

The Student-Athlete Leadership Academy Experience: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study sought to advance the understanding of how leadership education affects student-athletes interpersonally, as athletes, and as students while providing insight into the importance of leadership development for institutions and athletic departments for student-athletes who participate in a yearlong leadership program. The purpose of this study is to explore how a yearlong leadership development program influenced the personal and leadership growth and development of student-athletes during the 2020-2021 academic year. Two research questions guided the present study: How does the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy curriculum and experience contribute to student-athletes' progress through the theory on leadership identity development and understanding of the social change model? How do student-athletes perceive that their experiences in the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy influence and shape their development as a person, leader, and athlete?

These questions were explored through the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model and the social change model. I observed all 20 student-athletes during their courses and on their international immersion trip. I also utilized class readings, syllabi, and news articles as written documents in the data collection process. In addition to the observations and document analysis, I conducted semi-structured interviews with five students to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences in the SALA. I also administered and analyzed weekly journal prompts from these five students. The findings of this study illuminate the importance of leadership development programs for collegiate student-athletes. The study found that through their experience in the SALA, student-athletes moved through the LID model and gained an understanding of the social change model.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Nearly all higher education institutions incorporate leadership skills or leadership education in their missions and vision statements as part of preparing students for life after college (Kiersch & Peters, 2017; Smart et al., 2002; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). Higher education institutions benefit from academic leadership programs, which enable students to connect with peers and staff across campus, promote diversity, and ensure institutional effectiveness and dedication to the institution's mission and vision (Gmelch & Buller, 2015). Higher education researchers also suggest that leadership development is a process through which all persons can advance regardless of title or position, and that leadership can mobilize individuals to work toward shared goals (Eich, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2018). In 1999, the Kellogg Foundation funded its *Leadership in the Making* project, concluding that higher education institutions can foster leadership potential in every student through leadership programs and activities (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). Leadership development can also increase academic performance, character development, and personal growth (Benson & Saito, 2001; Fischer et al., 2015; Kiersch & Peters, 2017), rendering such initiatives and education essential for teaching the transferable skills needed for life after college.

On behalf of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Roberts and Ullom (1989) published the first major mention of leadership education in relation to personal and professional development. Many campuses offer specialized programs through which students can formally participate in leadership development, including the Bonner Scholars Program or LeaderShape, Inc. which will be described in chapter two (Bonner Foundation, 2020; LeaderShape, n.d.). Students can also gain leadership skills by participating in clubs or activities on campus, such as intramural sports, clubs, and student organizations (Milone, 2021; Rosch &

Collins, 2017). Participating in extracurricular activities provides an environment for students to develop their leader identity and practice leadership skills and behaviors such as administrative work, budgeting, strategic planning, and leading peers which mirror structures and professional environments in life after graduation (Rosch & Collins, 2017).

Leadership Development and Student-Athletes

Some athletic departments market leadership development as a significant benefit of intercollegiate athletics (Huntrods et al., 2017). For student-athletes, general student development programming on a college campus is often replaced with athletic department programming (Huntrods et al., 2017). With this specialized program, the athletic department environment creates a social situation in which collaborative and active learning result in leadership development (Huntrods et al., 2017).

There are some notable differences in leadership development when considering student-athletes versus non-athletes. For example, student-athletes spend a substantial amount of time in their sport, so athletic department staff must consider leadership development at both the individual athlete and team levels (Huntrods et al., 2017). According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) mission, participating in college sports promote students' leadership skills (Andrassy et al., 2014; Murdock, 2010; Richard, 2020). The NCAA has a specific department, the Office of Leadership Development, which "educate[s] and empower[s] student-athletes...through transformative experiences that develop effective leaders" (NCAA, 2020, para. 1). The NCAA and the athletic department staff work together to develop leadership skills in student-athletes and accomplish the mission of student-athlete development.

Researchers have demonstrated that participating in competitive sports increases student-athletes' responsibility, honesty, maturity, character, self-respect, and respect toward others (Chu

et al., 1985; Duguay et al., 2016). Similarly, McDowell et al. (2018) found that authentic leadership increased student-athletes' performance satisfaction and psychological well-being. Other researchers have shown that participating in college athletics contributes to student development, increasing satisfaction with the overall college experience, motivation to earn a degree, and the development of interpersonal skills (Ryan, 1989). Participating in college sports also correlates positively with retention (McElveen & Ibele, 2019) and improves leadership skills, individual and team performance, and cohesion of players on a team (Voight, 2012). Other researchers have stressed the importance of understanding holistic self-leadership development for the collegiate student-athlete for success post-sport and post-graduation (Eiche et al., 1997; DiPaolo, 2017).

College student-athletes also benefit from transferable skills related to their future career and life after college (DiPaolo, 2017; Murdock, 2010). Teamwork (i.e., communication and conflict resolution skills) often is instrumental to athletic success, and while the experiences of student-athletes in leadership programs have not been studied, general students who have participated in leadership development programs demonstrate increased skill levels in both categories (DiPaolo, 2017; Duguay, et al., 2016; Huntrods et al., 2017; Voight, 2012). Thirty years ago, the NCAA (2008) issued a specialized programming mandate requiring all NCAA institutions to implement the five pillars of the NCAA Life Skills program which are still being used at NCAA institutions today (Murdock, 2010; Forester et al., 2020). These five pillars include academic excellence, athletic excellence, personal development, career development, and community service (Murdock, 2010).

Given that there are no specific guidelines or restrictions concerning the NCAA Life Skills program curriculum, implementation has varied considerably among institutions (Forester

et al., 2020). Voight and Hickey (2016) outline the vast discrepancy and variance of the implementation of leadership programs for student-athletes in a sample of NCAA institutions. The NCAA hosts a leadership development forum each year where athletes can attend a training for life skills and career development, and some schools have created leadership programs to accomplish the life skills requirement (Forester et al., 2020). These leadership programs, and leadership programs at large, have a significant impact on a university, athletic department, and student-athlete experience (Day et al., 2014; DiPaolo, 2017; Duguay et al., 2016). However, little is known about the specific effects of leadership programs on student-athletes' leadership and identity development.

Leadership Programs for Student-Athletes

The scholarly literature affirms the importance of leadership on sports teams and the positive aspects of leadership development for student-athletes (Burton & Peachey, 2013; DiPaolo, 2017; Duguay et al., 2016; Hall, 2015). Leadership programs in athletics have primarily focused on coaches (Weaver & Simet, 2015). Researchers have shown that college students leave leadership programs with an increased sense of personal values, understanding of leadership skills, and ability to demonstrate leadership competencies (Rosch & Caza, 2012). For example, using the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership, researchers have examined leadership programs at a variety of institutions and concluded that participating increased leadership efficacy, leadership practice, community service activities, and engagement in socio-political conversations with their peers (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Day et al., 2014). Nevertheless, few studies have yielded tangible outcomes for student-athlete specific leadership programs or documented personal and leadership growth and development for student-athletes in

leadership programs. The question remains how student-athlete specific leadership programs influence student-athlete development.

Athletic department staff often promote the benefits of leadership development within intercollegiate athletics, yet few institutions' websites provide information, details, or descriptions of the student-athlete leadership programs offered. While the NCAA Life Skills program was implemented over 30 years ago, the leadership development component was not a focus for many schools until recently (Forester et al., 2020). Athletic leadership programs are trending and on the rise (Forester et al., 2020; Voight & Hickey, 2016); Table 1.1 lists all institutions in the Southeastern Conference and, if available, student-athlete-specific leadership programs administered by the athletic department. All of these programs were developed within the last ten years. The brief overview of the Southeastern Conference institutions with student-athlete leadership programs demonstrates the newness of formal leadership education explicitly tailored for student-athletes. As athletic departments continue to develop new programs and emphasize the importance of student-athlete leadership development, more research will become available.

This research study examined student-athlete leadership development by studying students' experiences in the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) (pseudonym). I aimed to (a) capture the growth, development, and learning of student-athletes in the SALA and (b) provide athletic departments and higher education institutions with a broader understanding of the need for student-athlete leadership programs and a framework for supporting student-athletes. The program selected for this study was chosen because it is a well-established and recognized at a large public university. Additionally, the program leaders were willing to allow access to the program. Student-athletes at the institution must be nominated by their head coach

and complete an interview process to be accepted into the program. If chosen to be in the SALA, the student-athlete will attend a leadership retreat, complete a year-long academic course, and participate in an international service immersion trip. For this study, I participated and attended every aspect of the

SALA alongside the student-athletes. A detailed description of research methods is discussed in chapter three.

Statement of Problem

Huntrods et al. (2017) reported that student-athletes often have lower GPAs, are less involved in campus life, have difficulty relating to non-athlete students, and have an increased risk of functional, psychological, and physical separation from the student body. Student-athletes are often expected to have lower academic performance and a general lack of concern for academic achievement (Huml et al., 2019; Huntrods et al., 2017). This label can strain relationships with professors, which many leadership programs have shown to improve (Baccei, 2015; Huml et al., 2019). However, other research has shown that team captains exhibited significant growth in Kouzes and Posner's (2014) five practices of exemplary leadership (Grandzol et al., 2010).

Student-athletes often struggle with self-esteem, especially following poor performance and external pressures through sport, and leadership development programs have demonstrated the ability to increase levels of self-esteem (Huntrods et al., 2017; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). Student-athletes' sport performance and participation are leading factors in how students identify and define themselves—and possessing an athletic identity can adversely affect academic, social, and behavioral development (Salgado, 2011). Student-athletes may also struggle with racial, religious, or social identities, among others, and if these identities are not

developed and understood, full identity achievement cannot be obtained (Marcia, 1989; Salgado, 2011).

Because formal programs for student-athlete leadership development are not widespread, the effects of leadership programs on student-athletes' development, sport performance, skills, identity, development, or any other benefit of participating in leadership programs are not known. Researchers have identified benefits for non-athlete college students who participate in leadership programs, including increased academic performance, character development, and personal growth (Brewer et al., 1993; Grandzol et al., 2010; Huntrods et al., 2017; Kiersch & Peters, 2017; Salgado, 2011; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). However, very few formal studies have been completed to explore the experience of student-athletes who participate in leadership programs. By understanding leadership programs and development among student-athletes, athletic department staff and higher education leaders can better support student-athletes in gaining the skills, career development, and personal growth needed for life after graduation, meet the NCAA Life Skills mandate, and potentially be utilized as a recruiting tool by athletic department leadership.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how the SALA influenced the personal and leadership growth and development of student-athletes in the program during the 2020-2021 academic year. This study aimed to better understand the student-athletes' leadership experience and movement through the various steps of the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model and social change model. This study explored how leadership education affected student-athletes as individuals, students, and athletes while providing insight for institutions and athletic departments regarding the outcomes and effectiveness of leadership development for student-

Table 1.1*SEC Institutions and Athletic Leadership Programs*

Institution Name	Student-Athlete Leadership Program
Auburn University	CONNECT through AuburnYOU
Louisiana State University	No known program
Mississippi State University	Bulldogs Leadership Institute
Texas A&M University	No known program
University of Alabama	Emerging Tide Leaders Academy
University of Arkansas	No known program
University of Florida	No known program
University of Georgia	L.E.A.D Program
University of Kentucky	No known program
University of Mississippi	No known program
University of Missouri	Tiger Leadership Institute
University of South Carolina	Gamecock Leadership Academy
University of Tennessee	The VOLeaders Program
Vanderbilt University	Be an Anchor Leadership Program

Note: References for the table above are derived from athletic department websites and are cited in the references section.

athletes. By revealing how SALA contributes to student-athletes' identity and leadership identity development, this study contributes to the broader understanding of student-athletes' holistic development, a key component of the goal and mission of the NCAA (NCAA, 2020). Holistic development incorporates development of the student-athlete in their personal and professional life, through academics and athletics. Moreover, the findings can enable athletic departments to achieve the pillars of the NCAA Life Skills program more effectively in the areas of academic excellence, personal development, career development, and community service. If the benefits of leadership development and education are the same for student-athletes as they are for the general student population, student-athletes could see increased GPAs and report higher levels satisfaction with the college experience or life outside of sport (Huntrods et al., 2017). Additionally, student-athletes could experience identity achievement, thereby assisting in their transition to life after college athletics (Marcia, 1989; Salgado, 2011). Finally, there may be longer-term effects on the team, culture within the athletic department, and even changes in campus culture given the high-profile nature of student-athletes in the NCAA. While GPA, athletic department culture changes, and identity achievement are not a focus of this study, each provides an opportunity for further research into the effects of leadership programs on student-athletes.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the present study:

1. How does the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy curriculum and experience contribute to student-athletes' progress through the theory on leadership identity development and understanding of the social change model?

2. How do student-athletes perceive that their experiences in the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy influence and shape their development as a person, leader, and athlete?

Theoretical Framework

There are two guiding frameworks for the study: the theory on leadership identity development and the social change model. The leadership identity development theory is not currently utilized by the SALA and will serve as a framework to analyze the data gathered in the research. The social change model is utilized in the goals and curriculum of the SALA and will be used to track the learning outcomes of student-athletes participating in the program. An in-depth discussion on the creation and implementation of the theory of leadership identity development and social change model is discussed in chapter two.

Leadership Identity Development Model (LID)

The theory of leadership identity development, also known as the leadership identity development model or LID model, seeks to “reflect the developmental experience of college student participants who ... demonstrat[e] relational leadership” (Komives et al., 2005, p. 594). Hall (2004) stated that identity is the most critical aspect of leader development. The LID model emphasizes that leadership is process-oriented and cyclical rather than linear, so the goal of the model is for students to move through the process (Komives et al., 2005). A variety of other developmental theories inform the leadership identity development model (Komives et al., 2009). These theories include psychosocial theories like Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory on college student development; Kohlberg’s (1977) theory on moral development; developmental synthesis theories like Kegan’s orders of consciousness (Love & Guthrie, 1999); and Tajfel’s (1979) social identity theory (Komives et al., 2009). Table 1.2 contains the

similarities between the LID model and the other leadership theories which will be discussed in chapter two.

While the LID model provides a framework for designing programs or curriculum with learning outcomes, the model itself is a series of six stages and five categories that students undergo while developing a leader identity (Komives et al., 2009). The LID model provides a lens through which to view the data gathered from the student-athletes in the SALA. The first stage of the LID model, Awareness, includes the understanding of leadership as a concept in terms of familial or public figures. Exploration and Engagement is the second stage and involves gathering new experiences such as clubs, sports, activities or other aspects of the collegiate experience. The third stage, Leader Identified, includes understanding the concept that leadership is positional and those who are not leaders are followers. The Leader Identified stage then involves a crisis where the student's view of hierarchical or position-based leadership transitions into an idea that leadership is a process and collaborative. This change marks the movement into stage four, Leadership Differentiated, where there is a shift in understanding of leadership as position based to leadership as a process. The fifth stage, Generativity, is where a student commits to their passions and dedicates time and leadership to their interests. The last stage, Synthesis, is when a student acknowledges that leadership can happen at any point and that congruence, credibility, and trustworthiness are crucial aspects of successful leaders.

The five categories of the LID model include: (1) broadening view of leadership; (2) developing self; (3) group influences; (4) developmental influences; and (5) changing view of self with others (Komives et al, 2005). The first category of the LID model is broadening one's view of leadership meaning moving from viewing leadership as positional to leadership as a process. The second category, developing self, includes developing a sense of self by deepening

Table 1.2*Comparisons Between the LID Model and Various Leadership Theories*

	LID Model: Developing Self	LID Model: Group Influences	LID Model: Changing View of Self with Others	LID Model: Broadening View of Leadership
Transformational Leadership	the individualized consideration behavior	increasing commitment to group goals; the inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence behaviors		
Servant Leadership	humility construct		empowerment and vision constructs	empowerment and vision constructs
Authentic Leadership	Wheel of Authenticity categories of self-discipline and values	Wheel of Authenticity categories of connectedness and relationships	Wheel of Authenticity categories of connectedness and relationships	
Adaptive Leadership		observing the situation and identifying the challenge		
Kolb's Experiential Learning Model	abstract conceptualization stage	feedback steps		active experimentation stage

Note: The rows correlate with a specific leadership theory. Each column represents a step of the LID model. The table demonstrates similarities between the aspects of the leadership theory and the steps LID model.

self-awareness, self-confidence, interpersonal efficacy, and developing new skills. The third category, group influences, considers the developmental influence in a student's life, such as adults and peers who affirm the student's skills and leadership potential, serve as mentors, and encourage involvement (Komives et al., 2005). The fourth category, developmental influences, includes parents or peers as well as personal reflection. Lastly, the fifth category, changing view of self with others relates back to the first and second stage and increasing self-awareness in terms of working with others. Figure 1.1 demonstrates the flow of the LID Model, and it is essential to note that while the model is circular, students must progress through the stages consecutively during their leadership journey. Through the proposed research methods, this study aimed to better understand the student-athletes' developmental experience and movement through the various steps of the LID model.

Social Change Model

The second theoretical framework for the study, the social change model, was first published by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute in 1996. The social change model focuses on leadership affecting change on behalf of others and leadership that is collaborative, process-oriented, and values-based (HERI, 1996). Service is a primary component of the social change model in developing leadership skills (HERI, 1996). The SALA goals and curriculum are rooted in the social change model. The model has two primary objectives: (1) increasing self-knowledge of a student's talents, values, and interests concerning effective leadership and (2) increasing leadership competency or the ability to serve, collaborate and influence change as a leader (HERI, 1996).

The social change model presents seven common values that are critical elements of leadership: collaboration, a consciousness of self, commitment, congruence, common purpose,

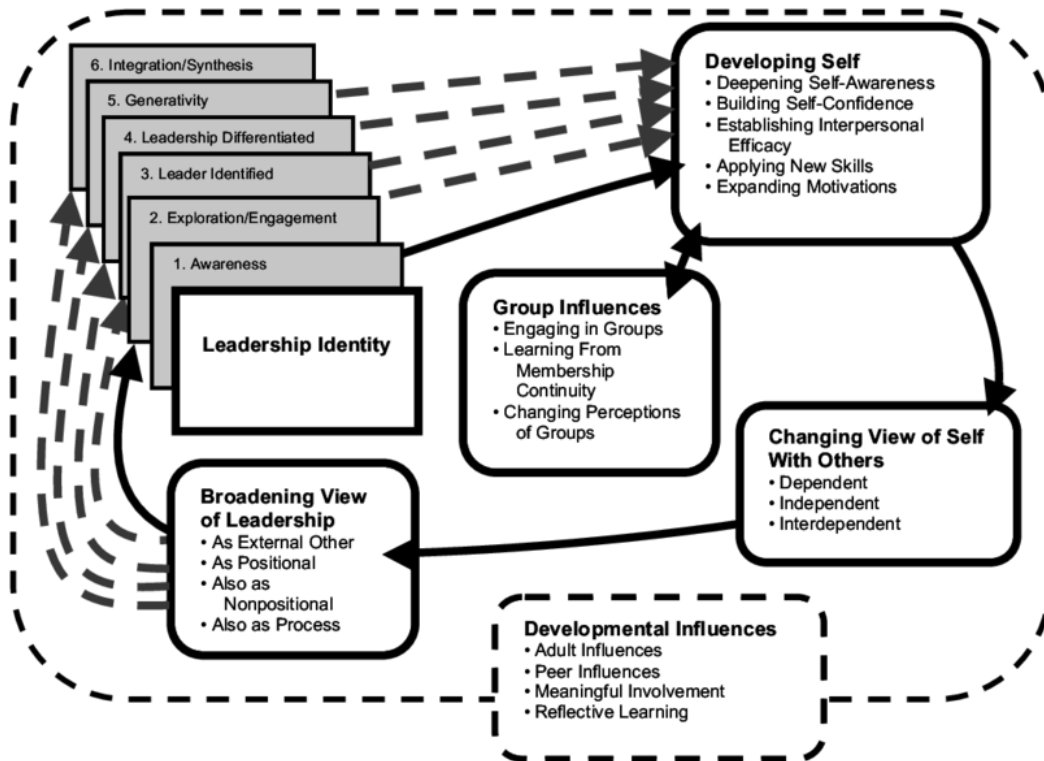


Figure 1.1

The Leadership Identity Development Model

Note: From “Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory” by S. Komives, J. Owen, S. Longerbearm, F. Mainella, and L. Osteen, 2005. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), p. 599. Reprinted with permission.

controversy with civility, and citizenship (HERI, 1996). These common values are known as the “Seven C’s,” and are categorized into three levels within the model. These levels include (1) individual values (consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment); (2) group process values (collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility); and (3) community or societal values (citizenship); all three levels combine to create change.

Consciousness of self refers to one’s understanding of their own beliefs, values, and overall self-awareness. Congruence refers to the ability of the individual to behave or act in congruence with their beliefs and values. Commitment signifies the ability to dedicate oneself to their purpose and passions. Collaboration is one’s ability to engage and contribute with others and accomplish common goals. Common purpose refers to the ability to commit oneself and share responsibility for achieving a communal goal or vision. Controversy with civility refers to the ability to engage in civil discourse, critical conversations, and healthy disagreements with a diverse group of people. Citizenship is the ability to become connected to the community and socially responsible to the community.

The Seven Cs and three levels of values create feedback loops through which individual learning and leadership development occurs. The social change model focuses on student learning and is a learning outcomes-based framework. Each aspect of the social change model can be taught while acknowledging that each step requires immense amounts of self-reflection to achieve the goal of assisting an institution and leaders to “function more effectively and humanely” (HERI, 1996, p. 27). Table 1.3 outlines similarities between the social change model and other leadership theories which will be discussed in detail in chapter two. The LID and Social Change Models and the SALA. One of the main objectives of the SALA is for student-athletes to learn how to be a leader for their team, campus, and local and global communities

Table 1.3*Comparisons Between the Social Change Model and Various Leadership Theories*

	Individual Values	Group Process Values	Community or Societal Values
Transformational Leadership	the individualized consideration behavior	increasing commitment to group goals; the inspirational motivation and individualized consideration behaviors	idealized influence behavior
Servant Leadership	humility construct	trust construct	love, empowerment, and vision constructs
Authentic Leadership	Wheel of Authenticity categories of self-discipline and values	Wheel of Authenticity categories of relationships	Wheel of Authenticity categories of values, heart, and relationships
Adaptive Leadership		observing the situation and identifying the challenge	giving work to the followers to assist in the challenge
Kolb's Experiential Learning Model	abstract conceptualization stage	feedback steps	

Note: The rows correlate with a specific leadership theory. Each column represents a set of values from the social change model. The table demonstrates similarities between the aspects of the leadership theory and the category of values from the social change model.

which aligns with the social change model framework. As such, the research methods will analyze the extent to which student-athletes in the SALA understand and internalize the seven C's of the social change model. The research methods will focus on growth through the seven C's, values, collaboration, and service, which are all major components of the SALA curriculum. Through the immersive experience into the SALA, I sought connections between the process-oriented outcomes of the LID model and the learning outcomes of the social change model and how each affected the leadership development and leader identity development of student-athletes in the program. Table 1.4 demonstrates commonalities between components of the LID model and the social change model in each row. I will use definitions of the components within each theory to demonstrate the commonality before naming the commonality itself. In the individual values of the social change model, consciousness of self refers to "being aware of one's beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions," and congruence refers to "thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty towards others" (HERI, 1996, p. 22). The group value common purpose is when "all members of the group share in the vision" and "work with shared aims and values" (HERI, 1996, p. 23). In the LID model, the developing self category and exploration and engagement stage contain aspects of personal growth such as deepening self-awareness, building self-confidence, establishing interpersonal efficacy, applying new skills, and expanding motivations (Komives et al., 2005). Based on the definitions provided in the theories, the building new skills, self-awareness, and self-confidence aspects of the developing self component in the LID model relate to the individual values of consciousness of self and congruence in the social change model. The establishing interpersonal efficacy portion of the developing self component of the LID model relates to the group value common purpose

Table 1.4*LID Model and Social Change Model Commonalities*

LID Model Component	Social Change Model Component	Commonality Name(s)
Developing Self category Exploration and engagement stage	Individual Values: consciousness of self, congruence Group Values: common purpose	Self-awareness
Changing View of Self with Others Leader Identified stage Leadership differentiated stage	Individual Values: commitment Group Values: collaboration, controversy with civility, common purpose	Teamwork
Group influences category Leadership differentiated stage	Group values: common purpose, collaboration, controversy with civility Societal/Community Values: citizenship	Connectedness
Broadening View of Leadership category Generativity stage Synthesis stage	Individual value: consciousness of self Group values: common purpose, collaboration Societal/Community Values: citizenship	Maturing as a leader

Note: Each row on the chart above demonstrates the similar aspects between the LID model and social change model.

in the social change model. This commonality will be called *self-awareness* because of the focus on interpersonal development.

