of the societal understanding of individual differences. Analyzing a coach's sport-specific use of intercultural communication in a non-revenue-producing framework involves studying the approach coaches use in constructing the sociocultural communication during the recruiting and retention processes (Treme et al., 2011; Zvosec & Baer, 2022).

Evaluating individuals with limited experience is the type of judgment that causes potential discourse in recruiting, exposing myths, and providing opportunities for misunderstandings. Coaches and student-athletes share an initial understanding of effective relational behaviors for a sport, which brings them together based on mutual knowledge and the social context of the communication norms. However, as the sociocultural relationship develops, ingroup understanding based on social constructs confuses the interface, as essential communication adaptation exposes superficial variables in an intercultural relationship (Sethi et al., 2022).

Research indicates that intercultural communication unifies knowledge-sharing relationships with a common objective (Perez et al., 2019; Presbitero & Attar, 2018). The structure of a team roster directly affects how the foundational culture evolves. Effective communication is enhanced by an individual's ability to predict attitudes and behaviors. The results influence the effectiveness of intercultural knowledge development. A coach's willingness to examine intercultural communication framework and secure the communication foundation of relationships influences recruiting and retention, and they can use the knowledge for personal development (Bell & Riol, 2017; Presbitero & Attar, 2018). Knowledge sharing influences ingroup relationships, creating mindfulness in different contexts and improving the capacity to share knowledge of cultural highlights to achieve the desired outcomes (Archer & Weaver, 2020; Presbitero & Attar, 2018).

Coaches' formal communication with student-athletes is essential to their mutual fundamental understanding of team culture and compliance with NCAA bylaws to distribute information effectively. The sociocultural relationships that build ingroup culture should match the level of comprehension in how the student-athletes understand language. Intercultural communication, by definition, is a mutual informational agreement in word meaning. Coaches often expect athletes to arrive at the adapted meaning in all communications. The variations in cultural differences require student-athletes to communicate based on the coach's understanding of cultural normalcy and community interest. The coaches' cultural communication system sets the foundation to create a culture of understanding

that allows athletes to gain understanding on the playing field, within the university's culture, and as a team member. Communication between individuals without improving signal transmission can hinder information flow (Archer & Weaver, 2020; Harrison, 2013). The intercultural communication metric in a team culture is coded based on a coach's perception, whereas student-athletes effectively decode a new cultural understanding. Some coaches use persuasiveness in interactions to influence intercultural communication and dismiss certain behaviors that favor assimilation. In other instances, coaches assist individuals who are more socially aware of the expected cultural norms in connecting to the ingroup, which can create barriers to understanding differences in unfamiliar concepts of cultural variations (Gorgulu, 2019; Treadway et al., 2014).

Coaches in the NCAA have a value system shaped by influences from the cultural communications requirements of the member institutions, personal understanding, and the specific goals of athletic departments. On one hand is the institution's development in the marketplace and on the other is performance goals, both within the framework of the NCAA, creating the foundation for the culture of university athletic departments. The two measures influence the structure of the departmental culture, which, in turn, influences coaches and the teams' cultural communications (Lee, 2018; NCAA, 2022). Intercollegiate recruiting measures involve different communication methods to influence prospective student-athletes to enroll in and participate in a specific sport at a specific university. The role of retention efforts is to ensure the continued enrollment of a student-athlete in an athletic program until graduation for team continuity and favorable graduation rates. Understanding the experience of non-revenue-producing sport coaches' methods of communication is needed to discover the perspective with the best intercultural understanding to foster communication strategies for athlete development in cultural relationships (Millea et al., 2018; NCAA, 2022).

Non-revenue Intercollegiate Sport Coaches

A coach in the NCAA creates a communication methodology to demonstrate their commitment to fostering positive outcomes in developing a non-revenue-producing sporting team that embodies direct and indirect influences of the university, NCAA bylaws, stakeholders, and team members. Coaches cannot simply focus on team development because they are hired to meet certain expectations and outcomes. Coaches have ongoing challenges in their role of exploring and integrating student-athletes into the university sporting culture and the complexities that occur beyond the surface relationships to the team, which include recruiting and retention. Coaches understand the foundational construction needed to build a sporting team. However, the structural makeup of team culture and the problems that arise from the complexity of cultural norms should lead coaches to recognize the direct and indirect influences the culture of the student-athletes produces on the communication process. Because coaches observe themes or behaviors to construct a social reality and create a team culture, obtaining a coach's perspective on intercultural communication in sport will allow a better understanding of the purposeful strategies they can use to foster positive outcomes during interactions with student-athlete training. Coaches are a vital economic component in the cultural structure that supports the student-athletes' personal and psychosocial development. This personal and psychosocial development benefits the university. Some researchers believe that coaches are pivotal in facilitating student-athlete cultural development into university assets that benefit athletic success, team acceptance, and higher graduation rates through communicative efforts (Banwell & Kerr, 2016; King & Bailey, 2021; Rathwell & Young, 2016).

In 1954, Gordon Allport identified four requirements to support intergroup relationship building: (a) equal status in the group, (b) common goals, (c) intergroup cooperation, (d) equal status, and (e) authority support (Pettigrew, 1998). Athletic departments do not frame the institutional structure in dichotomous terms, but research indicates that coaches benefit from building

relationships. Non-revenue sporting team's success or failure is analyzed based on social policies derived from complex exchanges that benefit economic considerations and intercultural communications (Cobb et al., 2020). Coaches devote resources to student-athletes' prospective athletic achievements, physical and mental well-being, academic support, ethical understanding, and athletic development to ensure team continuity (Hanson et al., 2019; Lee, 2018). Coaches want to communicate a team culture that is essential in constructing a framework to remind student-athletes of their obligations as team members. Coaches cultivate the ability to analyze various cultural adaptations required to foster interdependent development and personnel modifications that reflect in a team culture. As the coach builds and motivates team behaviors, they develop the capability to examine often overlooked and misunderstood everyday aspects of coaching. A critical coaching consciousness advances the coach's ability to explore the experiences and dilemmas involving team culture, and student-athlete performances drive the continually evolving team culture (Rathwell & Young, 2018; Vickery & Nichol, 2020). Researchers posit that most coaches' relationship building is essential to the teams' social foundation. Researchers also emphasize the sociocultural structure in the coach and team communication. The team's culture leads to a cultural context that solidifies the coach's ability to design a team structure. Intercultural communication is a tool for unpacking the context that influences cultural understanding of the social identity expected in ingroup membership. Losing student-athletes or failing to retain an athlete is a cultural symbol of the inconsistencies in their communication of expectations in how the institution operates. Without some recognition of intergroup expectations, the likelihood of unintentional sources of disconnection increases, which could increase the possibility of miscommunications emphasizing inconsistent content and connections between coach and student-athlete (Feddersen et al., 2021; Vickery & Nichol, 2020).

The social dynamics of team structures reflect the foundational beliefs of the coach. Coaches have an invaluable influence on student-athletes' performance outcomes and can have slightly more impact on their engagement in cultural

development, despite the pressure to compromise. Sport management researchers need to explore how stakeholders influence the cultural focus of coaches on student-athlete development and its impact on the overall intergroup culture (Hanson et al., 2019; Lee, 2018). Coaches set goals for the athletic culture of the team and work hard to achieve positive outcomes. However, external factors influence those outcomes and directly change the recruitment and retention culture of the team structure. Coaches should focus on skills for competition, including mental plans for dealing with distractions to sporting endeavors from a student-athlete perspective to the psychological dynamics of intercollegiate objectives (e.g., the goals, vision, departmental procedures, and cultural norms that govern the sporting programs) and the coaching style (e.g., the intercultural communication methods and approaches a coach uses while communicating and interacting with student-athletes). Coaches focus on the merits of cultural knowledge of the social processes and the subsequent use of intercultural communication for the betterment of interaction of an intergroup connecting to an ingroup cultural understanding. Using the knowledge gained for the benefit of the institution allows non-revenue sporting coaches to focus on attempting to provide entertainment for stakeholders, create a positive public identity for the university, generate revenue, and create a sustainable culture for the recruitment and retention of student-athletes (Hanson et al., 2019; King & Bailey, 2021; Lee, 2018).

Recruiting

Research indicates that coaching experience does not categorically influence the recruiting efforts of a coach. When recruiting student-athletes, coaches negotiate athletic and academic commitment with student-athletes in high school from a talented ingroup of individuals to a sporting team as an outgroup member. The process is challenging (Evans & Pitts, 2017; Pitts et al., 2019). The transition from high school to college can bring about a challenging adaptive process, particularly with elite young athletes who are recruited to join an intergroup relationship to address a need and have to learn a new team culture. According to various coaches, the key to recruiting and retaining student-athletes

is the desire for cultural adaptation. The student-athletes who have the mindset of advancing athletic skills, instead of choosing an institution based on reputation, develop intercultural understanding and connection at a higher rate than those who choose a university based on the university stakeholders or program reputation. Some student-athletes have been socialized to consider institutional standing in the recruitment process without regard to developing the athletic promise that enables the recruitment opportunity. Student-athletes who want to advance athletic skills have more flexibility in developing cultural understanding. The focus on enhancing sporting skills helps student-athletes meet the relationship-building requirement of cultural adaptation. By supporting student-athletes who are open to accepting varying socialized contexts, sporting programs increase positive outgroup contact and can increase the number of student-athletes seeking to join the sporting team. Universities create an athletic department within the traditional constructs of athletics with separate support structures. Athletic departments give student-athletes a distinct cultural viewpoint of information and opportunities to discover the purpose of combining sport and education, with the added benefit of embodying the ingroup's ritual, values, and symbols. Sport provides an opportunity to learn information that some cultural norms lack because of limited interactions with individuals from different regions, ethnicities, or genders. For example, the institutions that govern the recruiting process often fail to articulate the steps and requirements equally. If no one explains the process, student-athletes assume they are not eligible, especially when the members of the dominant culture profoundly understand the process (Gay, 2000; Kotzur & Wagner, 2021).

Recruiting student-athletes is the beginning of cultural adaptation. During the recruiting process, student-athletes interact with coaches and various stakeholders who explain the university's cultural messaging and mission of the athletic department. The recruiting skill of an intercollegiate non-revenue sporting coach is an essential attribute as past performance, future competition, and available assets influence the potential commitment outcomes (Lee, 2018; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018). Recruiting for non-revenue sport is a

competitive venture due to the limited number of competitive athletes in each sport. However, recruiting non-revenue student-athletes is not just about being competitive in the sport. Student-athletes must meet the academic standards of the university they wish to attend. The physical characteristics of the abilities that a student-athlete has developed associated with the sport constitute the foundation for the criteria for identifying and classifying individual athletes. Previous researchers have demonstrated intergroup outcomes that benefit cultural adaptations, such as leadership, expected behaviors, and personal development, as part of the foundation to build relationships to secure commitments (King & Bailey, 2021; Lee, 2018). Intercollegiate coaches recruit student-athletes to develop a team that has positive outcomes based on the culture around the talent pool to build relationships and create a system of team members committed to working together on a central focus. Having a coach who consistently recruits student-athletes who can compete and perform at a competitive level and retain athletes in each structure is a crucial objective of the cultural foundation created by ingroup relationships (Banwell & Kerr, 2016; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018; Winter et al., 2021).

Recruiting is a primary measure of competitive advantage in building team culture in non-revenue-producing intercollegiate sport (Treadway et al., 2014). Effective recruiting is a function of the coach's ability and the university's tradition and culture. Coaches who are successful in competition enhance the likelihood of an initial contact phase in the recruiting process. However, communication is essential as the relationship framework begins to unfold. Intercultural communication brings together diverse cultural norms as a construct for future understanding. Retaining student-athletes is the focus for coaches by leveraging student-athletes as a performance resource. Effective performance eases the coach's ability to construct a cultural narrative to reduce cultural differences and influence athletes during recruiting. The ability to leverage past performance effectively to achieve successful outcomes and recruiting objectives offers coaches an advantage in recruiting student-athletes. The nature of communication measures may be a part of the coaching objective and philosophy

of teamwork. The collective effort for the language to convey adequate communication tools to build a relationship with student-athletes during a recruiting visit. Each coach sets a goal to attain a certain number of student-athletes with the requisite ability to be considered a performance asset to the university. The conceptualization of team performance is rooted in the abilities of team members. Recruiting measures are interwoven with social influence. Social influence theory is an integrated perspective on recruiting methods presented in context to advance the university's future sporting successes. Foundationally, intercultural communication is used to exchange information to create relationships among individuals from an intergroup context in which differences, such as ethnicity and gender, are recognized and respected (King & Bailey, 2021).

Retention

Coaches' recruiting and retention bylaws were adopted by the NCAA membership to encourage competitive balance (Berri, 2015). Through research and practice, deliberate efforts must be made to confirm intercultural communication benefits to athletic department leadership and coaches to maintain the roster of eligible student-athletes (Berg & Warner, 2019). By clarifying expectations of the student-athlete, the coach ensures clarity of expectation, internalization of expectations, and acceptance of the measure of team expectation. In ingroup team productivity, structure, expectations, team culture, student-athlete retention, and acceptance are essential constructs associated with team success; student-athletes have no continuous contract with the university. The student-athlete participates in the sport based on a year-to-year commitment to comply with a contractual understanding cited in the scholarship agreement of the student-athletes. Creating a team social identity for building the team helps clarify the group dynamics (Kauff et al., 2020; Lens, 2018; Millea et al., 2018).

Retention has economic value as a component that requires student-athletes, athletic administrators, and coaches to work together to understand the complexity of retention of student-athletes (Eicher et al., 2021; Manwell, 2018; Turick et al., 2020). One of the keys to understanding any cultural norm is the observation and analysis of the participants in the social construct. Retention in

non-revenue sport is the foundational framework for teams to maintain their competitive advantage as members have experience working together on tasks and in competition. Coaches enhance opportunities for retention by supporting equality in the ingroup as a cultivating structure to build a relational foundation to secure membership by mitigating outgroup distinctions and treating people as unique individuals (Cobb et al., 2020). Any explicit emphasis on group differences can create negative foundational intergroup development and create uncertainty in the culture surrounding the team framework. Intergroup disagreement may color the student-athlete relationships and preexisting attitudes between the athlete and the coach with perceived expectations, demands, and pressures while striving to achieve team goals, focusing on successful outcomes, and working as a student and an athlete. Challenging student-athletes to meet goals and expectations does not always empower the athletes to remain on the team (Tolliver & Miller, 2018). The skills, vision, and resources needed to retain student-athletes is an adaptive measure that fluctuates based on the coach and the individual student-athlete. The intercultural communication efforts for non-revenue-producing sporting team coaches set the foundation for positive retention measures for coaches' success in maintaining student-athletes on the roster until graduation. A coach's accountability for communicating with student-athletes about responsibility to education and commitment to the sporting team is a unique part of the team context. Retention is a relevant part of team accomplishment, as graduation rates are a component of team success. Coaches develop an environment where student-athletes create a positive relationship in an ingroup context to influence the cultural stability of the team connections to drive retention (Becker, 2009; Lee, 2018). The team environment is an instrument for socialization, and power is established by coach's actions to structure social relationships fundamentally. In other words, in sport economic conditions, retention is measured to ensure that coaches advance development systems to support the sociocultural structure established by the NCAA bylaws; coaches are entrusted with communicating based on the information provided by the athletic department's structure to create a connection for positive outcomes. In some

ways, the need for retention leads coaches to influence independent thought as a part of the ingroup relationship formed with student-athletes.

In practice, competent intercultural communication in sport retention could be seen as a part of the continuity of coaches' understanding and developing the ability of an established team (Lee, 2018). Coaches who strive to build student-athletes' capabilities by developing programs to increase sporting performance, encouraging sport and academic focus, and providing intergroup support, create opportunities for positive ingroup connections. Research suggests that various levels of support for student-athletes increase retention rates. Student-athletes are essential to an athletic department's economic capital, and retention is fostered by a socially supportive cultural intergroup (Kim et al., 2017). As student-athletes compete in athletic competitions in exchange for education at the university, sport creates a marketable product they can use to generate social capital that increases chances of retention. Socially supportive cultural norms mixed with cultural acceptance allow respect for different perspectives, and acceptance creates a better foundation for student-athletes' retention. Coaching is an instrument of structural influence with a multitude of components that facilitate athlete retention in various sport contexts, social support, or a sense of community, and communication has been repeatedly recognized as a critical factor for achieving positive results in student-athlete retention that must be effectively managed (Berg et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2017).

