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**THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF A FRESHMAN FEMALE COLLEGIATE
STUDENT-ATHLETE**

by

Kaitlin Schullstrom

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education
at
Rowan University
May 14, 2019

Thesis Chair: Tyrone McCombs, Ph.D.

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my amazing family. Without your support during my undergraduate and graduate careers, none of this would have been possible.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Tyrone McCombs, for his continued support throughout this program and throughout the completion of this thesis. Thank you for all the time spent on helping me complete and prepare this final product and for your dedication to this program.

Abstract

Kaitlin Schullstrom

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF FRESHMAN FEMALE COLLEGIATE STUDENT-ATHLETES

2018-2019

Tyrone McCombs, Ph.D

Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of collegiate freshman female student-athletes at Rowan University. The lived experience refers to the way researchers can view the perceptions of people within the world they exist (Kafle, 2011). The study explored the meaning of female student athletes and attach them to their lived experience as a student-athlete and how they anticipate this experience impact their future college careers. This study interviewed 10 freshman female student athletes and aimed to receive honest and valuable information about the students experience in their first year at Rowan University. The data were then coded and developed three themes that helped answer research questions. The three themes included: transition, support, and toughness. These themes showed these student athletes felt as if the orientation programs provided by Rowan offered the transitional support they needed but there was need for more support from within the athletic department.

This study aimed to be able to gather information and data to show the need for support for freshman female student-athletes throughout their transitions into college and becoming an intercollegiate athlete. Coaches, administrators, and all other athletic support staff will then be able to assist in ways by being more aware and more knowledgeable of the experiences these student-athletes are having.

Table of Contents

Abstract	v
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	x
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Significance of the Study	3
Assumptions and Limitations	3
Operational Definitions.....	4
Research Questions	5
Overview of the Study	5
Chapter II: Review of the Literature.....	7
Introduction.....	7
Benefits of Sport at all Levels.....	7
History of Female Intercollegiate Athletics.....	9
The Female Student-Athlete	10
The Lived Experience	11
Astin’s Involvement Theory	13
Schlossberg’s Transition Theory	14
Summary of the Literature Review.....	15
Chapter III: Methodology	17
Context of the Study	17

Table of Contents (continued)

Population and Sample	18
Qualitative Research Approach	18
Instrumentation	21
Setting	22
Data Collection Procedures.....	22
Data Analysis	23
Chapter IV: Findings.....	25
Context of the Interviews.....	26
Demographics of the Participants	26
Biographical Statements of the Participants	28
Analysis of the Data.....	29
Transition to College.....	30
Struggle	30
Expectations	31
Toughness	32
Injuries	32
Pressure.....	33
Supportive Community.....	34
Programming.....	35
Chapter V: Summary, Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations	37
Summary of the Study	37
Discussion of the Findings.....	38

Conclusions.....	41
Recommendations for Further Practice	43
Recommendations for Further Research.....	43
References.....	45
Appendix A: Recruitment Letter	48

Table of Contents (continued)

Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	49
Appendix C: Institutional Review Board Approval.....	50

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure1. Model for Qualitative Research (Maxwell, 2005)	20

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 4.1 Participant Demographics.....	26

Chapter 1

Introduction

Every fall millions of students join a college campus for the first time and begin their college experience. Whether attending community colleges or 4 year institutions, these students are first timers in their college life. These students often will be leaving their families and a life they have been accustomed to their whole existence for a life of uncertainty and unknown. Although some students begin their first semester well-prepared for academic and social challenges, many more are not equipped to handle the expectations of higher education (Kidwell, 2005). Students transitioning from high school to college experience increased personal responsibility, increased workload, fewer class meetings, heavier academic responsibilities, and less teacher initiated contact (DiYanni, 1997). Because these freshman female student athletes have just graduated high school and left their families, friends, and the unknown worlds behind to come to a world of the unknown, they are unaware of what may be coming their way next. These freshman student athletes are now experiencing a whole new world and life and their experiences during the freshman year can make or break personal success or failures in their college academic and athletic careers. Many times these student athletes are experiencing emotions that were once never presented in their life such as depression and stress. In a 2010 survey that featured more than 200,000 first year students, the percentage of those admitting to poor mental health was at its highest point in 25 years (Lewin, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Many different people contribute to the experiences of collegiate student-athletes ranging from coaches, administrators, academic support staff, nutritionists, sports psychologists, athletic trainers, faculty, parents, and peers. In order to effectively serve

the student-athlete population, it is important to first understand the experience from the athlete's perspective. Also, the need to be able to understand the reality of the experiences to warrant that these experiences align with the educational mission and values of the university and athletic department, and are valuable to the student-athletes growth and development. Approximately 2% percent of all student-athletes have a professional career in sports following college which means that once these student athletes graduate and leave the institution, it is important that these experiences are setting or securing a foundation to serve them after their athletic career has been completed. The lack of women's leadership on both college campuses and within the athletic department further begs the need to examine the experience of the collegiate female student-athlete since this population generally accounts for 50% of the student-athlete population.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experiences of the collegiate freshman female student-athlete. The lived experience refers to the way researchers can view the perceptions of people in the world they exist within (Kafle, 2011). This study explored the meaning of female student athletes and attaches them to their lived experience as a student-athlete, and how they anticipate this experience impacted their future college careers. This population is in a point in their lives where they are under added stress as well as overcoming new transitions. This study aimed to be able to better support these freshman female student-athletes throughout their transition in years to come.

Significance of the Study

Gaining an understanding of the different experiences of collegiate freshman female-student athletes allows for future freshman female student-athletes to better prepare for the experience and evaluate their experience more wholly. Coaches, administrators, athletic trainers, and all athletic support staff may assist in more valuable ways by being more aware and more knowledgeable of the experiences of these freshman female student-athletes. This study sought to build on the existing literature regarding the lived experience and the meaning associated with these experiences. Searching NCAA for Division III literature gave very few results, which identifies that there is a need for further study in this area (Bandre, 2011).

Assumptions and Limitations

The scope of this study was limited to the freshman female student-athletes on the campus of Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ. Only those who responded to the search asking for participants participated in this study. It was assumed that all student-athletes participated in their respective sport throughout the freshman season of their college careers. Because the research was limited to the student athletes on campus at Rowan University, the results and recommendations may not be applicable to all colleges. A researcher limitation that existed was that my position on campus as an Assistant Coach may alter participant's responses due to my authority figure within the athletic department. Also, my experience as a former varsity athlete may alter responses.

Operational Definitions

The following operational terms are used for this study.