The changing view of self with others category of the LID model has a dependent and independent pathway where students are either independent positional leaders in the group or dependent group members (Komives et al., 2005). However, in both pathways, students “shared a leader-centric view of leadership believing only positional leaders did leadership” (Komives et al., 2005, p. 605). In this category students transition to believe that leadership can come from anywhere in the group and the group is interdependent with one another (Komives et al., 2005). The individual value commitment refers to the “energy that motivates the individual to serve and that drives collective effort” (HERI, 1996, p. 22) The collaboration component of the social change model means “work[ing] with others in a common effort” and “empower[ing] others through trust” (HERI, 1996, p. 23). The group value common purpose is when “all members of the group share in the vision” and “work with shared aims and values” (HERI, 1996, p. 23). Controversy with civility is the ability to view and discuss difference with respect for others and willingness to listen (HERI, 1996, p. 23). In the changing view of self with others component of the LID model, students learn that leadership is not positional and members of a group are dependent on one another which relates to the definitions of group values collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility in the social change model mentioned above. Additionally, similarities are found in students learning their interdependence on the group in the leader identified and leadership differentiated stages of the LID model and how leaders must have commitment to the collective effort concept in the social change model. This commonality will be called *teamwork* because of the focus on working with and relying on others in the group.

The LID model category group influences includes “the properties of engaging in groups, learning from membership, continuity of the group, and changing perceptions of groups” (Komives et al., 2005, p. 602). The group influences component of the LID model relates to the

common purpose and collaboration aspects of the social change model because of the ability to work with others for a common goal. Separately, the group influences category of the LID model relates to the controversy with civility component of the social change model because of the learning from membership continuity and changing perceptions of groups aspects which states: “students who were committed to a group or organization over time gained relational skills such as dealing with conflict...” (Komives et al., 2005, p. 603). Additionally, the group influences category relates to the societal/community values of citizenship within the social change model. The definition of the citizenship component is “the process whereby the individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society through the leadership development activity” (HERI, 1996, p. 23). The citizenship component also highlights the interdependence and common purpose of groups (HERI, 1996). The changing perceptions aspect of the group influences component and the leadership differentiated stage of the LID model are similar to the citizenship component of the social change model because students try to make their community better through their leadership roles and understand the importance of their group in the greater system. This commonality will be called *connectedness* because of the focus on connecting with others to accomplish a common goal and connecting the group to the community.

The broadening view of leadership category of the LID model is the process by which students transition from a view of leadership as external, to leader-centric or positional, to acknowledging that leadership can happen from anyone in a group, to leadership as a process (Komives et al., 2005). This category falls within the generativity and synthesis stage of the LID

model where students become committed to the larger purpose and leadership becomes a daily practice. The broadening view of leadership component of the LID model states that “leadership became an integrated part of self-concept” (p. 605) which relates to individual value consciousness of self in the social change model (Komives et al., 2005). Students recognize that leadership is non-positional and begin to understand that leaders can “facilitate the groups’ progress from anywhere in the organization” (p. 605) which correlates with working with others in a common effort (group value collaboration) and working to actively participate in a group’s common mission and vision (group value common purpose) (Komives et al., 2005). Lastly, a student’s understanding that leadership is a process in which anyone can partake in the broadening view of leadership component of the LID model is similar to the societal/community value of citizenship in the social change model because students recognize that the “group is connected to the community and the society through leadership development” and everyone has the ability and right to be a leader (HERI, 1996, p. 23). This commonality will be called *maturing as a leader* because of the way in which a student grows in their view and understanding of leadership.

Research Design

Through ethnographic fieldwork methods, I conducted a case study that explored the leadership identity development of student-athletes in the SALA program. Data collection included document analysis, interviews, and observation (Gobo & Marciniak, 2012). Direct observation through complete immersion in the SALA was the primary form of ethnographic data collection and made it possible to understand the student-athletes’ experience in the program (Emerson et al., 2011; Fetterman, 2020).

Significance

This study gains an inside perspective on the effects of the leadership development journey on the experience, growth, and development of student-athletes in a yearlong leadership program. By gaining an understanding of the effects of leadership identity development for student-athletes, higher education professionals and athletic departments can enhance the student-athlete experience, academic experience, and skills needed for life after sport and subsequently have a large impact on the life of the student-athlete. This study also contributes to a notable gap in the literature on how student-athletes experience leadership identity development. By understanding tools needed for leadership identity development for student-athletes, institutions of higher education and athletic departments can better understand the effects and impacts of leadership development for individual student athletes, athletic teams, and the institution at large; therefore, these individuals can make decisions to support, fund, and include leadership education in every student-athlete's experience. According to the NCAA (2020),

NCAA leadership development serves to educate and empower student-athletes, coaches, and athletic administrators through transformative experiences that develop effective leaders, cultivate an inclusive community, and enhance the collective sports landscape (para. 1).

I anticipate that, by exploring student-athletes' perception of their leadership identity development in the SALA, this study's findings will inform or support importance of leadership and identity development education for student-athletes and the experiences necessary for leadership identity development in student-athletes. Finally, this study contributes to the broader

understanding of how institutions support the student-athlete experience and meet the Life Skills requirement of the NCAA.

This research study examined the curriculum, lessons, readings, activities, and other aspects of the SALA to assist in understanding how the SALA experience affected the leadership identity development of SALA participants. I hypothesized that through the SALA curriculum and experience, the student-athletes would develop a leader identity, other aspects of their identities, and a commitment to social change. As individuals grapple with understanding their own identities, they will begin to incorporate aspects of leadership into their identity, leading to higher confidence and a better understanding of their leadership role and leadership identity (Zheng & Muir, 2015). Therefore, it will be vital to understand personal identity development within leadership identity development of the SALA participants.

Terminology

The following terms and definitions will assist in ensuring a clear and consistent understanding of the study.

- **Institution:** a college, university, or place of post-secondary education
- **Leader:** any individual with or without a formal leadership position who engages in the act of leadership
- **Leadership development:** expanding the capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes (McCauley et al., 2010)
- **Leadership:** “a process of social influence which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal” (Kruse, 2013); a discipline, an art, and a science of power and influence which is not position-based (Hughes et al., 2011); “a personal journey of exploration and then as a rallying of others” (Kouzes & Posner, 2014)

- **Student-athlete:** a student attending an institution of higher education who is also a member of an intercollegiate athletic team

Organization of the Study

In chapter one, I introduced the importance of student-athlete leadership development through formal leadership programs. Additionally, I identified the theoretical frameworks that guided this study, affirmed the study's significance, and defined key terminology used in the study to increase understanding and clarification for readers. Chapter two provides the historical context of leadership education, the literature surrounding leadership development, leadership education, and student-athlete leadership development. Chapter three outlines the case study research design, first by defining case study and ethnographic field methods and then by discussing the procedures, instruments, data collection, and data analysis processes. Chapter three concludes with a section on trustworthiness, ethical concerns, and a statement on positionality. Chapter four includes a detailed description of the study findings. Chapter five discusses the study outcomes while integrating previous research and the theoretical framework with the new findings. The conclusions to the research questions will be outlined in chapter five, followed by recommendations and strategies for future research.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study is to explore how the Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) influenced the personal, professional, athletic, and leadership growth and development of student-athletes in the SALA program during the 2020-2021 academic year. Using a case study design, this study aimed to better understand the student-athletes' developmental experience and movement through the various steps of the LID model and understanding of the social change model. The research questions for the study are as follows:

1. How does the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy curriculum and experience contribute to student-athletes' progress through the theory on leadership identity development and understanding of the social change model?
2. How do student-athletes perceive that their experiences in the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy influence and shape their development as a person, leader, and athlete?

The two guiding frameworks for this study are the leadership identity development (LID) model and the social change model. This study aimed to inform and support the importance of leadership and identity development and education for student-athletes.

This chapter begins with a literature review of leadership development and leadership education. To more fully understand leadership development in higher education, the chapter then covers the early history of leadership development followed by the current landscape of leadership education within higher education. The chapter then discusses multiple leadership development concepts and subsequently theoretical foundations of leadership development and leadership education, including the leadership identity development model and social change model which are the theoretical frameworks of this study. Lastly, the chapter outlines the

connection between leadership development and identity development paying attention to the unique student-athlete population which is the focus of this study.

Leadership Development

Leadership development, which spans many fields and disciplines, generally refers to (a) increasing individuals' effectiveness in leadership roles and processes and (b) building interpersonal competence (Gardner, 1993; Kiersch & Peters, 2017; McCauley, 2000). According to Morrison et al. (2003), "The essence of leadership development traditionally has been the ability first to understand the theories and concepts of leadership and then apply them in real life scenarios" (p. 11). Earlier models of leadership development tended to focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal competence (HERI, 1996; McCauley, 2000; see also Gardner, 1993). More recently, the definition of leadership development has begun to include the idea that leadership is a process in which the entire community or group participates (Marsh, 2012).

While the literature provides an extensive history concerning leadership theory, scholarly research on leadership development in particular has drastically increased in the last 20 years (Day et al., 2014). Classroom-oriented leadership lessons for college students served as the primary method of formal leadership development and leadership education until experiential learning became more widely accepted and understood (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Experiential learning will be more fully discussed later in this chapter. Leadership development now typically includes necessary leadership lesson, leadership experiences, coaching, mentoring, and/or action learning (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004).

Leadership development is distinctly different from leader development (Day et al., 2014). *Leader* development focuses on intrapersonal factors; *leadership* development focuses on interpersonal factors (Day et al., 2014). For example, understanding one's values, leadership

style, and characteristics is a part of leader development, while learning how to communicate, build trust, and motivate a team are aspects of leadership development (Day et al., 2014). Like any developmental process, leadership development occurs over time. Day et al. (2014) recommended that studies on leadership development be longitudinal, investigate intrapersonal and interpersonal processes, understand personal and between-person changes, and consider group dynamics to encapsulate one's leadership development journey. Some research on leadership development states that leadership development depends on progressive skill development (Lord & Hall, 2005).

Early History of Leadership Development in Higher Education

The earliest colleges in America were founded for the developing of leadership (McIntire, 1989). “[T]he young democracy needed citizen-leaders—first, to function, and second, to assure its future” (McIntire, 1989, p. 75). Harvard University, founded in 1636, aimed to educate young men on how to lead their families, society, and colonial America (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008). Many colleges at the time agreed to the classic curriculum, emphasizing the importance of Greek and Latin since ancient wisdom derived from those languages (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008). Educating all young men in the classics could ensure great leaders for service to the community and the church (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008).

The Yale Report, written in 1828 by the faculty, emphasized that the goal of academia was educating well-rounded men (i.e., future societal leaders), and should rely on classic curriculum (Herbst, 2004). In the early 19th century, Thomas Carlyle gave six lectures and coined the Great Man theory through the speeches (Spector, 2015). The Great Man theory was the idea that leaders are born, not made, and that all significant events in history were linked to great men (Carlyle, n.d.). The Great Man was someone who was sent to be a hero, and those heroes became

leaders (Spector, 2015). While not a rigorous academic theory, the Great Man theory was a theory on leadership and comment on society at the time (Spector, 2015). The Great Man theory was later infused into the classic curriculum of early American higher education (Herbst, 2004).

In the early days of American higher education, leadership development occurred primarily outside of the classroom with minimal incorporation into the curriculum of business colleges (Connaughton et al., 2003). During the 18th century, students began meeting in small groups, known as literary societies, to debate, discuss, and socialize, and in turn, build deeper relationships (Horowitz, 1987). By the early 19th century, these groups met for intellectual conversations in addition to organizing social events and intramural sports, leading to the first fraternities (Horowitz, 1987). Fraternities created missions, symbols, and rituals that included leadership development, service, and social aspects, all of which focused on developing well-educated and well-rounded young men (Horowitz, 1987).

Athletics also began to play a crucial role in extracurricular leadership development in the early years of American higher education (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008). College athletics developed from intramural sports and the need for more extracurricular activities on campus during the 19th century (Duderstadt, 2003). Alumni groups and student organizations jointly created the first recognizable athletic programs (Thelin, 2000); soon thereafter, groups of students traveled to compete at different campuses in various sports (Duderstadt, 2003). By the early 20th century, Yale was renowned for its football program—not only for football skills but also lessons on sportsmanship (Thelin, 2000). Early athletic department leaders and faculty focused on lessons such as sportsmanship and leadership skills learned through sport (Thelin, 2000). Harvard's President Eliot, in 1881, stated, "The perseverance, resolution, and self-denial necessary to success in athletic sports turn out to be qualities valuable in business and other

active occupation of after life” (Franklin, Delano Roosevelt Foundation, n.d.). Henceforth, athletics and other extracurriculars continued to be considered a form of leadership development in higher education (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008; Duderstadt, 2003).

Leadership Development in Higher Education Today

In 1949, NASPA published an updated version of the Student Personnel Point of View, expanding the purpose of higher education to assist in training students in solving social problems and administering public affairs (American Council of Education, 1949). In 1987, the American Council on Education Studies issued a statement about the Student Personnel Point of View claiming that the role of student affairs is to “design opportunities for leadership development” (NASPA, 1987, p. 14). Guidance from NASPA and other organizations for student affairs and higher education professionals has shaped the landscape of leadership education, programs, and development within higher education.

Leadership development is a fundamental responsibility and one of the central purposes of higher education and (Connaughton et al., 2003; Roberts & Ullom, 1989). The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) created a task force in 1976 to study the nature a delivery of student leadership programs (Roberts & Ullom, 1989). This task force led Roberts (1981) to write the first book exploring the concept of leadership programs in higher education (Roberts & Ullom, 1989). In 1989, Roberts and Ullom published the student leadership program model in efforts to assist higher education professionals in creating and implementing leadership programs. The student leadership program model was developed by the Inter-Association Leadership Project, a committee of student personnel professionals from multiple professional associations, and sought to expand the current thinking of student leadership programs (Roberts

& Ullom, 1989). The model which includes three overall types of leadership enhancing activities: training, education, and development (Roberts & Ullom, 1989).

Roberts and Ullom (1989) argued that leadership programs should integrate institutional values and mission, assess student needs before creating the program, and evaluate learning throughout the program. Additionally, leadership programs should include a partnership between faculty and student affairs professionals to accomplish the academic and experiential nature of leadership education (Roberts & Ullom, 1989). Roberts and Ullom (1989) outlined the curriculum needed for a leadership program and checklist for creating a leadership program. The student leadership program model serves as a founding principle for leadership programs and development within higher education.

Examples of Leadership Programs in Higher Education

There are countless leadership development programs, classes, retreats, and activities within the realm of higher education. The sections below outline some of the most well-known programs.

Bonner Scholars Program. The Bonner Scholars program, founded at Berea College in 1990, provides access to higher education for more students, service to the campus and community at large, and leadership opportunities for students in the program (Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation, n.d.). The Council for Independent Colleges recognized the Bonner Scholars Program for creating “powerful opportunities for students to develop strong leadership skills as they link lessons learned in the classroom with knowledge gained from service and volunteerism” (Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation, n.d., para. 11). Each campus that hosts a Bonner Scholars Program utilizes its service-based model with service at the core (Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation, n.d.). The program builds upon a student

development model that focuses on increased leadership roles through service (Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation, n.d.).

The Bonner Scholars Program has over 18,000 alumni who have impacted communities and campuses through service and leadership (Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation, n.d.). The Bonner Foundation released a report in 2020 which describes a comprehensive Student Impact Survey outlining multiple statistically significant positive outcomes of student learning, retention, and success. Other studies have been conducted on the student outcomes of service-learning programs and positive impacts of the Bonner program (Keen & Hall, 2009; Richard et al, 2016).

W.K. Kellogg Foundation. In 1999, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded a project titled *Leadership in the Making*, intended to help higher education foster leadership potential in every student through leadership programs and activities (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). Between 1990 and 1998, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation invested over \$14.1 million on grant funds to foster a leadership development movement for college students (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). The purpose of funding these initiatives on various campuses was the belief that leadership skills can be taught in the college environment (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999).

Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) studied 31 W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded programs, and through a combination of action research techniques and eight varying data collection methods. The researchers identified 30 hallmarks of successful leadership programs. They found each program had short-term and long-term favorable outcomes for leadership development, including enhancing an individual's ability to lead and providing institutional and community improvements.

LeaderShape, Inc. LeaderShape, Inc. is a curriculum-based leadership development program founded in 1986 by a group of men from the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity who desired a leadership immersion experience. LeaderShape Inc. involves a six-day retreat during which participants engage in self-discovery, self-reflection, and feedback in a community of other leaders (LeaderShape, n.d.). LeaderShape Inc. also has one-day programs that many campuses host for student leaders. LeaderShape Inc. programs focus on helping individuals identify values that make a difference in their community and teach leading with passion, and integrity (LeaderShape, n.d.). In total, over 78,000 people have participated in the LeaderShape Inc. premier institute during which participants have increased self-efficacy as a leader, integrity as a value of leadership, and an ability to contribute to the creation of equitable and caring communities (LeaderShape, n.d.).

Rosch et al. (2016) conducted a survey study of LeaderShape Inc. participants at 21 institutions of higher education across the U.S. in the fall of 2013. Over 1,000 students completed the pretest and post-test surveys (Rosch et al., 2016). The survey which used three different scales and eight sub-scales collected demographic information, prior-leadership training knowledge, leadership skills, confidence in leading, motivation to lead, and leadership behavior (Rosch et al., 2016). In the post-test immediately following the retreat and three months after the retreat, LeaderShape Inc. participants noted increases in skills, confidence and motivation to lead, more specifically in transformational and ethical leadership skills, self-efficacy, and motivation to advocate for social justice issues (Rosch et al., 2016).

Leadership Development Concepts

The current landscape of higher education includes many different models for leadership development and education. There is a vast amount of literature on leadership education,

programs, assessments, curriculum, retreats, theories, and more. While this is not an exhaustive list of all methods, programs, and concepts used in leadership education within higher education institutions, the following section provides an overview of the most well-known and commonly used aspects of leadership education such as Seemiller's (2013) student leadership competencies and Kouzes and Posner's (2014) five practices of exemplary leadership to create a landscape for better understanding the SALA.

Student Leadership Competencies

Over the past 30 years, a paradigm shift has occurred in personnel management and performance management in the workplace, where competencies have become the key to job skills, ability, performance, and management (Croft & Seemiller, 2017). Specifically, many companies, like the Walt Disney Company and the Microsoft Corporation, have begun to use leadership competencies for recruitment, training, and evaluation in the workplace (Croft & Seemiller, 2017). Leadership competencies are defined as the leadership skills and behaviors that contribute to high performance (Croft & Seemiller, 2017). The use of student leadership competencies began in the early 2010s. Seemiller (2013) published the competency approach to student leadership development, designed to assist students in developing leadership competencies before they enter their future careers. In doing so, Seemiller (2013) shared 60 leadership competencies in the *Student Leadership Competencies Guidebook*.

The creation of the 60 leadership competencies began with a review of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education, and outcomes from the National Association of Student Personnel (NASPA) document *Learning Reconsidered* (Seemiller & Murray, 2013). Seemiller and Murray (2013) subsequently reviewed a variety of leadership models, including the social change model (HERI, 1996) and the five practices of exemplary

leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2014), to create a list of Student Leadership Competencies. The learning outcomes were derived from a review of 475 academic programs and 72 different academic accrediting organization, which Seemiller and Murray (2013) compared with the list of Student Leadership Competencies. The authors used document analysis and a sequential exploratory research methods to code and analyze each document quantitatively to develop themes. This process eventually led to 61 competency areas formally known as the Student Leadership Competencies (now known as the 60 Student Leadership Competencies) (Seemiller & Murray, 2013).

The 60 Student Leadership Competencies were grouped into eight clusters: learning and reasoning, self-awareness and development, interpersonal interaction, group dynamics, civic responsibility, communication, strategic planning, and personal behavior (Seemiller, 2013). Each competency originally had four dimensions: knowledge, value, ability, and behavior; however, the dimensions have evolved into six domains: significance, motivation, efficacy, cognition, proficiency, and performance (Seemiller & Murray, 2013; Seemiller & Whitney, 2020).

The leadership competencies are frequently used in leadership development and education programs within higher education such as at Wright State University, Washington University, and the University of Iowa, just to name a few. Additionally, the student leadership competencies have been used in multiple empirical research studies (Rosch & Seemiller, 2018; Seemiller & Whitney, 2020). Figure 2.1 demonstrates the 60 leadership competencies with each of the clusters mentioned previously.

While student leadership competencies can be used to assess skills such as critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and professionalism, and the goal is to use the competencies as learning outcomes for successful leadership development, the leadership

competencies approach focuses more on leader development and less on leadership development (Croft & Seemiller, 2017). Additionally, with 60 student leadership competencies in the model, it may be impossible for students to develop all competencies, which can create overwhelming choices or feelings of inadequacy in young leaders (Croft & Seemiller, 2017).

Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

Kouzes and Posner (2014) outlined five practices for becoming an exemplary leader in the Student Leadership Challenge book. The five practices of exemplary leadership are: (1) model the way; (2) inspire a shared vision; (3) challenge the process; (4) enable others to act; (5) encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). The five practices outlined in the book come from evidence-based research of student leaders in action and include application methods to real-life scenarios (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). The five practices of exemplary leadership stress the importance of leadership in every sector and the responsibility that leaders have to be their personal best (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). The five practices of exemplary leadership serve as a resource and manual for achieving success as a leader, which is an objective of many leadership roles and programs in higher education (Kouzes & Posner, 2014).