Coaches have a difficult cultural journey because student-athletes spend considerable time developing a cultural identity based on a framework of expectation required by a community structure that forms the cultural reality that influences the value system. For positive outcomes, athletic departments should bolster the intergroup prospects of individual student-athletes that result from changes in individual behaviors that the cultural environment permits. The life of student-athletes is full of obligations, both athletic and educational. For example, student-athletes attend study hall regularly as a cultural obligation to increase their odds of graduation. Some cultural changes result from adaptive responses to the various requirements of university stakeholders, and the coach has a distinct

effect on the social development of the student-athlete. The effectiveness of coaching in sport can be heightened by promoting a socially supportive culture using intercultural communication as a methodology for intergroup connection opportunities. Communicating effectively with student-athletes is essential in retaining them once they are recruited to the university (King & Bailey, 2021; Warner & Dixon, 2011).

A coach's effectiveness influences student-athletes' performance in sport and educationally. One measure to ensure performance gains is to adapt intercultural communication skills to include student-athletes of diverse backgrounds in the conversation. The competitive nature of intercollegiate sport drives grand expectations for coaches who communicate a worldview as one of many. Student-athletes gain cultural experiences as they leave the security of normalcy to immerse themselves in a new culture by committing to a university with different norms and behavioral expectations. Those changes benefit from intercultural communication from coaches to form a cultural understanding as a practice that builds a specific kind of intergroup relationship that fosters personal development for individual motivation (Aba, 2016; Allen, 2018). According to research, these cultural relationships have become increasingly crucial, as coaches have learned to adapt to the complexity of culturally specific socialization practices to retain student-athletes and support intercollegiate sports' mental and emotional challenges. Because each student-athlete is from a unique culture, coaches should create an environment to accompany the psychological difficulties that adapt to differences. Whatever the effects on the ability of coaches to leverage past success on future outcomes, building intercultural relationships empowers student-athletes to meet challenges with a supportive foundation. Student-athletes who feel accepted by the coach are more likely to continue the relationship with the team, developing cultural understanding and enhancing intercultural communication based on the continued experience, thereby retaining the student-athlete (Eicher et al., 2021; Powers et al., 2016; Warner & Dixon, 2011). Effective coaching is essential in improving athletic performance and aids in academic achievement. As each coach strives to achieve incremental levels of

athletic success, they are also responsible for the social and academic outcomes of the student-athletes. Academic outcomes affect graduation rates, team GPAs, and the number of athletes allowed to continue the roster. The individual's educational obligation will amplify the chosen option's positive experiences. Therefore, academics are essential to retaining student-athletes (Aba, 2016).

Summary

The information gathered from the literature contributes to the knowledge and theory of intercultural communication patterns experienced by coaches of non-revenue-producing sporting teams in intercollegiate sport. The impact of intercultural communication by coaches of intercollegiate sporting teams directly influences team performance. However, extensive research is needed to formulate findings to confirm intercultural communication experiences by coaches of intercollegiate sporting teams. The processes and patterns of intercultural communication provide a map of the communication medium of intercollegiate coaches of non-revenue-producing sporting programs. The lack of formalization of intercultural communication methodology hinders the ingroup's ability to define how the team approaches relational opportunities. Formalizing intercultural communication creates an opportunity to reify intergroup variations and prevent harmful stereotypes and divisions.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The chapter contains the research design, method, and study approaches. The first section of the study focuses on my disposition and qualitative research design. The second section includes an overview of the phenomenological methodology used for this study. The application of the phenomenological theory encompassed the examination of intercultural communication methodology used by coaches of non-revenue sporting teams. The last section includes information on the participants, data collection, and data analysis process used in the research.

Researcher Disposition

My career as a student-athlete was short, primarily because the communication between the coach of my intercollegiate sporting team, a Black woman, and I, a Black woman, lacked a mutual agreement in shared language to communicate effectively and create a mutually beneficial sporting relationship. I was expected to embark on a journey with someone I barely knew, and she expected me to trust her without question. The poorly formed relational structure of our experiences led us to a situation where our channels of communication contradicted the reality of the relationship, resulting in a termination. Intercultural communication comes in many forms, including gender, socioeconomics, regionality, and education. However, in many situations, coaches can overcome the differences in communication created by cultural differences. Unfortunately, the worldview of my coach and mine differed, creating an obstacle in furthering the structural foundation of the coach and student-athlete relationship. As a researcher, by exploring the experiences of coaches as they navigate the intercultural communication process with student-athletes of diverse cultures, I gained further insight into intercollegiate athletes.

The objective of the current research was to investigate the intercultural communication experiences of coaches of non-revenue-producing sport teams when recruiting or retaining student-athletes. A pivotal aspect of approaching the project is advancing the understanding of coaches' intercultural communication methodology without preconceived ideas, assumptions, or theoretical frameworks.

Researchers do not embark on a phenomenological investigation with an uninformed cultural context but remain ready to learn new dispositions. In truth, researchers convey learned tendencies in dispositions influenced by relationships and experiences. The project begins with one assumption: the coaches are aware of the different forms of communication individuals derive from cultural interactions. The opportunity for coaches to reflect on the knowledge gained in coaching should reflect the narrative used to explain the experiences creating a team culture that ebbs and flows as new student-athletes arrive and others leave (Vong, 2021; Wiltsche, 2015).

A researcher's willingness to acknowledge the attitudes and values that could color the results is essential to ensuring openness to information gleaned from the studies to develop it systematically and integrate it into the academic framework to demonstrate the intercultural communication experience of intercollegiate coaches in the non-revenue-producing sport. By researching non-revenue-producing sport to effectively engage with and explore the experiences of coaches in developing and reconciling their dispositions, frameworks, and ability to critically reflect on their intercultural communication positionality throughout the research experience, the researcher's positionality should remain objective. Every researcher has a value system influenced by cultural undertones, which shapes the directionality of scientific research. For example, some researchers might focus on critically investigating literature and observations from their experiment (Collier, 2019; Vong, 2021).

The term *positionality* refers to an individual worldview and the researcher's position (Holmes, 2020; Vong, 2021), which, in the current study, is researching the coach's understanding and the social issues related to the intercultural communication process derived from lived experience. Tien (2019) warned that seeing identity as a fixed component of an individual cultural trait is essential. As the binary divisions of social constructs challenge the coaches' experiences in the narrative's subjective perceptions, the analysis focuses on the experiences. One of the essential measures is caution when engaging with coaches to elicit critical reflection to suspend judgment and focus on their experiences.

Focusing on coaches' identity in the reflection process can anchor the analysis of the structure of knowledge built to check any researcher assumptions to produce an in-depth description of the phenomenon (Holmes, 2020; Tien, 2019).

Nelson and Dunn (2017) found in their study that too much focus on the researcher leans towards the ideology of individualism, and individualism can lead to assumptions. Focusing on the narrative is a powerful method to understand the participant's subjective experience. Placing meaning and value on the coaches' lived experiences can provide a solid social connection to intercultural communication's structure and insight into the recruiting and retention process for further research. The phenomenological research design emphasizes the need to locate the social position coaches assume during intercultural communication experiences. The coach's narrative explains how conversations during recruiting or retention allow them to relate to student-athletes or traditional university cultural systems.

Studying the intercultural communications experiences of coaches requires acknowledging the broader and more significant influences of ideologies and bylaws that may influence the ways of thinking and cultural practices in a situation. Through the coach's reflection on the knowledge gained in the communication experience of intercollegiate coaching, the current research serves as a reference point to gain insight into the essential structure of experience that contributes to future communication research in sport and coaching methodology. Research is needed to examine structures and systems influencing how coaches address differences in cultural understanding in recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Many university athletic departments are searching for ways to strengthen connections between student-athletes and the university, as the economic impact of recruiting affects market share, shareholder engagement, and fundraising. The aim of the present study was to explore the narratives of the perception experienced by coaches when using intercultural communication to solidify ingroup communications and create outgroup relationships (Fort, 2016; Holmes, 2020; Nelson & Dunn, 2017; Tien, 2019). Semi-structured interviews were used in this phenomenological study of the coaches of non-revenue-

producing sport seeks to identify concepts to support the inclination. The information gained in the analysis of interview transcripts was categorized to understand better the essence of social interactions driven by the need to determine the parameters to define success in a non-revenue-producing sporting team to inform innovation in the recruiting and retention process (Nelson & Dunn, 2017; Tien, 2019).

Phenomenological Research Method

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of intercultural communication on intercollegiate coaches of non-revenue sporting teams and the effect intercultural communication on recruiting and retaining student-athletes in NCAA member institutions. The aim was to identify how a coach's perception of cultural norms influences the recruitment and retention philosophy used in securing athletic commitment to the university's non-revenue-producing sporting teams. Another aspect explored in this research is how recruiting and differences influence retention efforts in expectations and cultural understanding to understand the impact that NCAA bylaws, university culture, and socioeconomic constructs factor into the framework of the communication structure of non-revenue sporting coaches in intercollegiate sport recruiting and retention of student-athletes.

I used a phenomenological design to explore the intercultural communications aspects of building a relationship dynamic by coaches who recruit and work to retain student-athletes. Researchers use phenomenological studies to identify a specific phenomenon and provide an interpretive description of the practice to make a cultural practice visible for analysis. Understanding the communication measures coaches use to secure student-athlete commitments is needed, as there is limited information on intercultural communication in recruiting and retention methods of coaches in the NCAA non-revenue-producing sport illuminates the gaps in the literature (Hayes et al., 2016; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016).

Phenomenological research is suitable for investigating people's experiences of individual communication methods through their behaviors and

experiences associated with the belief and value systems of the subject. The information gathered can help form a theory from various interrelated framework elements connected to the coach's perspective. Researchers have tacit knowledge about the research questions but use observations to examine the subject's behaviors. Phenomenological research lacks firm guidelines and procedures, which made it appropriate for exploring answers to open-ended questions based on the lived experiences of the coaches. The questions in the semi-structured interviews for the study centered on the experiences of coaches when communicating with student-athletes and how coaching expectations, interactions, and other factors influence the program's social construct of developing a sustainable recruiting and retention communication framework. This framework addresses issues revolving around ingroup dynamics, intergroup relationship, cultural norms, and accountability measures of the university and other stakeholders. The decision to use phenomenological research for the project was based on the importance of the philosophical connection to the lived experience of intercollegiate coaches in recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Investigating the lived experience of coaches in the NCAA provided a foundation for exploring how external factors influence the process.

Four components encompass the phenomenological methodology: bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing. Phenomenology is the discipline of qualitative research in which scholars seek to identify lived experiences or a phenomenon with a commonality level in a universal event (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). I used a heuristic system to authenticate a conceptual connection between the experiences and the subjects, as described in the research design literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenon is simply an identifiable perception of the coach who has experienced communication adaptation based on cultural differences (Moustakas, 1994). My aim for studying coaches' experiences within the athletic departments was to define the culture of perception that occurs in intercultural communications between coaches and student-athletes. The phenomenon should exist in a specific context (Moustakas, 1994), which, for the current study, was in creating and maintaining team rosters.

The coaches participating in the study have a shared experience that can be viewed differently based on several factors as described in the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Thus, a phenomenological study is appropriate for analyzing the shared experience of various subjects, as Leedy et al. (2019) and Smith (2018) explained.

A phenomenological approach benefits the researcher and university athletic stakeholders by providing a framework to understand the experience participants experience during intercultural communication (Leedy et al., 2019). Because I explored experiences and no specific theory using the phenomenological research method, the individual narratives of the coach's experience included an in-depth description of the phenomenological occurrences in previous interactions, as discussed in the literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Based on this philosophy, researchers use the phenomenological method to discover the meaning of the experiences of the interactions in question (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The purpose of a phenomenological research project is to understand the meaning behind shared structures of experience (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). A phenomenological researcher seeks to explore perspectives influencing the actions of the participants as they experience the phenomenon (Leedy et al., 2019). The characteristics of a typical phenomenological study are (a) an exploration of the experience created by the suspected phenomenon with the ingroup of individuals, (b) an emphasis on the phenomenon articulated as a singular perception, (c) a philosophical discussion about the structure of experience, (d) bracketing by suspending opinions about preconceived ideology to focus on the analysis of the coach's experience, (e) collection of data through semi-structured interviews, (f) analysis of data based on universal themes that reflect the perception of an experienced phenomenon, (g) and creation of an analysis that configures a coach's experience to describe a coherent narrative of a universal phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Leedy et al., 2019).

The semi-structured interview process is a vital element of phenomenology (Leedy et al., 2019). In an interview, the researcher encourages

the subject to share insight into the cultural experiences gained during the meaningful relationship-building opportunities inside sporting teams and to guide the participants through the semi-structured interview questions about the lived experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Researchers should allow the opportunity for follow-up questions to provide study participants with an opportunity to articulate their experiences or challenges they faced during the interpretive process. The analysis of the interview data in this study was based on the paradigm of the phenomenological researcher's assumptive expertise of the subject (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

One of the central variables in interpretive philosophy is the motivation to expand the knowledge of experience. The process involves continually reflecting on the data analysis to communicate the perception of the analyzed expertise presented by the subjects. By analyzing the coaches' significant statements, researchers can generate units of meaning in developing the description of the lived experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The central assumption of phenomenology contains the researcher's interpretations of the information researched and that analysis is focused on the experience shared with others in similar coaching situations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenological approach includes a four-step framework to assist the researcher in removing bias, collecting the data, and distilling the information into significant statements or themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Researchers use the four steps, bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing, to set aside prejudgments and conduct the research interview with an unbiased mindset based on the subject's lived experience. With phenomenological research, the researcher must also set aside preconceived expectations about the discipline under investigation or bracket any judgment (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Leedy et al., 2019; Ormrod, 2019).

The research was designed to explore the participants' lived experiences. An epistemological framework for the phenomenological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018) was used for this research. I used the approach to engage in an interpretive process, as Creswell and Poth (2018)

advised. Instead of merely repeating the coaches' experiences, the interpretations create a framework from a theoretical standpoint using main ideas to serve as the foundation for the inquiry. The coaches' experiences were filtered through the lens of influences driven by bylaws, rules, stakeholders, and themes based on sporting culture. The analysis of data collected from a semi-structured interview process in a phenomenological research study follows a different approach depending on the type of phenomenology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Within the category of phenomenological research, the epistemological construct of the conceptual framework suggests a fundamental unity in the conceptual framework and investigative nature of the constraint of personal knowledge. The theoretical premise filters, lenses, and positionality offer a central idea, which serves as a foundation for the inquiry. The methodological premise is essential as the researcher describes the experiences carefully through the social construct created by the sociocultural foundation of the environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The epistemological premise used in the phenomenology approach involves an interpretive inquiry paradigm, which the researcher uses to insert a social and cultural context necessary to reduce biases, compile data, and classify the research interpretations into prevalent themes. All research is inherently interpretive, and each researcher brings a unique sociocultural influence on the construct at the center of the inquiry. The constructivist nature of knowledge building is a cumulative process considered socioculturally relative. The structure of the premise is that knowledge is not a foreign concept but one with a range of different experiences. A human being's perspective interacts with information, and from an epistemological perception, the resulting experiences are a social accumulation that supports knowledge gains to increase study paradigms.

Saldaña and Omasta (2018) suggested that researcher aims should include the acknowledgment of study bias and identifying personal or subjective connections in the unique social experience that lends awareness to the subject matter. Researchers create mental constructs based on the perceived worldview created by cultural understanding. Setting aside assumptions is essential in

achieving neutral or nonbiased findings in phenomenological research. The interpretation objective of the project is that the researcher maintains a goal of balancing the evidentiary conclusion developed from the experiences created by the investigative effort of the project. I used the phenomenological approach in the current study to identify the coach's life experience and interpret the experience's narrative.

Participants

The phenomenological research sample size can range from three to 10 individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested grouping sizes of three to four individuals, but many researchers suggest saturation as basis for gauging study completion. Therefore, the number of participants was initially five, but I continued with the interviews to the saturation point, as Saldaña & Omasta (2018) suggested. Each participant had to have experienced the phenomenon to understand their subjective personal experience. Each participant was a coach of a non-revenue-producing sporting team at a Division I or II NCAA member institution. Because the purpose of the phenomenological portion of the study was to understand the lived intercultural communicative experience of intercollegiate coaches of non-revenue-producing sporting teams, the coaches were purposefully selected for their recruiting and retention knowledge; purposive sampling is used to select participants with key information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The criteria in the selection process focused on the availability of coaches, as there are time constraints on the availability of coaches during certain parts of the athletic season. The coaches interviewed represented various sporting teams, encompassing track and field (athletics), lacrosse, and basketball. The largest team had approximately 80 student-athletes participating in athletic contests in two seasons from November to June. Furthermore, the coach's range in years of experience was from 10 to 25 years. My goal for the research was to explore the differences and similarities of coaches' intercultural communication experiences while working to recruit and attempt to retain student-athletes for their team roster. I knew three of the selected coaches personally but had no connection to

the other seven. A mutual colleague assisted in facilitating meetings. Therefore, 10 non-revenue-sporting coaches participated in the analysis, which is the minimum number of participants determined in literature for attaining the saturation point (Bartholomew et al., 2021; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Each coach received an informed consent document to read and approve before the interviews could commence. Finally, the research was presented and received an Internal Review Board (IRB) approval.