1. Athlete: Undergraduate college student who participated in a NCAA Division III sanctioned intercollegiate athletic sport at Rowan University during the 2016- 2017 school year; this student must have participated in one of the seven men's NCAA programs (football, soccer, cross country, basketball, swimming and diving, baseball, and track and field) or one of nine women's NCAA programs (field hockey, cross country, soccer, volleyball, swimming and diving, basketball, lacrosse, softball, and track and field)
2. Freshman Female Student-athlete: Competes in a NCAA varsity sport. She is in her first year of eligibility and initial enrollment year at Rowan University
3. Lived Experience: The way a person views the world through his or her experiences. Within this study, this refers to the way the participants viewed and described their experiences as a collegiate female student-athlete.
4. Phenomenology: Morales (2013) stated, "The method concerned with the richness of lived experiences and is useful for exploring and describing phenomena which have been neglected or completely overlooked" (p. 1293). Phenomenology was the methodology used within the study to explore the lived experiences of the collegiate female athletes.
5. Students: Undergraduate, residential college students who attended Rowan University and were enrolled during Spring 2017 semester.
6. Student-athlete: Used interchangeably with "athlete" in this study; see "athlete" for complete definition.

7. Wellness: Wellness is a cohesive approach to functioning that requires the integration of the mind, body, and spirit and orients a being toward their greatest potential (Dunn, 1977).

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences that selected freshman female student-athletes report during their first year of eligibility?
2. How do selected female student-athletes feel like these experiences are going to impact their future college experiences?
3. What are the student athletes' perceptions of first-year orientation and transition programs offered at Rowan University and how did they affect their experiences?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of scholarly literature that is relevant to this study. This chapter includes a section on the benefits of sports at all levels, the female student athlete, and lived experiences.

Chapter III describes the study methodology and procedures. The following details are included: the context of the study, the population and sample selection along with demographics, the data collection instrument, the data collection process, and an analysis of the data.

Chapter IV presents the findings or results of this study. The focus of this chapter is to also address the research questions that were presented in the introduction of this study.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses the major findings of the study, with conclusions and recommendations for practice and further study.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

There are more than 463,000 student-athletes competing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and approximately 200,000 of those are women (Irick, 2003). All of these student athletes vary among division, subdivision, institution, and sport and scholarship status. Women's collegiate sports have evolved during the past 40 years and women are now competing at high levels in collegiate athletics (Shaffer & Wittes, 2006). The everyday experiences of these collegiate female student-athletes are important to the ways that coaches, administrators, support staff, teammates and parents' guide this population and help evolve females into well rounded people. Many variables impact the way women experience collegiate sports and must be taken into consideration when exploring the lived experience of the collegiate female student-athlete. Transition is also an important time in these young females lives and the transition from high school to an elite level sport comprise of different experiences for these female student-athletes.

Benefits of Sports at All Levels

Organized sport captures much of a child's free time outside of school. In 2006-2007, nearly three-quarters of America's youth reported participating in organized sports (Women's Sports Foundation, 2008). Women's Sports Foundation (2008) noted that there are many benefits for children that participate in sports such as "physical health, emotional health, and social adaption in school" (p. 75). More specifically, sport participation among youth "contributes to general health and body esteem, healthy

weight, social relationships, quality of life, and educational achievement” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2008, p. 75).

The benefits of sports extends even past childhood and into adolescence. High school students have also spoken about the positive benefits of participating in sports. Steiner, Mcquivery, Pavelski, Pitts, and Kaemer (2000), explored the risks and benefits of sports participation among high school students. This study indicated that sports participation is associated with self-reported lower total risk scores, mental and physical health benefits, and an increased risk of injury. Although both genders experienced benefits, female participants reported more mental health problems, eating and dietary problems, and general health problems. These results made Steiner et al. (2000) wonder, are there significant differences between the experiences of sport participation among genders, or are females just more likely to self-report. Adolescence is a tough period in a young girl’s life because this is often when they enter puberty and these changes may negatively affect her self-perception (Ferrence & Muth, 2004). During these times many girls may choose to disengage from exercise or organized sport. Females often tend to feel pressures from the outside and will look to conform under all of those pressures whether it be from parents or friends or even from within themselves.

Collegiate sport participation offers a wealth of benefits as well. At the intercollegiate sport level, the NCAA boasts 11 benefits of participating in college athletics. These benefits include: college education, academic success, scholarships, student assistance fund, elite training opportunities, academic and support services, healthy living, medical care, medical insurance, exposure and experiences, and preparation for life (NCAA, 2013).

History of Female Intercollegiate Athletics

Women's physical education leaders created the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) in 1966 to meet the increased demand for competition among women students but administered it in a very different way than the spectator-oriented, commercial run men's college model (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). In 1967, the CIAW began sponsoring championships for women and in 1970, the physical educators of the CIAW formed the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

The CIAW was an organization of women physical educators, but the AIAW, while led by these women, was a national membership organization that institutions such as colleges and universities joined for women's athletic teams to compete for championships. Women leaders of the AIAW set up competitive intercollegiate leagues, leadership and governance at the institutional and national level, and started establishing revenue streams with corporate sponsorship. The AIAW did not set up this transition from recreational sport to competitive sport patterned after men's intercollegiate athletics because they wanted to branch out and not follow in their footsteps. Women athletic leaders often helped select faculty appointments in the women's physical education department as well and collectively advocated for a women-led alternative to the men's commercial model that was already in place.

By the time Title XI passed in 1972, women athletic leaders had established their own leadership and oversight of women's intercollegiate, competitive sports through membership in AIAW. Leadership in women's intercollegiate athletics was then quickly taken over by the men's organization, the NCAA in 1982, and soon after the AIAW no

longer existed. However, women's opportunity to lead women's athletic programs had already started to erode with the passage of Title IX 10 years earlier. This left women leaders in athletics today without the strength of women-led profession to sustain them in intercollegiate athletic leadership. Women leaders now must rely on individual strategies to attain leadership in intercollegiate athletics and these efforts have largely failed.

The Female Student-Athlete

While many researchers acknowledge the benefits of sport participation, many acknowledge that girls and women may experience sports differently than others. It is clear that benefits exist at every level spanning from youth sports to high school sports and ultimately intercollegiate sports. When looking at intercollegiate sports, different as they are on a more elite level, it is clear that women may be having different experiences than others and how they did previously.

College student athletes are a unique population that have many different stressors that enter their everyday life. Some of these stressors include additional time demands, physical demands, over training, sleep deprivation, injury, team travel and campus isolation (Etzel, Watson, Visek, & Maniar, 2006). If these stressors are not handled appropriately then these stressors could ultimately affect the student athlete's wellbeing. Also, those that experience high levels of stress, athletes and non-athletes, are more likely to engage in bad health habits (Hudd et al., 2000). Hudd et al. (2000) also found that female college students are significantly more likely to experience stress than their male counterparts, which may translate into bad health habits for the female college student population, including the female student-athlete.