The five practices of exemplary leadership have been implemented, instructed, and utilized in the realm of higher education for student leadership development programs and curriculum such as at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, William and Mary University, and Georgia Southern University (Georgia Southern University, n.d.; Texas A&M University-San Antonio, n.d.; William and Mary University, 2011). Additionally, the five practices of exemplary leadership were used to create the 60 Student Leadership Competencies (Seemiller & Murray, 2013). Hirsch (2016) conducted a qualitative study of 37 peer mentors in the FOCUS program at Texas A&M University to determine if serving as a peer mentor related to students exemplifying



Figure 2.1

Student Leadership Competencies

Note: From “The Student Leadership Competency Guidebook: Designing Intentional Leadership Learning and Development” by C. Seemiller, 2013. Image copyright 2019 by Corey Seemiller. Reprinted with permission.

the five practices of exemplary leadership. Hirsch (2016) collected personal leadership experience statements and reflections throughout the mentor experience to determine that mentors utilized the five practices of exemplary leadership in their mentor role and noted positive changes in their leadership skills. Díaz et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study of 49 undergraduate students in Spain and 46 undergraduate students in Mexico all taking entrepreneurship classes. Using independent sample *t*-tests, Díaz et al. (2019) found statistically significant differences in leadership behaviors between the two cohorts of students for those that were taught the five practices of exemplary leadership and those that were not.

Process Outcomes Associated with Leadership Development

Many leadership development programs have process or methods outcomes, in addition to any learning outcomes, associated with the goals and missions of the program. Eich (2008) conducted a multi-case study using grounded theory to discover what aspects of leadership programs contribute to student learning and development. The study sample included four different leadership programs at differing institutions and gathered data on: (1) the attributes of the programs that enhance student learning; (2) the actions that enact each attribute; (3) the student outcomes of each attribute and action. Eich (2008) claimed that leadership programs must focus on engagement and learning-focused teaching to increase the quality of leadership education. Additionally, the study shows that high-quality programs which contribute most to student learning include “diverse and engaged participants, participatory cultures, interactive teaching and learning, connected program requirements, and adequate resources” (Eich, 2008, p. 177).

Service and experiential learning for college students have been studied in terms of effectiveness for teaching leadership (Eich, 2003, 2005). Service learning is defined as learning

through acts of service or serving another person (Eich, 2003, 2005). Experiential learning is learning through an experience or role rather than other methods such as a classroom or lecture (Eich, 2008). Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model is often used in leadership programs within higher education, and the model will be outlined later in this chapter. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model is a "practical pedagogy for teaching students how to engage in the leadership process through constructing meaning and making connections between their own experience and reflection" (Eich, 2008, p. 177).

Lastly, social engagement, such as mentoring and networking, and action learning are beneficial for leadership development (Day, 2000). Mentoring specifically has been identified as an effective way to develop students as leaders through providing support, feedback, and individualized focus (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Dzikowski, 2013). Networking skills, whether in a formal or informal environment, are necessary to leadership development in terms of teamwork, conflict management, and engaging with all stakeholders in a leader's role (Jenkins, 2012). Action learning is a process in which leaders, individuals, and teams work together to solve a problem while simultaneously learning and reflecting through the process (Volz-Peacock et al., 2016). Volz-Peacock et al. (2016) stated that leadership development can be achieved through action learning because leaders are practicing their skills in action.

Theoretical Foundations of Leadership Development

Nawaz (2016) reviewed the literature on leadership theories and styles. He noted that while there has been considerable effort to classify and clarify theories and styles of leadership over the years, many researchers viewed leadership as an ever-changing developmental process with research continually building on what has been completed before (Nawaz, 2016). Nawaz (2016) sought to develop a consensus on the progression of thinking surrounding leadership.

Caredda (2020) compiled a list of over 120 models of leadership while still barely touching the surface of the many theories and styles that exist. The researcher grouped the leadership models into six categories: theoretical, competency-based, values-based, effectiveness-based, purpose-based, and applicative. Caredda (2020) sought to gather information on leadership models in order to create a more robust definition of leadership. Northouse (2018), a scholar in leadership theory for higher education, discussed the characteristics of influential leaders and theories and models of leadership. He defines leadership throughout history, outlines leadership theories, and gives real-world applications and methods for using leadership theory in practice.

Because the present study utilizes the leadership identity development (LID) model and the social change model, it is essential to outline other leadership theories with similar concepts and ideas. Northouse (2018) emphasized transformational leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, and adaptive leadership as some of the most successful leadership theories and styles and which possess aspects that relate to the theories used in this study.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was developed in the 1980s and focuses on how leaders motivate and inspire followers to work toward shared goals, achievement, and self-actualization (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Transformational leadership emphasizes increasing individuals' commitment to group goals, which will increase effort and productivity (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership possesses four behaviors, also known as the four Is, which include (1) inspirational motivation, (2) idealized influence, (3) intellectual stimulation, and (4) individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leadership has been linked to school improvement and student achievement (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Leadership within intercollegiate athletics has focused

on transformational leadership and outcomes associated with transformational behavior (Burton & Peachey, 2009). Transformational leadership is the guiding theory in Chelladurai's (1990) Multidimensional Model for Leadership in Sport and several other sport management and leadership models used in the arena of intercollegiate athletes (McDowell et al., 2018).

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1977) coined servant leadership in the essay, "The Servant as Leader," in which he emphasized that leaders are first to serve others. According to Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership focuses on followers' needs rather than those of the organization or leader. Patterson (2003) developed the servant leadership theory out of gaps in the transformational leadership theory. In transformational leadership, the leader tries to align personal interests with organizational interests and interests of the followers; however, in servant leadership, the leader focuses on serving the followers' interest individually (Patterson, 2003).

Servant leadership theory includes constructs or virtues that guide a leader from within and puts the follower first (Patterson, 2003). A servant leader leads and serves according to the following constructs: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, serving others, and empowering others (Patterson, 2003). Patterson (2003) developed the constructs from Laub's (1999) clusters of servant leadership and Greenleaf's (1977) definition of the servant leader. Later, Dennis and Bocarnea (2005) developed a servant leadership instrument to conduct a factor analysis of Patterson's constructs and determine the reliability and validity. Participants in the study completed an online survey about the seven constructs of servant leadership, and the data determined that only five factors: (1) empowerment, (2) love, (3) humility, (4) trust, and (5) vision were valid and reliable constructs of servant leadership (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005).

Burton and Peachey (2013) found that the servant leader model of leadership most fully supported the mission of the NCAA to focus on relationships, teamwork, and the development of the student-athlete. They noted, “athletic directors adopting servant leadership would establish an organization that focuses first on how to best support the development of the student-athlete, and through this development, facilitation organizational objectives (p. 357). Burton and Peachey (2013) further stated that many athletic directors use transformational leadership while focusing on organizational objectives that take away from the development of the student-athlete and often focus more on increased revenue. They proposed that through transforming intercollegiate athletic leadership to be more servant leader minded: (1) athletic directors will better meet the NCAA mission of student-athlete support and development; (2) athletic directors will inspire other employees in the department; (3) athletic directors will yield more positive organization outcomes; and (4) athletic directors will cultivate an ethical environment that best supports student-athlete development.

Authentic Leadership

The authentic leadership model uses the wheel of authenticity (Figure 2.2) to strengthen characteristics of leaders defined as self-discipline, purpose, values, relationships, and heart (George, 2004). The wheel of authenticity is a representation of what is needed to achieve full authenticity (George, 2004). In 2018, James Kelley used the authentic leadership model to create a new version of authentic leadership focusing on a crucible moment, or a moment of adversity, that powers the most authentic and best leaders. A crucible moment, a defining moment of hardship or change in a person’s life, along with self-awareness, is the key to being an authentic leader (Kelley, 2018). Authentic leadership development includes “ongoing processes whereby leaders and followers gain self-awareness and establish open, transparent, trusting, and genuine

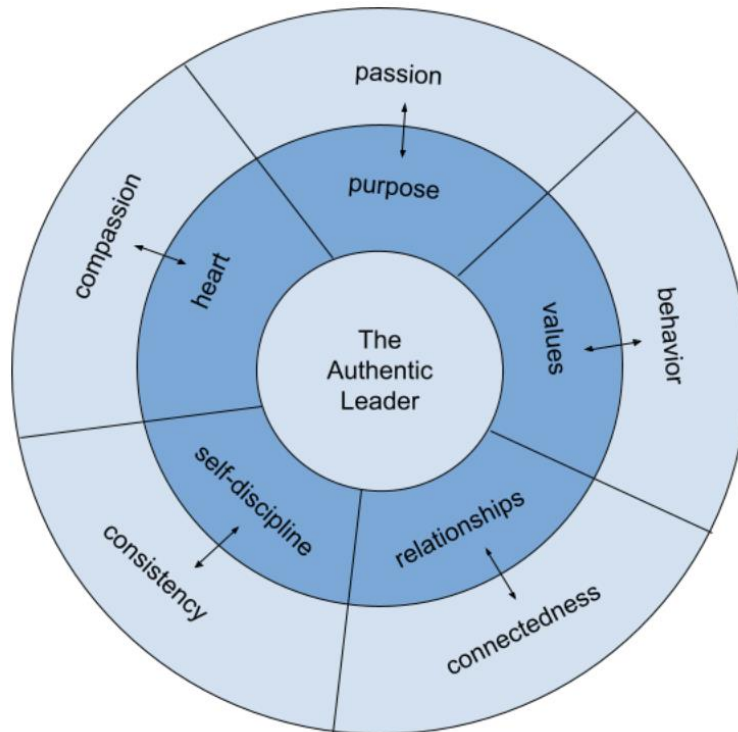


Figure 2.2

The Wheel of Authenticity

Note: Adapted from “Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value” by B. George, 2004. Copyright 2004 by Wiley.

relationships, which in part may be shaped and impacted by planned interventions such as training” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 322). Figure 2.2 demonstrates the wheel of authenticity. Authentic leadership has been explored within sport management research (McDowell et al., 2018). Researchers have found that authentic leadership within sport management and coaching staff positively influenced student-athletes’ psychological capital and can influence player engagement and subsequently performance (McDowell et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2020).

McDowell et al. (2018) conducted a survey of 119 men’s and women’s division I basketball players to determine the effects of authentic leadership on the student-athletes. The researchers used the Psychological Capital Questionnaire and a confirmatory factor analysis to find that authentic leadership was a significant factor in predicting positive psychological development and showed a positive relationship between authentic leadership and positive team climate (McDowell et al., 2018).

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership is the practice of “mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 14). According to Heifetz et al. (2009), adaptive leadership also requires that leaders observe their followers and the situation, identify the challenge, regulate distress, maintain attention, and give work to the people (Heifetz et al., 2009). Similar to situational leadership, which focuses on leadership in various situations and how leadership style may vary depending on the followers, adaptive leadership requires adjusting to each new challenge and situation (Heifetz et al., 2009; Hersey & Blanchard, 1997). Adaptive or situational challenges often have an unidentifiable root cause (Northouse, 2018).

The adaptive leadership theory and framework are relatively new in terms of implementation in higher education. However, because adaptive leadership addressed the process

of change in response to crisis, it has recently been used in the crisis response aspect of higher education professionals (Sunderman, 2020). For example, higher education administrators have been observed using adaptive leadership to handle crises on their campuses such as football players taking a knee during the national anthem and the resultant outcry from the community, an English lecturer harassing a student for having contradicting political beliefs, or issues of White supremacy groups and beliefs on campus (Sunderman et al., 2020). In each of the aforementioned incidents, campus leadership faced the emotions, political pressure, competing perspectives, and handled the adaptive challenge (Sunderman et al., 2020). Adaptive leadership has not yet been studied in terms of student-athletes.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model (Figure 2.3) is a four-stage cycle of distinct learning styles and is cyclical in nature. Students' co-curricular involvement, leadership roles, and experiences in college play a crucial role in leadership development outcomes (Haber & Komives, 2009). Kolb's experiential learning model is highly regarded within higher education because of the integral role that involvement and out-of-class experience plays in college student learning and is demonstrated by the multiple awards and four honorary degrees Kolb has received in recognition of his work on experiential learning (International Centre for Educators' Styles, n.d.). Figure 2.3 demonstrates the stages of Kolb's experiential learning model.

The first stage is the concrete experience when a person has a new experience or situation or a repeat of an existing experience (Kolb, 1984). Then, through feedback, whether interpersonal or intrapersonal, formal or informal, the person can reflect upon the experience in the section stage, reflective observation. The person can then make meaning of the experience, modify their understanding of the experience or what the person has learned from the experience,

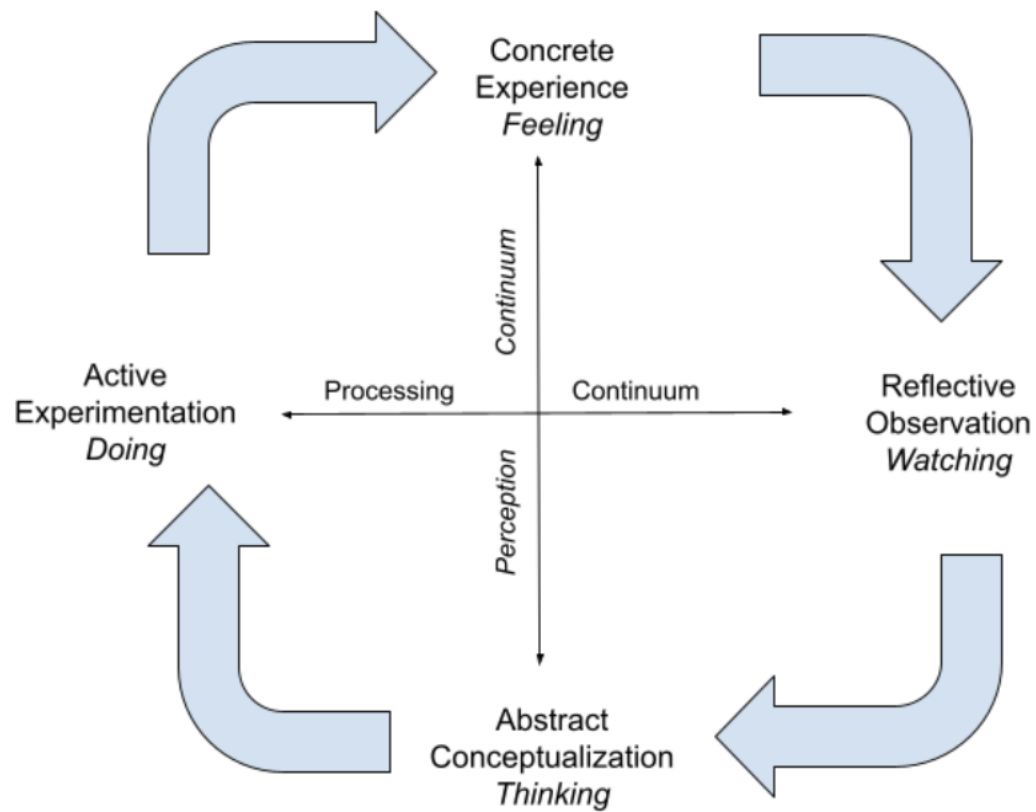


Figure 2.3

Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Note: Adapted from "Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development" by D. Kolb, 1984. Copyright 1984 by Prentice-Hall.

or acquire abstract concepts in the abstract conceptualization stage. Finally, the person can apply the learning to future experiences in the active experimentation stage (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) noted that the ability to move through the experiential learning cycle allows learning, in this case, leaders, to strengthen knowledge and skills via experience.

Leadership Identity Development Model

The leadership identity development (LID) model demonstrates the process and experience of college students who have developed a leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). The LID model seeks to understand how leadership capacity and skills change over time and how a person develops a leadership identity. Komives et al. (2005) conducted a grounded theory study of 13 students who “exhibited the theoretical dimensions of relational leadership” (p. 594). They conducted in-depth interviews to gather data and used open, axial, selective coding with a constant comparative analysis strategy to identify five categories of leadership identity: (1) broadening view of leadership; (2) developing self; (3) group influences; (4) developmental influences; and (5) changing view of self with others. These five categories along with six stages formed the LID model. In the LID model, students grow from viewing leadership as simple and position based to more complex and a process (Komives et al., 2005).

The first stage of the LID model, Awareness, includes the understanding of leadership as a concept in terms of familial or public figures. Exploration and Engagement is the second stage and involves gathering new experiences such as clubs, sports, activities or other aspects of the collegiate experience. The third stage, Leader Identified, includes understanding the concept that leadership is positional and those who are not leaders are followers. The Leader Identified stage then involves a crisis where the student’s view of hierarchical or position-based leadership

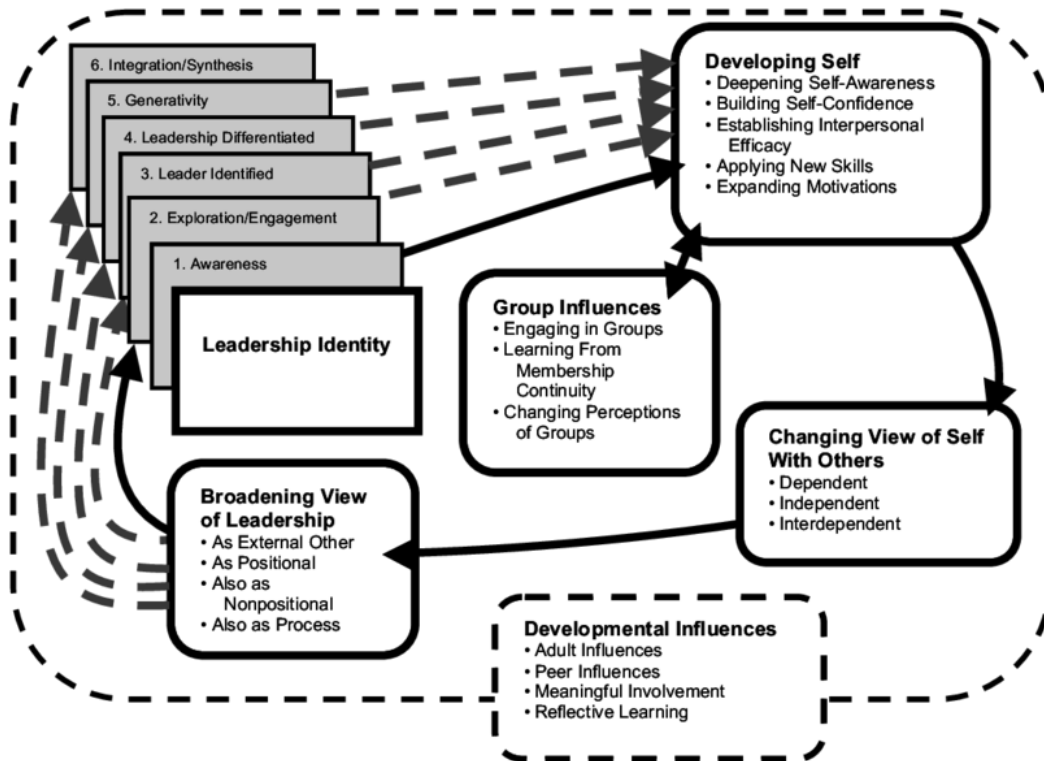


Figure 2.4

The Leadership Identity Development Model

Note: From “Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory” by S. Komives, J. Owen, S. Longerbearm, F. Mainella, and L. Osteen, 2005. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), p. 599. Reprinted with permission.

transitions into an idea that leadership is a process and collaborative. This change marks the movement into stage four, Leadership Differentiated, where there is a shift in understanding of leadership as position based to leadership as a process. The fifth stage, Generativity, is where a student commits to their passions and dedicates time and leadership to their interests. The last stage, synthesis, is when a student acknowledges that leadership can happen at any point and that congruence, credibility, and trustworthiness are crucial aspects of successful leaders.

The five categories of the LID model include: (1) broadening view of leadership; (2) developing self; (3) group influences; (4) developmental influences; and (5) changing view of self with others (Komives et al, 2005). The first category of the LID model is broadening one's view of leadership meaning moving from viewing leadership as positional to leadership as a process. The second category, developing self, includes developing a sense of self by deepening self-awareness, self-confidence, interpersonal efficacy, and developing new skills. The third category, group influences, considers the developmental influence in a student's life, such as adults and peers who affirm the student's skills and leadership potential, serve as mentors, and encourage involvement (Komives et al., 2005). The fourth category, developmental influences, includes parents or peers as well as personal reflection. Lastly, the fifth category, changing view of self with others relates back to the first and second stage and increasing self-awareness in terms of working with others. Because the LID model has been validated through numerous studies examining college student leadership identity development, it is often used as a primary theory in understanding leadership development within higher education (Komives et al., 2009). Within the context of higher education, the LID model is widely used to build leadership development programs and understand which stage of leadership identity development a student may be experiencing (Hall, 2015; Wagner, 2011). While the model is circular, students must

progress through each stage consecutively during their leadership journey. Figure 2.4 is the LID model figure as presented by Komives and colleagues. LID model emphasizes that leadership is process-oriented and cyclical rather than linear (Komives et al., 2007). While the LID model can provide a framework for designing programs or curriculum with learning outcomes, the model itself is presented in stages, a process, that students experience while developing a leader identity (Komives et al., 2009).

Social Change Model

UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) published the social change model in 1996 and to understand the experiences of college student leaders who wanted to create positive social change. The social change model was developed by 15 scholars in the field of leadership development over the course of 50 hours and two years (HERI, 1996). The social change model was presented to three groups of constituents before reaching the final published version. The social change model focuses on leadership effecting change on behalf of others and leadership being collaborative, process-oriented, and values-based. Student learning was the main objective of the social change model, and was intended to be a curriculum-based model (Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011). The social change model is a learning outcomes-based model similar to Seemiller's (2013) student leadership competencies.

The social change model has transformed into a process model, which Komives initially hypothesized during the creation of the social change model (Komives & Wagner, 2017). For example, the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) at the University of Maryland is an instrument based on the social change model to measure and identify leadership capacities. (University of Maryland, n.d.). The SLRS aims to improve leadership practices by understanding which experiences have the most impact on learning outcomes (University of Maryland, n.d.).