Data Collection

A phenomenological research methodology was appropriate to explore the cultural experiences of the coaches interviewed for the research (Creswell, 2013). The phenomenological interviews for the study involved 10 participants. Each participant worked as a non-revenue-producing coach for various sporting teams at an NCAA member institution. These interviews consisted of questions derived from intercultural communication elements in previous academic research to explore the constructs coaches use to produce and reproduce a team culture, as changes are a constant in the structure. The interview protocol contained eight questions during the initial interview with reserved space and time for expanded answers and follow-up questions (Appendix A). The time, date, and place of the interviews are listed in the interview transcripts (Appendix B), with the name of the researcher, subject (by pseudonym), and sport coached. According to Saldaña and Omasta (2018) and Englander (2020), the semi-structured interview process should encompass approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Each interview was scheduled for approximately one hour and conducted via Zoom video conferencing or in person. Additionally, the research involved follow-up interviews as necessary to ensure accuracy and saturation. Each interview was recorded using the Otter.ai app through a recording device. The interview began with an affirmative verbal agreement as permission to record the interaction. I saved audio and Zoom video recordings on my devices and immediately password protected them. I used the Otter.ai program to produce an artificial intelligence-generated transcription of the dialogue. The next step was editing the transcripts for any misinterpretations,

inaccuracies, or omissions in the initial transcription followed preserving a password-protected version of the transcript electronically as a Word document.

Saldaña and Omasta's (2018) explanation of the process coding guided the value and in vivo coding of the interviews. Using hand process coding as an examination method, the next step, according to Saldaña and Omasta, was to identify the cultural experiences of the participants. Value coding revealed the values, beliefs, and attitudes underlying the participants' responses through in vivo coding; the process helped to identify naturally occurring themes from the corrected transcripts, according to Saldaña and Omasta's (2018) guideline. The analysis also included a coding pass using emotion coding to provide additional insight into the participants' perspectives. After a fourth and final coding pass, the themes emerged, which included descriptions for several phenomena to support the study. The qualitative research included the systematic development of pointed categories or themes grouped into a coding report using an Excel spreadsheet to analyze the information exported from the interviews, which, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), helps sort all given information into groups for analysis. I identified the groups by signifiers of each unique theme and reviewed them in Chapter 4 by comparing the themes of the experiences against sociocultural analysis, as described in the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

The semi-structured interview process is one of the most vital steps in phenomenological research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). The foundation for the interview process included the seven elements of a phenomenological methodology for gathering data, including any shared phenomenon uncovered in the study, using intuition to discover information, controlling for potential bias, collecting data, coding analysis to study common themes, and examining the subjects overall individual lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, semi-structured interviews are the means for coaches to reflect on experiences to gather necessary study data, as the researcher guides the participants with semi-structured interview questions (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). However, even well-crafted interview questions may require further explanation to interviewees; thus,

clarifying questions may be necessary for the researcher to ascertain the nuanced information of the experienced phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018).

Interview Protocol

RQ1: How do coaches perceive the role of intercultural communication when interacting with student-athletes (Bell & Riol, 2017; Powers et al., 2016; Simien et al., 2019)?

IQ1: Can you tell me about your experience recruiting students from different cultures?

IQ2: Tell me about your experience communicating with student-athletes from different cultures during recruiting visits? What about when attempting to retain an athlete?

RQ2: How do coaches adapt their communication based on perceived cultural differences? (Carter-Francique, 2018; Fisher et al., 2017)?

IQ3: In what situations do you need to adapt your communication methods due to cultural differences? Can you share an example?

IQ4: What intercultural communication tactics do you utilize in building relationships with student-athletes? Do you have any examples?

IQ5: When recruiting student-athletes, can you give me an example of when you felt there was miscommunication based on cultural differences?

IQ6: Have you had cultural challenges or barriers communicating with a student-athlete on your roster? What was the outcome?

RQ3: How do coaches perceive NCAA bylaws and institutional traditions influence cultural differences during recruiting and retention-based interactions (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)?

IQ7: Have you experienced any communication constraints related to cultural differences when recruiting or retaining a student-athlete?

IQ8: How has your experience in recruiting and retaining student-athletes affected your understanding of cultural differences?

RQ4: In the recruiting or retention process, how has the coach's understanding of intercultural communication changed to benefit student-athletes (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)?

IQ9: In your conversations with student-athletes, how does concern for their cultural understanding influence your experience in recruiting or retention? What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

IQ10: What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

IQ11: What communication skills did your collegiate coach need to improve that you are aware of as you talk to student-athletes?

IQ12: Is there any information about intercultural communication while coaching an NCAA non-revenue sporting team that you feel I have missed in my questions?

Data Analysis

During the Zoom interview process, I used Zoom's recording feature to record the audio responses and saved the recordings on my computer, iPhone software, and Otter.ai to ensure proper collection of the interview content. Next, I used the Otter.ai program to transcribe the interviews to generate a reviewable Word document of each interaction. The next step was correcting errors in the transcriptions by comparing the audio recordings to the transcribed material to guarantee accurate transcription of the original dialogue. I then examined the data for omissions and errors to ensure a comprehensive transcript to analyze for common themes via coding methods suggested by Saldaña and Omasta (2018). Coding passes included in vivo, process, and values coding to identify the common themes that reflect the actions, attitudes, and beliefs that may be visible in the interviewee's lived experiences (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

Southeastern University's IRB approved the study before beginning any research. Each participant was informed about the study's purpose and any study risks, rewards, and prescribed procedures. Participants read, signed, and dated an informed consent document electronically or in person. I collected, stored, and secured the documents as well as the recordings and transcriptions of the interviews. After each interview, the audio transcripts from an artificial intelligence website were password-protected. All participants agreed to validate the transcripts. I will keep all digital recordings of the semi-structured interviews and written transcripts on my password-protected computer for 5 years before deleting all data permanently. The data of each participant are stored under pseudonyms associated with the research findings, and the identities of the study participants are only known to me. Therefore, pseudonyms were used in the analysis phase of the research. Given the nature of the study, individual responses were analyzed and reported. However, all possible efforts were made to protect individual identities, as the information gathered, including the interviews, was secured on a password-protected computer in password-protected files.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to analyze the experience created by the framework of intercultural communication methods used during the recruitment and retention process by NCAA Division I and II coaches. The research goal was to investigate the narrative behind the experience intercultural communications plays in the conversations used to communicate information to recruit or retain student-athletes. The perspective gained in a coach's experiences began as an individual worldview, and variations in bylaws, culture, and the student-athlete perception caused some adaptation in the coach's cultural understanding. The social issues related to the intercultural communication process reflect the coach's lived experience. For example, the foundation of an athletic department's cultural identity encompasses several factors, including tradition, market influence, and the university's cultural framework. The system design is monolithic, and the cultural foundations are rooted in a university-based

cultural identity, but examining the coach's experience in the university athletic system as stakeholders and the NCAA governing process influence the coach's recruiting and retention efforts in creating a team culture that supports the coach understanding of the sport. The analysis of the coach's experience in the sociocultural process that creates relationships to determine the prominent themes from the data analysis, using the themes developed through the semi-structured interview answers from the coaches (Edley, 2014; Gay, 2000; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The characterized themes followed the suggested phenomenological study foundational definition: (a) an exploration of the coach's experience, (b) articulated perceptions, (c) the philosophical structure of experience, and (d) an analysis of universal themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Leedy et al., 2019).

Literature analysis revealed themes that guided the creation of the study's interview questions. The resulting themes were used to analyze phenomenological interview data from the coach's shared experiences into common themes as described by Saldaña and Omasta (2018). The aim of this phenomenological study was to determine how coaches communicate interculturally with student-athletes when creating and maintaining relationships despite the influences that challenge their cultural norms. The semi-structured interviews yielded data that I coded for common themes to illustrate shared experiences, as described by Saldaña and Omasta. In addition, I used common themes from the interviews to define each coach's perceptions of the lived experience of communicating within the confines of differing cultural expectations.

Chapter 4 – Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the lived experience of non-revenue-producing coaches using intercultural communication during recruiting and retaining efforts for various intercollegiate sporting teams. The participants' coaching styles varied in technique, but all exhibited authentic leadership communication measures in the foundational depictions of team culture. Research involving the intercultural communication methods used by coaches to recruit or retain student-athletes was scarce and lacked continuity. Despite the lack of a formalized research development model or information about communication measures used by NCAA non-revenue-producing sport team coaches, financial investment in collegiate sport continues, which informed the current research to understand communication development within the programs.

In this study, the lived experiences of non-revenue-producing sporting coaches and their perceptions were examined regarding how intercultural communication methods affected each non-revenue-producing coach as they recruited or retained student-athletes. The purposeful sampling technique was used to identify the 10 NCAA intercollegiate non-revenue-producing sporting coaches who participated in the study. The study participants were male and female non-revenue-producing coaches of various sport, between the ages 35 and 53, who worked in a Division I or Division II athletic department. A phenomenological approach aided in the collection of data from the participants. Each individually conducted semi-structured Zoom interview comprised open-ended questions to assess the participants' perceptions and experiences. The closed-ended questions functioned were used to inquire about the student-athletes in the coach's charge.

Precautionary measures ensured the privacy of each student-athlete mentioned in any narrative. If the examples collected during the interviews revealed identifiable information about any student-athlete, measures were taken to ensure anonymity. In addition, the definition of intercultural communication was read to each participant before the interview began. For consistency, all

participants were asked the same set of questions. Probing questions were asked spontaneously to clarify and gain additional context regarding a participant's answers. The study included 10 participants, including four female and six male coaches. All participants coached at an NCAA member institution with four coaches working at Division II institutions and six coaches at Division I institutions. All participants had experience in recruiting and retaining student-athletes at multiple universities. Nonetheless, the information collected from the participants was limited to the coach's institution. Participants were asked limited demographic questions at the beginning of the interview to maintain confidentiality, and each study participant was given an alias, beginning with Participant 1 and moving upwards in positive integers to Participant 10. Table 1 shows the participant demographic information.

Participants

Before conducting any analysis, participants were contacted via cellular phone and text message for verbal consent for the interviews. After receiving verbal consent, the participants agreed to a formal interview, and each participant received a consent form via email to sign (Appendix A). Before each scheduled interview, a reminder was sent to the scheduled participant, and there was a verification of the receipt of informed consent. Each 45- to 60-minute Zoom interview followed a specific protocol, including reading my definition of intercultural communication, a formalized list of questions, and an expression of thanks (Appendix B). Each interview question helped me further explore the lived experiences of non-revenue-producing coaches. The next step after the interviews was the examination of the participant's responses and a systematic analysis of the data provided, according to Creswell and Poth (2018).

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Sport	Gender	Division
Participant 1	Athletics (M & W)	Female	NCAA DI
Participant 2	Athletics (M & W)	Female	NCAA DI
Participant 3	Athletics (M & W)	Male	NCAA DI
Participant 4	Lacrosse (M)	Male	NCAA DII
Participant 5	Athletics (M & W)	Male	NCAA DI
Participant 6	Basketball (M)	Male	NCAA DII
Participant 7	Athletics (M & W)	Female	NCAA DI
Participant 8	Athletics (M & W)	Male	NCAA DI
Participant 9	Athletics (M & W)	Male	NCAA DII
Participant 10	Lacrosse (W)	Female	NCAA DII

Note. The College Division column includes the abbreviation “D” for Division.

Data Collection

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of NCAA Division I and II non-revenue-producing sporting coaches of various intercollegiate sporting teams in intercultural communication while recruiting and retaining student-athletes. The recruiting and retention experiences of Division I and II non-revenue-producing sporting coaches were gleaned from four perspectives based on 12 measures:

RQ1: How do coaches perceive the role of intercultural communication when interacting with student-athletes (Bell & Riol, 2017; Powers et al., 2016; Simien et al., 2019)? (authentic leadership communication)

IQ1: Can you tell me about your experience recruiting students from different cultures?

IQ2: Tell me about your experience communicating with student-athletes from different cultures during recruiting visits? What about when attempting to retain an athlete?

RQ2: How do coaches adapt their communication based on perceived cultural differences? (Carter-Francique, 2018; Fisher et al., 2017)?

(connecting cultural differences)

IQ3: In what situations do you need to adapt your communication methods due to cultural differences? Can you share an example?

IQ4: What intercultural communication tactics do you utilize in building relationships with student-athletes? Do you have any examples?

IQ5: When recruiting student-athletes, can you give me an example of when you felt there was miscommunication based on cultural differences?

IQ6: Have you had cultural challenges or barriers communicating with a student-athlete on your roster? What was the outcome?

RQ3: How do coaches perceive NCAA bylaws and institutional traditions influence cultural differences during recruiting and retention-based interactions (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)? (creating common ground)

IQ7: Have you experienced any communication constraints related to cultural differences when recruiting or retaining a student-athlete?

IQ8: How has your experience in recruiting and retaining student-athletes affected your understanding of cultural differences?

RQ4: In the recruiting or retention process, how has the coach's understanding of intercultural communication changed to benefit student-athletes (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)? (cultivated isolation, adaptive communication)

IQ9: In your conversations with student-athletes, how does concern for their cultural understanding influence your experience in recruiting or retention? What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

IQ10: What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

IQ11: What communication skills did your collegiate coach need to improve that you are aware of as you talk to student-athletes?

IQ12: Is there any information about intercultural communication while coaching an NCAA non-revenue sporting team that you feel I have missed in my questions?

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to investigate individual perspectives or group lived experiences by considering the social processes supporting the research interaction as Saldaña (2021) indicated. The research focused on the lived experience of non-revenue-producing sporting coaches who operated using differing beliefs. The phenomenological study included, the foundational elements of the coach's lived experience, necessitated the development of a semi-structured interview process to capture the coach's individuality and distinct cultural understanding for data collection. The aim of this phenomenological research was to explain various cultural communication occurrences experienced by the participants.

During 10 one-on-one interviews conducted for data collection, the coaches discussed the impact of intercultural communication differences in the analyzed roles. The data collection process was according to a qualitative approach as a part of the descriptive structure of the study based on Creswell and Poth's (2018) five-step process: (a) organize the data, (b) examine the data collected, (c) code data for analysis, (d) generate themes with structured descriptions, and (e) illustrate the themes of the sport-related research. The method recommended by Creswell and Poth suggested gathering the data from individual interviews until specific themes could be identified in the analysis. The methodology allowed the synthesis of the information to categorize the participants' responses into codes and themes in the data analysis.

Data Analysis

After receiving final approval from the IRB board, each participant agreed to the interviews. All interviews were completed via the Zoom communication platform using the given interview protocol. All questions were specifically scripted to obtain further knowledge of the lived experiences of non-revenue-producing sporting coaches of Division I or Division II member institutions. Each participating sporting coach interviewed worked at an NCAA member institution and actively involved in recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Ten coaches participated in semi-structured interviews to supply the research data. The analysis of the data provided by the coaches involved five steps. The first step was the Zoom interview transcription using Otter.ai software to analyze the interviews. The second step was editing the interview to reduce the number of attitude and style adverbs in each transcription. The third step was a comparative analysis of the interview data to generate the study's framework. The fourth step was a review of the data using the *in vivo*, process, values, and emotion coding techniques to refine the data gathered for analysis. Lastly, the codes were aggregated into 26 categories from which five themes emerged.

The *in vivo* coding process was used to review each participant's exact words to identify key phrases. Next, process coding analysis was useful for identifying gerunds and the actions or reactions of the participants, as interpreted from the interview questions. Values coding was employed in the analysis of participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs based on the information gathered during the content analysis. The values coding practice was beneficial to the data analysis process as the information revealed various intercultural communication frameworks that influenced cultural norms, perspectives, and insights into the participant's lived experience as non-revenue-producing sporting coaches at NCAA member institutions. Lastly, emotion coding was used in a research-based determination of the coaches' feelings about intercultural communication's role in coaching student-athletes. Emotion coding was also used to distinguish attitudes and beliefs that supported the analysis of the participants' emotional link to the established relationship patterns between the coach and the student-athletes, as

each coach recruited and subsequently attempted to retain student-athletes. Each identified coding form facilitated the analysis of the dynamic phrases created during data collection into the meaning and value of the participants' lived experiences. The data gathered and coded was systematically reduced into overarching themes described in Table 2 and further illustrated a non-revenue-producing sporting coach's lived experiences within an NCAA member institution.