One main concern for a female athlete at almost every level of their sport is the development of an eating disorder. Eating disorders, a mental health disorder, affect young women at a greater rate than any other population (Brunet, 2010). Not only are female athletes worried about increasing their physical appearance, they are worried about raising their athletic performance. Athletic performance has been one of the reasons female athletes engage in weight control behaviors such as vomiting, taking laxatives, and diet pulls (Haupt, 1993). Although not all student athletes react to the unique stressors the same way, they are always at risk for these issues and disorders when exposed to high levels of stress and being a college athlete.

The Lived Experience

Phenomenology, a philosophy and method of research, is the basis of the lived experience (Finlay, 2014). Phenomenology looks to uncover the realities of human experience which is lived through the consciousness of a particular person (Sloan & Bowe, 2013). Phenomenology requires the researcher to take words and descriptions and seek the core of the experience to reveal the essence of the experience (Sadala & Adorno, 2002). With that researchers are able to derive meaning from the lived experience and be able to analyze what factors had an effect on one's experience. Phenomenology spans throughout many different fields but includes the study of sport. To better understand the process of phenomenology and the lived experience, it is important to discover prior research that extends past female athletes.

There are few studies that have explored the lived experience of the collegiate female student-athletes. Burton, VanHeest, Railis, and Reis (2006) conducted a study that explored the lived experience of talent development among female Olympians in the

United States. There was also a study done of the lived experience of female collegiate athletes that were suffering from depression (Jones, Butryn, Furst, & Semerjian, 2010). While there were studies done with female athletes, no study has explored the lived experience of the female student-athlete throughout their entire collegiate athletic career.

Gearity and Murray (2011) explored collegiate, semi-professional and professional athletes' experiences and associated psychological effects of unfortunate coaching. This study included both men and women. The study used phenomenology and unstructured interviews with one question, "tell me about a specific time you experienced poor coaching" (p. 215). The researchers were then able to probe all responses based on the answers to this question. The interviews then arranged into five themes which included: poor teaching by the coach, uncaring, unfair, inhibiting athlete's mental skills, and athlete coping (Garrity & Murray, 2011). This study showed the strength of taking a phenomenological approach to understand athlete's lived experience.

There are few studies that have explored the lived experience of the collegiate freshman female student-athlete. Burton et al. (2006) conducted a study that explored the lived experience of talent development among female Olympians while Jones et al. (2010) developed the study of the lived experience of female collegiate athletes suffering from depression. None of these studies have specifically explored the lived experience of the female student athlete throughout their freshman year.

It is imperative to know that each experience will be different among these female athletes and their overall experiences are going to vary. Each athlete has a unique story to tell and a unique circumstance to convey when reflecting back on an individual journey (Burton et al., 2006).

Astin's Involvement Theory

Astin (1984) defines student involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518). This does not only include their academic experience at the higher education level but also participation in other campus events and activities. Astin stated that “participation in sports, particularly intercollegiate sports, has an especially prolific positive effect on persistence” (p. 518). When a student is involved in both academics and intercollegiate athletics, time is extremely valuable. Astin also speaks about how time is perhaps the most valuable resource students will have during their undergraduate career. With that, involvement is also a key factor in the students overall satisfaction with the university, their overall success, and their retention.

Astin incorporates postulates that are important in the overall success of students in the collegiate environment. All of the postulates join together to create the most positive experience for students and especially for student athletes. The first postulate defines involvement in terms of physical and psychological energy invested in an activity. The second postulate then states that the involvement occurs on a continuum which is crucial in a student athlete's career especially within their sport. The third postulate states that the involvement will have both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The fourth is the correlation between the amount of learning and growth the student is having and the investment of the student. The fifth postulate then discusses that educational policy and practice effectiveness is directly relation to the ability of that policy and practice (Astin, 1984).

Athletic involvement has a positive impact on the institution's academic reputation, the intellectual environment, student friendships and institutional administration. The overall involvement of student athletes can ultimately lead to a positive or negative intercollegiate experience and retention rates at the not only the institution but within the athletics programs. Student athletes face many of the similar academic, emotional, and personal challenges encountered by the general student population (Broughton, 2001).

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

Schlossberg (1984) proposed a transition theory that explores adult transitions in an effort to better understand, define, and support these changes. This theory can be applied to the numerous changes one can experience throughout their life, including the transition the student athlete takes from being a high school student and athlete to becoming a college student athlete. The transition from high school to college sport is one that is an adjustment that can either make or break a student athlete's overall experience. Schlossberg (1984) stated that the transitions are a time for individuals to reevaluate themselves and their lives in order to promote growth and development. These transitions alter ones relationships, routines, and assumptions (Schlossberg, 2011). The experiences that freshman students experience are anticipated. Anticipated transitions are expected so the students transitioning from high school to college are experiencing an expected transition. Some of these student athletes may also experience nonevent transitions which are transitions that are expected to occur which could be a student athletes expectations prior to entering college.

There are four factors in Schlossberg's (1984) Transition Theory that affect the coping abilities of an individual in transition. These factors are called the 4 Ss which include: situation, self, support, and strategies (Schlossberg, 1984). Situation encompasses the individual's triggers, perception of control, prior experience, perception of responsibility and the timing of the transition (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Self refers to the effect that personal characteristics have on the individual's view of life and their coping ability (Evans et al., 2010). Support refers to social support which includes relationships, family, friends and community. Lastly, strategies refers to the strategies that change a situation, strategies that control the problem and the strategies that aid with coping with the problem (Evans et al., 2010).

The four Ss can be applied to the lived experience of freshman female student athletes differently for each individual. Each student is a unique individual that comes from a different background and situation therefore it may vary exponentially for the individual.

Summary of the Literature Review

Many different people contribute to the experiences of collegiate student-athletes ranging from coaches, administrators, academic support staff, nutritionists, sports psychologists, athletic trainers, faculty, parents, and peers. In order to effectively serve the student-athlete population, one must first understand the experience from his or her perspective. Also, the need to be able to understand the reality of these experiences to warrant that these experiences align with the educational mission and values of the university and athletic department and are valuable to the student-athletes growth and development. The purpose of this research study was to better understand the first-year

experience of female student athletes at Rowan University. With further understanding, this allowed for the possible development of programs to support this population and increase success in these students. The review of literature showed the challenges faced by many first-year student athletes and their transition into higher education. Further, this section gave background information on the history of the NCAA and showed the lack of research on Division III institutions. The chapter also included Schlossberg's Transition Theory and Astin's Involvement Theory. The following chapter presents the methods that were used in order to collect and analyze data for this research study.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University, in Glassboro, NJ. The school is a public 4 year higher education institution. Rowan University has climbed to become a prestigious public school in the northeast. Currently Rowan University offers 57 bachelors, 47 masters, 5 doctoral degree programs and two professional degrees to its nearly 16,000 students while still enabling small classroom environments (Rowan University, 2016). Rowan University is a state research institution and there are additional campuses in both Camden and Stratford, NJ.