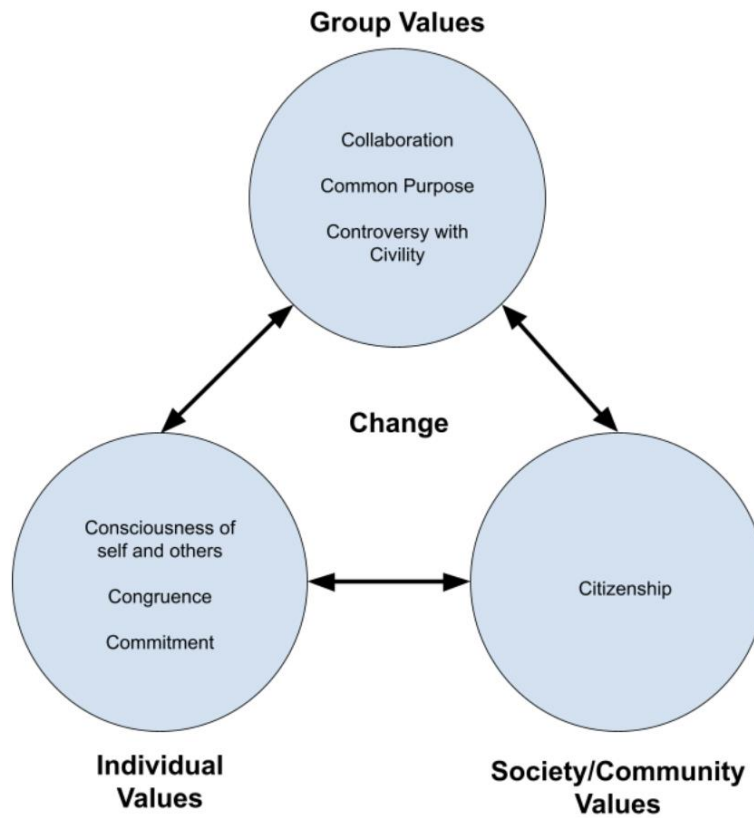


Figure 2.5

Social Change Model

Note: Adapted from “A social change model of leadership development” by HERI, 1996.

Copyright 1996 by the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

Many leadership programs utilize these principles in developing the classroom curriculum (Haber & Komives, 2009; Komives & Wagner, 2017). Service is also a primary component of the social change model in developing leadership skills (HERI, 1996). The social change model has two primary objectives: to increase self-knowledge of a student's talents, values, and interests concerning effective leadership and to increase leadership competence or the ability to serve, collaborate and influence change as a leader (HERI, 1996).

The social change model (Figure 2.5) presents seven common values, which are critical elements of leadership: collaboration, consciousness of self, commitment, congruence, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship (HERI, 1996). These shared values are known as the “7 C’s” and are categorized into three levels within the model—individual values (consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment), group process values (collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility), and community or societal values (citizenship) (HERI, 1996). Individual values relate to authentic leadership.

Consciousness of self refers to one's understanding of their own beliefs, values, and overall self-awareness. Congruence refers to the ability of the individual to behave or act in congruence with their beliefs and values. Commitment signifies the ability to dedicate oneself to their purpose and passions. Collaboration is one's ability to engage and contribute with others and accomplish common goals. Common purpose refers to the ability to commit oneself and share responsibility for achieving a communal goal or vision. Controversy with civility refers to the ability to engage in civil discourse, critical conversations, and healthy disagreements with a diverse group of people. Citizenship is the ability to become connected to the community and socially responsible to the community. The three levels of values work together to create change (HERI, 1996). Figure 2.5 is a representation of the three levels of the social change model.

Students may enter the model at any point and ebb and flow throughout the model. Many institutions mention leadership development, commitment to change, and service as primary components of the mission statement, and the social change model has been used to meet these objectives (Haber & Komives, 2009; Komives & Wagner, 2017).

Leadership Development and Identity Development

Identity development requires intentionality, consciousness, and reflexivity (Carroll & Levy, 2010). Leadership development also requires reflexivity and active identity work because leadership can comprise a substantial piece of an individual's identity (Carroll & Levy, 2010). Leadership development is often seen as self-authorship where an individual must form their meaning and path towards the end goal, and according to Carroll and Levy (2010), the method for achieving self-authorship is known as identity work. Identity is known as a piece within oneself that defines the individual, while the idea of leadership is one aspect of an individual's identity. Identity formation is fluid, constantly forming, maintaining, strengthening, or revising, which is very similar to leadership development (Carroll & Levy, 2010).

Research on leadership development primarily provides a set of skills or tools that individuals can use to work on and within themselves (Carroll & Levy, 2010; Zheng & Muir, 2015). In this approach, developing a person's identity serves as a tool for developing leadership (Carroll & Levy, 2010). Zheng and Muir (2015) found that leadership identity development is not a unidimensional event but rather a process occurring across time and on a continuum. Velsor and Drath (2003) used a lifelong development framework to affirm that identity development is cognitive, linear, and internal. Carroll and Levy (2010) found that leadership development is a form of identity regulation, and therefore, leadership development is also cognitive, linear, and internal.

The identity regulation process creates a space for multiple identities to compete, contradict, struggle, harmonize, and emerge (Carroll & Levy, 2010). As such, Carroll and Levy (2010) found that scholars and practitioners of leadership development need to pay attention to the identity regulation process within leadership development programs or curriculum. Researchers also have demonstrated that as individuals develop in their understanding of their identity at large, the leader identity also becomes more salient (Zheng & Muir, 2015). Baxter Magolda (2008) also states that there are three elements of self-authorship. The three elements including trusting an internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Attaining self-authorship is a long and arduous process that requires challenging tasks and adapting in the face of adversity to move forward in the developmental process (Baxter Magolda, 2008). By achieving self-authorship, students work towards a deeper understanding of identity achievement and regulation.

Leadership Development, Identity Development, and Student-Athletes

Research on student-athletes' experiences in higher education presents conflicting narratives regarding the benefits and drawbacks of participating in college athletics. For example, some studies show that student-athletes often have lower GPAs, are less involved, have difficulty relating to non-athlete students, and have an increased risk of functional, psychological, and physical separation from the student body (Beauchemin, 2014; DiPaolo, 2017; Huml et al., 2019; Huntrods et al., 2017). Provencio (2016) state that student-athletes are often held to higher standard with added academic and social pressures while being labeled as leaders. Other studies show that participation in competitive sports increases the student-athletes' academic performance, career success, responsibility, honesty, maturity, character, self-respect, and respect towards others (Chalfin et al., 2015; Chu et al., 1985; McElveen & Ibele, 2019;

Sauer et al., 2012). The NCAA (2020) outlined a 2016 Gallup study finding that college sports promote student-athletes' ability to learn in diverse groups and overall leadership. However, few studies have connected leadership development, leadership education, and identity development of college athletes.

Huntrods et al. (2017) conducted a study of 271 student-athletes using data from the Wabash National Study (WNS) of Liberal Arts Education. The WNS study was a multi-institutional, longitudinal study of around 2,000 students at four-year institutions from 2006-2010. The WNS study collected pretest and post-test data from participants. Huntrods et al. (2017) used the data to determine which students participated in intercollegiate athletics, controlled for a variety of factors, and used statistical analysis to find that personal development, including identity development, differed between individual and team sport college athletes. The researchers concluded that additional research was needed to understand the many differences found between team and individual sport athletes. However, the results showed that team sports adversely affected leadership development among the population they studied (Huntrods et al., 2017). The literature overwhelmingly emphasizes the importance of leadership for an athletic team and the positive aspects of leadership development for student-athletes (Beam, 2001; Burton & Peachey, 2013; DiPaolo, 2017; Huntrods et al., 2017; Murray, 2006). However, few researchers have documented specific learning outcomes of student-athlete leadership programs or personal development and leadership growth of participants.

Comeaux and Fuentes (2015) found that 60.5% of student-athletes felt that participation in sport increased their understanding of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, the study found that 79% of student-athletes reported their tolerance for those from different backgrounds increased due to their participation in collegiate athletics (Comeaux & Fuentes,

2015). Hall (2015) responded to the study by recommending leadership educators include socio-cultural conversations and reflections into athletic training. Hall (2015) also identified the high impact practice of community service as crucial for leadership education and socially responsible leadership. Service is an important piece of the social change model and in the NCAA Life Skills program (Murdock, 2010).

Student-athletes' sport performance and participation are leading factors in defining their identity that can negatively impact academic, social, and behavioral development (Salgado, 2011). Brewer et al. (1993) found that having a strong athletic identity can improve athletic performance. A strong athletic identity can cause feelings of loss of identity when transitioning away from the world of college athletics (Brewer et al., 1993). Student-athletes battle the different aspects of their identity, whether athletic, leadership, or societal identities, and if these identities do not interact effectively with society, then full identity achievement cannot be obtained (Marcia, 1989; Salgado, 2011).

Summary

Researchers have published extensive studies examining leadership development among college students, drawing on several models and theories utilized in theory and practice. While these approaches to leadership development have been used extensively in research on college students in a variety of co-curricular settings, a specific application for student-athlete leadership development was not identified in the published literature. The general thought is that participation in college athletics increases leadership development, yet there is no consistent model for leadership development implementation across the NCAA (Hall, 2015; Weaver & Simet, 2015). Both student-athletes and their peers have drastically different college experiences and may experience leadership identity development differently (Provencio, 2016).

Because college students, and collegiate student-athletes, are complex individuals with intersecting identities and individualized experiences, leadership education should include multiple theories, models, and tools (Owen, 2012). According to the literature, learning-focused teaching and experiential learning are important aspects in enhancing leadership education for college students (Eich, 2003, 2005, 2008). Service is another crucial element for increasing leadership development in college students (Hall, 2015). Additionally, social engagement, such as mentoring or networking, and action learning are important for leadership development in college students (Day, 2000). The research also demonstrated that through developing a leader identity, students also can develop other aspects of their identities (Carroll & Levy, 2010; Zheng & Muir, 2015). The many theories associated with leadership development, such as authentic leadership, adaptive leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership, demonstrate the multiple approaches to leadership education yet lack consistency in application. The links in the related research suggested that the LID and social change models may be useful as lenses to view the experience of student-athletes in a yearlong leadership development program.

Organization of Study

In chapter two, I discussed the historical context of leadership education, the literature surrounding leadership development, leadership education, and student-athlete leadership development. Chapter three describes the study's methodology first by defining case study methods and then discussing the procedures, instruments, data collection, and data analysis processes in chapter three. Chapter three concludes with a section on trustworthiness, ethical concerns, and a statement on positionality. Chapter four includes the study's findings, and chapter five, discusses the study outcomes while integrating previous research and the theoretical

framework with the new findings. Chapter five concludes by listing recommendations and strategies for future research and practice.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Researchers have demonstrated numerous benefits for students who participate in leadership programs (Baccei, 2015; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Huntrods et al., 2017; Rosch & Caza, 2012). Additionally, the NCAA claimed that participating in college sports promotes students' leadership skills (Burton & Peachey, 2013; Murdock, 2010). It is essential to understand the specific effects of leadership development on student-athletes because leadership development is a key component to holistic development, a component of the NCAA mission and many institutional missions (Burton & Peachey, 2013; DiPaolo, 2017).

The purpose of the study was to explore how a leadership development program for athletes, the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA), influenced the personal, professional, athletic, and leadership growth and development of 20 student-athletes who completed the program during the 2020-2021 academic year. I observed all 20 student-athletes during their courses and on their international immersion trip. I also utilized class readings, syllabi, and news articles as written documents in the data collection process. In addition to the observations and document analysis, I conducted semi-structured interviews with five students to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences in the SALA. I also administered and analyzed weekly journal prompts from these five students. This study advances the understanding of how leadership education affects student-athletes interpersonally, as athletes, and as students while providing insight into the importance of leadership development for institutions and athletic departments.

The research questions that guided the study and exploration were as follows:

1. How does the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy curriculum and experience contribute to student-athletes' progress through the theory on leadership identity development and understanding of the social change model?
2. How do student-athletes perceive that their experiences in the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy influence and shape their development as a person, leader, and athlete?

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research methods occur in a natural setting, meaning a setting that is known and familiar to the participants, with many data sources (Patton, 1985). In qualitative research, the researcher is an essential instrument for collecting data which means the researcher is gathering, interpreting, and pushing the data collection process forward (Patton, 1985).

Qualitative research also utilizes inductive and deductive analysis approaches to allow for the most accurate yet natural interpretation and meaning-making (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Inductive data analysis works from a set of data to develop a more general conclusion and takes raw data to form a theory, concept, or idea (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Deductive analysis takes an already existing theory or idea and tests new data or a new hypothesis against what already exists (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Focusing on the participants' meaning and experiences and representing a holistic account are critical components of qualitative research. Finally, understanding the researcher's role, influence, and perspective—also known as reflexivity—can assist in transparency and interpreting the data and study at large (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017; Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). All of the above components were used in the qualitative design of this study.

I hold a social-constructivist worldview and used the social-constructivist worldview to view and analyze the student-athlete experience in the SALA (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A

social-constructivist worldview holds that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” while developing meaning from their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 8). In this case, I sought to make meaning of leadership identity development from the viewpoint of the student-athletes in the SALA.

Research Design

The research design is a case study of the SALA using ethnographic methods. A case study allows the researcher to study a complex issue or phenomenon within a specific context using various data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I made meaning of participant experiences using ethnographic field methods such as observations of class, interviews, and document analysis procedures outlined in detail below.

Case Study

A case study is a standard methodology used in the social sciences (Dumez, 2015). This study represents a bounded case, meaning that the overall case has been separated for research by time, place, or other limits (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The boundaries for this study were the one specific leadership program, SALA, during the 2020-2021 academic year. When conducting a case study, a researcher must answer the following questions: “What is the case a case of? What stuff is the case made of? What can the case do?” (Dumez, 2015, p. 43). This study is the case of the experience in a leadership development program specifically for student-athletes, consisting of an academic curriculum and international service immersion trip. According to Herreid (1997), “Cases are stories with a message” (p. 92). Understanding this leadership development case in student-athletes can provide insight for athletic department and higher education leaders to better support student-athletes in gaining the skills, career development, and personal growth needed for life after graduation.

This design is an exploratory case study, meaning the study was used to answer the research questions, but as with most qualitative research, there was no clear, single set of expected outcomes (Yin, 2003). The study was a single case with different subunits of analysis (Yin, 2003). A single case, the SALA, was examined using various data sources, also known as subunits—interviews, observations, document analysis—to make meaning during the data analysis process (Yin, 2003). Case studies require multiple perspectives which in this study is accomplished from using multiple different types of data from multiple different participants (Tellis, 1997). A case study is the ideal methodological approach when a holistic, detailed investigation is needed into a particular case and can amplify participants' voices by using multiple data sources (Tellis, 1997).

Ethnography

Ethnographic field methods often are used to understand and describe social worlds (Emerson et al., 2011; Fetterman, 2020; Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). Ethnography is a set of qualitative research methods that includes direct observation for data collection (Gobo & Marciniak, 2012). Using a participant observation strategy, the researcher becomes a part of the group while still recording all events and observing the participants (Fetterman, 2020).

Ethnographic research methods rely on direct observation but can also include document analysis, interviews, field research, and narrative analysis (Fetterman, 2020; Gobo & Marciniak, 2012). Traditional ethnography describes artifacts, interactions, processes, and cultures (Gobo & Marciniak, 2012). In traditional ethnography, the researcher is an observer-participant who seeks a deeper understanding of the studied phenomena (Gobo & Marciniak, 2012). I used a traditional ethnographic approach for this study.

An ethnographic researcher must immerse themselves in the field to understand others' experiences (Emerson et al., 2011). Gaining the emic—or insider perspective—is a crucial step in ethnographic research (Fetterman, 2020). The term emic was first used by anthropologist Kenneth Pike who believed there were two perspectives to a societal system, an insider perspective and an outsider perspective (Ninnemann, 2012). It is also crucial for the researcher to develop a unique informed etic, or external, perspective since the researcher is an outsider in the environment (Fetterman, 2020). In this study, I sought to understand the leadership identity development of student-athletes in the SALA by gaining an emic perspective.

Through the tenants of ethnographic field methods, prolonged engagement in the research setting or deep immersion in the field, witnessing everyday events, and in-depth data collection, I gained multiple perspectives for data analysis (Emerson et al., 2011; Fetterman, 2020; Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). Ethnographic research is based on a phenomenologically oriented paradigm which means it embraces multiple perspectives of reality (Fetterman, 2020). Using ethnographic field methods and a phenomenologically oriented paradigm in a case study allowed me to understand how the experience of each student-athlete in the SALA is representative of their individual and interpreted reality. Additionally, ethnographic methods are the appropriate methodological approach to answer the research questions because knowledge will be co-constructed by the researcher and concurrently through dialogue and negotiation with the participants (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017).

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling, specifically criterion sampling (Check & Schutt, 2012), to identify and select participants. Purposeful sampling refers to selecting information-rich cases for in-depth analysis (Check & Schutt, 2012; Patton, 1990; Schutt, 2018). Criterion sampling, a type

of purposeful sampling, involves establishing characteristics that are crucial to the purpose of the study and finding participants that match the needed characteristics (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, criterion sampling involves establishing criteria for how or why a specific population matches the theoretical or descriptive interests of the research study (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). For this study, the participants were student-athletes involved in the 2020-2021 cohort of the SALA. There were two groups of 20 student-athletes participating in the SALA during the 2020-2021 academic year, and I worked with one group of 20 student-athletes.

I attended class twice a week with the student-athletes for the fall and spring semesters, and I used a portion of the first class of the fall semester for recruitment. With permission from the instructors and during this initial class period, I explained the study, what was required of participants should they choose to participate, details about protecting the identity of participants, and provided the informed consent document (Appendix A). I also explained the observation portion of the research methods. The instructors provided contact information for all student-athletes involved in the SALA classes. After the initial class, I sent an email to the student-athletes in the class that included the informed consent document (Appendix B). Data collection initially began as part of an independent study titled ethnographic field methods and was approved by the institutional review board (IRB). With IRB approval, I continued data collection beyond the course to maintain continuity in the data collection and to create a cohesive case study working with the same participants.

Students in the class were asked to sign the informed consent document. Students placed the informed consent document in a sealed envelope, and all informed consent documents were kept by my dissertation advisor until after grades were submitted at the end of the SALA program. Students were informed that I would not see their signed informed consent until after

the spring semester grades were due which was to ensure students knew that their choice to participate in the study had no influence on their academics.

The SALA instructors served as gatekeepers or people who enable access to participants (Seidman, 2019). It was vital to maintain confidentiality of topics discussed and privacy of the program, which was requested by the gatekeepers. I observed all 20 student-athletes during the class observation portion of the data collection and obtained their consent using the process outlined above. I worked with five student-athletes in the SALA on a deeper level to gain a deeper understanding of their experience and focused point of view. Moving forward, these five student-athletes will be referred to as *focus participants*. The focus participants signed a more detailed informed consent document outlining the research process, data collection, confidentiality, and other important information. In the fall semester, I worked with three student-athletes as focus participants. In the spring semester, one of the focus participants who had participated in my study in the fall transferred to a different institution. As such, I added two new focus participants to my study in the spring semester totaling four focus participants in the spring. In total, there were five focus participants who participated in the additional portion of the data collection at some point during the 2020-2021 academic year. The focus participants completed the journal entries and interview processes outlined later in this chapter. The student-athletes completed the weekly journals and monthly Zoom interviews, and I observed their engagement and participation during class.

Data Collection

The study included three types of data collection: semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations. Exploring student-athletes' experiences in the SALA via multiple

collection methods and data sources provided a deeper understanding of the research topic than a single resource could have provided alone.

Document Analysis. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) noted, “The presence and significance of documentary products provide the ethnographer with a rich vein of analytic topics, as well as valuable sources of data and information” (p. 132). Fetterman (2020) stated that written documents can be some of the most valuable and time-saving forms of data collection due to the amount of information, such as internal dynamics, mission, beliefs, values, relationships, which can be gleaned from documents rather than other more time-consuming forms of data collection. Following Fetterman’s (2020) recommendation, I utilized class readings, syllabi, and news articles as written documents in the data collection process. Documents often can provide information about the setting or people being studied that are unavailable elsewhere; such sources can play a crucial role in comparative analysis because the documents can be compared to other data sources for common categories and themes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). For example, I was able to compare written documents with interview transcriptions and observation notes to gather a larger picture and deeper understanding of categories and themes.

Each week of the study, the focus participants completed a journal entry where they reflected on the lessons and their personal development from participating in the SALA biweekly class (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Journal responses were considered informal documents since these were completed by only a few students and only available to me as the researcher. The questions that participants answered in the journal entry each week are in Table 3.1. Table 3.1 also demonstrates which aspects of the LID model and social change model each question is designed to prompt.

Table 3.1

Journal Prompts and Theoretical Framework

Journal Questions	LID Model	Social Change Model
What is the biggest lesson you learned in the SALA class this week?	Leader Identified stage; Leadership Differentiated stage; Generativity stage	Any values could be discussed depending on response
What did you learn about yourself this week? (think: as a person, leader, and athlete)	Awareness stage; Leader Identified stage; Leadership Differentiated stage; All categories	Individual values - consciousness of self, congruence, commitment; Group values - collaboration, common purpose

Note. The information on the LID Model is from “Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory” by S.R. Komives, J.E. Owen, S.D. Longerbeam, F.C. Mainella, & L. Osteen, 2005, *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), 593-611.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2005.0061> . The information on the Social Change Model is from *A social change model of leadership development: Guidebook version III* by Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996, National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

Syllabi, class readings, handouts, or other items used in class instruction served as formal documents for data analysis since the documents were available to the entire SALA cohort (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The journal responses, syllabi, and other documents used in the instruction of the classes were included in the documents used for the data analysis portion of the study (Gobo & Marciniak, 2012; Fetterman, 2020; Savin-Baden, 2017).

Interviews. Once per month, I conducted an audio-recorded interview with each focus participant. Due to the altered academic calendar in the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were only conducted in October, November, February, March, and April. After the initial data collection and analysis, I also conducted follow-up interviews with two focus participants after the international trip. Semi-structured interviews include open-ended questions guided by a checklist but allow extensive probing and flexibility (Fetterman, 2020; Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). I developed and used a common set of interview questions, but I also asked probing or follow-up questions as needed during the interview to explore the commonalities between participant responses which later emerged into patterns and themes (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). The IRB approved interview protocol with the semi-structured premade set of interview questions is in Appendix C. The premade list of interview questions are also listed below in Table 3.2. Table 3.2 demonstrates which aspects of the LID model and social change model each question is designed to prompt.

Seidman (2019) stated, “Listening is the most important part of interviewing” (p. 85). Listening requires a researcher to (1) listen to the substance of the response to ensure it is as

Table 3.2*Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Theoretical Framework*

Interview Questions	LID Model	Social Change Model
What have you learned about yourself as a person within the past month?	Awareness stage; Developing self category	Individual values - consciousness of self, congruence, commitment
What have you learned about yourself as a leader within the past month?	Awareness stage; Leader Identified stage; Broadening view of leadership category; Developing self category	Individual values - consciousness of self, congruence, commitment
What have you learned about yourself as an athlete within the past month?	Exploration and Engagement stage; Generativity stage	Individual values - consciousness of self, congruence, commitment; Group values - collaboration, common purpose
Do you notice any changes in your perception of yourself or others? If yes, please explain.	Leader Identified stage; Leadership Differentiated stage; Group influences category; developmental influences category; Changing view of self with others category	Individual values - consciousness of self, congruence, commitment; Group values- collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility; community and society values - citizenship
Do you notice any changes in your interactions with others? If yes, please explain.	Leader Identified stage; Leadership Differentiated stage; Group influences category; developmental influences category; Changing view of self with others category	Group values- collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility
What skills have you obtained from the SALA class within the past month?	Generativity stage; Developing self category	Any values could be discussed depending on response
What is the lesson that impacted you the most in the past month?	Developing self category; could also relate to other stages or categories depending on response	Societal values- citizenship; could also relate to other values depending on response
Share your thoughts and experiences with the SALA from the past month?	All stages and categories could be discussed and revealed	Any values could be discussed depending on response

Note. The information on the LID Model is from “Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory” by S.R. Komives, J.E. Owen, S.D. Longerbeam, F.C. Mainella, & L. Osteen, 2005, *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), 593-611. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2005.0061>

The information on the Social Change Model is from *A social change model of leadership development: Guidebook version III* by Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996, National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

detailed as necessary, (2) internalize what participants say to encourage thoughtfulness and transparency, and (3) remain aware of the interview process while listening (Seidman, 2019). To remain focused and actively listening during the interviews, I took notes to (a) track body language, facial expressions, and my thoughts during the interview, and (b) create follow-up questions as necessary (Seidman, 2019). If multiple participants shared common experiences or reflections, I asked follow-up and probing questions to gain clarification and determine if these common experiences were patterns and themes within the data. For example, if three participants discussed the same topic, experience, or feeling in their interviews, I asked the fourth participant about their thoughts on the same topic. In subsequent interviews, I would also follow-up on common themes or ideas shared by all participants.