The data analysis revealed strategies used in coaching to assist student-athletes in building connections with the coach and the institution. The adapted communication methods aligned with the cultural understanding in conversations and allowed coaches to create an environment where student-athletes or their families felt accepted in an unfamiliar situation. During the semi-structured interview process, each coach discussed the essential nature of consistent messaging to ensure that all student-athletes received similar communication messaging. Each coach also reiterated the importance of adjusting the conversation to be suitable for the cultural understanding of the student-athlete.

Table 2*Description of the Themes*

Theme	Descriptions
Authentic leadership communication	Being genuine while building a relational framework to cultivate a safe space to support the student-athlete's social identity.
Connecting cultural differences	Structuring a social paradigm whose narrative allows student-athletes to connect to the social ingroup without assimilation.
Creating common ground	Establishing a connective element for the team culture that outweighs a student-athletes' cultural understanding.
Cultivated isolation	Communication behavior using technology serves as a protective barrier, allowing the individual to control interpersonal interactions by limiting personal access and restricting avenues of connection.
Adaptive communication	Encouraging a supportive atmosphere for the expression of cultural differences and understanding of student-athlete social identity for the purpose building relationships within the group.

Interviews

The interviews were 10 recorded semi-structured interviews that lasted 45 to 60 minutes. Each interview was conducted via Zoom and recorded. Each participant received assurance that the information gathered during the interviews would be kept confidential, so that each coach would be comfortable discussing the nuanced information regarding their experience of being an intercollegiate, non-revenue-producing sporting coach. The data collection process was intentionally explained to ensure a comfortable environment in which the participants could speak openly. The one-on-one interviews were informal, so that

each participant could answer the semi-structured interview questions without reservation.

Themes

According to the analysis of the research questions, the experiences of the 10 current intercollegiate non-revenue-producing college coaches encompassed five major themes. The themes that emerged were as follows: connecting cultural differences, authentic leadership communication, cultivated isolation, adaptive communication, and creating common ground. The order in which the analysis and findings are presented in the study is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Themes

Research Questions	Themes
RQ1	Authentic leadership communication
RQ2	Connecting cultural differences
RQ3	Creating common ground
RQ4	Cultivated isolation Adaptive communication

The research questions helped connect the 1,223 data segments to the specific measures associated with the lived experience of non-revenue-producing coaches, resulting in five identifiable themes derived from the coding process. The themes are authentic leadership communication, connecting cultural differences, adaptive communication, isolated communication, and creating common ground. Table 4 shows an overview of the final themes, 26 categories, and the number of occurrences for each category.

Table 4*Development of Themes*

Theme	Categories	Occurrences
Authentic	Authentic leadership strategies	79
Leadership	Financial concerns	24
Communication	Intercultural communication	43
	Curiosity	41
	Open to questioning	34
	Recruiting/retention	51
Connecting	Parenting	25
Cultural	Cultural adaption	100
Differences	Social identity	76
	Ingroup culture	81
Creating	University tradition/rules and bylaws	10
Common	Building relational framework	57
Ground	Interpersonal communication	77
	Common ground	101
	Socioeconomic background	13
Cultivated	Comfortable	34
Isolation	Post-pandemic communication	41
	Frustration	7
	Device as voice (hindrance to relationship building)	25
Adaptive	Communication differences	93
Intercultural	Behavioral modification	41
	Empathy (caring)	58
	Insightfulness	35

Note. The occurrences represent individual data segments of the related category.

Theme 1: Authentic Leadership Communication

The theme “authentic leadership communication” consisted of seven categories: authentic leadership, coaching strategies (76), financial concerns (24), intercultural communication (113), curiosity (41), open to questioning (34), recruiting (24), and retention (27). The description of the theme, “Being genuine while building a relational framework to cultivate a safe space to support the student-athlete’s social identity,” resulted from a combination of the data and categories used to generate the theme.

RQ1, “How do coaches perceive the role of intercultural communication when interacting with student-athletes,” helped develop the inquiry to gather data. The question formed the basis of two interview questions, which were used to explore the lived experience of each participant regarding how each used authentic leadership as a varied coaching strategy to address the cultural differences that occur in the connection phase of the recruiting and retention process, as an ongoing part of the development of an ingroup culture:

IQ1: Can you tell me about your experience recruiting students from different cultures?

IQ2: Tell me about your experience communicating with student-athletes from different cultures during recruiting visits? What about when attempting to retain an athlete?

Authentic Leadership Strategies

The category “authentic leadership strategies” consisted of nine codes: authenticity, curiosity, leadership, strategies, concern, communication, discovery, recruiting/retaining, and openness. Participant 3 spoke about the importance of authenticity that occurs in coaching because of the willingness to be open and honest about the cultural perspective developed through the cultural norms generated for the foundation of the teams’ ingroup:

I’m more rolled up your sleeve [leadership] you sort of got. I think I communicate in those terms [communication]. I’m not afraid to be authentic [authenticity]. It’s really important, but also, I’m not afraid of

showing failure because I think it's really important that they don't see you as someone that is always perfect or always right authenticity [openness]. Every participant discussed the importance of being open to answering questions about themselves as they interacted with the student-athletes they recruited or retained. Participant 7 spoke about the strategic nature of authenticity as a benefit to non-revenue-producing sporting coaches and the university for recruiting and retention: "My strategy [strategy] was being unique and being authentic [authentic]. I always encourage my colleagues to do the same and be yourself in their particular university or institution [leadership]. I coach at a predominantly White institution." Participant 6 also shared other authentic leadership attributes in the non-revenue-sporting arena: "As a coach, I want their experiences to be as authentic [authenticity] as possible. I don't want them to get here and think all of a sudden coach is way different than when I met him" [authenticity]. The non-revenue-producing sporting coaches indicated that through self-evaluation and willingness to explore individual perspectives, they established a culture that adapts to student-athlete changes and supported a student-athlete-centered approach. Participant 7 stated,

Sometimes, I think it makes you step back and then actually kind of evaluate yourself [discovery]. I think coaching, in general, dealing with student-athletes. We have currently and are trying to retain it's an everyday kind of personal challenge [concern] to you to be yourself and always forces you to be a better person [authenticity] simply because you're communicating [communication] with them and what you receive back and you're trying to help them to be a great person you try to practice what you preach what you preach you try to be authentic [authenticity] and know that they're always watching you and in turn that means that you're always working on yourself [openness].

Participant 1 advanced the statement, "That communication is one of the most important aspects of the job as a coach" [communication]. The student-athletes of the institution often arrive without taking a recruiting trip [recruiting/retaining]. Therefore, the day they arrive on campus is their first time meet the coach.

Authenticity in leadership is a crucial step in maintaining positive relationship building. Regarding this aspect, Participant 1 stated, "So, learning how to communicate [communication] with them and what's the best method to kind of reach out to them" and "Communication with students-athletes helps to ensure [concern] that coaches know more about the person and not just the athlete" [communication]. Each coach developed an authentic approach to convey a foundational team culture constructed to an ingroup connection to increase opportunities for student-athlete retention. Participant 5 stated,

Sometimes, I spend a lot of time in front of a dry-erase board trying to explain different aspects of team and group behavior to my student-athletes [strategy]. [Because] at the end of the day, you bring all those people together trying to get them to listen to the same music and to get along on the same bus ride [discovery].

Financial Concerns

The foundation of the team recruiting, and retention structure involved the student-athlete's ability to cover the cost of attendance. In non-revenue sport, full grant-in-aid is not often available. Therefore, coaches have a duty to weigh the athlete's ability to cover any budgetary shortfall. Participant 4 discussed,

People who don't have people experienced with higher education or they're not experienced with athletics in general don't have the information they need to make choices [concern]. So, we explain to people how we operate[communication] is very different than, say, Division I football, we have 50 guys, and we are only allowed 10 scholarships total. Nobody's going to school for free. I always tell kids if you wanna scholarship go to the library not the weight room [concern].

The actual financial aid picture is difficult to communicate in non-revenue-producing sport. Often student-athletes engage in college sport for simple enjoyment. Participant 7 stated, "We don't use athletic scholarships in the same way that other institutions would" [concern].

Some intercollegiate institutions operate the athletic departments strictly on need-based financial aid. Student-athletes either cover the cost of attendance or

receive financial aid to cover any cost associated with institutional expenses. Other institutions only cover the cost of attendance. Some institutions offer non-revenue-producing sporting athlete's full scholarships (or full cost of attendance). Full cost of attendance in non-revenue sport is rare, but Participant 6 coached a sport that did: "We are a full scholarship sport, so the student's financial outlook is less of a concern than other non-revenue sports" [discovering]. However, Participant 4 had a different understanding, "There are financial ramifications in non-revenue sport, the recruiting is often controlled by the financial aid and the family's ability to pay" [concern].

Non-revenue sporting coaches developed different recruiting techniques to combat the lack of financial aid available to student-athletes. For example, Participant 3 stated, "In my current institution, athlete recruitment [recruiting/retaining] includes kids who come from lower income housing situations that I know have no financial resources and kids from money, where money is not an issue" [strategy]. Participant 3 further stated,

And now we're looking for kids who are going to fill those spots like developmental kids we're attempting to raise specifically the women's numbers [discovering]. So, I went after a group of kids that potentially would have had the grades and possibly receive enough in financial aid, so my pitch was applied by the deadline, and we'll accept you into our team culture [concern].

The financial concerns of a non-revenue sporting coach required relationship building to create the relational foundation for garnering the necessary trust in the financial aid process. The coaches lacked the ability to guarantee the necessary financial aid package to cover the cost of attendance. However, each coach used coaching strategies to create opportunities for student-athletes to continue to participate in sport, receive an education, and become a part of an ingroup culture.

Intercultural Communication

Participant 5 said intercultural communication, "Is the most effective coaching strategy," for non-revenue-producing sporting coaches [strategy]. One

of the functions of non-revenue coaching is the development of intercultural communication techniques to create opportunities for connection. Participant 3 stated, “You're literally speaking ten different languages” [discovering]. “Essentially, you're trying to create a narrative that fits [concern] whoever it is that you are recruiting” [communication].

The required communication adaptations can be related to social interactions and lived experiences common in the cultural reality of recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Participant 4 discussed,

We always have to be cognizant [concern] that we may be recruiting first-generation college students. You've always got to have it in the front of your mind, that there are things that seem automatic to me that are not completely understood by the student-athlete and their parents [discovering]. It's the mysterious nature of athletic recruiting [communication].

The coaches sometimes realized direct communication with student-athletes or their parents was not possible without assistance, and that help comes in different forms. Participant 9 discussed not knowing a recruit's parents who only spoke Russian:

There're kids whose parents are from a different country, and they don't speak English [communication]. I have an athlete whom I didn't really realize this until they came to visit, but both parents were from Russia and the father speaks no English, but the mom had some understanding [concern]. During the visit, and I'm trying to talk to this dad, and he's like just giving me nothing back, and then I realized, oh, he doesn't understand what I'm saying, and her mom's English was OK, and that's great, but the student has been educated in the United States her whole life so she can speak perfect English, but she's speaking back to her parents and I'm like Oh my gosh this is a crazy conversation. So, you're trying to figure out [strategy] how you can maybe use less verbal communication on the fly and more like nonverbal cues that might be universal, but that was a hard visit [communication].

Another difference in communication during recruiting is determining whom within the family, other than the student-athlete, is permissible and appropriate to discuss potential recruitment. Participant 5 stated,

But we do have to figure out that dynamic [discovering]. Sometimes, it's how much is Dad in the picture. Is Dad somebody we should be talking to? Is dad somebody we shouldn't be talking to? Where does Dad fit in? What is mom going to say? Is mom going to say something totally different than the kid [concern]? Not to be offensive, I don't want to put anyone down, but we don't want to make anybody feel inadequate or judged. It's just something we have to figure out in both parent's structural situations. We end up just trying to figure out who should we talk to. Who should we not talk to? We have to talk to the kid and find out what's going on with the kid, but the culture puts us in a place where we have to investigate [strategy]. We have to be able to figure out what is best for us, as we talk to this particular recruit, because sometimes there is a right person to have the conversation with [communication].

Due to differences in cultural norms, non-revenue-producing sporting coaches had to adapt their communication to correspond with any differences in the lived experiences of the student-athletes recruited.

Curiosity

During the interviews, each non-revenue coach was curious about the student-athletes in the recruiting classes or those retained in the team structure. Participant 9 said, "Instead of all these assumptions, I like to be curious and have a conversation" [curiosity]. Participant 4 added,

We try to make any recruiting visit way more about questions and answers and make sure they understand that this is about having a look behind the curtain [strategy]. We're not going to be scared off because you want to know as much about our team as humanly possible and as much about this process as humanly possible [curiosity].

The non-revenue coaches often realized that, during the recruiting or retention process, understanding individual cultural differences was necessary. Many

coaches indicated that natural curiosity benefited the relationship-building process. Participant 2 stated,

The way I communicate versus the way the teenagers communicate is different. Then, when you add a cultural layer to the communication [communication] that goes on between a coach and the student-athletes [recruiting/retaining], everyone has to be willing to learn [discovery]. Having the opportunity to understand the team culture helps in the retention of student-athletes [curiosity].

Authenticity supported the notion of curiosity as a coaching strategy because, in the research, non-revenue coaches reported that open and honest communication was a factor in recruiting and retention. Participant 9 indicated,

I use my natural curiosity [curiosity]. I wanna know I'll start asking questions [discovery]. I think that an important thing to ask questions. You want to create relationships, so you ask questions about how you grow up, what is your background, and let me find out about you [curiosity].

The premise was further supported by the lived experience of Participant 6, who stated,

I can't stress enough that every individual, no matter where they're from, no matter what they look like, no matter how old they are [leadership], we're digging in to find out who they are, what motivates them, we're trying to build information to work off of [discovery]. Every individual person is different and has a different path before them. We need to find out first if they're fit, to convince them they are a fit, and they would be a great addition to our team, and that all comes with getting to know the student-athlete on the recruiting trip [curiosity].

The use of curiosity as a coaching strategy to build relationships and recruit or retain a student-athlete was seen as an effective measure by the non-revenue sporting coaches. Showing interest in student-athletes helped coaches not only recruit but also to retain student-athletes.

Open to Questioning

The adaptive nature of authentic leadership in non-revenue-producing sport coaching was evident in the lived experiences of the coaches as they developed an intercultural communication methodology to use when recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Participant 5 stated, “The recruiting process is quite eye-opening and interesting [discovering]. I am not American, so my views of culture as being different is reflected in every student-athlete I recruit” [curiosity]. Participant 4 advised,

Knowing your recruit’s openness is important [openness] ... at my current institution, I learned there was a vast difference in the way higher education was viewed in certain cultural communities. Some communities value trade school more than higher education [discovering]. Where I grew up, college was the assumed next step when you graduated high school, so it was eye-opening getting outside of the bubble I grew up in and starting to coach [openness].

Because of the culture of openness, the coaches could question their personal cultural understanding and that of student-athletes. Participant 7 stated,

I've always said that I would be selling them short if I didn't provide a diverse atmosphere because that's part of the educational setup in which you would be able to work closely with different people and have teammates who are different from you [leadership]. Even looking at geographic diversity, racial diversity, ethnic background, and gender. I communicate with everyone across the board. That is kind of my standard and stable speaking to student-athletes and their families. I'm very open and candid, being able to give opportunities to universities or colleges [recruiting/retaining] that historically were not available to them [openness]. I just want to make it plain to encourage others on my coaching staff to do the same to connect with the student-athletes and their families on a personal level, relating what is different about them and what they have in common to be able to better have a better sense of comfort to show them someone who understands at least part of their journey everyone's journey is different [authenticity].

The non-revenue-producing sporting coaches in the study agreed that being open to questions and allowing adaptive behaviors enhanced the focus of their intercultural communication on team building.

Recruiting/Retention

Many participants believed that being a non-revenue-producing sporting coach meant continuously practicing the process of recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Participant 9 stated,

I think that it's [recruiting/retaining] definitely made me a better critical thinker in some ways. Because you're as you're having the recruiting conversation, you're getting answers to questions that are kind of these are context clues to what this person situation might be and even hearing about different backgrounds [discovering]. You'll talk to kids, and it's like, oh wow, his kids adopted, and maybe they're not coming out and saying it, but they're referencing a different experience, and it's like, OK, so that changes the conversation, we're going to talk about maybe some of the different resources that we have on campus here [recruiting/retaining].

The non-revenue-producing coach perceived coaching, recruiting, and retaining athletes as an opportunity to assist student-athletes in reaching their individual goals. Participant 2 stated, "My opportunities as a coach have allowed me to recruit many student-athletes from different religions and socioeconomic backgrounds, just a wide range of differences" [recruiting/retaining].

The interactions and behaviors during recruiting influenced the value of the experience. Participant 4 discussed,

Beginning the recruiting process is diagnosing what the button is and who the decision makers are there are visits where I spend more time talking to Mom because I know she's my biggest competition if she doesn't wanna put him on a plane if she wants him closer to home, we have to overcome those types of things [recruiting/retaining].