The Rowan University athletic department consists of nine female sports that compete in the NCAA Division III level. These sports include: Women's Soccer, Women's Cross Country, Women's Field Hockey, Women's Swimming and Diving, Women's Basketball, Women's Indoor Track and Field, Women's Softball, Women's Outdoor Track and Field, and Women's Lacrosse. Division III athletics often places major emphasis on the "student-athlete" role. Student athletes are on campus to receive a college degree and that is the ultimate goal and athletics comes second to all studies. Rowan University's athletics has a rich history. With a 1978 Division III National Championship in baseball, the first of 11 national championships for the institution, the athletic program established itself as one of the premier athletic programs in the country. Rowan Athletics compete in the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) and have won more than 120 conference championships.

Population and Sample

The study focused on collegiate female student-athletes in their first year (freshman year) of eligibility at Rowan University in any NCAA sport. Freshman female student-athletes from a variety of sports and backgrounds were sought. The study employed purposive sampling to ensure that participants were relevant to the phenomena being studied and fit within the criteria described. Purposive sampling is act of seeking participants that fit specified criteria required for participation in the study. These criteria included: being a female student-athlete on an intercollegiate team and being in their first year of eligibility at the university, I also sought participants by finding female student-athletes who fit criteria based on the institution's athletic page. I then contacted the coaches, staff and administration of those particular teams. I sought out to interview 10 student athletes from the response I receive.

Qualitative Research Approach

The nature of this research demanded for qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are suited to elicit the meaning and nature of a given experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This study utilized hermeneutic phenomenology, an interpretive type of phenomenology. By using interpretive phenomenology, the study sought to explore in detail how participants make sense of their personal and social world. This method of data gathering was chosen to create a deep exploration and reflection of each student-athlete that was interviewed. According to Maxwell (2005), qualitative research has no predetermined starting point nor does it proceed through a fixed sequence of steps. Because the process is so ongoing, research cannot be borrowed or used from the past. Effective qualitative research designs involve going back and forth between the different

components of design, assessing goals, theories, research questions, methods, and validity (Maxwell, 2005). This study used Maxwell's (2005) model in qualitative research design (Figure 1).

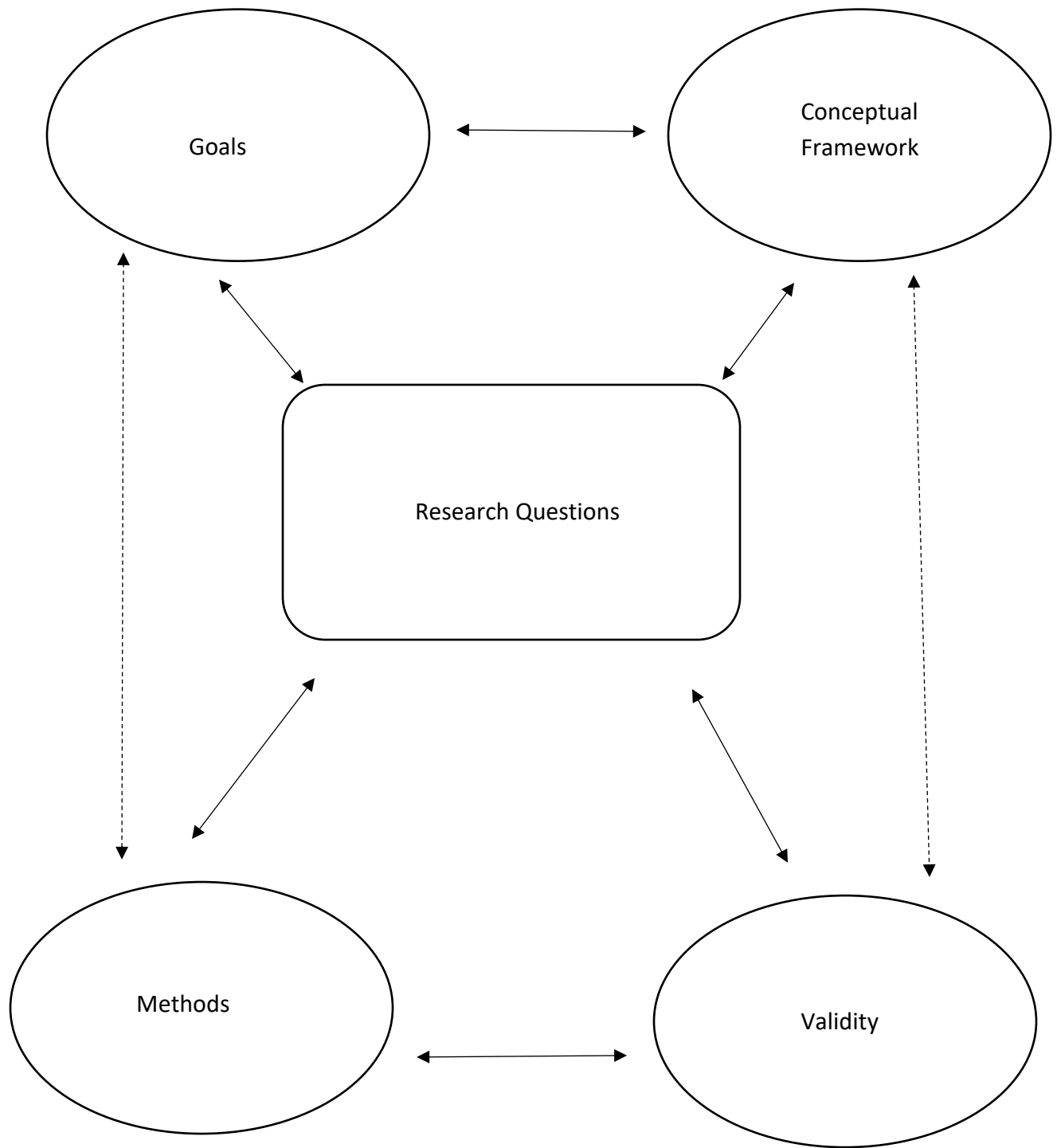


Figure 1. Model for Qualitative Research

(Maxwell, 2005)

The model for qualitative research design displays five components of research including goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods, and validity, and how they connect with one another. The research questions served as the focal point of the model, informing the other components throughout the study.