I sought to become deeply interested in what the participant was saying, their experience and body language to create an open environment where they felt heard, valued, and willing to share (Seidman, 2019). I used gestures such as nodding, statements like “mhmm,” and other tactics to demonstrate to participants that I was engaged and listening during the interview process (Seidman, 2019). All interviews took place virtually via Zoom, which allowed for COVID-19 precautions to be in place to protect both the participant and the researcher. Interviews occurred at a mutually convenient time.

I also held brief conversations with student-athletes who were not focus participants during breaks, in-class activities, instruction, or before and after class periods. These short informal interviews were not recorded, but I took detailed notes of the interactions and responses afterward. Informal interviews are the most common form of ethnographic field research because informal interviews can include conversations in passing, a one-time question, or a simple interaction with a participant (Fetterman, 2020). During activities, small group discussions, or

other opportune moments, I spoke with students in the class about their learning, thoughts, or ideas on a topic. I took notes on these conversations and included these interactions as informal interviews in the research process. These informal interviews during class served comparative and representative purposes, meaning comparing responses and putting responses in a larger context, and allowed me to find common beliefs or themes within the group (Fetterman, 2020). While the informal interviews may seem like casual conversations, the implicit research agenda was to discover categories and cultural meaning and compare perceptions and experiences between participants (Fetterman, 2020).

Participant Observation. Observations of SALA took place throughout the data collection process and over the academic year. The SALA held classes twice per week for 90 minutes each. I recorded class observations using detailed field notes. According to Schensul and LeCompte (2013), thorough field notes include exact quotes, pseudonyms, description of activities in the field in chronological order, and the date, time, and place recorded at the top of each entry. Individuals' physical appearance in the field and the environment should be described "as if through the lens of a camera" (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013, p. 108).

Participant observation prepares the researcher and informs the research process allowing the researcher to become more refined as an instrument for data collection (Fetterman, 2020). I observed classes to better understand the lesson plans, learning outcomes, the behavior of student-athletes in class, and the program environment. I used a participant-observer approach, in which the researcher becomes a part of the participant group while also recording events and observing the participants (Gobo & Marciniak, 2012). Participant observation requires close, long-term contact with participants in the field (Fetterman, 2020). Gobo and Marciniak (2012) described the five characteristics of participant observation which include: (1) establishing a

relationship with participants; (2) remaining in the research setting for an extended period; (3) maintaining the purpose of observing and describing the social behavior; (4) interacting and participating with participants; and (5) learning the code, meaning common terms or phrases, that participants use to better understand the behavior and actions. I relied on these practices to obtain detailed, thorough, and accurate field notes and conclusions.

I took descriptive field notes and jottings of all observations (Emerson et al., 2011). According to Fetterman (2020), “Thick description and verbatim quotations are the most identifiable features of ethnographic field notes” (p. 134). Verbatim quotes are beneficial in ethnographic research because they serve as a record of a person’s thoughts and feelings, and verbatim quotes do not require the researcher to interpret embedded meaning, emotion, or facts (Fetterman, 2020). Jottings are a form of scratch notes, shortened words, or phrases to help jog one’s memory at a later date to construct more detailed field notes (Emerson et al., 2011). A thick description includes detailed, context-sensitive notes of experiences in the field, which can help determine findings, relationships, codes, and themes (Holloway, 1997; Schensul & LeCompte, 2013).

International Trip. I also attended an international trip with the students, which is a key part of the SALA program. While on the trip, I conducted daily observations of all activities and events while paying close attention to behaviors, actions, and conversations of participants. I used a notebook to write down observations each day and to note follow-up questions to ask the interview participants. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with participants, and I took notes on their learning and reflections throughout the trip. After the trip, I conducted a final structured interview with each focus participant ranging from 45 minutes to one hour to gather any final thoughts, reflections, or takeaways from the trip experience or SALA experience at

large. I was careful not to impede the student-athlete's experience and learning during the trip or to interfere with their cultural immersion experience. The international trip was the culminating experience for students in the SALA; thus, the trip was the concluding element of the study. Observations of the activities, learning, and reflections on the trip along with the semi-structured interview process on the trip provided additional context and detail to the information gained during the structured interviews, class observations, and document analysis phases of data collection.

Data Analysis

The complete dataset for this study included journal entries, course documents, transcribed interviews, notes from semi-structured interviews, and observation field notes. I analyzed 11 total recorded interviews, 112 pages of observation notes, and 48 pages of journal entries. Data analysis of qualitative research consists of a detailed description of the setting and participants and an analysis of themes and issues that emerge from data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Tellis, 1997). Interviews were transcribed using Otter.ai software which turns audio files into editable text. Once transcribed by Otter.ai, I checked the text against the audio recording of each interview for accuracy and redacted any identifying information such as names or sports. Interview transcriptions were sent to the participants via secure file sharing to confirm the accuracy and ensure no correction was necessary. This process of asking participants to review transcriptions for accuracy is known as member checking (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Coding. I reviewed all transcriptions for common themes and categories and performed axial coding, or grouping codes based on conceptual categories that reflect commonalities amongst the codes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through axial coding, I was able to organize large amounts of data into relational categories. For this study, categories could include topics such as

leadership style or personal values, while an overall theme was a broader concept such as improved knowledge of leadership skills led to improved confidence.

I used an inductive and comparative analysis strategy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). More specifically, I used a constant comparative analysis strategy where interpretation and findings were compared with existing findings throughout the interview process (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Fram, 2013). A constant comparative analysis strategy means that as I collected data through interviews or class observations and patterns or themes emerged, I compared these findings with previous patterns and themes to ensure consistency, relevancy, and accuracy. The constant comparative analysis method is an iterative process that reduces data through constant coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Often, using a constant comparative analysis strategy helps maintain an emic, or insider, perspective because the research is continually being compared with previous categories and themes to ensure accuracy and validity of the experience (Fram, 2013). I was careful not to impose meaning from the emerging categories and themes until the data collection process had concluded (Seidman, 2019). Data must be analyzed inductively rather than deductively, highlighting the importance of not making the data fit a theory or hypothesis and, instead, allowing the data to “breathe and speak for itself” (Seidman, 2019, p. 126).

Categories. The first step in analyzing the data was to reduce the transcribed interviews, interview notes, journal entries, and field notes into meaningful passages or statements—a process called winnowing (Seidman, 2019). Winnowing occurred throughout the data collection process, using the constant comparative analysis strategy. Categories emerge from patterns among pieces of data (Seidman, 2019). During the analysis process, I read observation notes, journal entries, and interview transcriptions to find common statements and experiences or pieces of information that stood out amongst the data. Patterns are thoughts, actions, statements,

or sentiments that appear in various situations with various participants (Fetterman, 2020). As the commonalities, or patterns, emerged, I continued to compare the patterns with existing and new data.

In the axial coding process, I wrote down these common statements, experiences, and patterns onto sticky notes. I placed the sticky notes into relational content-related piles which then became known as the categories. Throughout the constant comparative process, I would go back through the piles to refine the categories and determine if a new pile need to be made, if the content was still related, or if content from multiple piles needed to be combined.

Themes. Themes are relationships and connections between patterns or categories that develop and evolve throughout the data analysis process (Fetterman, 2020; Fram, 2013). By continuing to reduce, clarify, and define the patterns and constantly comparing and analyzing previous and new data, I continued to develop, evolve, and perfect the themes throughout the research process. I compared the categories with one another to see if overarching themes emerged. According to Fetterman (2020), researchers also can label paragraphs within their field notes based on the meaning which is known as coding chunks of data (Fetterman, 2020). During the observation stages, I marked passages, observations, or statements in the margins of the paper that coincided with themes and categories from journal entries and interviews. The overall process of reading, marking, and categorizing the data is called coding (Seidman, 2019). I conducted the coding process throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the research process.

As the study progressed, I coded subsequent interviews to compare new categories and themes with existing categories and themes as part of the constant comparative method of data analysis (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Fram, 2013). By comparing categories and themes, it was

possible to determine if each category or theme was a unique case or a subset of an existing case (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). The variations of similar categories and themes helped clarify and connect the overall meaning and reality (Fetterman, 2020). The constant comparative analysis strategy required immense reflection, time, and inductive thought (Fram, 2013). The process of finding connections, explaining connections, and creating categories from the data is “demanding and involves risks” (Seidman, 2019, p. 135). This means that from inducing and deducing meaning of the themes and categories, I am risking making false connections or interpretations of the participants’ experiences, which is why member checking (described later in this chapter) is important.

Using the categories presented in the data, I compared each case against the theoretical frameworks. Table 3.3 includes the components, key words, or concepts within the LID model and social change model that I would expect to find in the data. In chapter four, I will demonstrate where the themes and categories align with the components of the LID model and social change model as well as any new concepts that emerged from the data.

Interpretation. After determining all the categories and themes, I continued to seek a broader understanding of the data. Seidman (2019) presented the following questions about data interpretation:

What connective threads are there among the experiences of the participants [the researcher] interviewed? ... What do [the researchers] understand now that they did not understand before they began the interviews? ... How have interviews been consistent with the literature? How have they gone beyond [the literature]? (p. 126)

The most important aspect of interpretation was to demonstrate meaning discovered from the data collection process (Seidman, 2019). Schensul and LeCompte (2013) discussed the

Table 3.3*Components of LID Model and Social Change Model Used for Coding*

Theory	Aspect of Theory	Components Used for Coding
LID Model	Awareness stage (1)	leadership exists (parents, historical figures); leadership is external
	Exploration and Engagement stage (2)	intentional involvement but not positional; skill development
	Leader Identified stage (3)	groups are made of leaders and followers; leader-centric
	Leadership Differentiated stage (4)	anyone in the group can be a leader and do leadership; interdependence of group; if in a position of leadership: commitment to engage, shared responsibility, community builder, shaper of culture; if in member role: awareness of influence and responsibility to engage
	Generativity stage (5)	actively committed to larger purpose; individual passion connected to values; service; responsibility for developing others and sustaining the group; leadership continuity for group
	Synthesis stage (6)	leadership as daily process; leadership as self-identity
	Developing Self category	self-awareness; self-confidence; interpersonal efficacy (learning to appreciate differences); new skills; motivation (goals, commitment,); values
	Group influences category	engaging in groups (belonging, trust, relationships, culture); leadership role; developing new group members; changing perceptions of groups (purpose, objective, structure, roles, systems)
	Developmental influences category	adult influences (family, mentors, coaches, teachers); peer influences (role models, older peers, friends); meaningful involvement; reflective learning (reflection, meaningful conversations)
	Changing View of Self with Others category	independent leader; dependent follower; interdependence of group
	Broadening View of Leadership category	moving through construction of leadership: leader is external, leader-centric or leader is positional, interdependence, leader is non-positional, leadership as process
Social Change Model	Consciousness of self	being aware of beliefs, values, attitudes, emotions
	Congruence	thinking, feeling, and behaving consistently; authenticity; honesty; genuineness

Table 3.3 Continued

	Commitment	passion; intensity; motivation to serve; driven
	Collaboration	working with others in common effort; builds trust; capitalizes on talents of others; diversity of talent, thought, creativity
	Common purpose	work with shared goals; share the vision; common mission
	Controversy with civility	differences must be shared with respect for others; willingness to hear others' viewpoints
	Citizenship	where the individual and group connect to the community; working for positive change on behalf of others; interdependence of all;

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importance of confirming hypotheses throughout the data collection process while allowing for new categories and themes to emerge to enhance the overall understanding of the research. During the data analysis stage, I found common themes and continued to focus on those themes while allowing for new categories to emerge or for data to be placed in existing categories, and as such, I continued to refine my understanding of the themes. This level of reflection, or “looking back on and critiquing what has occurred in the past for its quality, righteousness, and rigor... and anticipating what might happen in the future,” was crucial to accurate data analysis (LeCompte & Schensul, 2015, p. 251). The process constantly compares, revises, and triangulates (Carter et al., 2014). Triangulation is the use of multiple methods of data collection to increase validity (Carter et al., 2014). A more detailed discussion of triangulation, validity, and reliability is discussed later in this chapter.

Interpretations can be grounded in theory, ask new questions, and propose further research while illuminating the researcher’s conclusions and participants’ experiences (Seidman, 2019). I allowed the data and findings to assist in developing a theory or falling into all or pieces of the current theories used in this study, the LID model and social change model (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The LID model and social change model were used in the interpretation to help make sense of the categories, themes, and data. As the categories and themes emerged throughout the data collection process, I compared the data to the various steps in the LID model and the students’ understanding of the social change model. The themes and categories were compared to the process-oriented outcomes of the LID model and learning outcomes of the social change model to understand better the effects of leadership development and leader identity development on student-athletes in the SALA.

Representation. Savin-Baden and Tombs (2017) stated the importance of accurate representation, focusing on those represented (the participants) and not speaking for participants. To accomplish this form of representation, researchers should not make claims to represent a person's interests (s), embody the needs of a group of people, and state truth or views of those in the study (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017). Researchers should know how data may represent those involved in the study (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017). Researchers need to make claims to represent the data in honest manners, disclose positionality, admit mistakes or errors, and demonstrate to participants how data will be used (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017).

Saturation. Saturation is a research principle that describes the point at which a researcher collects sufficient data to develop a robust and valid understanding of the topic of study (Hennink et al., 2019). It is possible to reach saturation with just a few participants or key actors (Fetterman, 2020). Fetterman (2020) explained that key actors are participants with whom the researcher works closely to provide historical data, give information about current interpersonal relationships, and provide insight into the nuances of everyday life. The key actors in this study were the focus participants. I reached saturation when no new themes or categories were emerging from the data collection and no new perspectives or meaning could be made (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017; Fetterman, 2020).

Trustworthiness

Ethnographic field methods seldom adhere to standard principles of validity and reliability for qualitative research (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). First, ethnographers cannot distance themselves from participants because they are the primary data-collection sources in the field. Second, ethnographers cannot control others' behavior and environments. Third, ethnographers cannot replicate a study precisely because human events and behavior change over

time. However, despite these challenges to traditional forms of validity and reliability, credibility, truth, or usefulness for ethnographic research is not compromised (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). At the same time, using the case study approach and having multiple sources of data enhances credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). The collection and comparison of multiple data sources, such as journal entries, observations, and interviews, promote credibility and support the research results as truth for this specific case (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence in the data, interpretation, methods, and findings (Polit & Beck, 2014). Schensul and LeCompte (2013) stressed the need to constantly reevaluate and question the data to increase trustworthiness. Fetterman (2020) and Savin-Baden and Tombs (2017) discussed the need to self-reflect, reevaluate, question, member check, and clarify all methods and interpretation processes to increase validity and trustworthiness. I used self-reflection by checking my personal biases, beliefs, and positionality multiple times throughout the research process and staying in communication with my faculty advisor. I reevaluated and questioned the data, constantly reviewing, comparing, and ensuring consistency of interpretations through the constant-comparative analysis strategy.

Consistency. To increase trustworthiness in the study, I ensured findings were consistent with data collection. During the data collection and data analysis portion of the study, I sought to highlight both negative and positive experiences and themes that the focus participants shared. Richardson (2000) presents five criteria for critiquing ethnography. Throughout the research process, I sought to answer Richardson's (2020) questions clearly and thoroughly.

1. Substantive contribution: Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social life?

2. Aesthetic merit: Does this piece succeed aesthetically?
3. Reflexivity: How did the author come to write this test?... Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the (imposed) point of view?
4. Impact: Does this affect me? Emotionally? Intellectually? Does it move me?
5. Expresses a reality: Does it seem “true”—a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the “real”? (Richardson, 2000, p. 254)

Member Checking. Member checks with participants occurred throughout the research process to ensure that my interpretations were accurate according to participants’ intentions (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). Member checking also moves beyond having participants verify the interview transcripts are valid to ensuring participants agree with the way interpretations are made, and data is presented (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017). I used member checking to provide each participant the opportunity to review and edit their interview transcript and give feedback on preliminary findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the research process continued, I allowed participants to provide feedback on the meaning making of the observations and interviews. Member checking increases the authenticity of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Tellis, 1997). I sought to ensure that my interpretation of the participants’ experiences was accurate according to their perspectives.

Triangulation

Methods triangulation refers to using multiple data collection methods to confirm emerging findings (Carter et al., 2014). The use of document analysis, journal entries, semi-structured interviews, and observations of the SALA classes allowed for triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). Triangulation also refers to using multiple data sources (Natow, 2020). Multiple data

sources in this study include the five focus participants and other non-focus participants. Using both multiple data collection methods and sources increases the credibility of the findings (Carter et al., 2014; Natow, 2020).

Ethical Research Procedures

I obtained permission to conduct the study from the institutional review board (IRB) (Appendix D) and followed all guidelines as required. I paid close attention to the COVID-19 requirements of current research studies, such as social distancing during class observations and conducting interview virtually to minimize direct contact. Each participant created a pseudonym to protect their real name and identity during the research process. All data collection and documents were kept confidential and stored on a password-protected computer and locked file cabinet in my office which is only accessible to myself and my faculty advisor.

Each participant completed an informed consent document. The informed consent document outlined the study purpose, described requirements for participation, described how to remove oneself from the study, and outlined the potential risks and benefits. I ensured that student-athletes, who could be seen as a vulnerable population, were educated and familiar with the research project and understood the consent form (LeCompte & Schensul, 2015). Bracken-Roche et al. (2017) defines a vulnerable population as any population which may be at more risk to harm, such as pregnant women, children, or people who are incarcerated. Student-athletes can be considered a vulnerable population due to their high-profile status. Since the interviews took place via Zoom, before the initial formal interview, I sent the informed consent documents to the participants for review. During the first interview, I reviewed the consent document orally and answered any questions the participants had at the time. I then requested consent to record the interview. To follow recommended remote interview procedures, I obtained oral consent to

conduct and record each subsequent interview (Seidman, 2019). Additionally, I collected signed informed consent documents from each participant.

I sought to build reciprocity throughout the interview process, which means to “make choices through each step of the research process that seek to highlight the experiences of the researched and benefit both the researcher and the researched” (Kiluva-Ndunda, 2005, p. 222). While conducting interviews during the international trip, I was respectful of the time, place, and surroundings in which the interview took place so as not to draw attention or cause disruption and maintain respect for the environment and people (Seidman, 2019). For example, I did not record an interview while we were with a community partner to avoid causing a distraction to the student-athletes or community. I ensured minimal to no social risks to participants or risks that could lead to losing friendships, jeopardize family relationships, cause embarrassment, stigmatization, or shunning (LeCompte & Schensul, 2015). I built rapport with the student-athletes by participating in the conversations and activities during class, conversations during class and maintaining the integrity of the research process. I sought to have a mutually beneficial relationship with the participants while ensuring that the participants’ stories and experiences were respected and objectively and accurately shared.

Ethics and Ethnographic Research

In ethnography, ethics often is defined as responses to encounters in the field (Beach & Eriksson, 2010). Ethnographic researchers tend to want to respond or intervene when experiencing unethical dilemmas in the field (Dennis et al., 2018). I was keenly aware of my position as an observer and how intervention could have influenced the environment and understood the repercussions of my actions and to whom I was responsible and accountable (Dennis et al., 2018). Dennis et al. stated, “I am neither fully responsible for outcomes nor fully a

bystander in the ethnographic scene,” demonstrating the tension between observing and participating in ethnographic research (p. 84). The tension between observing and participating varies between ethnographic scenes and researchers; however, I carefully considered and then determined the most ethical balance for the specific environment.

Another critical element to ethnographic and case study research lies in making truth claims. When researchers make conclusions about truth, they must recognize that while this is truth in the specific study, it cannot be absolute truth (Dennis et al., 2018). Claiming truth must be centered around the specific ideology and power of the participants and scene as well as the positionality of the researcher (Dennis et al., 2018). Therefore, researchers must ensure the results and claims are bracketed in the context of the specific case in which the research occurred. For my study, this means that when reporting results, it was important to make clear that while the results may be true for the student-athletes who participated in the SALA, the results may not be true for all student-athletes who participate in leadership programs because each program and student experience is different.

Ethics and Research with this Population

Research with the SALA and student-athletes presents a variety of specific ethical concerns. I was immersed in the SALA experience alongside the student-athletes. As such, I had to be aware of my position as an observer in the classroom and beyond. I participated in class activities and group conversations while also observing student responses and behavior. According to Dennis et al. (2018), once the data were gathered and conclusions were made, I had to carefully present the results in a way that did not claim absolute truth for student-athlete leadership development.

Stakeholders interested in the research attempted to gather information about participants and ask questions about participant's involvement in the research process. I became aware of external pressures from stakeholders yet continued to maintain ethical research practices and did not share results or insights with the stakeholders. When writing descriptive field notes, conducting informal interviews, coding the journal entries and interview transcriptions, I did not try and force student-athletes' comments or behaviors into a theoretical framework to achieve a desired outcome or result. I had to be patient and allow the data to create categories and themes, tell a story, answer research questions, and describe the development of participants in the program.

Limitations

According to P. Hodkinson and H. Hodkinson (2001), the most common limitations of a case study include: "too much data for easy analysis; the complexity examined is difficult to represent simply; and results are not generalizable" (p. 9). Additionally, Simon and Goes (2013) stated that there could be many alternative explanations in case study research, so researchers should be cautious in making causal inferences. Similarly, the findings of one case study may not be transferable to similar cases (Simon & Goes, 2013). In the second semester of my research study, two new students completed journal entries and interviews, which may be a limitation since I do not have interview transcriptions or journal entries from these two students for the fall semester.

Two students completed journal entries and interviews for the fall and spring semesters. Of the four students who completed journal entries and interviews in the spring semester, two of the students did not attend the international trip, which is a limitation to fully understanding the trip's impact on the leadership journey of student-athletes in the SALA. These interview

transcriptions, journal entries, along with observation notes, class materials, and notes from the international trip, comprise the comprehensive data in my research study. There are so many nuances and complexities in the data that simplifying the material and leadership development journey proved difficult.