Participant 3 asserted that as a coach of a non-revenue team, "I relied on my previous experience to guide my recruiting and retention efforts [recruiting/retention]." Participant 3 also stated,

I think there's a shifting dynamic that has changed the communication [communication] when you're talking about retention. You gotta try to sell the school in the experience and the team culture and keep the kids because there's less loyalty now because of the NCAA. They know they can go into the portal and get a better offer [recruiting/retaining].

Participant 8 agreed, saying,

You have to be on board, you have to understand what's going on [concern], you have to be, you have to understand your clientele, you have to understand what works, you have to understand what makes them tick [discovering]. You have to understand what's attracted to them those types of things there's a shifting paradigm thing have adjusted, and we have to adjust with them [recruiting/retaining].

The lack of connection affected recruiting, and failure to add value resulted in negative opportunity costs in the recruiting or retention focus. Participant 5 stated,

As coaches, we believed the team belonged to the student-athlete as much as it belonged to us [leadership]. This is your team you are the student host tell us what you think about the recruit when they come for their visit. You tell us whether or not you think they fit [recruiting/retaining].

Each non-revenue coach created a system of recruiting and retaining that best suited the team's cultural foundation to support the ingroup. Participant 7 stated,

Far as communicating [communication] during the recruiting process. Definitely pairing, as well pairing them with a host, as well as having a primary and a secondary host, show that someone can assist them to feel comfortable [strategy]. They have the opportunity to have multiple conversations [communication] because they may or may not connect with the primary host, but it gives them the opportunity to have somebody there who they may connect with better. We really work hard to try to have the collaborative process with the kids and the family. Recruitment involves support and the building of the relational framework [recruiting/retaining].

The recruitment system faced some opposition, which hindered the recruiting process. Cultural changes related to the use of cellular devices for communication

enabled gatekeepers to slow down relationship building. Participant 10 referenced,

I think in the recruiting process sometimes it's OK this kid is not gonna answer me. So, I have to reach out to the parents, but nobody has home phones anymore. So, you're trying to contact them via cell phone, and sometimes the other way happens the parent doesn't even give you their kid's cell phone. It's the parents who want to handle all the communication [communication], and then it's trying to figure out, well, I'm never going to coach you, MOM [concern]. So how do I get to coaching your kid and talking to your kid, so you see like the gatekeepers [strategy] from some of the parents in the recruiting process. Then they get here, and the parents still want to gatekeep, but they're not here, and I'm not going to call home to you know, New Hampshire to your mom when you're dorms right across the campus. Like, just come over here and talk [communication]. Identifying the cultural background and being able to frame the conversation as much as possible through their life experience and finding out what their major questions and seeking points are is how we benefit student-athletes in the recruiting process [recruiting/retaining].

The participants viewed recruiting and retention as an essential part of the relationship building process that required adaptive coaching strategies to create opportunities for successful outcomes.

Theme 2: Connecting Cultural Differences

The category “connecting cultural differences” consisted of eight codes: parenting, trust, adaptation, communication, connection, relationships, identity, and ingroup. The themes definition, structuring a social paradigm whose narrative allows student-athletes to connect to the social ingroup without assimilation, was used to set the parameters for Theme 2 of the research. The participants mentioned several communication elements that help align themes connecting cultural differences in 284 data segments, producing four categories: parenting (25), cultural adaptation (98), social identity (76), and ingroup culture (81). The theme of connecting cultural differences was widespread throughout the different

interviews during the research. The theme connecting cultural differences was directly associated with RQ2, which was “How do coaches adapt their communication based on perceived cultural differences?” Participants remarked about the lived experiences and the learned behaviors acquired as coaches of non-revenue-producing sporting teams that resulted in cultural adaptation to support the social identity of the student-athletes they encountered.

In four interview questions, participants explored the lived experience of how each adapts to intercultural communication methodology to explore the student-athlete's primary cultural experience:

IQ3: In what situations do you need to adapt your communication methods due to cultural differences? Can you share an example?

IQ4: What intercultural communication tactics do you utilize in building relationships with student-athletes? Do you have any examples?

IQ5: When recruiting student-athletes, can you give me an example of when you felt there was miscommunication based on cultural differences?

IQ6: Have you had cultural challenges or barriers communicating with a student-athlete on your roster? What was the outcome?

Parenting

The data segments contained 44 references to the coaching concept known as parenting while coaching. The majority resided in the segment connecting cultural differences. The coaches recognized that the commitment to a sporting team is a complex practice and regarded themselves as parental figures in the lives of some student-athletes. Participant 9 stated, “coaching is parenting” [parenting], and Participant 2 followed up with,

I am going to protect them as if they were my own children, that for sure they would have 24/7 access to my cell phone in case of emergencies [trust], that I was going to be the first line of defense, and so keeping those lines of communication [communication] is definitely important [parenting].

That concept is only further supported by a narrative in which Participant 3 communicated,

By far, my biggest challenge since I've been a coach at this institution actually involved a student-athlete I inherited. The athlete was going through a lot of things mentally. I became a parent in terms of day-to-day coaching, there was very little about our sport [parenting]. Much more, how are you doing today? Where are you today? I was just going to meet her where she was. The big struggle was trust [trust]. If I got two or three days a week of practice that was great. I'd literally put on my dad hat and take off my coaching hat, and vice versa as needed. It was like being a dad watching your kid fall off the carousel over and over again. You just sitting there, just waiting, and you're making sure that you say the right things [communication]. Making sure that when things are positive, you reaffirm it and reassure, hey you're going to be OK. The student-athlete finished the season, but it was exhausting [adaptation].

Supporting student-athletes came in many forms, and non-revenue-producing sporting coaches reported developing the willingness to take on distinct roles to encourage student-athletes to continue using their talent. Participant 7 discussed, "In the background, every year there is a perspective that student-athletes that now we're taking on the second half of their life [trust] as almost their parents or guardians" [parenting]. According to the participants, coaches use parenting insights to create the relationship foundation that connects student-athletes to the team culture. Participant 7 stated,

For some student-athletes, I (coach) become a parent from the beginning and remain so until graduation [parenting]. Other student-athletes mature and learn to compartmentalize. There are things that you're going to tell me (the coach) that you won't tell your teammates, some things you're going to tell your teammates that you won't tell me [trust]. There are things that you'll tell your teammates and friends and so forth, but mostly I end up being like a cool parent [relationship]. Sometimes I'm your friend, sometimes I'm disciplinarian, sometimes I've be the one giving you advice, sometimes I'm the person who's helping you through something,

the person that's on the side who's helping you get through everything [adaptation].

Each coach interviewed exhibited some form of parental consideration towards the student-athletes they recruited into the ingroup culture established and maintained by the relationships, cultivated on the foundation of trust and communication, and created by the relationships built to connect different perspectives.

Cultural Adaptation

Participant 1 noted, “Ingroup behavior was a learned skill [ingroup] that does not require assimilation,” understanding that student-athletes brought different social identities into a situation where relationship building is an important role in the team structure. Relationship building increased the need to explore the different experiences that punctuate the coaching experience. Participant 2 shared similar sentiments when asked about the need to adapt communication methods due to cultural differences: “My opportunities as a coach have allowed me to recruit many student-athletes from different religions and socioeconomic backgrounds, with a wide range of differences and I’ve never asked one to change” [adaptation]. The attitude the coaches expressed when discussing cultural differences amongst student-athletes supports a system of connection that values cultural adaptation over cultural assimilation. Participant 4 stated, “Different regions of people view college from different lenses” [adaptation], which reflects the value placed on the system of recruitment used to add members to the sporting team. Participant 7 stated,

I've always said that I would be selling them short if I didn't provide a diverse atmosphere [relationship] because that's part of the educational setup in which you would be able to work closely with different people and have teammates who are different from you [adaptation]. Even looking at geographic diversity, racial diversity, ethnic background, and gender. I communicate with everyone across the board, that is kind of my standard and stable speaking to student-athletes and their families. I'm very open and candid, being able to give opportunities to universities or

colleges that historically were not available to them [connection]. I just want to make it plain to encourage others on my coaching staff to do the same to connect [connection] with the student-athletes and their families on a personal level, relating what is different about them and what they have in common to be able to better have a better sense of comfort to show them someone who understands at least part of their journey everyone's journey is different [authentic].

Participant 6 exhibited a similar understanding when asked about cultural adaptation. The coach posited,

It (cultural adaptation) goes beyond being honest with athletes [trust]. In basketball, it's such a diverse setting on our team, both racially diverse and nationality diverse. We have guys from different countries, and different regions. The majority of our team is from North America, but that, too has differences we have kids from Nebraska, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, and California. Different places and there was geographic difference, differences mean that our team has a very diverse outlook [adaptation].

Even though different sporting teams use a distinctive methodology to structure the teams' ingroup expectations, coaches develop dynamics in relationship building to increase successful connections. Participant 7 stated,

In general, in America, there is an interesting dynamic in the way the country views things in general. Sometimes, you're too afraid to say how we really feel because we might be offensive, or somebody might shut down or call us out or whatever [communication]. But the fear of those types of conversation comes from our lack of knowledge, and creating a culture that is open to explaining differentiation and different cultural norms helps us to develop the empathy and understanding necessary to support building in group relationships [adaptation].

The coaches' expectation to gather student-athletes representing diverse cultural norms to form a team with an ingroup structure that accepts diverse opinions and respects differences was normative among non-revenue-producing sport coaches.

Social Identity

The ingroup social identity created by the team's cultural framework provided an emotional connection to increase the likelihood of student-athlete retention. Participant 6 stated,

I can't stress enough that every individual, no matter where they're from, no matter what they look like, no matter how old they are, we're digging in to find out who they are and what motivates them [connection]. We're trying to build information to work off of. Every individual person is different and has a different path before them we need to find out first if they're fit to convince them they are a fit and they would be a great addition to our team, and that all comes with getting to know the student-athlete on the recruiting trip [identity].

Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches attempted to create common ground to influence their relationships with individuals regardless of culture to support relationship building. Participant 1 stated,

I want the student-athletes to come and talk to me about anything my door is always open to have conversations [communication], even the tough ones. I want to make a space where my athletes feel they can get what they need to develop, and then I'm going to provide for them a place that is safe. I will be willing to have the conversations to learn about them and their experiences [identity].

The framework for the established ingroup culture of a non-revenue-producing sporting team influenced student-athletes' perspectives. Participant 6 stated,

Support of cultural differences and different cultural norms helps bring understanding and safety [trust] to different types of communication that goes on within the group [identity]. You become better because you're not in competition [relationships]. It's very unique you pull some of that in you, pull in some of the information gathered from different cultures, you become more aware of different things, you have more understanding of different ways of viewing things, you have a wider scope and breadth of experience it's about my relationship with my players [adaptation]. I make

no assumptions that's the other thing I make no assumption about people based on their backgrounds naturally, everybody's going to have to talk about uncomfortable situations in our culture [trust], and I wanna encourage our student-athletes to talk about specific things to show that we create a level of understanding that may not be there for some of our players we have to have those tough conversations in order to continue on as an in group and create a culture that is open to communication [communication] that is open to explanation that wants to understand how other people perceive the culture around us you learn from differences you learn from different backgrounds we're not a homogeneous environment so there are a lot of differences that cause our players to see things from different perspectives [identity].

Ingroup Culture

A student-athlete's ability to communicate influenced the opportunity to join the ingroup culture. Participant 5 stated,

As coaches, we believed the team [ingroup] belonged to the student-athlete as much as it belonged to culture and continued. We turned away recruits because during the visit, the student-athlete host a nice person, and during her team the team interactions [ingroup], her behavior caused the team to unanimously vote that she would not add value to the culture, so we did not bring her we did not ask her to join our team [ingroup].

Coaches believed that the ability to connect with team culture is paramount to support successful relationship-building outcomes. Some recruits had the opportunity to experience ingroup behavior during institutional visits and decided to accept the foundational culture. Participant 5 revealed,

In another instance, a young man came on a recruiting trip [connection], went to a pool party with his host, and spent the entire pool party on his phone his student-athlete host called me from the party and said he hadn't talked to anyone he's been on his phone the entire time [ingroup]. When the student-athlete called me to say he wanted to commit to my institution, I had to find a way to tell him no because he had not said a word during

the visit, and that was a red flag for my athletes assigned that he would not fit well in their culture [ingroup].

Being connected to the teams' ingroup culture is an integral part of the cultural framework. The ingroup established the foundation for the behavioral expectations of the team's cultural norms. Participant 7 stated,

In many cases, coaches are introductions introducing their universities [connection] to student-athletes to be in the ingroup culture. Cultural expectations have no relevant context to the student-athlete's cultural norms [ingroup]. I want to bring this best student-athletes here and the brightest, but at the same time, I want to make sure that everybody is meshing well [connection] with the culture [adaptation] that I already have. We're also attempting at the same time to create our own culture, our own team culture there's that overlapping [ingroup].

Coaches agreed that through the trust gained in the exchanged information, student-athletes learned about the cultural background of other members of the ingroup. The process of relationship building was central to the retention of student-athletes. Participants acknowledged that the sheer number of interactions with student-athletes hindered a complete understanding of unfamiliar cultural cues.

Theme 3: Creating Common Ground

The category "creating common ground" consisted of five codes: tradition, framework, communication, connection, and economics. The theme "creating common ground" consisted of five categories: university tradition/rules and bylaws (10), building relational framework (57), interpersonal communication (77), common ground (100), and socioeconomic background (13). The descriptive explanation of "creating common ground," establishing a connective element for the team culture that outweighs a student-athlete's cultural understanding, helped underscore the value the participants placed on the adaptive cultural measures.

Distributed throughout the research was the theme of creating common ground. During the research interviews, various participants discussed creating an institutional connection that assisted in retaining student-athletes. The theme was

connected to cultural differences and was directly associated with RQ3, which was, “How do coaches perceive NCAA bylaws and institutional traditions influence on cultural differences during recruiting and retention-based interactions (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)?”

In the following two interview questions, participants explored the lived experience of how each coach adapts the intercultural communication methodology required to explore the coaches’ experience in creating a common group, as a primary measure to develop the teams’ in group culture:

IQ7: Have you experienced any communication constraints related to cultural differences when recruiting or retaining a student-athlete?

IQ8: How has your experience in recruiting and retaining student-athletes affected your understanding of cultural differences?

University Traditions/Rules and Bylaws

Participants remarked about the learned behaviors that influenced the operation of non-revenue-producing sporting teams, which resulted in the creation of the theory of creating common ground. Participant 7 acknowledged,

The university was slow make to cultural adjustments that supported the changes in the student population [framework], which occurred approximately 50 years ago. And are still adapting to the ramifications of a culture slow to adapt the university traditions [traditions].

Universities’ traditions assisted in recruiting some student-athletes. However, being slow to adapt caused the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches to create adaptive measures to support recruiting and retaining other student-athletes.

Participant 8 stated, “Traditions and differences help some recruits connect, but with others, then the coach is key” [traditions]. The non-revenue-processing sporting coaches understood the need to adapt the team’s cultural perspective and balance recruitment and retention against university tradition. Participant 6 discussed,

Developing a culture based on campus tradition [tradition] connected some with the team's ingroup [connection]. But the structure to establish trust [trust] to gain the foundation to motivate the retention of student-

athletes requires learning background information to build relationships with others [connection].

Some universities' adherence to tradition caused coaches to limit the cultural distinctions of student-athletes recruited into a program. Participant 7 admitted, "I think as a coach, I spend most of my recruiting time trying to recruit athletes that are a good fit [connection] for the particular university that I work in. Some may fit better than others" [traditions]. Cultural norms and traditions resulted in limitations in the recruiting process. Participant 4 stated,

My sports, in my perspective, was pretty easy, any good recruiter learns his niche [framework]. Mine is a small private Catholic education, and that brings us to the Northeast and in the Midwest, where culturally, people understand small and private [traditions].

University traditions impeded the recruiting framework of some non-revenue-producing sporting coaches. Participant 3 stated,

You're dealing with the preconceived notions of the university and what the reputation is [framework]. What the sporting programs have done historically? Are you recruiting a kid whose dream is to go to that hometown or home state school? You're always trying to overcome all the things the culture placed in front of you [traditions].

Generationally, changed cultural norms affected the recruiting process. Some changes were adapted too quickly, whereas others required relationship building to create common ground. Participant 6 stated, "I think the first thing is to find the common ground to build relationships [connection]. I think trying to find common ground with young people from other cultures is obvious" [framework].