- The goal of this study was to better understand the lived experiences of first year female student athletes in order to provide better support and improve success.
- The conceptual framework used in this study is Astin's Student Involvement Theory and Schlossberg's Transition Theory.
- The method used in this study is qualitative, and drew upon the experiences and insights of first-year female student athletes at Rowan University.
- Validity was tested throughout the study through collecting data and the use of several coding techniques.

For the purpose of this study, a phenomenological approach was used. A phenomenological study "describes meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 57), which allowed the researcher to focus on the common parts of the experience. With that, a small number of participants were selected.

Instrumentation

The data collection in a qualitative study is typically extensive and draws on different information, such as observations and interviews. Conducting interviews is one of the most important methods of data collection in qualitative research (Yin, 1994). An

interview protocol was designed (Appendix B) to answer the research questions. This protocol consists of few open-ended questions and was presented to a small sample size to ensure the quality of the interviews. Each interview was streamed on three main foci; that were presented throughout the interview. The first focus was on the student athlete's history prior to entering college. This allowed me to understand the background in which they were coming from but also to identify any barriers that existed for them prior to college. The second focus was on their experiences thus far being a student athlete. This allowed me to gather any more information on struggles and different topic areas. The last focus was on the meaning of their experience as a freshman and how they use this meaning to carry forward in their college careers. The validity of this study is that all student athlete interviews were recorded and then transcribed and there were no influences on their responses to the questions posed.

Setting

The study was conducted in a location that was comfortable and safe for them on the Rowan University campus. Each athlete scheduled a time that was convenient and each time slot was 30 minutes long. Open ended interviews then provided flexibility on the student athlete's responses.

Data Collection Procedures

This study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received approval through the Rowan University IRB (see Appendix C). An email (Appendix A) was sent out to all freshman female student athletes that was provided to me by the Rowan University Athletic Department. The email included a letter explaining the study and asked for a response from interested freshman female student athletes.

All participants also signed an informed consent form before engaging in the interview (see Appendix B). All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed by me. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and occurred in a quiet, safe and public location. Interpretive phenomenology studies vary in the number of participants; however, it is not uncommon to limit the sample to a small number to ensure that each case is interpreted richly (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached, which was 10 interviews.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Kafle (2011) stated:

IPA methodology is concerned with individuals' perceptions of events, and the process of understanding individuals' perceptions involves a 'double hermeneutic' whereby the participant is trying to make sense of their personal and social world and the researcher is trying to make sense of their world. (p. 30)

Additionally, Polkinghorne (1983) described the interpretive process "as concentrating on historical meanings of experience and their development and cumulative effects on individual and social levels" (p. 9). However, not all meanings were readily available. The researcher must take an active role in creating meaning of the experiences shared throughout the interviews.

The data collection in qualitative research is extremely intensive with the collection of observations, interviews, and documents. When using qualitative research, the results are presented as discussions rather than statistics (Patten, 2005). One of the most important methods of data collection is interviewing (Yin, 1994). An interview

protocol was designed and consisted of open-ended questions that were presented to the consenting female student athletes.

Chapter IV

Findings

The purpose of this study was to better understand the experience of freshman-female student athletes during their first year at Rowan University. The methodology of this study allowed for student-athletes to express and share their experiences in a conversation setting which allowed for more detail and understanding of the student-athlete. Three research questions were developed to help answer the overlying question of what are the experiences of these freshman female student-athletes.

1. What are the lived experiences that selected freshman female student-athletes report during their first year of eligibility?
2. How do selected female student-athletes feel like these experiences are going to impact their future college experiences?
3. What are the student athletes' perceptions of first-year orientation and transition programs offered at Rowan University and how did they affect their experiences?

The source of data collection for this research study consisted of individual interviews, which followed an interview protocol (Appendix A). The protocol contained open-ended questions that allowed for participants to best answer the questions related to the purpose of this study. This study helps with the lack of research in the area of Division III athletics as well as helps with enhancing and improving upon experiences with freshman female student-athletes in the future.

Context of the Interviews

Interviews were conducted in a location of choice by the student-athlete where they felt most comfortable. Student athletes also chose a time in which they were best available. Overall, the interviews were relaxed, personable and student athletes were more than willing to share their experiences and provide detail about their experiences. At times there were awkward pauses but overall, student-athlete were extremely receptive to the questions and open to talking about their lived. Most interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes in length. There was no pressure to share any information as they felt comfortable in responding to the posed questions.

Demographics of the Participants

The study sought out interviews of 10 female student-athletes that were in their first year of eligibility at Rowan University. Participants came from each women's varsity sport, except for Cross Country. Below (Table 4.1) are the demographics for each participant.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

Participant #	Sport
1	Women's Swimming and Diving
2	Women's Softball
3	Women's Basketball
4	Women's Volleyball
5	Women's Field Hockey
6	Women's Lacrosse
7	Women's Track and Field
8	Women's Soccer
9	Women's Basketball
10	Women's Soccer

Biographical Statements of the Participants

Participant #1 -“I came from around the corner to Rowan. I loved being close to home but also having the option to be away. Rowan has been great so far.”

Participant #2-“I chose to come here growing up in the area. The coaches were great to me all through high school and they were who I really wanted to play for. I had many other school options but ultimately it led to coming to Rowan.”

Participant #3- “I kind of made a last minute decision to come to Rowan. I wasn’t recruited to come and play basketball and I just thought that I would give it a shot. I am so happy with how that turned out because my buddies are the basketball girls and they have made this great for me. Being a part of athletics on this campus is an honor.”

Participant #4 – “I’m from north jersey and I feel like life is completely different from north to south jersey. When I came to visit prior to committing I loved the campus and couldn’t wait to get here and believed I was going to start a new chapter of my life. It has been awesome so far and being a college athlete is pretty cool as well.”

Participant #5 – “Starting pre-season in August was a great experience because I was nervous about my first year. I was able to get acclimated and make friends before the campus got full. I also had opportunities to travel home to see my family which helped my adjustment easier. I grew up in south jersey and couldn’t wait to start my Rowan experience.”

Participant #6 – “I am from over 2 hours away and I was a little hesitant about the distance. Luckily, one of my friends from high school was coming in here and playing a sport as well so it was easy to adjust. My team as well has been great. I played

multiple sports in high school and really wanted to continue that but it was not doable with all the schedules.”

Participant #7 – “I have a big family and leaving home was difficult for me. I struggled with homesickness a lot. I am not too far away though so I have the chance to go home. I played a couple sports in high school but really decided to stick with track once I got here.”