Additionally, since the SALA is a unique program, the student-athletes' experience and leadership development journey is specific to each individual. The study would be difficult to replicate since the SALA is currently the only program in the NCAA with two academic courses and an international trip. Another study limitation is research subjectivity, meaning that as the researcher immersed in the field for so long, I could experience observer bias and insert opinions into the assessment or choose not to interpret data in ways that contradict hypotheses (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). In the reflexivity and positionality statements below, I describe methods for addressing observer bias and subjectivity in the data analysis process.

Reflexivity and Positionality

Reflexivity refers to how my role as a researcher could influence my research and interpretation of the data (Fetterman, 2020). As a human instrument of data collection, my background, assumptions, and pre-conceptions all influence the research process, and my role is to acknowledge these factors and mitigate the influence on the research process. Fetterman (2020) noted, "reflexivity propels us into a state of continual analysis throughout the ethnographic journey" (p. 39). I reflected on my roles, pre-conceptions, and assumptions at every step of the research process.

I am a 27-year-old white female doctoral student who is interested in student-athlete identity development. I was an NCAA athlete at a different institution than the study site and participated in similar leadership development programs for student-athletes. As a former NCAA

athlete, I understand the stresses of academics and sport performance, the mental, physical, and team-oriented struggles, and identity development aspects within my own experience as a college athlete. I learned how my experience as a student-athlete impacted my identity development after years of reflection and learning. For example, as a college athlete, my identity was most salient, and I lacked an understanding of other crucial aspects of my identity. I also participated in leadership programs during my collegiate career, which impacted my personal and leadership development.

I have worked to ensure that my own story and understanding do not overtly or unreasonably influence data analysis and drawing conclusions. First, I used existing literature and theoretical frameworks to guide and inform the design of the study and analysis of the findings. Second, I worked to mitigate the influence of my personal experiences through member checking. I asked participants to review the transcripts and meaning-making of the interviews to verify that I captured their experience and intended response.

In Spring 2020, I completed a research study with alumni of the SALA. The study was IRB approved and concluded in June 2020. The previous research study involved understanding the learning outcomes of alumni of the SALA, and the results from this concluded project have the potential to be similar to my current study. I was intentional not to use the previous study results to influence the analysis and interpretations of the current study.

While I do not work in a campus athletics department, I have pre-existing relationships and some past or current supervisory experience over some student-athletes in the SALA. I am aware of how these pre-existing relationships could influence interactions and relationships during my time in the field. Additionally, I paid close attention to maintaining confidentiality outside of the classroom and interview process. To maintain confidentiality, I did not engage in

conversations with participants outside of the field (class, international trip, interview sessions, etc.) unless initiated by the participant. I did not discuss any material or topics related to the research with participants outside of the field of study. Lastly, I did not discuss the research, participants, or results with anyone except my faculty advisor.

I hold a belief that leadership programs can increase leadership identity development within student-athletes. I recognize that this belief may cause me to look for opportunities for growth in students who participate in leadership programs. Additionally, I hold a social-constructivist worldview which may influence how I interpret the data. A social-constructivist worldview means that individuals understand the world through their own unique experiences and interactions with others (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I believe that participant's views of reality and knowledge are constructed and that as a researcher, I can gain knowledge by studying how participants make meaning of their reality (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017). I sought to make meaning from the participants' views of their experience in the SALA (Seidman, 2019).

Organization of the Study

In chapter three, I outlined the study methodology first by identifying and defining case study and then by discussing the procedures, instruments, data collection, and data analysis processes. I included sections on trustworthiness, ethical concerns, and a statement on positionality. Chapter four will include detailed descriptions of the study findings. Chapter five will discuss the study's outcomes while integrating previous research and the theoretical framework with the new findings. The outcome of the research questions will be outlined in chapter five, followed by recommendations and strategies for future research.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) influenced the personal and leadership growth and development of student-athletes who participated in the program. Using a case study design, this research aimed to better understand the student-athletes' developmental experience and movement through the various steps of the LID model and their understanding of the social change model. The research questions for the study were as follow:

1. How does the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy curriculum and experience contribute to student-athletes' progress through the theory on leadership identity development and understanding of the social change model?
2. How do student-athletes perceive that their experiences in the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy influence and shape their development as a person, leader, and athlete?

In this chapter, I present the findings from the data collection and analysis process while highlighting how the student-athletes moved through the LID model and understand the social change model.

Findings

The data analysis process for this study consisted of document analysis of class readings, syllabi, and journal entries from focus participant, as well as interview transcriptions and fieldwork observation notes. The total number of participants was 20 student-athletes who participated in the SALA program during the 2020-2021 academic year. Five focus participants completed journal entries and interviews. As mentioned in chapter four, one limitation in the study is that not all focus participants completed the entire SALA program (fall academic course,

spring academic course, and international service immersion trip). Table 4.1 lists the focus participants by pseudonym and which components of the SALA program each completed. To protect the identity of the participants, all student-athletes are referred to with gender neutral pronouns and any identifiable information about their sport was removed.

After finishing initial data collection and analysis, I determined that follow-up interviews were necessary to clarify the first research question and to better understand to what extent the student-athletes transitioned through the stages of the LID model. I conducted follow-up interviews with Kaya and Tristan because these student-athletes were the only two focus participants who completed the entire SALA program and experience. The follow-up interviews were coded against the originally coded interview transcriptions.

Initial Codes to Categories

Initial codes came from repeated statements, ideas, and sentiments in the interview transcriptions, observation notes, and document analysis. During the initial coding phase, there were 279 codes, which were written on post-it notes to aid in organization. The post-it notes were then sorted into content-related categories which are the 32 categories listed in Table 4.2. Table 4.2 also includes a column that demonstrates the number of post-it notes or initial codes in each category. This is the frequency of each code identified during the data analysis. For example, “confidence” was coded 26 times in the data analysis process and therefore constituted the largest and most frequent category.

Categories and Theoretical Framework

After identifying the initial categories, I sorted the post-it notes based on the information in Table 3.3 which outlined the concepts of the LID model and social change. The

Table 4.1*Focus Participants and Components of the SALA Completed*

Pseudonym	Components of the SALA Completed
Edward	fall academic course
Ryan	fall academic course, spring academic course
Taylor	fall academic course, spring academic course
Tristan	fall academic course, spring academic course, international service immersion trip
Kaya	fall academic course, spring academic course, international service immersion trip

Table 4.2*Initial Categories*

Category	Number of Codes in Category
adaptability	3
authenticity	7
collaboration	5
commitment	3
confidence	26
connection	3
communication	11
community	21
congruence	3
COVID	1
emotional intelligence	4
finding joy in sport again	10
grateful	6
growth from mistakes	9
growth through adversity	2
humility	5
leadership is not a position	9
listening	3
mental health	2
mentor	8
others' point of view	12
more than an athlete	7
out of comfort zone	9
platform	5
privilege	21
servant leader	19
trust	11
understanding	14
unity	8
values	14
vulnerability	13
vocal leader	5

description of the concepts of the LID model and social change model and the categories aligning with each component of the theoretical framework are found in Table 4.3, Table 4.4, and Table 4.5.

As represented in Table 4.3, no categories aligned with the first stage of the LID model. The fewest number of categories could be aligned with the *leader identified* stage of the LID model. The *exploration and engagement* stage as well as the *generativity* stage aligned with the most categories. The following categories did not align with the stages of the LID model and are not included in Table 4.3: COVID, finding joy in sport again, and mental health.

As seen in Table 4.4, all categories in the LID model aligned with categories in the data. The fewest number of categories could be aligned with the *developmental influences* category of the LID model. The *developing self* category of the LID model aligned with the most categories in the data. The following categories did not align with the categories of the LID model and are not included in Table 4.4 above: COVID, finding joy in sport again, and mental health.

All seven values of the social change model aligned with categories from the data. The individual value *consciousness of self* aligned with the most categories from the data. The individual values *congruence* and *commitment* as well as the group value *controversy with civility* aligned with the fewest categories from the data. The following categories did not align with the social change model and are not included in Table 4.5: finding joy in sport again, grateful, leadership is not a position, and mental health.

Research Question One

Research question one focused on the aspects of the SALA curriculum that impacted students the most as aligned with the theoretical framework.

Table 4.3

Categories and Stages of the LID Model

Awareness stage (1)	Exploration and Engagement stage (2)	Leader Identified stage (3)	Leadership Differentiated stage (4)	Generativity stage (5)	Synthesis stage (6)
leadership exists (parents, historical figures); leadership is external	intentional involvement but not positional; skill development	groups are made of leaders and followers; leader-centric	anyone in the group can be a leader and do leadership; interdependence of group; if in a position of leadership: commitment to engage, shared responsibility, community builder, shaper of culture; if in member role: awareness of influence and responsibility to engage	actively committed to larger purpose; individual passion connected to values; service; responsibility for developing others and sustaining the group; leadership continuity for group	leadership as daily process; leadership as self-identity
	adaptability	collaboration	collaboration	authenticity	commitment
	authenticity	connection	commitment	collaboration	confidence
	confidence	communication	confidence	commitment	connection
	communication		connection	confidence	congruence
	congruence		communication	connection	growth from mistakes
	emotional intelligence		community	communication	growth through adversity
	humility		leadership is not a position	community	humility
	listening		listening	congruence	leadership is not a position
	more than an athlete		others' point of view	grateful	mentor
	out of comfort zone		privilege	humility	platform
	privilege		trust	listening	privilege
	trust		understanding	mentor	servant leader
	understanding		unity	platform	values
	values			privilege	vulnerability
	vulnerability			servant leader	vocal leader
	vocal leader			trust	
				understanding	
				unity	
				values	
				vulnerability	

Table 4.4

Categories and LID Model Categories

Developing Self category	Changing View of Self with Others	Group influences category	Developmental influences category	Broadening View of Leadership category
self-awareness; self-confidence; interpersonal efficacy (learning to appreciate differences); new skills; motivation (goals, commitment,); values	independent leader; dependent follower; interdependence of group	engaging in groups (belonging, trust, relationships, culture); leadership role; developing new group members; changing perceptions of groups (purpose, objective, structure, roles, systems)	adult influences (family, mentors, coaches, teachers); peer influences (role models, older peers, friends); meaningful involvement; reflective learning (reflection, meaningful conversations)	moving through construction of leadership: leader is external, leader-centric or leader is positional, interdependence, leader is non-positional, leadership as process
adaptability	adaptability	adaptability	community	commitment
authenticity	collaboration	collaboration	mentor	confidence
commitment	commitment	commitment	values	connection
confidence	confidence	confidence		community
connection	connection	connection		congruence
communication	communication	communication		growth from mistakes
congruence	community	community		growth through adversity
emotional intelligence	emotional intelligence	emotional intelligence		leadership is not a position
grateful	humility	listening		mentor
growth from mistakes	leadership is not a position	mentor		platform
growth through adversity	listening	others' point of view		servant leader
humility	mentor	privilege		vulnerability
listening	others' point of view	trust		vocal leader
more than an athlete	platform	understanding		
out of comfort zone	privilege	unity		
privilege	servant leader	values		
trust	trust			
understanding	understanding			
unity	unity			
values	values			
vulnerability	vocal leader			
vocal leader				

Table 4.5

Categories and Social Change Model Values

Consciousness of self	Congruence	Commitment	Collaboration	Common purpose	Controversy with civility	Citizenship
being aware of beliefs, values, attitudes, emotions	thinking, feeling, and behaving consistently; authenticity; honesty; genuineness	passion; intensity; motivation to serve; driven	working with others in common effort; builds trust; capitalizes on talents of others; diversity of talent, thought, creativity	work with shared goals; share the vision; common mission	differences must be shared with respect for others; willingness to hear others' viewpoints	where the individual and group connect to the community; working for positive change on behalf of others; interdependence of all;
confidence	authenticity	commitment	adaptability	connection	others' point of view	community
emotional intelligence	congruence	servant leader	collaboration	unity	understanding	COVID
growth from mistakes			communication	values		platform
growth through adversity			listening			unity
humility			mentor			
more than an athlete			privilege			
privilege			trust			
values						
vulnerability						
vocal leader						

Impact of Class Lessons. During monthly interviews with focus participants, I asked which lessons had the biggest impact on each of their leadership development journeys. Table 4.6 denotes the lessons that focus participants stated impacted them the most and the number of participants who mentioned each lesson. The lessons student-athletes report having the largest impact on their learning included: “The Crucibles of Leadership,” inclusive community, privilege, The Invisible Knapsack, and servant leadership. I identified the LID model and social change model components that aligned with aspects taught in the class session or mentioned by the student-athletes in the data collection processes. To do this, I cross referenced the components of the theoretical frameworks found in Table 3.3 with the aspects of each impactful lesson taught during class or mentioned by the student-athletes in the data collection processes. In the sections below, I notate which theoretical framework concepts relate to each specific impactful lesson. Overall, the following LID model stages and categories were evidenced:

- Leader Identified stage
- Leadership Differentiated stage
- Exploration and Engagement stage
- Generativity stage
- Synthesis stage
- Developing Self category
- Group Influences category
- Developmental Influences category
- Broadening View of Leadership category

The following social change model values were evidenced:

- Consciousness of Self
- Congruence
- Commitment
- Collaboration
- Common Purpose
- Controversy with Civility
- Citizenship

“The Crucibles of Leadership”. “The Crucibles of Leadership” is an article written by Warren Bennis and Robert J. Thomas in 2002. Bennis and Thomas (2002) found in their research that leaders often have a traumatic or significant moment in their life that shapes their leadership trajectory, beliefs, and experience. During this class lesson, the student-athletes were asked to share a crucible moment in their life. The instructors led the class by sharing their crucible moment. Through observations in class such as long periods of silence and tension that could be felt, it was clear that not everyone felt comfortable sharing their crucible story and not everyone felt that they had a crucible story to share. One well-known student-athlete said, “I’ve never shared this before, but I feel like now is the time,” and they shared an emotional childhood story. After their story was shared, a few other students gave this person a hug, and then the room felt more relaxed. More student-athletes then spoke up and shared their crucible story. However, the student-athletes in class made multiple comments thanking their peers for sharing their stories. This class period and reading was a lesson noted by the student-athletes as very impactful.

“The Crucibles of Leadership” lesson related to the following LID model stages and categories:

- Exploration and Engagement stage
- Leadership Differentiated stage
- Generativity stage
- Synthesis stage
- Developing Self category
- Group Influences category
- Broadening View of Leadership category

“The Crucibles of Leadership” lesson related to the following values of the social change model:

- Consciousness of Self
- Congruence
- Commitment

The courage and confidence to share a vulnerable story or experience seemed to be a big concept learned through the “The Crucibles of Leadership” lesson. At the end of class, the instructors asked the student-athletes what they learned from sharing crucible stories with one another. The overwhelming majority of the class agreed, nodded their heads, and gave verbal confirmation after one student said, “You never really know someone’s story or what they’ve been through.” During an interview following the crucible lesson, Tristan commented on how learning to be vulnerable through “The Crucibles of Leadership” increased their confidence to be themselves. “A big turning point for me was when we shared our crucible moments, and I shared my story. Trusting other people and seeing their response gave me the confidence to be myself and speak up more often” (Tristan). Similarly, Ryan came to understand how “The Crucibles of Leadership” lesson taught them how vulnerability brings people together.

I felt like I was only being identified as an athlete, and I didn’t know how to describe myself other than an athlete. But hearing everyone’s stories showed me that we are all way more than the sport we play and that being vulnerable can bring people together.

(Ryan)

Kaya’s learning from “The Crucibles of Leadership” came from a more introspective place. During their interview, they shared how they often judged people based on how they presented themselves or appearances. Kaya discussed how they would think that a teammate came from a high socio-economic background with many privileges if they drove a nicer car or had expensive belongings. Kaya assumed that because of a higher socio-economic background or other identities, that these people could not have had to struggle or experience hardship in their lives. “The Crucibles of Leadership” lesson and hearing others’ crucible moments allowed Kaya to put themselves in someone else’s shoes. “The crucible day really changed my outlook on people

Table 4.6*Most Impactful Lessons on Focus Participants*

Lesson from Class	# of Focus Participants who Noted the Lesson as Impactful
360 Degree Leadership	2
adaptive capacity	1
bias lesson	2
commitment	2
communication styles	2
Competition v. Decompetition	1
“The Crucibles of Leadership”	3
emotional intelligence	1
identity lesson	2
inclusive community	4
leadership styles	2
privilege lesson	4
servant leadership	3
social change projects	2
sport for change	2
The Invisible Knapsack	4
“The Small Sprocket”	2
values lesson	2
vulnerability lesson	2

You're with this group of people who you've been around before, but you don't really know. ... It helped me realize that you never know what other people are going through" (Kaya).

Inclusive Community. The inclusive community lesson began with the instructors' asking the student-athletes what they thought constituted an inclusive community. Almost all the student-athletes believed their team was an inclusive community. Additionally, the class read an article by M. Scott Peck (1987) titled "A Different Drum." The article described the four stages groups experience when becoming a *true* community which resonated with many student-athletes and their respective teams. A *true* community is defined by Scott M. Peck as an inclusive community that has experienced all stages of community, is conflict-resolving, and is focused on the good of the group rather than the good of the individual (Peck, 1987). The inclusive community lesson relates to the following LID model stages and categories:

- Leader Identified stage
- Leadership Differentiated stage
- Generativity stage
- Developing Self category
- Group Influences category
- Developmental Influences category
- Broadening view of leadership category

The inclusive community lesson relates to the following values of the social change model:

- Collaboration
- Common Purpose
- Controversy with Civility
- Citizenship

Many of the student-athletes found the inclusive community lesson impactful because of the immediate relevance to their team. After the discussion on the article, many student-athletes were able to recognize how their team was not at the inclusive community stage currently or where their team struggled at some point throughout the year. In class discussion a student-athlete on a large team noted that by having a larger team, it's hard to know everyone and have a

true community. Some student-athletes agreed with this sentiment while others noted that even on a smaller team, there is disconnect between teammates. During an interview after the inclusive community lesson, Kaya reflected on a particularly eye-opening moment when they said, “Learning about what an inclusive community actually means really hit me. Because I realized that my team is just a group of people with a collective interest. Not actually a community that is trying to actively better one another”.

In the interviews following the inclusive community lesson, Taylor and Ryan realized that while from the outside looking inward, it appeared that their team had an inclusive community, when, there were a lot of unaddressed issues. Taylor commented on how they (Taylor) need to become more comfortable with being uncomfortable to create an inclusive community. They said, “Sometimes I get so uncomfortable with confrontations or chaos on our team, that I don’t realize that this is what will make our community stronger and move us to the next stage of inclusive communities” (Taylor). In the final interview of the program, Ryan noted how they were taken aback in learning that they did not have an inclusive community on their team when they originally considered their team as an inclusive community. Ryan was impacted most by learning which key people need to be involved to create an inclusive community. They said, “When we learned about what an inclusive community actually means, I learned that a team will not reach their full potential unless the players are on the same page as the coaches. And my team is not there right now” (Ryan).

From a performance standpoint, Tristan immediately realized that a lack of inclusive community could greatly impact the team’s performance. In the interview following the inclusive community lesson, Tristan recognized the changes the team needed to make moving forward to perform better as a group and their (Tristan’s) role in helping transition the stage of

community on the team. Tristian noted the importance of inclusive community as the team was nearing championship season again. Tristan said,

When we learned about the stages of inclusive community, I was able to reflect and identify the different stages on my team. We rotate between pseudo-community and chaos, and we never really resolve conflict. I think that relates to our team's performance at [conference championships] last year. Now I understand that I need to speak up and initiate change on my team to bring us to a true community. (Tristan)

Privilege. For this lesson, there was not a specific reading or day dedicated to learning about privilege. However, this was still a major theme when student-athletes discussed what they learned. Privilege was discussed in a lesson where students learned about capitalizing on difference, a lesson about identities and biases, and at great length on the international service immersion trip. The privilege lesson related to the following LID model stages and categories:

- Leadership Differentiated stage
- Generativity stage
- Synthesis stage
- Developing Self category
- Group Influences category
- Broadening View of Leadership category

The privilege lesson related to the following values of the social change model:

- Consciousness of Self
- Collaboration
- Common Purpose
- Controversy with Civility
- Citizenship

Overall, awareness of bias was a theme from the lessons learned about privilege.

Awareness of bias consisted of stereotypes of certain sports, personal bias, and implicit bias.

After the class lesson on bias, one student-athlete shared how they realized that every time they

experience privilege in a certain situation, another person is experiencing a disadvantage. The student commented how their entire thought process and decision-making process had been altered by this lesson, and multiple other students nodded in agreement. Throughout the interview process, Kaya was very open about their growth in terms of privilege and bias. They transitioned from not believing they had bias at the beginning of the SALA program, to becoming more aware of their biases and how those biases impact their relationships with others after the class lessons. In the interview following the identities and bias lessons, Kaya noted the lessons in saying, “Before we started talking how everyone has bias and should work to remove it, I would’ve said that didn’t have any biases. I wasn’t able to identify the fact that I do have biases that are not conscious to me.”

In the interview following the bias lessons, Ryan was able to recognize the daily struggles of those with marginalized identities and things that they are privileged not to have to think about. Ryan mentioned,

There are so many things that happen in a day that seem normal to me, but that might be a really big deal to someone else who has a different identity. Realizing that some people have struggles every day that I have never had to think about once in my life really opened my eyes. It will help me put myself in others’ shoes and build better relationships on my team and in life. (Ryan)

Certain sports have historically only been accessible to people of higher socioeconomic status which was a common discussion during identity, privilege, and bias topics in class as well as on the service immersion trip. In their journal entry for two weeks, Taylor wrote about their sport and how they are privileged to play a sport that others may never get to learn. In the interview following the identities and bias lessons, Taylor also noted how playing a privileged

sport may be hindering recruitment of new student-athletes with differing identities. Taylor stated, “I’ve learned to be more aware of my privilege. Because of the history and privilege of our sport, I need to talk to my coaches about how we should be diversifying our recruiting efforts.”

Lastly, understanding what to do with more awareness of privilege and their role in social justice issues was a moment of significant growth for the student-athletes. During class discussion, Tristan was extremely reflective in this aspect and how their silence could be harmful. Tristan stated, “For me when concepts like privilege, feminism, racism, etc. come up in conversation, my mind immediately goes to a place of fear, so I don’t say anything that will unintentionally offend someone.” In an interview following this lesson, Tristan said, “I now realize that my shyness is why issues like racism continue. People feel too afraid to address racism in their community because of the fear of negative repercussions. When in reality, their silence contributes to the problem.”