Relationship Building Framework

During the interviews, Participant 6 stated, "We try to figure out what motivates each student-athlete" [connection] and supported the theory that adaptive measures are an integral part of the coach's use of intercultural communication methodology to connect with student-athletes and create opportunities to build relationships. Participant 9 stated,

It's our responsibility to understand that the lack of understanding context student-athletes face today, and we have to give it to them [connection]. We're not trying to change them. But it's a long road in this life, and if we can just impact the course of the thinking, helping them to adapt information, it will benefit them [framework].

Several study participants revealed that they accommodated student-athletes with specific religious, dietary, or financial requirements to continue to compete in sport. Creating space to fulfill family or religious expectations required coaches to create parameters to adapt program expectations that included fundamental differences. Participant 5 detailed one such incident as follows:

During Ramadan [tradition], one of my student-athletes was practicing at five in the morning so that he could eat the night before and still practice [framework]. His culture is very different, and it's a big deal for him [connection]. It's not a small thing. There are many Muslims in this country that observe Ramadan, but they're not as strict about it. So, I had to be very careful that I was maintaining the level of strictness that his family expected and respected the cultural difference that he brought to the team [framework].

The non-revenue sporting coaches indicated their willingness to create an ingroup whose internal factors are integral to a cultural function that included a supportive environment as the team membership increased. Participant 7 stated,

Being cognizant and being aware of who you're bringing [connection]. It's making sure you're not just bringing them in because they have a high GPA or they're an elite athlete but understanding that when you bring them in, you are prepared for them [framework]. When you bring them in, your team is prepared for them regardless of who they are [connection]. It's your job to prepare everyone around them, from the coaches to the teammates, to help to bring them into the culture and support them in their transition into your ingroup [ingroup].

According to Participant 4, "Recruitment involves support of the building of the relational framework." Additionally, Participant 7 stated,

But continuation of relationship building during the recruiting process is a unique facet of non-revenue-producing sports [framework]. In that many times, coaches recruit athletes, they develop a relationship during the recruiting process, and that relationship continues on despite them choosing another institution [connection]. Or them not choosing an institution at all. Those relationships carry on past the recruiting process. I open up to college athletes, showing my willingness to disclose my personal journey to help them to know and understand that this place is a safe place for you to open up [connection]. Even though the culture is different, we accept that the intercultural relationships developed here are successful because we teach our student-athletes that differences are acceptable. Then we are open to having a conversation [connection].

The coaches participating in the research emphasized the importance of structured communication patterns to build trust and secure connections with student-athletes.

Creating Common Ground

Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches created systems of connection to overcome differences in cultural understanding to facilitate the formation of an ingroup culture. Participant 5 discussed,

I never truly appreciated the separation of cultures until I moved to this country [tradition]. At the end of the day, you bring all those people together, trying to get them to listen to the same music and to get along on the same bus ride [framework].

The adapted cultural space built to create relational connections served as the framework for the ingroup culture. Participant 9 admitted,

As a coach, I'm trying to find common ground [framework]. I'm trying to figure out if this stranger will commit to coming to school and trust their goals to this process. I kinda of meet you on common ground and try to dim the differences and brighten the common similarities [connection]. I claim more to similarities rather than differences. The differences, I kind of assume, are going to be there because it's not home. I kind of go

digging around for the common ground because it's important work [framework].

Participant 5 continued,

The student-athletes we recruit have to fit into a team [framework]. You can bring a 17-year-old Caucasian girl onto the cross-country team with 30 ladies, and they all look exactly like her, but she may not fit [connection]. We've had some scenarios where I think people didn't fit in because they didn't vibe. They didn't find common ground with our team culture [framework]. I'm an old white guy trying to create a relationship with this young person that's Muslim or African American or from another country or whatever it is. I have to find common ground [framework]. The student-athletes we are recruiting today have a very short memory space. They will remember the athletes that you have coached recently but not in the past, so educating them on who you are and who you've coached is an important part of building relationships, one of the biggest things [framework].

The participants supported the belief that sport has a unique common goal that forces individuals into relationships regardless of culture.

Socioeconomic Background

The complicated economic truths set forth by the NCAA, as a part of the financial realities facing non-revenue-producing sporting coaches continued to dictate recruitment efforts. Participant 6 stated,

We are a full scholarship sport, so the student's financial outlook is less of a concern than other non-revenue sports [economics]. The socioeconomic background of basketball players it's from both ends of the spectrum. We have upper-middle-class basketball players. we have some rich kids, we have some poor kids, we have some black kids, we have some white kids, we have some Asian kids, a little bit of everything [framework].

Continuity between campus visits and the introduction to campus life can damage relationships if they experience different cultures. The location of my institution is a unique socioeconomic class of people who might

consider it incredibly impressive or incredibly intimidating [economics]. So, as we recruit our student-athletes, we try to gage things like that as lunch at the Country Club restaurant, something that's going to help us or hurt us is it appropriate is this gonna bring a weird dynamic [economic].

In contrast, Participant 4 said,

The phrase we cannot afford that student-athlete strikes home to the socioeconomic differences, in institutions, in America [economics]. The kid can have the talent, the kid can have the grades, but the reality of the university system prohibits student-athletes from living their dream because we are limited on the kids that we can support [economics].

The structured socioeconomic expectation derived by the institution's athletic budget and the bylaws set forth by the NCAA supports non-revenue-producing student-athletes and limits scholarship funding. Participant 4 continued,

Institutionally, we tend to get a relatively blue-collar student-athlete [tradition]. And there's not a huge socioeconomic swing socioeconomic diversity is the more frequent at universities with massive endowments. Where student-athletes receive funding to attend the institution, so they end up with different ends of the spectrum that is not the case that my institution we rely on financial aid as a tool to make up economic shortfalls [economic]. Knowing the socioeconomics of the committing communities you recruit can help you better manage your scholarship budget and influence the retention of student-athletes [framework]. The socioeconomic piece factors into how we use our scholarship budget it's thinking what is it going to take to get this student-athlete are we wasting our time and theirs because we're never going to be able to get to the financial number that kid needs in order to attend our university [economic].

Participant 2 stated,

I've really enjoyed learning about different places and different cultures [connection]. I would not know my way around certain communities if I had not had my coaching experience. Even knowing culturally, some

differences include socioeconomic differences [economics]. I wouldn't know so much about the different ways the student-athletes that I have the privilege of coaching live their lives [economic].

Non-revenue-producing coaches celebrated the adaptive culture created by socioeconomic differences.

Theme 4: Cultivated Isolation

The category “cultivated isolation” consisted of four codes: comfort, communication, frustration, and mechanization. The theme “connecting cultural differences” consisted of four categories: comfortable (34), post-pandemic communication (41), frustration (7), and the device used as voice (hindrance to relationship building) (25). In cultivated isolation, “communication behavior using technology served as a protective barrier allowing the individual to control interpersonal interactions by limiting personal access and restricting avenues of connection,” and offered insight into post-pandemic communication changes.

In 2016, the NCAA allowed unlimited texting and communication on social media platforms at the beginning of a student-athlete's Junior year (Fraleay et al., 2020). However, the participants preferred voice communication to create context in conversation to increase understanding by student-athletes, stakeholders, and recruits. The pandemic and social media accelerated the need to adapt communication. The research interviews supported the idea that the changed communication method increased the difficulty level in the coach's ability to connect with student-athletes. Coaches use social media to avoid gatekeepers who keep athletes from opportunities for whatever reason. The theme cultivated isolation was directly associated with RQ4, which was, “In the recruiting or retention process, how has the coach's understanding of intercultural communication changed to benefit student-athletes?” In two interview questions, participants explored the lived experience of how each adapted the intercultural communication methodology required to explore the coach's ability to recruit or retain in the face of changed communication methods:

IQ9: In your conversations with student-athletes, how does concern for their cultural understanding influence your experience in recruiting or

retention? What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

IQ10: What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

An additional component to the theme of cultivated isolation was based on the communicated needs of the student-athlete with the coach via electronic mediums.

Comfortable

Coaches discussed gaps in connectedness and limited reliability in communication. Coaches also reported changed physical interaction. Participant 10 stated, “Electronic communication allows student-athletes to leave out information, because they don’t want to discuss the matter, or it takes too long to communicate of a device [comfort].” Coaches reported that student-athletes used devices to communicate in a less directed manner, which allowed for comfortable communication. Participant 2 said, “Creating open lines of communication are important to make student-athletes feel comfortable” [comfort].

Participant 1 stated,

It’s been a little bit more difficult because these kids have missed, like, probably like, a year of school, maybe a year and a half of school. Learning how to communicate with them, I think, is a little bit different [communication]. A lot of these kids are not as open, they're not as outgoing because they were stuck in their house for a year [frustration]. So, learning how to communicate with them and what's the best method to kind of reach out to them.

Coaches continued to develop different communication methods to increase communication quality. Participant 10 stated,

Phones have ruined some of the communication between student-athletes and coaches [communication]. They're super uncomfortable when you ask them to come in for a one-on-one meeting. I’ve had to ask them to please write things down, because if you don't when they come into the office,

they won't know what to say they won't have anything to say [comfortable].

A willingness to adapt communication had to evolve, as the classes of student-athletes exhausted their eligibility and new recruits needed to feel comfortable. Participant 2 stated, “I think communication is always evolving [communication], and it is important for me to change the way I communicate with the student-athletes to create the connection and culture that the team needs to facilitate success” [comfortable]. Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches benefitted from continued communication opportunities to retain student-athletes. Participant 7 stated,

Equality of communication with equality of explanation to retain those people, I just have to keep communicating [communication]. I continue to check in, I think, checking in with specific people. I have ones that I check in on and have one-on-one's each term. Twice in a term, and we have four, well, technically, three terms. So, I have six chances to be able to check in [framework]. I know about their families, I know what their goals are, I know about their mom and dad, I asked them questions about those things and let them know that I see them that their valued that I'm paying attention regardless of their performance [comfort].

Post-pandemic Communication

Electronic communication became normalized in recruiting and retention student-athletes. Since the pandemic, coaches have had to rely more upon Zoom and other electronic communications to develop relationships with student-athletes. Participant 1 stated,

A lot of these kids are not as open [framework]. They're not as outgoing because they were stuck in their house for a year. So, learning how to communicate with them and what's the best method to kind of reach out to them [communication].

Participant 8 continued, “A lot of these student-athletes are not as open [framework]. I prefer to talk but I understand this, and I understand the kids like that form of communication these days” [communication]. The changed

communication styles caused coaches to adapt their communication skills to recruiting or maintaining relationships with student-athletes to include mediums that hindered their ability to communicate directly. Participant 3 added,

Since the pandemic, some kids don't want any part of being around people who don't look like them, who don't share their culture, and because of that, you probably can't have those conversation that you're used to having with your friends from home [communication]. Sport, in general, is being uncomfortable putting situations and putting pressure situations [comfort]. I find that the ones who don't understand communication, who haven't really been versed in the things that forced them to communicate to open up to talk about different things, they fade off, and that never ends well [communication].

When student-athletes fail to communicate within the ingroup, an outgroup emerged, and there is great difficulty residing in an outgroup alone.

Frustration

The isolated conditions created by the pandemic caused rapid acceleration of changes in communication. The changed communications methodology frustrated the non-revenue-producing coaches. Participant 10 stated,

The biggest restraint, I mean the biggest communication issue we have now, is getting them to actually communicate in person versus on their phone [mechanization]. Like, I think I get a very different communication from a text message than I do in person. So, I don't know if the phone can be considered a restraint, but for all of my student-athletes, that is their preferred method of communication as a text [mechanization]. But honestly, even that's getting harder to get them to reply to because then they have notification silenced or something else [communication]. And then and then you do not get to them, so my biggest restraint, and I don't even know this is truly how you want the question answered, getting them to communicate back because finding like the medium to reach them [mechanization]. It's really hard. They definitely don't want face-to-face, in-person conversation. They want to avoid that one like the plague. I

don't even think they'd answer the phone if I call them like I don't think kids answer the phone anymore they would, so a text is usually your best choice, but it's sometimes you're relying on like the roommate of the kid who you know will answer the phone [frustration].

The frustration over the gravitation towards communication via a device was evident in all the participants' responses.

Device as Voice

Coaches have an admitted tendency to prefer communication measures that involve physical conversation, and student-athletes are trending toward communication measures that involve electronic communication. Participant 1 revealed,

These kids do not like to be on the phone. And so, text messaging, messaging, messaging them through Twitter or social media is usually the way to go with them, even based on what kids would rather Face Timing than actually talk to you on the phone [mechanization]. So, just learning by was a mess for the influence, how they like to communicate, and being able to adapt to that I'm on the phone person myself [communication].

The duality encompassed in the differing methods reflected the generational differences that coaches and student-athletes adapted to build relationships.

Participant 7 stated,

I have adapted to the cell phone, it's important for communication of information. I can send out the email or text, and they will most likely read it, read the text sometimes, not the email [communication]. But it's frustrating because I don't even know if they got the message or understood it. The pandemic changed so much [mechanization].

Changes in communication between non-revenue-producing coaches and student-athletes have happened previously, but the pandemic sped up the iteration.

Participant 3 said,

But with recruiting, oh yeah, sometimes it's 100% introduction on social media or Twitter or Instagram [mechanization]. I can send an athlete a

direct message. But I had to see if they responded. It's easier to ignore people or find them [communication].

Relationship building created by social media introduction became normalized and has increased in usage. Participant 8 stated,

The problem with calling student-athletes, is if they don't have your number, they won't answer the phone if they don't have your name by it, they won't answer the phone [mechanization]. So, for me, keeping in touch through text and social media works out. I prefer to talk but I understand this, and I understand the kids like that form of communication these days [communication].

The coaches faced a changed communication environment, which further complicated the relationship-building process. Participant 10 discussed,

And so, I think the phones have ruined some of that, and I see that on a regular basis [mechanization]. We're losing the ability to communicate back as each generation kind of comes in and they're super uncomfortable [comfort]. When you ask them to do one-on-one meetings. It's super uncomfortable for them, like they don't have anything to say, like I've had to ask them, please write down things to say so that way you have something to say. You obviously have feedback on yourself, right? The whole year, something you like, something you don't like, and usually they come in here and don't have any questions [frustration]. And they are like, OK, OK, OK, and like, OK is my least favorite answer. Like, have an opinion. And so that I think that if we could have had this probably 20 years ago without cell phones, we'd have less miscommunication. I'm not sure if that answers your question, but that's my biggest battle on a daily basis [frustration]. They are the worst. Yeah, I can't even, and these kids don't have like room phones anymore, either. So, like you have to rely on their phone and then when they break it or lose it then you can't contact them, you have no contact to them at all [communication]. Yeah, because then they're like my Momma won't buy me a phone. Yeah, because they

broke it 12 times. Without cell phones, we'd have less miscommunication. That's my biggest battle on a daily basis [frustration].

Many participants discussed the changed communication values and expectations traditionally expected in sport. The type of communication coaches typically used to help build relationships and find connections has become increasingly difficult. Student-athletes have embraced devices, which serve as a barrier to interpersonal connection. Devices provide safety, brevity, and a physical barrier to control external communication.

Theme 5: Adaptive Communication

The category “adaptive communication” consisted of four codes: communication, behavior, empathy, insight. The theme “adaptive communication” consisted of four categories: communication differences (93), behavioral modification (41), empathy (58), and insightful (35). The theme also addressed RQ4 and the changed processes, which helped develop relationships. RQ4 was “In the recruiting or retention process, how has the coach’s understanding of intercultural communication changed to benefit student-athletes [adaptive communication] (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)?” In addition, an explanation of the theme, “Encouraging a supportive atmosphere for the expression of cultural differences and understanding of student-athlete social identity for the purpose of building relationships within the group,” guided the research of the participants’ lived experiences.

IQ9 and IQ10 addressed the differences in communication realities of non-revenue-producing sporting coaches. In the theme of cultivated isolation, the focus was on mechanized communication methods that stemmed from losses in interpersonal communication habits exacerbated by the pandemic. At the same time, adaptive communication addresses physical communication and the behaviors, feelings, and changes due to cultural differences during both verbal and nonverbal communication.

IQ9: In your conversations with student-athletes, how does concern for their cultural understanding influence your experience in recruiting or

retention? What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

IQ10: What positive insights are gained by the influence of intercultural communication during the recruitment or retention process?

IQ11: What communication skills did your collegiate coach need to improve that you are aware of as you talk to student-athletes?

IQ12: Is there any information about intercultural communication while coaching an NCAA non-revenue sporting team that you feel I have missed in my questions?

Communication Difference

Each non-revenue coach developed a system to educate student-athletes to cultivate empathy and learn how to handle cultural differences in preparation to adapt to cultural differences. Participant 2 stated,

To have a team conversation, we have to find a space where everybody feels like they belong, and they have a voice, and they are appreciated and are valued, so that we can learn from each other. It means that the variety of cultural differences we have prepared you to step into your future understanding of difference [communication].

The cultural norms of student-athletes differed, but the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches accepted the difference and tried to teach the athletes the same.