Participant #8 – “I’m from north jersey about 2 hours away and have a close family. My parents were always at all of my games growing up. I also went to a very small school so everyone was always close knit. I knew coming here was going to be a very different experience for me.”

Participant #9- “Coming from North Jersey from a very close family along with a twin sister going to a different college was hard for me at first. The basketball girls were great in making me feel at home from day 1. We are a crazy group.”

Participant #10 – “I grew up around the corner from Rowan but never imagined myself going here. When I was recruited and finally came to visit I couldn’t wait until August came around. Perks of being on this team is the girls and how we have success every season. My family is able to come and watch me play which is awesome as well.”

Analysis of the Data

The purpose of the study was to understand how the selected freshman student athletes described their first year experience and what experiences they had as a college athlete. There were 10 interviews completed during this study with athletes representing all but one varsity women’s sport at Rowan University. Each interview was audio recorded and then transcribed and coded looking for common and divergent themes

between them. The coding was done multiple times and during each coding session key words were identified throughout the 10 interviews.

Three themes were developed from the study and subthemes emerged from the themes that were presented in the 10 females interviews. These themes helped portray the lived experience of the freshman female student-athlete at Rowan University. The themes that emerged were: transition to college, toughness, and supportive community.

Transition to College

Freshman year transitions are an aspect that defined these student athletes but also had a great effect on the experiences of the student athletes. All 10 participants mentioned their freshman year when describing their experience as a student athlete at Rowan University. While freshman year for most was a struggle, it often was a time where the participants learned from others such as upperclassman often feeling like they had something to prove.

Struggle. Struggle, a subtheme that developed within this theme, was the most prevalent where many student athletes referenced the feelings of wanting to transfer and go home and quit their sport at some point during their freshman year. Many also felt those emotions because they were no longer the star of the team. Participant #1, said “I really struggled in classes my fall semester of this year. For the first time, I had no one helping me and monitoring my every move.” Participant #4 also struggled with this transition. She said:

I called my mom several times and was like I hate it here and I don't want to be here. All I remember is that I wanted to transfer after the fall semester... it was definitely a struggle.

It was interesting enough to note the varying experiences students had upon entering college. Six student-athletes stated that the transition was somewhat easy, where some stated it was extremely difficult. This could play a part in the preparedness that high schools are providing as well as home support from the students.

Expectations. Also, it seemed as if half of the participants had expectations entering into college, and they felt after those expectations were not met that they wanted to quit and go home. These expectations set them back when they were not met which impacted student success and a feeling of belonging.

Participant #2 said:

I was very homesick. I was struck by tragedy my first semester this year and my father unexpectedly passed away. That was really tough for me. I felt like I completely lost focus and was going to give up on college. It was overall tough.

All but 3 of these student-athletes also stated the transition from high school coursework to college coursework was a struggle along with time management and study skills. Participant #5 stated:

I always was able to just get by in high school with the bare minimum of work or effort and that was something I had to learn that wouldn't work with my accounting course load that I was taking my fall semester. After I didn't pass my first exam it was almost a reality check for me. It was beneficial because I was able to learn from that but that transition from high school to college classes was something I struggled with the first month.

Playing time was also discussed during multiple interviews with participants who felt their expectations of their playing time was underestimated. For example, participant

#2 stated: “I thought I was going to be the best thing to enter the campus. That’s how I was in high school and I went from being the star to seeing absolutely no time. That was difficult to handle and I was crushed”

While a majority of the participants although felt their expectations and college life as a student-athlete were met, several thought otherwise. Participant #6 stated “I thought everything would come easy like it always has. My expectations were far off from what I thought would happen, but my experience has still be great. For future student-athletes some advice I would give is to try to not have expectations because then it is less likely to get disappointed when something doesn’t work out.”

Toughness

From this statement, student-athletes had free range of their experiences, good or bad, to express their experiences that are not specific to a topic. By analyzing the transcripts and coding the data, the theme of toughness developed. Within toughness though, there were a few subthemes that stood out the most.

Nearly all of the participants described their experience as a “grind” where they were forced to be both mentally and physically tough. Many of the participants were faced with the obstacle of overcoming the challenges faced but also continuing their experiences. Some of these struggles included injury, coaching issues/changes, and pressure.

Injuries. Seven participants of the study described being injured at some point throughout their freshman year as a student-athlete at Rowan. With many of them, the injury was not the hardest part to overcome; it was the fear and emotions that came along

with the injury. Participant #8 stated that she had a pulled quad muscle during preseason of her freshman year. She said,

My coach was just brushing me off and focusing on other girls that played my position. For the first time, I wasn't being babied and the coach's first priority wasn't when I was coming back, like it was when I was in high school. I started questioning my worth to the program and really had to overcome a mental battle with myself.

Participant #1, however, had a different experience when she had missed her first year due to a torn shoulder. She said, "My coach told me that I'm a big part of this team whether I was injured or not. I was still expected to be at every practice, as if I had the opportunity to play that year, even though I didn't. It made me still feel a part of it."

Pressure. Another big part of toughness was the pressure the student athletes faced on a daily throughout their experience. Participant #9 stated:

We don't have the pressures that a regular college student has. We have pressure from all aspects on our college life whether it's our performance in our sport, performing in our academics but also the pressures of having a social life and balancing them all. It gets tough and it takes the right person to be able to deal with all of the mental stressors placed on you.

Participant #5 elaborated, by stating, "there are so many pressures but one that you take pride on in the representation of this university every time you step on the field."

Participant #3 spoke about the difference in coaching and how that affected her experience during the first season. She stated, "I was so accustomed to what I knew already and felt like I couldn't connect with my coach and get on the level in which I was

expected to play at, as well as being comfortable speaking with him about that.” While this was not stated often, the communication barrier that student-athletes mentioned with their coaches during the first year was something that affected their experience. Another participant (#3) stated, “I just didn’t know how to approach my coach to talk about any issues regarding both basketball and my academics. I would just stay quiet instead.”

Supportive Community

The support received from campus, coaches, administrators and overall campus community was something majority of the student-athletes felt was overwhelming as illustrated by this participant #2:

I feel as if that Athletic Department as well as the campus community support your every move in each athletic team. They are providing events for different sporting events as well as promoting the success of the athletes here. It’s cool when you walk into Savitz and your picture is on one of the TV screens.

Although most students felt supported, two participants stated that they felt like they were not supported being a female student-athlete by their professors. They stated that missing classes due to athletic events was often an issue and would affect their grades. One of the participants (#7) said “I just felt like I didn’t get the grade I wanted to first semester, solely base on being an athlete and having to miss a class for a meet. I would do all of the work and do well on exams but it was not enough for my professor.”