The Invisible Knapsack. The Invisible Knapsack lesson refers to an article that the student-athletes read titled “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh (1998). The article seeks to bring awareness to unacknowledged privilege by making statements about daily privilege that many people possess but may not realize. For example, “I can choose blemish cover or bandages in ‘flesh’ color and have them more or less match my skin” (McIntosh, 1998, p. 190). While The Invisible Knapsack was similar to the privilege lesson, the student-athletes named this article as being impactful rather than the broad spectrum of lessons related to privilege. The Invisible Knapsack lesson related to the following LID model stages and categories:

- Leadership Differentiated stage
- Generativity stage

- Synthesis stage
- Developing Self category
- Group Influences category
- Broadening View of Leadership category

The Invisible Knapsack lesson related to the following values of the social change model:

- Consciousness of Self
- Collaboration
- Common Purpose
- Controversy with Civility
- Citizenship

Awareness was again a common theme in the growth from The Invisible Knapsack lesson. One student in class noted how the article made them feel humbled and become extremely aware of the many things that happen in a day which they do not even have to think about compared to people with marginalized identities. Multiple students with privileged identities agreed with this statement and made comments about feeling ignorant for not knowing what other people with differing identities have to think about in a day. Taylor who recognized their privilege specifically in sport in the former lesson still found a lot to learn from The Invisible Knapsack in terms of everyday struggles that many people face. In the interview following The Invisible Knapsack lesson, Taylor said, “I came to understand how I don’t have to notice things that other people do. Things like the confederate flag or the color of bandages at the store. Things that hurt other people that I don’t even notice most days.”

Similarly, Kaya and Tristan both recognized ways in which they could be better allies for the people with whom they interact. Kaya, who was very aware of their identities as seen throughout the interviews, learned to be more forgiving and understanding of others who may have less experience or more privileged identities. Kaya wrote in a journal entry that instead of approaching others from a point of anger, they can give people more grace when not everyone has the same lived experiences. In the interview, they said, “[H]earing how some people in class

have a lack of knowledge and experience with people from marginalized identities helps me be more understanding. I guess, more forgiving because you can't be mad at people for experiences they don't have" (Kaya).

Tristan immediately took notice of how they can be a better ally and voice for those around them by becoming more aware of the challenges that others face. Tristan reflected on their allyship in two journal entries and listed action items which they could do to improve in this area. Tristan wrote, "Moving forward, I need to do a better job of being more conscious and more aware of the differences in people around me and incorporate that better into my life and my actions."

Perhaps the most impactful moment from The Invisible Knapsack lesson was during the international service immersion trip. Many student-athletes noted how seeing sport facilities and meeting coaches and athletes in another country was a very humbling experience. Kaya made a statement during a nightly reflection about The Invisible Knapsack that visibly impacted the entire group which was noted by the "mhmm" comments and silence that followed the statement. Kaya said,

The Invisible Knapsack and the experience of being humbled from being [on this international trip] comes from privilege. We need to bring this back to campus and remember that not everyone can have the experience of being humbled because not everyone has the privilege that allows it. (Kaya)

Servant Leadership. The servant leadership lesson spanned multiple class days. One day included a guest speaker who was the CEO of a large, well-known corporation and who used servant leadership in their daily supervision of the company. The second class day included an article titled "The Understanding and Practice of Servant Leadership" by Larry Spears (2005)

and outlined the daily practices of a servant leader. The servant leadership lesson related to the following LID model stages and categories:

- Exploration and Engagement stage
- Leadership Differentiated stage
- Generativity stage
- Synthesis stage
- Developing Self category
- Group Influences category
- Broadening View of Leadership category

The servant leadership lesson related to the following values of the social change model:

- Consciousness of Self
- Congruence
- Commitment

When the guest speaker came to class, multiple students seemed surprised by the idea that the guest speaker led their corporation with a servant leader mindset. After the guest speaker left the room, the instructors asked the student-athletes what they learned from the guest speaker's story. One student-athlete noted that it is crucial to "lead from the middle alongside the people and not from the top" which resonated with other students in class as they mentioned how this applies to their ability to lead on their team. Tristan was particularly impacted by the servant leadership lesson as they mentioned it multiple times throughout the interview and journal writing process. In the final interview after the international service immersion trip, Tristan, who is naturally more shy, resonated with the idea of not being recognized for tasks but continuing to serve others around you. Tristan said, "I think the biggest thing that resonated with me was treating everyone with kindness, you know? Being kind to everyone and truly listening to what they have to say. Being a servant to those around you."

The concept of sacrifice as a servant leader was a common theme during this lesson as well. Understanding that leadership comes with a cost and is not always easy was an impactful

concept for the student-athletes. After the servant leadership lesson, Kaya commented in their interview how servant leadership was related to personal sacrifice when they said, “I had to analyze how much I would be willing to sacrifice as a leader to serve those around me and the things I am not willing to sacrifice” (Kaya). Taylor also mentioned the importance of sacrifice and the cost of leadership in their interview. They said,

Overall, one of the biggest lessons I learned was servant leadership and how the heart of leadership is sacrifice. Something that stuck with me is ‘the more you go up, the more you have to give up.’ There truly is a cost to leadership. And I think about how the leaders in my life have sacrificed for me. (Taylor)

Summary. The categories found in the data analysis process were aligned with the components of the LID model and social change model according to the concepts outlined in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3. Some categories did not align with the stages or categories of the LID model: COVID, finding joy in sport again, and mental health. The following categories did not align with the social change model: finding joy in sport again, grateful, leadership is not a position, and mental health.

Table 4.6 then outlined the lessons which student-athletes found most impactful to their SALA experience. The most impactful lessons were: “The Crucibles of Leadership,” inclusive community, privilege, The Invisible Knapsack, and servant leadership. By using the aspects of the lesson taught in class, the reading material, and comments from student-athletes in the data collection process, I then listed the components of the LID model and social change model which aligned with the most impactful lessons. “The Crucibles of Leadership” and servant leadership lessons only aligned with three values of the social change model which is the fewest out of the impactful lessons. The privilege and The Invisible Knapsack lessons aligned with five of the

social change model values which is the most of any impactful lesson. All impactful lessons either aligned with six or seven components of the LID model. Overall, the impactful lessons did not align with the *awareness* stage or *changing view of self with others* category. The impactful lessons aligned with all values of the social change model. By aligning the impactful lessons with the theoretical frameworks, we can further understand the extent to which the SALA experience assisted the student-athletes in moving through the stages of the LID model and understanding the social change model.

Research Question Two

Table 3.2 in chapter three outlined the components of the LID model and social change model which I expected each semi-structured interview question to prompt. The first three interview questions asked what the participant had learned about themselves as a person, leader, and athlete and answers research question two. The specific LID model components that related to what student-athletes learned about themselves as a person, leader, and athlete are: *awareness* stage, *leader identified* stage, *exploration and engagement* stage, *generativity* stage, *developing self* category, and *broadening view of leadership* category. The social change model values that related to what student-athletes learned about themselves as a person, leader, and athlete are: *consciousness of self*, *congruence*, *commitment*, *collaboration*, and *common purpose*. Using these LID model components and social change model components listed in Tables 4.3, Table 4.4, and Table 4.5 that aligned with the first three semi-structured interview questions, I created the list below of categories that emerged from what student-athletes learned about themselves as a person, leader, and athlete. The categories are:

- Adaptability
- Authenticity
- Collaboration
- Communication

- Community
- Confidence
- Congruence
- Connection
- Emotional intelligence
- Grateful
- Growth from mistakes
- Growth through adversity
- Humility
- Listening
- Mentor
- More than an athlete
- Out of comfort zone
- Platform
- Privilege
- Servant leader
- Trust
- Understanding
- Unity
- Values
- Vulnerability
- Vocal leader

Person. By examining quotes from the interview and observation processes, I aimed to identify how student-athletes may have grown as people through the SALA experience. Many of the student-athletes experienced *the developing self* and *awareness* stages of the LID model and the *individual values* components of the social change model while developing as a person through the SALA. Developing their identity was a key theme in their development as individuals. During class observations from the beginning of the SALA program, most student-athletes only used their sport or sport related issues to discuss the topics provided in the lessons or questions asked by the instructors. However, as the class progressed, the conversations became more in-depth, personal, and moved into worldly or personal topics outside of sport. This transition potentially demonstrates that student-athletes were growing as people outside of their sport and had more content to contribute to conversations in class.

As noted in interviews at the beginning of the program, Kaya mentioned, “Before reading some of the articles and doing the activities, I realized that I really had a false sense of identity coming into this class.” While during interviews at the end of the program, Kaya said, “I’ve done a lot of rebuilding who I am this year. I’ve learned what I stand for and who I want to be surrounding me in my circle, in my community.” In the same vein as striving towards understanding their identity, Ryan noted in their final interview, “Before the [SALA] I couldn’t describe myself as anything other than an athlete. I’ve figured out who I am outside of [sport]. It’s helped me grow as a more than just a leader. It helped me grow as me.” In an interview following many of the identities and values lessons, Taylor experienced a similar moment when struggling to find their worth outside of sport. They said, “I was taught from an early age that my worth was in what I did. The classes and lessons have made me dig deep and really think about what I stand for and who I really am” (Taylor).

Awareness and recognizing the importance of differences was another key lesson student-athletes in the SALA expressed. In an interview after the first semester of SALA classes, Tristan learned how to be more cognizant of others’ experiences and reflected in a journal response, “I’ve really become more observant of other people and how certain situations can affect others depending on their life experience or identities.” During a class conversations of the bias lesson, Kaya stated, “I’ve learned that I hold a lot of biases and grudges against people who may be more privileged than I am because of their identities.”

In a journal reflection near the end of the SALA experience, Taylor had a very introspective moment in their personal growth which is noted in their comment:

I’ve realized that I have, like, a really strong personality and can come on really strong.

And in doing the class activities, it made me think that people have different perceptions

of everything going on around them. My perception doesn't make me right. We have differences and need to be able to communicate them. So it really opened my eyes to, I guess, something about myself that I always think I am right. (Taylor)

Edward had a similar moment of growth in learning during an interview at the end of the first semester. Edward learned that not everyone on their team had the same thought process or decision-making skills. Edward said how this made them (Edward) be more present and understanding with teammates when they (Edward) would normally get frustrated. Edward noted, "The [SALA] really helped me realize that not everybody got the same attitude and mindset that I got. You actually got to understand where they're coming from to be a better leader."

As previously mentioned, confidence was a key growth component for Tristan. Throughout multiple interviews and journal entries, Tristan commented about growth in confidence. In their final interview following the international trip, Tristan said, "the [SALA] has really been instrumental in my life. Gaining the confidence to be a leader and learning leadership skills has also allowed me to let my true personality shine, on my team, with my friends, in class." This confidence was also seen during class observations as Tristan rarely spoke during the beginning of the first semester of classes and was consistently contributing by the end of the second semester. During the final reflection period on the international service immersion trip, a particularly shy student-athlete stated, "Before the [SALA], I never fit in. I was quirky, different, never felt accepted. I didn't know how to use my strengths. Everyone here let me be myself. You taught me that I have strengths and can fit in." After this comment, multiple students said, "Awww" and some leaned in to pat the student on the back.

The lessons on confidence influenced Kaya's mental health. Kaya chose not to end their life due to the confidence and courage they developed through their SALA experience. This quote was from a very emotional reflection which they shared with the class during the final reflections of the international service immersion trip and has been included in the research with their permission. Kaya stated,

This program kept me alive. Last year, I attempted suicide three times and the only joy I felt that I had in my life was the [SALA] and coming to class to this authentic community. This is the first time I've been myself and felt truly accepted and part of a community. It gave me something to be strong for, to wake up for. And this will stay with me forever. (Kaya)

Leader. By examining quotes from the interview and observation processes, I aimed to identify how student-athletes may have grown as leaders through the SALA experience. Kaya very clearly experienced the *leader identified* stage throughout their time in the [SALA]. In the first interview of the fall semester, Kaya said, "To be quite honest with you, I don't see myself as a leader. I just thought I was a part of like a big machine. I kind of just saw myself as part of the team." Nearing the end of the interview process, Kaya then said, "Knowing I've been through a yearlong training program... it's stopped me from questioning myself and doubting my own abilities and know that, like I do have the potential to create change on my team and around me." In an interview before the international trip, Tristan also had a clear moment during the interview process when they identified themselves as a leader and demonstrated the *leader identified* stage of the LID model. They said, "Since being in the [SALA], it's really taught me that, like, I do have all the capabilities. I do have the potential to be a great leader on my team. And I am a leader on my team" (Tristan).

Coming to understand that leadership is not positional was another key learning moment for the student-athletes and related to the *leader identified* stage of the LID model. In the interview at the end of the first semester, Kaya stated, “The [SALA] changed my outlook on leadership because I always thought it was seniority or achievement based. But the [SALA] taught me about how leadership is who you are and how you carry yourself and how you treat people.” Similarly, Ryan also came to recognize that leadership is not position-based during a journal entry at the beginning of the second semester. Ryan said, “Before the [SALA], I always thought you had to be starting or a captain to be a good leader, but I’ve realized it’s what happens behind closed doors that makes an impact and that can come from anyone.”

Edward and Ryan both experienced moments of growth in their leadership development when coming to understand that leading by example is often not enough. In an interview following the leadership styles lesson, Edward explained this as the importance for someone to be a voice on the team. They said, “I try to just do stuff right and lead by example. And now I see that my team probably need a voice. A voice for somebody to pick players up, address them, and tell them to do the right thing” (Edward). In their reflection project at the end of the first semester, Ryan also stated a similar sentiment about needing to do more than set an example. Ryan said, “I’ve always been quiet. I like to lead by example. But the biggest lesson I have learned is that you have to do more than that. You have to get to know people. You have to voice your opinion.”

Being comfortable in uncomfortable in terms of conflict and managing conflict became another theme with the student-athletes. In a journal entry at the end of the first semester, Tristan said, “I never felt like I had the power to call people out individually or confront them. But as a leader, it’s okay for me to do that. I’ve seen changes in how I approach people when there is

conflict.” After the conflict management lesson, Ryan wrote a journal reflection notating a similar sentiment and how learning to be comfortable with conflict can be better for the team. Taylor was also impacted by this lesson of managing conflict. In an interview after the conflict management and communication lessons, Taylor said, “One of the biggest things I’ve learned about myself as a leader is that I thought it was better to just live in harmony rather than address conflict. I realized that it’s okay to go through difficult dialogue.”

Lastly, during the final reflection of the international service immersion trip, one student-athlete made an impactful statement about the leadership growth and development of student-athletes involved in the SALA. They said,

To be a part of something that has a core mission to give to other people and leave a legacy. I will never forget those leadership lessons. The [SALA]’s goal is to make an impact in the lives of others and to shape us into leaders. But it’s so much more than that. It started in each one of us this year, and we will continue to impart the lessons we’ve learned and the gift of this program. We will let it ripple into the lives of those we encounter. And that is what it means to be a leader. To impact others to the extent that it carries on and on.

After this statement, many student-athletes in the group nodded their head or made comments representing the shared sentiment of being impacted by the leadership lessons of the SALA.

Athlete. By examining quotes from the interview and observation processes, I aimed to identify how student-athletes may have grown as athletes through the SALA experience. The interview questions and journal responses allowed for focus participants to interpret what growth as an athlete meant to them. For example, growth as an athlete could mean improved

performance, dedication to sport, growth as a teammate, respect for coaching staff, or the many other aspects of a student-athlete's athletic identity and athletic experience.

The concept of sport for social change is something that is taught as a lesson in the SALA classes. However, this lesson impacted the growth of the student-athletes in understanding the role sport can play in society. During a spring semester class, I spoke with Tristan after the facilitated activities for the entire class. Tristan said, "I've learned the real influence that sport, and me as an athlete, can have in society. Not only on a personal scale, but on a global scale. Sport brings people together and can create lasting change." During an interview after a guest speaker who works for a sport-related non-profit, Ryan also noted, "I've learned that one of the most beautiful things about sports is that it can connect people and build relationships through working together and having fun." A student-athlete on the international service immersion trip stated, "There are very few things in life that are more valuable than human connection. That is what we are doing here. Yes, we are playing sports, learning. But we are fueling leaders for the future by building human connection."

While not only recognizing the importance of sport in society, the student-athletes were taught the importance of their role as an athlete in influencing those with whom they interact on a daily basis, such as other students, teammates, community members, family, or friends. Some of the student-athletes were impacted by this concept of having a platform as a student-athlete to influence and create change. In their journal reflection following a class lesson on sport for change, Ryan said, "Right now being a college athlete, I have a platform where I can use my voice. It is important for me to not take that for granted and use it to benefit others." In an interview during the second semester, Kaya repeated this idea that college athletes have a platform for making change. They said, "I do have a platform as an athlete. Regardless of how

small it may be. But a platform is a platform, and I can use it for good.” Taylor made similar observations about having a platform but shared the challenges that some student-athletes experience with having a platform and wrote a lot in their journal entry about this topic. They said, “As athletes we have this huge stage, and it’s easy to become overly confident and let our accomplishments define us.” Taylor also recognized a personal area of growth for themselves and their team in terms of this confidence. Taylor said, “I’ve been letting my confidence transfer to my team too much where it makes it look like I believe I am better than my teammates. I need to work on humility as an athlete and for my team.”

Another common moment participants expressed as being part of their growth as athletes, was the lack of joy many were experiencing in their sport and re-discovering the joy or passion for their sport again. During a challenging time for Kaya in the spring competition season, they said,

I realized that over time, I came to have a dominant decompetition view of my sport and this was a big contributor to me falling out of love with my sport. I became so focused on [competition], place, and outcome that I don’t even enjoy [my sport] anymore. (Kaya)

During a nightly reflection while on the international trip and after a day of playing sports with children in the community, one student-athlete said, “When we were playing [sport] with all the people, I caught myself getting angry and mad at my performance, and I had to remind myself to just enjoy and play... like everyone else is doing.” Another student-athlete agreed with this idea and said that when they were playing a basketball game with children, they were getting embarrassed when they would miss shots. This student-athlete then realized they had no reason to be embarrassed because they were simply playing games and play basketball for fun with no pressure. Similarly, another student-athlete said, “Sport has become so stressful and serious. It’s

felt good to be immersed in the kids' environment because they just want to play. It makes you step back and remember that we too played sport because it was fun." After this comment, multiple student-athletes nodded and made snapping gestures showing their agreement with the statement.

Another common theme that student-athletes learned in class in terms of growth as an athlete from the SALA experience is how to be better teammates. Tristan noted how they have become a better teammate by encouraging positivity during hard moments for the team. In the final interview of the year before the international trip, Tristan said, "The biggest thing I've learned from the [SALA] as an athlete is how to take a step back, take a deep breath, and realize it's okay to make mistakes." After the communication styles lesson, Taylor said in their interview how they learned how to be a better communicator to their teammates. They said, "I'm a pretty straightforward communicator, but I've learned that some people don't respond to that very well. So as a leader, I have to adapt and communicate in a way they'll understand." Finally, in the final interview of the first semester, Edward shared how the community amongst the student-athletes in the SALA made them a better teammate. Edward shared,

Being in the class has made me a better teammate, you know? Especially when we in season and you got a lot of stuff going on, and everything is busy. There's issues on your team, with coaches, or in your life. And you come in there to class with all these other athletes and they say something that hits the spot. You can go back and apply it to your life or what's going on with your team. And these are people I would never normally talk to, but we dealing with the same things. (Edward)

Summary. The student-athletes shared growth and development as people, leaders, and athletes through the data collected in the observation and interview processes. They shared

personal reflections and feelings about pieces of their developmental journeys about their experience in the SALA. Most of the growth appeared to be in the person and leader categories which the student-athletes could then relate to growth as an athlete and is consistent with the majority of the categories found in the data aligning with the personal development components of the LID model and social change model.

The student-athletes identified growth as a person in themselves by coming to understand their identity outside of sport. Additionally, they noted personal growth in communication skills and increased confidence. These areas of personal growth aligned with the *exploration and engagement* stage and *developing self* category of the LID model as well as the *individual values* of the social change model. The student-athletes identified growth as leaders through coming to understand that leadership is not positional. Leadership growth was also noted in increased ability to manage conflict and become more vocal. Lastly, leadership growth was seen by the student-athletes not identifying as a leader in the beginning of the SALA experience and calling themselves a leader by the end of the SALA experience. This also relates to the *leader identified* and *leadership differentiated* stages of the LID model. Lastly, the student-athletes noted growth as athletes in coming to understand the platform student-athletes have in society and ability to use sport for change. The student-athletes also commented how the SALA experience helped them find joy in their sport again and become better teammates. Overall, the student-athletes noticed and shared growth in all three areas asked in the research questions and identified in the theoretical frameworks—person, leader, and athlete.

Fieldwork Observations

The fieldwork observation process provided extensive context to the lessons which were impactful to student-athletes, seeing the focus participants engage with the material they

discussed in interviews and journals, and allowed for small conversations with non-focus participants. The observations also provided opportunity to witness how the student-athletes may have been experiencing the LID model and understanding the social change model. Additionally, the observation process allowed me to relate codes emerging from focus participant interviews to comments and conversations with non-focus participants in class. These comments and observations of non-focus participants resulted in similar statements, sentiments, and experiences as the focus participants, and many non-focus participant quotes were used in the sections above.

As previously stated, there were multiple instructors for the class. All the instructors were present for every class, which contributed to the confidential and trusting nature of the environment. Additionally, the instructors alternated who taught each lesson depending on comfortability and strengths in teaching the material. Some students built stronger bonds with certain instructors, but each had a strong presence in class.

While every student in class had a different personality and strengths, class discussions or groupwork was not dominated by individuals with more extroverted personalities. Some students, while quieter by nature, still spoke and shared multiple times throughout the classes. In speaking with these students, like Tristan for example, the environment of the SALA gave them the confidence and willingness to speak up. Whereas, according to them, they do not speak up in other classes. During the second semester when all students were required to facilitate group activities, some of the quieter students presented the loudest and most out-going personalities. Other students in class and the instructors were shocked and amazed at the change in personality of a few students when asked to facilitate the activities, and it provided a strong foundation and confidence for facilitating activities on the international trip.

While on the international service immersion trip, one of the common themes discussed during reflections was humility. The student-athletes were amazed at the athletic experiences of athletes in a different country. Coming from a Division I institution where they have the best gear, nutrition services, strength coaches, outstanding equipment, and other elite resources, understanding what life is like for athletes in another country was a humbling, challenging, and rewarding experience for many. Each night, a student-athlete would comment how they became more grateful for what they have as a student-athlete and the opportunity they have to play at a well-known university in the United States. When visiting a professional sports facility on the trip, the student-athletes were taken aback by the quality of the field, lack of jerseys, used or worn equipment, and other aspects of the professional athletes' lives. During the nightly reflection, two student-athletes noted how humbled they were by the experience and how they wanted to start a donation drive on campus for used sports equipment. During the fall 2021 semester following the international trip, the students did host a clothing and equipment drive to donate back to the organizations from the international trip.

Other Influential Components of the SALA

There were multiple aspects of the SALA experience that were not specifically connected to theoretical frameworks but were impactful to the student-athletes in the program. I noticed these aspects of the program through observations in class, conversations with focus participants, and in journal entries.

Syllabi. The course syllabi note learning objectives focusing on personal growth (in terms of skills, abilities, strengths, and values), tenets of servant leadership, practices to cultivate individual and team leadership, and increased confidence in facilitation and collaborative

leadership skills. Through the categories found in the data as well as quotes from participants, these objectives were met through the SALA courses.