Participant 1 stated,

Communication with student-athletes helps to ensure that coaches know more about the person and not just the athlete [empathy]. Coaches adapted communication measures to comfort student-athletes. The trust factor has a little bit more to do with open communication, letting them see who you are outside of being just their coach [communication].

Openness to adaptation helped create a foundation to build relationships dependent on connections developed by the actual curiosity. Participant 7 said,

Sometimes, I think it makes you step back then actually kind of evaluate yourself [insight]. I think coaching, in general, dealing with student-athletes we have currently and are trying to retain it's an everyday kind of

personal challenge to you to be yourself and always forces you to be a better person simply because you're communicating with them and what you receive the same kind of communication back and you're trying to help them to be a great person, you try to practice what you preach, you try to be authentic and know that they're always watching you and in turn that means that you're always working on yourself [communication].

Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches had to develop different methods of communication to encompass the variations of the student-athletes recruited into the team ingroup dynamics. Participant 3 stated,

My experience has taught me that I could have a conversation with anybody. From the standpoint of having to speak different cultural languages because of my background and the student-athletes have recruited [communication]. It's just different for me. I mean, we're talking about the gambit of culture, not just one teeny piece like regionality, we're talking race, we're talking gender, we're talking about the entire spectrum [insight].

Team ingroups consisted of different foundational norms that required adaptive measures to communicate comfort and acceptance and create a safe environment to support student-athletes. Participant 2 added,

The way I communicate versus the way these teenagers communicate is different. Then, when you add a cultural layer to the communication that goes on between a coach and the student-athletes, everyone has to be willing to learn [empathy]. One of the intercultural strategies that we use are the use of potluck dinners. It gives the team an opportunity to lead together outside of our sport in a more relaxed environment. It's a small way to create opportunities to communicate differences and develop pathways to secure strong relationships within our team culture [behaviors].

The willingness to communicate openly despite differences helped develop connections between unfamiliar cultural understandings. The function led teams to create ingroup behaviors that worked together to build a relational structure that

supported differences and allowed non-revenue-producing coaches to provide a safe environment for personal growth.

Behavioral Modification

The natural cultural difference caused non-revenue-producing sporting coaches to accept modified behaviors for themselves and student-athletes for the ingroup structure formulated to create the team. Participant 4 stated,

This gonna be a whole new world and open doors. We're very aware again of our actual language, so they were not offensive. We never want to be offensive in any regard. We're very consistent in our messaging [communication]. But the reality is when you coach a team of student-athletes privately, you can put your arm around someone and say something different to a guy who doesn't like hard coaching. But there are also guys that I can call out in front of everybody and can get them to respond in a different way. There are levels of differentiation in my sport, and it has to do with their backgrounds. So, we have to gauge recruits to determine what's the best way to introduce them to our culture team culture [behavior].

Coaches adapted their behavior to support the background of the student-athletes. Each team developed differently based on the structure created through recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Participant 6 stated,

The willingness to put student-athletes together who lack similar cultural norms is a part of the structural foundation that creates ingroup connections [behavior]. One thing we do in my program is that we choose the roommates for our freshman athletes. We try to take the guys who are the least alike on paper who are the least likely to have common ground and make them live together for the first year [behavior].

Differences in cultural understanding served as the foundation to build relationships and form ingroup connections. When athletes who lacked connection roomed together, they had an opportunity to learn. Participant 5 discussed,

I had one student-athlete during their recruiting trip ask if they had to room with black people. My response was absolutely [empathy]. I went on to say I will make you room with multiple people because you rotate rooms on every trip [insight]. My theory was that everybody should change roommates every trip because you want them to get to know everyone [behavior].

Experiencing unfamiliar cultures resulted in a friendship that required exposure to diversity to formulate. Participant 6 learned, “It’s important to be willing to adapt to the cultural norms of a student-athlete because sometimes we hit triggers based on their cultural upbringing, which causes us to adapt our communication” [behavior]. Non-revenue coaches displayed respect for the humanity of their student-athletes by acknowledging the cultural norms of the student-athlete and the group opportunities provided for acceptance of differences.

Empathy

Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches have long created systems of understanding for improved recruiting results and connected relationships to safeguard retention. Participant 7 mentioned,

Once, on the way home from a track meet, I stopped by a restaurant with a particular cuisine because I knew one of my student-athletes who was far away from home and would enjoy it. So, we took some of the meal money, and I gave them the food, and they were so appreciative to have just a little taste of home [empathy].

Participant 2 stated,

The socialized unrest that student-athletes experience causes suffering and unbelievable stress and anxiety, and sometimes depression. Culture and race just add another layer to something that people don't fully understand as a coach and a leader in an educational environment [empathy]. It's my job to provide a space where understanding can occur [insight]. Being well-versed in different cultural experiences gives me the opportunity to share the benefits and duty of understanding different cultures, that is, being accepting of different cultures [empathy].

The pattern of empathy created for the care and support of student-athletes recruited and retained within an ingroup was structured in distinctive approaches to nurturing difference. Participant 10 stated,

But that just comes from constant communication. When you should use that strategy for each one [communication]. I don't talk to all 39 student-athletes on my team the same I wish I could, though. I had to develop techniques to ensure one-on-one communication with athletes flows fluidly, and athletes are not sitting there with nothing to say [insight].

Participant 4 continued, "Student-athletes, no matter their culture, want to be important to us, and what signals that to every kid is going to be different" [empathy]. Participant 9 stated, "Make sure that you communicate effectively and appropriately for their age level and for the age group you're talking to" [insight]. Participant 6 said,

We see the difference, and it depends on how we're treated. I think sometimes you see differences of wanting familiarity, and it's important to talk about that with the student-athletes [communication]. I think as far as communication with people from different cultural backgrounds, the cultural background could be interpreted in many different ways, and when they're feeling that they wish they can talk to someone, they need us to be open to listening [empathy]. Participant 1 stated, just trying to get to know them a bit better so that we do not have any barriers to communication, but sometimes there is a language barrier [communication].

Insightful

At one point, every non-revenue-producing sporting coach in the research was a student-athlete, each with a unique lived experience that influenced their coaching methods. When asked, "What communication skills did your collegiate coach need to improve that you are aware of as you talk to student-athletes?"

Participant 3 said,

My situation was unique. I was not American when I attended an institution in the United States. Another issue was that my coach and I, in

fact, had a communication barrier, which was such that my coach and I communicated via stick figures. Because English was not his first language, and I did not speak American. The communication difference was so vast, that pictograms were the best way for us to convey information [insight].

By contrast, Participant 5 stated, “I don't think my coach lacked any skills. I think he chose not to use them because he didn't have to” [insight]. Next, Participant 6 revealed,

He didn't talk to us at all, really, he was very professional [insight].

The changes in communication between non-revenue-producing sporting coaches who participated in the research and the lived experience of being an athlete caused the coaches to adapt the methodology used to create the team ingroup.

Participant 7 said,

Yikes, my college coach had zero communication skills. My college coaches assumed a lot of times they stereotyped, and many times, they placed those stereotypes on you. They familiarized themselves with you based off those stereotypes. They thought they knew your background [insight].

Participant 10 discussed,

My coach was really bad at this. Coach always felt really bad about giving feedback. So, Coach wanted to be your friend versus tell you the truth. You would ask why am I not playing? She would say oh no, you're doing everything right, you're great, it's just we'll get you next time. And then that doesn't happen. It doesn't make you feel better. It makes you feel like you're being lied to because you didn't get to play the next time [insight].

Each coach recalled the communication differences that structured the foundation of the communication philosophy used to develop the team culture. Each created an ingroup to support the recruiting and retention efforts used to support the team structure.

Summary

The chapter consisted of a presentation of five themes derived from the interviews gathered from 10 participants. The themes are authentic leadership communication, connecting cultural differences, adaptive communication, isolated communication, and creating common ground. In total, 26 categories were generated from 1,223 for qualitative analysis of the information gathered. The data collected and the themes produced indicate the value of intercultural communication in non-revenue-producing sport. Chapter 5 will include the findings, recommendations, implications, and conclusions of the study.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

The objective purpose of studying the intercultural communication methodology of non-revenue-producing intercollegiate sport was to explore the lived experiences of the coaches in the recruitment and retention of student-athletes in a system influenced by NCAA bylaws and institutional traditions. Cultural variations affect a team's social structure, and the recruiting and retention system will benefit from additional research. Using the semi-structured interview process associated with phenomenological research methodology to gather data, the lived experiences of 10 non-revenue-producing intercollegiate sporting coaches were explored in this study to examine the creation of an ingroup culture. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of relevant research findings, practical and theoretical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research to illustrate the research's relevance and importance.

Research Questions

The study addressed four research questions that were used to structure the data collected. The questions focused on the foundation developed by the lived experiences of the non-revenue-producing coaches using intercultural communication during interactions with student-athletes. The semi-structured qualitative interviews consisted of 12 primary questions and allowed the participants to reflect on different events that shaped the changes in their communication methodology. Then, interview data were analyzed to answer the research questions. The findings showed that the participants used intercultural communication as a function to recruit and retain student-athletes. The research findings are presented in the following sections.

Research Question One

The cultural framework used to facilitate an ingroup culture and solidify relationship-building opportunities is vital to creating a cohesive team structure. RQ1, "How do coaches perceive the role of intercultural communication when interacting with student-athletes?" (Bell & Riolo, 2017; Simien et al., 2019; Powers et al., 2016) was used to understand the use of intercultural communication in the

coach-athlete relationship. Each participant coached a different group of student-athletes, and all the student-athletes subscribed to distinct cultural norms. According to several participants, creating a functional team requires an ingroup cultural foundation. The participants believed that supporting individual social identities helps overcome cultural misunderstanding, agreeing that an adaptive environment could help facilitate an atmosphere where willingness to accept cultural differences was a beneficial measure. Participants described having the willingness to position student-athletes who lack similar cultural norms, which is a part of the structural foundation for creating ingroup connections. The non-revenue-producing coaches used intercultural communication to help convey acceptance of contrasting ingroup behavior. The participants communicated expectations, and student-athletes had the opportunity to learn from the cultural foundation created to structure ingroup behaviors (Berg & Warner, 2019).

Each participant's lived experience emanated from within a unique cultural understanding built on the commonality of a particular sport. The non-revenue-producing coaches used the sporting perspective to create an intercultural communication narrative for interacting with the student-athletes to determine different motivating factors for each student-athlete. The non-revenue-producing coaches used relationship building in their recruitment and retention efforts to enhance ingroup connections, as the financial structure of non-revenue-producing sport is complex. Consequently, some athletes are not fiscally incentivized to participate. The study participants discussed the formalization of an intercultural communication methodology to assist in creating a sociocultural foundation to connect student-athletes with the ingroup to bolster feelings of security and acceptance. The role of intercultural communication in non-revenue-producing sport coaching gives rise to relationship building and connections to support student-athletes from distinct cultures. The resulting interactions support the adaptive changes required to thrive in an unfamiliar environment. Creating a sporting team, in an ever-adaptive environment, requires non-revenue-producing coaches to adapt communications measures and ensure safety in communicating emotions or asking questions (Berg et al., 2021).

One of the core measures used to support the role of intercultural communication in a non-revenue-producing sport is authentic leadership behaviors. The non-revenue-producing coaches discussed presenting themselves openly to the student-athletes recruited or retained for the sporting team. Authenticity was communicated as a component of the intercultural communication processes and ongoing development of the ingroup culture. The use of authentic behavior was a strategic method to encourage student-athletes to be themselves. Learning how to communicate with student-athletes involved curiosity about the individual and not only athletic ability. There is a dynamic to an effective non-revenue-producing coaching strategy, and it involves creating opportunities for connection and supporting a narrative that adapts to help communicate a willingness to learn. The participants suggested that interacting with student-athletes means constructing a diverse environment and the opportunities to challenge certainty, which creates better student-athletes and individuals (King & Bailey, 2021).

Research Question Two

RQ2 was, “How do coaches adapt their communication based on perceived cultural differences” (Carter-Francique, 2018; Fisher et al., 2017)? The question was used to examine the different intercultural communication adaptation practices non-revenue-producing sporting coaches used to interact with student-athletes, during the recruitment or retention process. Student-athletes come from many distinct cultures, and non-revenue-producing sporting coaches have developed techniques to create communication patterns to build relationships and support connections to team ingroup culture. The willingness to support the social identity of student-athletes is advantageous in building a team cultural structure (Perez et al., 2019). One methodology in non-revenue-producing sport coaching is using parenting techniques to create connections. One participant referred to the phenomena as parenting while coaching, whereas another coach pronounced it as protecting them as if they were one’s own children. The parenting while coaching concept allowed non-revenue-producing sporting coaches opportunities to explain relevant information or support the

emotional needs of the student-athletes. The participants noted that developing a team ingroup culture required a framework of understanding for a series of behaviors. Some student-athletes have grown up parenting themselves, some have little expectation for responsibility, and others are left with emotional scars, but they all commit to adapting behaviors to reflect team expectations. Intercultural communication is a key factor in the adaptive nature of differences in cultural norms. Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches must communicate information to student-athletes to effect change. As student-athletes surrender the formerly understood cultural norms to connect with an unfamiliar culture, different behavioral modifications must be communicated. The difference in upbringing means the student-athlete must be willing to adapt communication to learn the expected behavioral measures. By developing a structured ingroup dialog, the team structure can tend more toward biculturalism, wherein assimilation is not the given response to cultural difference (Kim & Kim, 2019).

The non-revenue-producing sporting team's ingroup behavior has an adaptable understanding that supports social identity but requires communication changes based on the student-athlete's cultural norms. Student-athletes hail from different regions, communities, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Because of these differences, adaptive communication measures are required to connect ingroup relationships. Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches adapt their communication to connect to student-athletes, as each student-athlete has an individual understanding of acceptable cultural norms. Therefore, coaches develop systematic adaptive measures to communicate specifically with an athlete to ensure that the athlete feels connected to the ingroup and strengthen the relationship-building process by framing communication adaptations that encourage ingroup development (Kauff et al., 2020).

Non-revenue-producing sporting coaches build relationships during interactions with student-athletes. Each participant discussed the unique framework used to construct relationships from previous interactions into a type of developmental understanding that fostered trust. The dynamics of the relationships are important to the cultural structure that represents distinct

behaviors performed by the ingroup, which supports key relationships. Learning a student-athlete's motivations, key stressors, or cultural background helps sustain a framework of support to invalidate cultural differences. The non-revenue-producing sporting coaches and student-athletes often have grown up to expect different behaviors. However, creating a framework that adapts to differences using intercultural communication helps build the team ingroup and enhances communication (Presbitero & Attar, 2018).

The non-revenue-producing coaches create a social identity to direct the ingroup behaviors for the team's cultural framework. The participants constructed a common ground to assist student-athletes in building relationships despite given differences. Connection to team culture is a vital part of the sociocultural benefit of adaptation to the common framework of the non-revenue-producing sport, as coaches adapt connections to build trust and successful interactions to overcome perceived cultural differences (Fraley et al., 2020).

Research Question Three

For RQ3, "How do coaches perceive NCAA bylaws and institutional traditions influence on cultural differences during recruiting and retention-based interactions?" all the non-revenue-producing coaches agreed that the NCAA bylaws factor little in the intercultural communication methods used to interact with student-athletes. The participants focused primarily on discovering specific motivations of individual student-athletes to support adaptive intercultural communication measures and create opportunities to build relationships that benefit the team. Cultural differences affect some intercultural communication factors and hinder equality in intercollegiate sport. For example, understanding how recruiting and retention operates in intercollegiate athletes can present a barrier to effective communication. Socioeconomic factors, such as financial aid, official and unofficial visits, or how to get recruited, add complexity to the process, which advantages certain student-athletes over others.

Institutional tradition is a more influential factor in relationship-building efforts to understand differences. The participants agreed that developing a culture that is not only based on campus tradition but also connected to the team's

ingroup cultural function is beneficial to the framework used to establish the trust necessary to gain information, learn the cultural background, and motivate student-athlete retention. For a non-revenue-producing sporting team, the ingroup cultural vision is an important part of creating a space to allow participants to communicate across cultural differences. The use of intercultural communication creates common ground, and the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches structured a foundation based on tradition to direct behavioral patterns, as the intercollegiate institutions served as the primary unifying factor in bringing the student-athletes together (Segev et al., 2022).