Another shift in support was talking about moving forward towards a college degree and completion of their sport for the next 3 years. One participant (#4) stated:

I am so excited for the future because of the experience that I have had this year. It makes me excited to work hard for both my sport but also for my academics. Now

that I am comfortable with the campus and the athletic department, I feel like I can be successful in anything that I do.

Another participant #1 stated “I feel like I’ve found my home. I am happy with my major, and the classes I am taking and I’ve found a great group of friends. I couldn’t be more excited about what is to come whether it’s for swimming, for any internship I may get or just my overall college social life. It’s really exciting to think about”.

Programming. Rowan University offers many traditional orientation and summer programs for students upon entering their first year on campus. The purpose of the programs is to help students become acclimated to the campus, socialize with other freshman, and learn more about what different opportunities are available on campus. While every student interviewed stated that they had been on a campus visit whether it was with a coach or the admissions office prior to these orientation programs, all attended an orientation session and all but one felt as if it was beneficial to their experience at Rowan.

Participant #3 stated:

The orientation program that I attended over the summer was so beneficial to my experience at Rowan. I met my eventual roommate there, as well as some of my best friends still during my orientation. It made me feel so much more comfortable with campus and where everything was. I was a little nervous on how I was going to learn where everything was but this definitely eased that up for me. I also got to see and change my class schedule which was very exciting too.

Although a majority of the student athletes found orientation beneficial to their experience at Rowan, two of them stated that orientation was not beneficial. Participant

#4 stated, “I just felt like they dragged out the entire day and tried to make everything fun and glamorous and I just wanted to pick my classes and meet some people and go home. If they just did a smaller meet and greet I think it would have been better for me.”

Participant #6 stated earlier the need for a student-athlete orientation within the athletic department and recommended “a whole day dedicated to athletics and the policies and procedures, along with all components of the university”

One student-athlete (#6) said: “What about if there was a student-athlete orientation that was in addition to the orientation program Rowan has to offer as a stepping stone into the athletic department.” Another participant (#9) stated the need for “Academic Help” right from within the athletic department, such as printers, computers, access to tutoring or an academic coach.”

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Freshman female student-athletes are entering college and dealing with experiences, challenges, and environments that they have never been exposed to before. They deal with the pressure of being both a college athlete as well as being a college student and striving for success in both of those categories. They often are relying on the athletic department and their team members and coaches for support and are often not looking towards outside resources that the campus provides. Coaches and administrators in the department in turn are then acting as advisors, counselors and stretching far outside their comfort zone and expertise to help their student-athletes.

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the lived experiences of freshman female student-athletes at Rowan University. This study was implemented to assess the experiences that these freshman females experienced during their freshman year as well as explore how these female student-athletes felt that their experiences would impact their future college experience and careers. The subjects in this study were female student athletes in their freshman year of their respective sport at Rowan University. The athletes represented each female sports team during the spring 2019 semester besides Women's Cross Country.

An interview was conducted with a total of 10 purposively selected female freshman student-athletes at Rowan University. An informal consent form was read and signed by all participants prior to conducting the structured interview. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

These interview data were transcribed and were analyzed using content analysis looking for common and divergent themes. The themes were then organized into meaningful categories in order to answer the research questions posed in chapter one.

Data collection consisted of 10 interviews of current freshman female student-athletes during their spring semester of freshman year. After data was collected and coded, three major themes that were discovered through these interviews stood out and were prevalent in almost every interview; transition to college, toughness, and supportive community.

These three themes can in turn be presented to administrative staff and coaches in order to help not only build on these experiences but also foster a room for improvement in some areas.

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this research study was to determine the experiences freshman female student-athletes had in their first year of eligibility at Rowan University.

In order to determine the experience of the freshman female student-athletes, the study was a qualitative approach and relied on interviewing participants in order to elicit thoughtful and honest responses. The overarching research question was to determine the lived experience of a freshman female student-athlete at Rowan University. The research questions developed for this study included:

Research Question 1. What are the lived experiences that freshman female selected student-athletes report during their first year of eligibility?

These transitions alter one's relationships, routines, and assumptions (Schlossberg, 2011). Student-athletes are going through different phases in their personal

and developmental growth and a grasp and understanding of these theories and what these athletes may be feeling is important in order to better serve as a coach or administrator in an athletic department. Student athletes using the terms “tough” and “stressful” are indicators that there is a need for additional support for these student athletes as they are experiencing new things. The transitions that occur during their first year are expected in terms of Schlossberg’s transition theory. There are shifts in their transition and fall backs but again with overarching support from the university and administrators, student athletes will be encouraged and provided with motivators of their success. Athletic involvement has a positive impact on the institution’s academic reputation, the intellectual environment, student friendships and institutional administration. These student-athlete responses elaborate on the positive and sometimes negative impact themselves and how their experience is altered by the positive.

Data supports research from Schlossberg (1994) when she stated that the transitions are a time for individuals to reevaluate themselves and their lives in order to promote growth and development. Students often changed their mindset upon entering, whether it was about their sport or even about the University. During that transition period specifically when entering a college sport, there is revaluation from playing time, or even gaining the respect of your athletic ability from your coach. This data from the interviews of the struggle of playing time and coaching experience is an example of that. Also, these female student athletes mentioned the transition from being at home with guidance to being on a campus with no guidance and having to figure it out for themselves which made them reevaluate their expectations and experiences.

Research Question 2. How do these female student-athletes feel like these experiences are going to impact their future college experiences?

The findings appear to support the previous research of Broughton (2001) who argued for academic support services and found student athletes face many of the similar academic, emotional, and personal challenges encountered by the general student population (Broughton, 2001).

Toughness was something that was present as well throughout the data. Whether this stemmed from injury or lack of playing time, many student athletes felt the toughness aspect during their first year as a student-athlete. These factors that came into a student-athlete's life during their first year could ultimately affect retention and their academic success. This supports the students continued efforts to improve and do better and supports Astin (1984) who stated that "participation in sports, particularly intercollegiate sports, has an especially prolific positive effect on persistence" (p. 518).

Research Question 3. What are the student athletes' perceptions of first-year orientation and transition programs offered at Rowan University and how did they affect their experiences?

While transition is something that an entire university student body goes through, there is a greater transition becoming a college athlete. The NCAA has approved legislation to improve academic success at the division I and division II levels (NCAA, 2014) however, division III institutions do not partake in such. The theme was developed over the span of the interviews with the participants and although many of the student athletes felt the programming and support was adequate, some suggested a form of improvement. The data collected referred to a positive for the orientation programming

and student-athletes were able to become more aware of the campus and what it had to offer.

According to the data, the current orientation programs were beneficial to most of the female student-athletes. Student athletes felt the ability for them to meet friends outside of their sport and get familiar with campus was beneficial to them. The data supported the success of the orientation programs at Rowan University and how they are fostering a good campus relationship for students upon their arrival. The need for a separate student-athlete orientation was not necessary from the participants who spoke, but it may be something that could additionally support the needs of the students along with the Rowan orientation programs.

Conclusions

The results of this study confirmed the need for further research and understanding of first year student athletes but also explored a more specific population, females, regarding their lived experience. The interview participants not only enjoyed being able to tell their story about their experience and thought that sharing their experience might be able to help future students enter college but the research was able to gather themes along the way that reflected upon common experiences these athletes had at Rowan University.

With the growing of the female athlete populations at institutions across the country, the understanding of these individuals by themselves but also coaches and administrators can ultimately lead to more successful programs but also successful individuals throughout their college experience as well as ease the transition for freshman student athletes into college. Lived experience is something that is personal but also

beneficial to understand at the coaching level in order to be able to adapt to individuals. The influence that these coaches and administrators may have on students either positive or negative experience is exponential. With that, the growth that this will allow both college athletic administrators and coaches but also athletic programs as a whole will enable more successful student athletes, both athletically and academically.

This study has provided data that indicates first year female student-athletes need support within transitions, specifically athletes, a need for awareness of resources the campus has to offer and a need for support within the campus and community. Using the information produced from this study as well as prior research, it is important that universities understand their need in supporting these freshman female student athletes which will overall improve student success in their college career.

In order to continue to allow these student athletes to grow upon the start of their second year, it is imperative to have the necessary skills developed in the first year that can carry with them throughout their college career. These student-athletes can help then foster a mentor relationship with the student-athletes that follow and develop a leadership role directly from this position.

Addressing these challenges needs to be a priority when students enter campus. First year students are expected to balance so much, often things they never had to a balance before, at a higher level and all within the first few weeks of the semester. With an academic success coach or support within the athletic department, such as workshops and programming on these issues, student-athletes will be able to transition smoother into their first-year student-athlete college experience.

Recommendations for Further Practice

The Rowan University Athletic department could present a program in the summer for freshman student-athlete orientation that develops the understanding of the policies and procedures of the athletic department as well as develop a relationship within the athletic department which can help ease transition for these student-athletes. This could be a one-two day event that takes place during the summer that will provide an opportunity for fostering and creating relationships as well as developing support from the first day. There could be guest speakers and a student panel to talk about real experiences and even issues they may have had.

Another recommendation for the athletic department is to develop a position within the department that serves as academic support and can handle the case load of student athletes, not just one person. This position could develop workshops and seminars on different topics for freshman student athletes such as time management, study skills, advising, and other resources that are available on campus.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based upon this research, there is a need for further research within Division III institutions and their academic programming within their athletic department. Whether that is support, or different programming that could be beneficial to these student athletes that is imperative. This research could develop a better understanding of the life Division III student athletes face each and every day and the improvements that could be made to further increase retention rates and over student success, which in turn will lead to success in their respective field.

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the researcher, the following suggestions are presented:

1. Further research could be conducted on injuries in first year student-athletes and how that affected their first-year experience.
2. Further research could focus on this population (freshman) at a greater scale such as a different division (sorority life, majors, etc.) of the institution or even at a different institution.
3. Research on male student-athlete lived experience could be conducted for comparison on the uniqueness of the female student-athlete.
4. Research on first-year programming for all freshmen, not just athletes.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Letter

My name is Kaitlin Schullstrom and I am currently pursuing my graduate degree in Higher Education Administration. As a part of the graduate program, we are required to complete a thesis capstone project. In order to complete my thesis, I am reaching out to Freshman female student-athletes at Rowan University to take part in an interview about your experiences your freshman year.

Ultimately, the purpose of this interview and study is to examine the experiences on has in their transition from high school to college playing a sport. This will further help develop programming for freshman in the future to maybe ease transition but also for a complete understanding of what freshman female athletes are actually experiencing here at Rowan University.

While your participation in this survey is completely voluntary, I would appreciate any willingness to talk about your experience. The interview will last no longer than 30 minutes and can be scheduled at a time of your convenience. If you are interested, please send me an email expressing your interest and when a time would be best by April 6th.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at Schullstrom@rowan.edu

Best,
Kaitlin Schullstrom

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research study. The interview is set up to take no longer than 30 minutes and will be recorded. This interview will also be completely confidential. Are you ready to begin?

- 1) Could you please tell me about yourself? Your background prior to college, family, sports, etc.
- 2) What were your expectations of your first-year of college? Have your expectations been met?
 - a. If yes, how have your expectations been met?
 - b. If no, why were your expectations not met?
- 3) Describe your transition from high school to college.
 - a. Did Rowan University assist you during the transition process?
 - b. What could Rowan University have done better to assist your transition?
 - c. What could the athletic department have done better to assist your transition?
- 4) What were your experiences of first-year orientation programs at Rowan University?

Appendix C

Institutional Review Board Approval

** This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.
If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office **

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier: FWA00007111

IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman

IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy

Effective Date:

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID:	Pro201900400		
Title:	The Lived Experience of a Freshman Female Collegiate Student-Athlete		
Principal Investigator:	Tyrone McCombs	Study Coordinator:	
Co-Investigator(s):	Kaitlin Schullstrom	Other Study Staff:	There are no items to display
Sponsor:	Department Funded	Approval Cycle:	Twelve Months
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	Device Determination:	Not Applicable
Review Type:	Expedited	Expedited Category:	6
Subjects:	56		7

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type:	Research Protocol/Study	Submission Status:	Approved
Approval Date:	4/16/2019	Expiration Date:	4/15/2020
Continuation Review Required:	Progress Report		
Pregnancy Code:	No Pregnant Women as Subjects	Pediatric Code:	No Children As Subjects
		Prisoner Code:	No Prisoners As Subjects
Protocol:	Interview Protocol IRB Protocol	Consent:	There are no items to display
		Recruitment Materials:	Recruitment Letter

* Study Performance Sites:

Glassboro Campus 201 Mullica Hill Road Glassboro, NJ 08028

There are no items to display

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
- 2a. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
- 2b. **Progress Report:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses, an annual progress report is required at least 21 days prior to the expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions :** If you wish to change any aspect of this study after the approval date mentioned in this letter, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects. This policy is also applicable to progress reports.
5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations:** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.
8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been completed or stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor nor the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application, progress report or final report.
9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.
10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*