According to several participants, institutional tradition is a driving factor in establishing common ground because university tradition has positive and negative effects on recruiting. Three participants discussed the slow institutional movement to adapt to cultural changes and the effects that decision had on recruitment. Traditional university reputations were mentioned as a hindrance in recruiting, as generational changes require adaptive measures to create common ground for the non-revenue-producing coaches and student-athletes to find connections. The intercultural communication framework a sport creates provides the foundation for common ground in addressing the cultural differences encountered by non-revenue-producing coaches during recruiting and retaining student-athletes. The perspective and ingroup cultural balance is used to drive the perceived influences on non-revenue-producing coaches' ability to overcome challenges. By building a relational framework that influences acceptance of cultural differences, the ingroup team structure can provide an open adaptive culture to connect student-athletes to the team as well as the institution (Bodin et al., 2022; Miles & Shiner, 2022).

Research Question Four

RQ4 was, "In the recruiting or retention process, how has the coach's understanding of intercultural communication changed to benefit student-athletes" (Carter-Francique, 2018; Powers et al., 2016)? The results of data analysis supported the notion that understanding intercultural communication benefitted the participants. The advantage is in comprehending the context of the cultural

environment that student-athletes experience, and understanding the ingroup framework connection is bolstered by intercultural communication. One of the goals of intercollegiate sport is the retention of the student-athletes to fulfill the expectations of the NCAA (Dean & Reynolds, 2017). The non-revenue-producing coaches' willingness to be open in communication provides a foundation for social adaptation, allowing coaches an opportunity to form a cogent perception of the individual during interactions with student-athletes.

Any changes in communication patterns the participants used helped develop the approaches that adapt communication measures to support student-athletes and introduce them to the team's ingroup culture. The participants used different measures of adaptive interactions to support the underlying message of a cooperative team environment. The participants' intercultural understanding resulted in subtle changes in the message to benefit both the recruited and retained student-athletes. For example, simplifying language to ensure proper understanding, employing listening techniques, or researching student-athletes backgrounds helps heal old wounds. Building relationships to use systematic social connections to communicate information allows non-revenue-producing coaches to overcome uncertainty and increase understanding of the benefit of an ingroup structure to the student-athletes (Dixon et al., 2020). The participants explained the benefit of developing an ingroup, and using intercultural communication to facilitate an emotional attachment between student-athletes and the institution. The results indicated that communication is vital to relationship building and creating an ingroup system that loosens the culture of expected behaviors. That dynamic creates a foundation for developing a structure supporting diverse cultural behaviors. The resulting communication measures reinforce bylaws concerning matriculation, and new recruitment does not damage the foundational structure built to promote willingness to openly discuss differences and maintain a humanistic social identity for the team structure. The intercultural communication behavioral phenomena for an ingroup create comfort and connection for the student-athletes (Delia, 2019).

Implications

The lived experiences of non-revenue-producing sport coaches were explored in this research to understand their use of intercultural communication during recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Student-athletes require a support system to create a social construction that positively impacts their retention experiences. The adaptive communication techniques used to shift methods of connection and communication based on perceived cultural meaning or understanding was a universal adaptive measure used to comfort student-athletes into authentic behaviors and allow opportunities for accepting differences. The differing system of values communicated did not hinder the levels of respect that are constructed between student-athletes and non-revenue-producing sporting coaches. The participants' belief in an ingroup cultural foundation created by a behavioral expectation system that includes openness and willingness was vital to the relationship-building process.

Theoretical Implications

The goal of the present study was to discover the meaning and value of the lived experiences of the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches' intercultural communication methodology to understand the framework of the phenomenon for the development of the research structure (Miles & Shiner, 2022). A theoretical lens was used to examine the participant's philosophy of ingroup connections and intercultural communication's impact on the relationships built on the culture of the sport and the tradition of the institution. The theoretical interpretation of the study complexity was guided by the lived experiences of the non-revenue-producing coaches. The differences in communication and expectations of the participants and the student-athletes have changed and no longer include a closed system of communication, where only coaches determine every aspect of team culture, but a system of openness and authenticity (Rathwell & Young, 2018). The system of intercultural communication in non-revenue-producing sport has no conceived pattern. However, social identity, ingroup-outgroup structure, and intercultural communication create a context to describe patterns of consciousness that are used to provide knowledge to gain insight into the communication phenomena (Presbitero & Attar, 2018).

The findings suggested that changes in cultural understanding not only provided different means of ingroup communication but also added a new level of complexity to creating connections through intercultural communication in building relationships. In relationship building, non-revenue-producing sporting coaches work to secure a commitment to the athletic experience as a framework to develop opportunities for positive outcomes. Therefore, it is critical to have a comprehensive analysis of the program structure created by an inclusive culture created by a non-revenue-producing sport coach's intercultural communication methodology to gain insight into the best communication recommendations (Jolly et al., 2020; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). The function of the system structure non-revenue-producing sporting coaches use to build relationships that accommodate social identity is not only logical, but a symbol of the economic value formed to demonstrate the benefit of the non-revenue-producing team's overall ingroup cultural connection that work to ensure positive team outcomes (Powers et al., 2016). There is no precise formulation of a successful ingroup based on the understanding of institutional tradition and the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches' cultural understanding. However, the generalization of an ingroup structure has significant implications for the future of team building in non-revenue sport (Turick et al., 2020).

The analysis of the data collected revealed the benefits of the participants' communication methods and the willingness to accept different social identities as a developmental function of the team structure. The use of intercultural communication in non-revenue-producing sport provided a framework for understanding the participants' experience as each worked to create connections more effectively for recruiting and retaining student-athletes. The validity of the communication structure non-revenue-producing sporting coaches use highlight the meaningful concern for adaptation to cultural changes required for openness in adjustment to communication differences (Sutherland & Yoshida, 2015). The methods used for intercultural communication between non-revenue-producing sport coaches and student-athletes operate as a connective resolution of the ingroup behavioral expectations and social identity. The research interviews

supported the idea that the changed communication method increased the difficulty level in the coach's ability to connect with student-athletes. Some geographical differences hindered intercultural communication, but the participants created common ground through sport participation to understand and clarify ingroup behaviors. Such an understanding helped design an explanation of intercultural communication in non-revenue-producing sporting culture to create ingroups and understanding of social identities to build authentic relationships that allow open communication to bolster the recruitment and retention of student-athletes (Bissett et al., 2020).

Practical Implications

The use of intercultural communication in non-revenue-producing sporting teams was used by the participants to develop a system of open communication to accept differences and illuminate the benefits of ingroup cultural foundations to provide comfort to the athletes that are recruited or retained onto non-revenue-producing sporting teams. Each of the 10 participants developed a system of connection to enhance the opportunities to yield positive outcomes in student-athlete recruitment and retention. The variations of methodologies reinforce the scope of diversity in the cultural dictates the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches encounter as they form intercultural communication strategies to disseminate relevant information to bolster agreement through adaptive measures effectively. The information on the foundational understanding of cultural adaptation and how to support the development of a team cultural structure based on the non-revenue-producing coaches' experiences advances the notion that coaches exhibit changes in behavior as a part of the connection process. Participants did not always directly express cultural adaptation as the foundation for creating group behavioral norms. The structural development discussed reflected the willingness to accept differences, as a strategy for mitigating traditional roadblocks to a culture of acceptance with a system of organized behaviors to reflect an environment to provide comfort in expression. Developing a communication structure creates a

framework to improve border missteps in behavior throughout Division I and II sport (Cooper et al., 2020).

The institutional development of non-revenue-producing sport has a complicated financial system designed to support the team's framework, but not the educational cost of every student-athlete. The pattern of complexity required the development of intercultural communication methodology to build trust in the relationships with student-athletes. The data showed that socioeconomic factors affected the recruitment and retention structure built by the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches. Some participants were forced to stop recruitment in certain communities because the economic realities of intercollegiate sport did not allow full grant in aid for every student-athlete. The financial divide is sometimes too extreme to overcome. The differences in university tradition, financial resources, and reputation change how the athletic department operates its non-revenue sporting teams. University tradition can increase the ease of recruitment and retention of student-athletes because the university tradition creates a narrative to influence student-athletes. The primary function of the intercultural communication process is to build trust-based relationships into the foundational team structure. The complicated and nuanced structure of student-athlete recruitment required entering into an agreement where some rules have not been made clear. To seek a commitment in uncertainty, non-revenue-producing sporting coaches must learn methods of communication that bridge cultural divides and create a cultural foundation that supports adaptation over assimilation to ensure open lines of communication in relationship building. In recruiting or retaining student-athletes, the data revealed that it is important for the participants to build relationships that connect the student-athlete to the institutional and sporting team culture to support positive outcomes. For example, texting has become a fundamental communication method. However, texting is a difficult measure to develop cultural understanding or perceive ingroup expectations for sociocultural adaptation.

Limitations

The research study has several limitations. Firstly, the study was based on the lived experiences of non-revenue-producing sporting coaches from different universities with at least 10 years of experience. One limitation in interviewing participants with more than 10 years of experience coaching non-revenue-producing sport was the assumption that improvements in the ability to recruit and retain student-athletes continue to advance and non-revenue-producing coaches with less experience could yield different results. The long-term development of intercultural communication methods results in a framework that allows adjustment to cultural differences when applied to various interactions. The ability to adapt relevant information to a given situation improves with experience. Therefore, less experienced coaches of non-revenue-producing sport may communicate differently during recruiting or retaining (Bell & Riol, 2017). The research involved a singular perspective. The participants were all coaches of different NCAA DI or DII non-revenue-producing sporting teams, and no data were collected to verify the behavior or resulting communication adaptations during student-athlete interactions. Additionally, no student-athletes were consulted to verify the participants' perspectives of the communication practices.

The structured communication framework of the participants and the information gathered was reflective of diverse types of sporting teams with different genders, different numbers of student-athletes, and different regional locations of the 10 participants. An increase in the number of participants, changes in the type of sport, or an increase in the number of tier-one institutions would affect the approach and understanding of intercultural communication methods used in recruiting and retaining student-athletes of non-revenue-producing sporting teams at NCAA member institutions. Despite the establishment of communication frameworks applied in various sport settings, it is not feasible to compare the sporting system of one athletic department to another (Cobb et al., 2020). However, this study is a relevant portrayal of the connection between non-revenue-producing sporting coaches and their abilities to

communicate and develop intercultural communication practices unique to the institution's context.

The core dynamics of building a team structure for a non-revenue-producing sporting team have changed dramatically because of the pandemic and the use of electronic devices to communicate (Kim & Kim, 2019). The advances in communication are foundational to the adjustments that non-revenue-sporting coaches are required to use to develop ingroup cultural behavioral expectations, as student-athletes matriculate (Johnson et al., 2012). The continuous changes, beliefs, perceptions, or ideas of student-athletes cause variations in the core communications patterns of the team ingroup as student-athletes graduate and others enter the recruiting process. The changes in behavior and the settings created by institutional tradition change the ingroup narrative by affecting the subjective experience of the non-revenue-producing sport coaches' ability to recruit or retain student-athletes (Simons & Bird, 2022).

Suggestions for Future Research

The use of intercultural communication methods in non-revenue-producing sport has led to changes in how coaches and student-athletes communicate or adapt their communication. Having a one-on-one conversation between a coach and a student-athlete is difficult. The fundamental social structures affect outcomes because communication variances in cultural understanding and generational gaps influence the dialogue between non-revenue-producing coaches and student-athletes. The fluctuations in communication form variations that create opportunities to develop connections that supersede the foundational cultural norms. Further research on the lived experience of intercultural communication by the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches can increase the ability of future non-revenue coaches to adapt the communication used in recruiting and retaining student-athletes. Future researchers could also expand the intercultural communication methodology in non-revenue-producing sport to include more participants and more theories on communication and relationship building in sport.

Summary

The research data revealed an intercultural communication structure based on openness and adaptation to form an ingroup structure to support relationship building in a system of tradition and trust. The non-revenue-producing sporting coaches operate in an ever-evolving recruiting and retention process based on the rules, bylaws, and institutional traditions that govern the sport. The data showed that participants adjusted communication methods to adapt interactions to the benefit of structural practices and did not allow changes to affect their core coaching belief that open communication is beneficial to creating a cultural foundation to support the team structure. The non-revenue-producing coaches believed that the effort to uncover the motivating factors of the student-athletes provides comfort in the structure used to form the foundational ingroup that supports the relationship built during open, authentic communication opportunities. The data showed that the non-revenue-producing sporting coaches created team structures with increased opportunities to communicate cultural differences for positive outcomes. The behavioral manifestation of adaptive communication in authentic non-revenue-producing coaches' openness to difference served as a catalyst in the creation of an ingroup culture that adapts to changes established by the evolutionary system of recruitment that profits from the acceptance, as each new student-athlete becomes a part of the ingroup foundation of the team culture.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

When recruiting or retaining student-athletes, you are invited to participate in a research interview concerning intercultural communication by coaches of a non-revenue-producing sport.

You were chosen for the interview because you are the coach of a non-revenue-producing-sporting team. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to participate in the interview process.

This interview is being conducted by a researcher named Janay Rouser, a current doctoral candidate at Southeastern University.

Background Information:

This interview explores the coaches of non-revenue sporting teams' experiences adapting their communication to build relationships with the student-athletes they recruit.

Procedures:

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview lasting approximately 60 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of the Interview:

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. This means that the interviewer will respect your decision concerning whether or not you want to be interviewed. You will not be treated differently if you choose not to participate in the research interview. If you decide to join the research interviewing process, you can change your mind later. If you feel stressed during the interview, you may stop anytime. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Interview:

There is a minimal risk of psychological stress during this interview. If you feel stressed during the interview, you may stop anytime. There are no benefits to you from participating in this interview. However, the interviewer will benefit from the information gathered as it adds to the research understanding of using intercultural communication in non-revenue-producing sport.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this interview.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential in password-protected documents. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this intercultural communication research project without further consent. Additionally, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any interview reports.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher's name is Janay Rouser. The researcher's course instructor is Dr. Joshua Henson. You may ask any questions you have now. Alternatively, if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at ejrouser@seu.edu or the instructor at jdhenson@seu.edu. If you want to communicate privately about your rights as a participant, you can contact Janay Rouser, MBA, at ejrouser@seu.edu

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in the interview.

Printed Name of
Participant

Participant's Written
Signature

Researcher's Written
Signature

Appendix B
Dissertation Interview Protocol
Interview Protocol

The role of intercultural communication in recruiting and retaining student-athletes: A phenomenological study on understanding the sociocultural aspects of building non-revenue teams in intercollegiate sport.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Informed Consent: _____

Note to the interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your experience will be valuable to this research and help grow the academic research communities understanding of intercultural communication in sport.

A pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interview Questions

IQ1: Can you tell me about your experience recruiting students from different cultures?

IQ2: Can you think of a time when you had to adapt your communication for a recruit?

IQ3: Can you tell me about your experiences adapting your method of communication during recruiting and retention as a coach?

IQ4: What communication tactics do you utilize in building relationships with student-athletes?

IQ5: Can you give me an example of when you felt intercultural communication may have been problematic in discussing the benefits of joining your program?

IQ6: Have you had trouble communicating with a student-athlete on your roster? What was the outcome?

IQ7: How do you think your experience in recruiting and retaining student-athletes has affected your understanding of culture?

IQ8: Have you experienced communication constraints because of university tradition or NCAA bylaws that stopped you from communicating a modern or culturally relevant message when recruiting or retaining a student-athlete?

IQ9: What are the benefits of intercultural communication in recruiting and retention?

IQ10: When conversing with student-athletes, do you ask questions about their experiences to improve recruiting or retention?

Thank you for participating in this process: Do you have any questions for me?

Reassure confidentiality.

Ask for permission to follow up.

Appendix C

IRB Approval

SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY



NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: March 8, 2023
TO: Eva Rouser, Joshua Henson, Bethany Peters
FROM: SEU IRB
PROTOCOL TITLE: The role of intercultural communication in recruiting and retaining student-athletes: A phenomenological study on understanding the sociocultural aspects of building nonrevenue teams in intercollegiate sport.
FUNDING SOURCE: NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 23 BE 02
APPROVAL PERIOD: Approval Date: March 8, 2023 Expiration Date: March 7, 2024

Dear Investigator(s),

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled, The role of intercultural communication in recruiting and retaining student-athletes: A phenomenological study on understanding the sociocultural aspects of building nonrevenue teams in intercollegiate sport. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol pending the following change:

- Please add IRB contact information (irb@seu.edu) to the informed consent and clearly identify SEU.

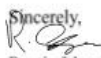
Any changes require approval before they can be implemented as part of your study. If your study requires any changes, the proposed modifications will need to be submitted in the form of an amendment request to the IRB to include the following:

Description of proposed revisions;
If applicable, any new or revised materials;
If applicable, updated letters of approval from cooperating institutions

If there are any adverse events and/or any unanticipated problems during your study, you must notify the IRB within 24 hours of the event or problem.

At present time, there is no need for further action on your part with the IRB.

This approval is issued under Southeastern University's Federal Wide Assurance 00006943 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under the IRB's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Rustin Lloyd
Chair, Institutional Review Board
irb@seu.edu