Confidence. The concept of confidence was found as a code in the data 26 times. Through the monthly interviews and journal entries by focus participants and final reflections by all students in class, increased confidence was a skill that over 13 student-athletes noted. The concept of confidence was stated in terms of confidence to be a leader, openly share their identities, address conflict, make mistakes, be vulnerable, and speak up when needed. Confidence was mentioned in all areas of growth (person, leader, and athlete) at some point during the interview process. While confidence is not a specific lesson taught in the SALA, the SALA experience significantly contributed to increased confidence in SALA participants.

Community. The idea of community was found as a code in the data 21 times. From the beginning of the first semester, the instructors place emphasis on confidentiality of information shared in class, making and owning mistakes, and vulnerability. I repeatedly heard from the focus participants, during class conversations, and in reflections on the international trip how crucial the “SALA community” was to their growth and experience. A common theme was the was a life-changing experience that resulted from providing a safe, trusting, and welcoming space for student-athletes from every sport to come together, growth together, and learn together. Edward commented how being able to discuss struggles within their team or struggles that student-athletes experience with other athletes on different teams was refreshing and rewarding. It provided Edward an opportunity to understand they are not alone in their struggles and challenges as a student-athlete.

Kaya and Tristan both noted how they never would have talked to the football players or other “big name” athletes on campus out of fear or thinking that they (Kaya and Tristan) were

not good enough. However, through the SALA, they were given a chance to build real connections with the “big name” athletes and realized that they are people, too, and experience many of the same athlete struggles. Many students refer to the SALA as their “SALA family”. During the final reflection in class, one student-athlete said, “Being a part of this community has changed my life. It’s made me understand who I am and who I want to be. I’m forever grateful for this family.” This sentiment rang through multiple student-athletes’ reflections and was shared repeatedly during reflection nights on the international service immersion trip.

International Service Immersion Trip. Throughout the entire SALA experience, the instructors mentioned that the international service immersion trip was an opportunity to see the potential sport has to create connections and implement change. Prior to the trip, the student-athletes spend an entire class learning about the culture, language, customs, and norms of the country. The student-athletes are given a folder with information about the country, reminders for language and customs, along with their itinerary. This year, the trip and activities for the trip were altered a number of times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but despite all the changes, the student-athletes shared that they were grateful to be going on a trip and to be a part of this experience.

While on the trip, the focus is on meeting community partners, sport for change, and learning from the people with whom we interacted. Each night, the student-athletes participated in reflection-based conversations about the activities for the day. During the trip experience, the student-athletes were introduced to new food, historical sites, and important sport related locations in the country, but most importantly, the student-athletes were expected to implement their leadership lessons and facilitate sport for change activities with community partners. One student-athlete shared at a nightly reflection, “This trip is the key and the epitome of our

definition of leadership.” The international trip was difficult for some students who had never been out of the country or far from home, but an overwhelming number of student-athletes said to me in conversation how the experience gave them passion for their sport, meaning behind their leadership, and lessons that they would carry for the rest of their lives.

Missing Components in Findings

Much of the information previously shared in the findings has represented a positive growth experience and environment for the student-athletes. However, there were aspects of the theoretical frameworks and SALA program components that were not evidenced in the data.

Theoretical Framework Components. Throughout the data analysis process, some of the components of the LID model were not found in the data. The *awareness* stage of the LID model did not align with any categories. The *leader identified* stage and *developmental influences* category did not align with many categories from the data meaning these aspects may not fully be evidenced by the data. Because these aspects of the LID model are missing, this could mean that the SALA program does not facilitate student-athletes moving through all stages of the LID model. My understanding and potential reasoning behind the lack of categories in the data that align with these components of the LID model will be outlined in the discussion portion of chapter five.

In reading the journal responses, the responses varied greatly to how the focus participants identified growth as an athlete in themselves. The focus participants also appeared to struggle answering this question during the interview process which was noted by long pauses and stumbling over their thoughts. Many of the student-athletes noted growth in themselves as people which in turn altered their athlete role. For example, being a better communicator,

conflict management skills, or learning their role as a leader then influenced their ability to perform, communicate with coaches or teammates, or resolve issues on their team.

SALA Program Components. Emotionally intelligent leadership is one of the four key pillars of the SALA program and noted as a key learning objective in the syllabi. While there was a class lesson on emotional intelligence, the category and frequency with which focus-participants noted this lesson as impactful was very small. This lesson did not appear to be as impactful or instrumental to the SALA experience for it to be considered a pillar of the program. While many of the objectives in the syllabi were met, one focus participant noted how they wished more lessons were geared towards leadership at large and not so focused on sport-related leaders. The reason behind this wish was because they want to have the skills and knowledge to be a successful leader outside of sport as well.

During the spring semester of the SALA, much of the class is spent allowing the student-athletes to work in groups to facilitate games. The groups are given a target population and lessons which they are to teach through games. For example, one group was given children with visual impairment and teaching about communication. The purpose of these assignments was to encourage the athletes to facilitate activities well and understand how sport has the ability to build connections and educate at the same time. These lessons also serve to prepare the student-athletes for the international service-immersion trip. However, the observations from class in the spring were lacking depth, comments about growth, or personal reflection. The observations noted students providing critical feedback to one another, pushing themselves to lead groups, learning to be vocal and give clear instructions, but there were minimal observations demonstrating connections to leadership development. The second semester provided the

student-athletes an opportunity to practice and implement many of the lessons they learned during the first semester.

While on the international service-immersion trip, the primary focus was on sport for change. Overall, the first semester of class focuses on leadership lessons which then apply to the second semester lessons about being a leader who creates change. During nightly reflections and conversations on the trip, many student-athletes commented about privilege, servant leadership, or other lessons from the first semester were applicable to the international trip experience. However, when leading discussions on the trip, the instructors rarely mentioned the leadership lessons from the first semester, and more emphasis was placed on the sport for change lessons of the second semester.

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter first outlined the data analysis process and the 32 initial codes found in the interview transcripts, journal entries, and observation notes. I then used tables to outline which codes align with the stages of the LID model, the categories of the LID model, and the values of the social change model. To answer research question one, I used a table to demonstrate the lessons that student-athletes noted as most impactful during their SALA experience. Then, the theoretical frameworks were placed in context of the most frequently noted impactful lessons. The most frequently noted impactful lessons were: “The Crucibles of Leadership”, inclusive community, privilege, The Invisible Knapsack, and servant leadership. I used quotes to outline the specific ways which the student-athletes felt impacted by these lessons.

To answer research question two, I analyzed the data for specific quotes and moments that identify if the student-athletes demonstrated growth as people, leaders, and athletes. Using

the connections between the theoretical frameworks and the interview questions found in Table 3.2 and research question two, I demonstrated which codes from the original data can be used to understand how the student-athletes felt that they grew as people, leaders, and athletes through their SALA experience. The use of quotes answers the question of how the student-athlete themselves perceived and experienced growth in these three areas.

Organization of the Study

In chapter four, I outlined the findings and presented data that answers the research questions. I included multiple data sets and tables. In chapter five I discuss the study's outcomes while integrating previous research and the theoretical framework with the new findings. The discussion on the results of the research questions are outlined in chapter five, followed by recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore how the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) influenced the personal and leadership growth and development of student-athletes in the program during the 2020-2021 academic year. This study aimed to better understand the student-athletes' leadership experience and their movement through the various steps of the Leadership Identity Development (LID) and social change models. This study explored how leadership education affected student-athletes as individuals, students, and athletes while providing insight for institutions and athletic departments about the outcomes and effectiveness of leadership development for student-athletes. By revealing how SALA contributes to student-athletes' identity and leadership identity development, this study contributes to the broader understanding of student-athletes' holistic development, a key component of the goal and mission of the NCAA (NCAA, 2020).

Two research questions guided this study:

1. How does the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy curriculum and experience contribute to student-athletes' progress through the theory on leadership identity development and understanding of the social change model?
2. How do student-athletes perceive that their experiences in the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy influence and shape their development as a person, leader, and athlete?

Because formal programs for student-athlete leadership development are not widespread, the effects of leadership programs on student-athletes' development, sport performance, skills, identity, development, or any other benefit of participating in leadership programs are not known. By understanding leadership programs and development among student-athletes, athletic

department staff and higher education leaders can better support student-athletes in gaining the skills, career development, and personal growth needed for life after graduation, meet the NCAA Life Skills mandate, and potentially can be utilized as a recruiting tool by athletic department leadership.

Two theoretical frameworks were used in this study: the leadership identity development (LID) model and the social change model. The LID model served as a framework to analyze the data gathered in the research. The social change model was used to understand the learning outcomes of student-athletes participating in the program. The research design is a case study of the SALA using ethnographic field methods. The study included one academic year of fieldwork including a fall academic course, a spring academic course, and an international service immersion trip during the summer. There were 20 participants in the study and five focus participants. Data consisted of field observations, descriptive field notes, document analysis, and interviews with focus participants. The document analysis component consisted of class readings, syllabi, and journal entries completed each week by the focus participants. The data analysis phase of the study used axial coding and an inductive and constant comparative analysis methods to group data into conceptual categories and themes. Once categories and themes emerged from the data, the data were compared to the theoretical frameworks and interpreted.

Summary of Findings

The initial coding process resulted in 32 categories which were listed in Table 4.2. The LID model components that aligned with the most categories in the data were: the *exploration and engagement* stage, the *generativity* stage, and the *developing self* category. All values in the social change model aligned with categories from the data, but the *consciousness of self* value aligned with the most categories in the data.

To answer research question one, the SALA curriculum components were matched against the theoretical frameworks underpinning the curriculum. The SALA lessons that impacted the student-athletes the most were: “The Crucibles of Leadership,” inclusive community, privilege, The Invisible Knapsack, and servant leadership. Overall, the following LID model stages and categories were evidenced:

- Leader Identified stage
- Leadership Differentiated stage
- Exploration and Engagement stage
- Generativity stage
- Synthesis stage
- Developing Self category
- Group Influences category
- Developmental Influences category
- Broadening View of Leadership category

The following social change model values were evidenced:

- Consciousness of Self
- Congruence
- Commitment
- Collaboration
- Common Purpose
- Controversy with Civility
- Citizenship

The lessons student-athletes found most impactful to their leadership journey contributed most to their leadership development through the aforementioned stages and categories within the LID model and the values of the social change model.

To answer research question two, the data were analyzed to identify growth in the student-athletes as people, leaders, and athletes. After the open and axial coding process, quotes and narratives from the interview transcriptions, journal entries, and observations were used to evidence the growth in each aspect. Major themes from the data where the student-athletes identified growth in themselves as a person included: developing aspects of their identity,

becoming more aware of differences between themselves and others, appreciation for differences, and an increased confidence in themselves. Major themes that emerged from the data where the student-athletes identified growth in themselves as a leader included: understanding leadership is not positional, conflict management skills, and learning that leading by example is not enough. Major themes from the data where the student-athletes identified growth in themselves as an athlete were: learning the importance of sport in society, understanding their influence or platform as a student-athlete, finding joy in playing their sport, and becoming better teammates.

Fieldwork observations provided an opportunity to gain additional context for emerging themes in the data with focus participants and non-focus participants. Observations gave deeper understanding of how the student-athletes experienced the LID model and understanding the social change model. Observations during class also provided an understanding of the personality types of the students and how their various personalities may have affected their leadership development journey. Additionally, on the international service immersion trip, the observation process offered the ability to observe the leadership lessons in action and to see the impact of the trip on the individual student-athletes. Quotes and observations from focus participants and non-focus participants were used to answer the research questions.

Some aspects of the SALA experience did not fully connect to the theoretical frameworks. Most of the SALA objectives outlined in the syllabi were met through the courses as noted by the quotes and observations of the student-athletes. The most prominent category in the data and frequent comment in the reflections were the increased sense of confidence as a person and leader that the SALA experience imparted on the student-athletes. Separately, having a trusting community of like-minded peers provided the student-athletes with an experience they

had yet to experience as a student-athlete. The “SALA community” was important for many student-athletes in the program. Lastly, the international service immersion trip impacted the student-athletes in multiple ways, but specifically by providing a chance to put leadership skills and sport for change in action. This means that the student athletes were able to implement what they learned from the cross-cultural communication, servant leadership, or teambuilding lessons during activities on the trip. Additionally, the student-athletes were able to see how sport has the power to create change and bring communities together which was a huge emphasis of sport for social change lessons. Lastly, the trip also aided the student-athletes in finding joy in their sport again and increasing their sense of gratitude for their student-athlete experience.

Some aspects of the theoretical frameworks and SALA program components were not evidenced in the data. The *awareness* stage of the LID model did not align with any categories. The *leader identified* stage and *developmental influences* category did not align with many categories from the data. The growth as an athlete question and responses were difficult for the student-athletes to answer and more details were placed on growth as a person and growth as a leader which then influenced their athletic identity. The emotionally intelligent leadership pillar of the SALA program was not fully evidenced in the data. Observations from class in the second semester were not as detailed or descriptive due to the nature of the SALA instruction and program. The sport for change aspect of the second semester was extremely evident in the instructors’ conversations and leadership of the international service immersion trip; however, the leadership lessons were mentioned more by student-athletes on the trip rather than the instructors.

Discussion

Athletics is the earliest form of leadership development outside of the classroom in American higher education (Duderstadt, 2003; Thelin, 2000). As such, studying the impact of the SALA program on the leadership journey of student-athletes connects to the early history of leadership development. College athletics are a pillar of the U.S. higher education experience (NCAA, 2020). If leadership is a fundamental responsibility and central feature of higher education and college athletics is a pillar of the U.S. higher education system, the emphasis on leadership development within higher education should be a topic of importance for athletic departments and campus leadership (NCAA, 2020; Roberts & Ullom, 1989).

By studying a yearlong leadership development experience for student-athletes, scholars in the leadership education field and student-athlete development staff can more fully understand the effects of the LID model and social change model on an important subset of the college student population. Additionally, scholars in the leadership education field and student-athlete development staff can better understand how aspects of leadership development programs apply to different communities within the college student population who may not have the same experiences or opportunities as the general student population. Discussion in the following sections focuses on the alignment with the theoretical framework, the personal growth experienced by student-athletes in the SALA, service learning, specialized leadership programs, and other unique findings.

Alignment with Theoretical Frameworks (Research Question One)

Research question one asked how the SALA experience contributed to the student-athletes progress through the LID model and how they understood the social change model. The 32 categories identified in the coding process aligned with almost all the LID model components.

As previously mentioned, the *awareness* stage did not align with any categories in the data. It is possible that the student-athletes did not experience the *awareness* stage due to the nature of selection into the SALA program. The selection process requires a coach's nomination, application, and interview with the SALA instructors. The selection process most likely creates "awareness that leadership exists" for the student-athletes prior to their entry into the SALA program explaining why there were no categories which aligned with the *awareness* stage. Additionally, by participating in an elite-level sport, the student-athletes may enter the LID model at a more advanced stage than the general student population. Due to the nature of sport (i.e.—team captains, coaches, etc.), student-athletes may have a greater awareness of leadership than general population students explaining the missing stage experienced during the SALA journey.

The LID model requires students to progress through the stages consecutively, but once a student reaches a new stage, they can regress to previous stages during their leadership journey. Categories in the data aligned with the sixth stage of the LID model, *synthesis*, and demonstrated that at some point during the SALA experience the student-athletes experienced all stages and categories of the LID model because they reached the sixth and final stage. This was evidenced and confirmed in the data with the follow-up interviews with Kaya and Tristan months after the international service immersion trip. The questions in the follow-up interview specifically focused on the transitions between stages of the LID model and the *generativity* and *synthesis* stages. For example, one student said, "Yes, we are playing sports, learning. Yes, we are leaders. But we are fueling leaders for the future by building human connection." Both Kaya and Tristan noted aspects aligning with the *synthesis* stage during their follow-up interview representing that

at some point during the SALA experience the student-athletes were experiencing all stages and categories of the LID model.

All 32 categories that emerged from the data analysis aligned with the values of the social change model because the social change model is used as a lesson in the SALA curriculum. It is not surprising that student-athletes demonstrate an understanding of the seven values and how the individual values, group values, and societal values are interconnected due to the inclusion of curriculum components focused on the social change model. The individual values of the social change model aligned with the most categories in the data most likely due to the many lessons focused on individual development in the first semester of the SALA. The group values and societal values were evidenced more frequently during the second semester and international service immersion trip because these aspects of the SALA focused more on interactions with others and the community. In the follow-up interviews after the international service immersion trip, Kaya and Tristan specifically were asked questions about their understanding of the social change model. Both noted the connections between the values in the social change model and how crucial understanding societal values and commitment to social responsibility is for student-athletes.

The most impactful lessons in the student-athletes' SALA experience aligned with some of the most critical components of the stages and categories of the LID model and values in the social change model. The data did not evidence if these specific lessons were the cause of the student-athletes moving through the LID model to the *synthesis* stage, but these lessons contributed to students experiencing various stages or categories of the LID model. Rather, the entire SALA experience—two semesters of class and international service immersion trip—led to students experiencing the *synthesis* stage of the LID model, identifying as a leader, and

understanding a broader view of leadership. Similarly, the data did not evidence if the lesson on the social change model or other impactful lessons caused the student-athletes to understand and commit to the social change model. However, the data did evidence that through the entire SALA experience, student-athletes came to understand all social change model values and the connections between each set of values. As such, the SALA program, which contained a semester of classes focused on personal growth and leadership lessons, a semester of classes focused on social change, and an experiential learning component allowing student-athletes to practice the lessons learned, moved student-athletes through the leadership identity development model, and created an understanding of the social change model.

Personal Growth (Research Question Two)

Research question two asked how the student-athletes in the SALA grew as a person, leader, and athlete from their SALA experience. Through the semi-structured interview questions, class lessons, class conversations, and observations, the data revealed student-athletes' awareness of their growth in all three areas from their SALA experience. The student-athletes directly shared their individual growth during the reflection assignments at the end of the first semester and during the nightly reflections on the international service immersion trip. The areas of personal growth aligned with the *exploration and engagement* stage and *developing self* category of the LID model as well as the *individual values* of the social change model. The areas of growth as a leader aligned with the *leader identified* and *leadership differentiated* stages of the LID model. Most of the growth appeared to be in the person and leader categories. The student-athletes noted points of personal development which they would then relate to how it affected their athletic identity. For example, increasing communication or conflict management skills could be seen as personal growth, but the student-athletes shared how this skillset immediately

impacted their identity as an athlete and assisted them on their team. However, more categories in the data aligned with the personal growth components of the theoretical framework suggesting that more growth occurred in the personal and leader development aspects of the research question.

In the beginning of the first semester of class, most student-athletes only spoke about their sport or sport-related activities in class discussion, but as the semester continued and into the second semester of class, the student-athletes began to discuss aspects of themselves beyond sport. This transition in topics of discussion may have been caused by the significant focus on personal and identity-based growth of the SALA lessons. As the student-athletes became more comfortable in their environment and focused on other aspects of themselves from the SALA lessons, they were able to relate the lessons to topics outside of sport. The personal growth that the student-athletes experienced was crucial to their leadership development journey and the data evidenced this because categories in the data aligned with the personal development aspects of the LID model and social change model.

Student-athletes often struggle with self-esteem, especially following poor performance and external pressures through sport (Huntrods et al., 2017; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). Supporting previous research, the student-athletes in the SALA experienced increased confidence as a result of participating in the program (Rosch et al., 2016; Zheng & Muir, 2015). Student-athletes who participated in the SALA identified increased confidence in themselves as leaders and as individuals as one of the major learning outcomes from their experience. Tristan said, “the [SALA] has really been instrumental in my life. Gaining the confidence to be a leader and learning leadership skills has also allowed me to let my true personality shine, on my team, with my friends, in class.” The literature states that student-athletes often struggle with self-

esteem and the increased confidence levels evidenced in the data combat this issue (Huntrods et al., 2017; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). Additionally, student-athletes may also struggle with racial, religious, or social identities, among other identities, and if these identities are not developed and understood, full identity achievement cannot be obtained (Marcia, 1989; Salgado, 2011). Through lessons on values, privilege, and identities outside of their athlete identity, the SALA focused on enhancing the overall identity development of student-athletes in the program. Gaining and developing identity outside of their sport was another common theme evidenced in the SALA experience as the student-athletes worked toward identity achievement. This also supports previous research that leadership development enhances identity development.

Leader and Leadership Development. In the vast number of well-known leadership programs implemented on college campuses (e.g., Bonner Scholars, LeaderShape), none are specifically focused or created for student-athletes. As noted in the review of Southeastern Conference campuses with known leadership development programs geared towards student-athletes, few programs are available and even fewer offer an in-depth leadership education experience, theory-based curriculum, and experiential learning components. This research study revealed that prior to the SALA experience, most student-athletes in the SALA had not experienced formal leadership education at the collegiate level and many had not experienced leadership education during their high school careers. Because formal programs for student-athlete leadership development are not widespread, the effects of leadership programs on student-athletes' development, sport performance, skills, identity, development, or other benefits of participating in leadership programs are not known. This research on the effects of the SALA program aids in understanding the ways in which leadership development programs affect student-athletes as a person, leader, and athlete.

The SALA experience focuses both on the *leader* development or intrapersonal factors associated with leadership and *leadership development* or interpersonal factors associated with leadership. *Leader* development was demonstrated in the movement through the *exploration and engagement*, *leader identified*, *generativity*, and *synthesis* stages of the LID model as well as the *developing self* and *broadening view of leadership* categories of the LID model (Day et al., 2014). The SALA experience also demonstrated a focus on *leader* development via the understanding and commitment to the individual values of the social change model and the categories in the data that aligned with each value of the social change model.

The SALA experience also contributed to interpersonal factors of *leadership* development in addition to the *leader* development factors previously mentioned (Day et al., 2014). This is seen in the movement through the *leader identified*, *leadership differentiated*, *generativity*, and *synthesis* stages of the LID model as well as the *group influences*, *developmental influences*, and *broadening view of leadership* categories of the LID model. In addition, *leadership* development is seen through the *group* and *societal values* of the social change model and was specifically notable during the sport for social change aspects of the spring semester class and the international service immersion trip. Tristan said, “Since being in the [SALA], it’s really taught me that, like, I do have all the capabilities. I do have the potential to be a great leader on my team. And I am a leader on my team.”

The findings of this study supported Day et al.’s (2014) recommendation for studies on leadership development that are longitudinal, focusing on intrapersonal and interpersonal factors, as well as understanding personal and between-person changes, and considering group dynamics. The SALA program meets all of Day et al.’s (2014) recommendations through the length of the program and curriculum components. Dugan and Komives (2010) found in their research that

programs with optimal personal leadership development were of moderate duration in time. The SALA incorporated a semester of classroom-oriented learning, where many of the most impactful lessons were found, and then transitioned into experiential learning during the “sport for social change” lessons in the second semester and international service immersion trip in the summer. This method of leadership education aligns with previous research by Hernez-Broome and Hughes (2004) on the leadership education components necessary for leadership development which includes both class-oriented learning, service learning, and experiential learning. The length of the SALA program, one academic year, surpasses Dugan and Komives’ recommendation of a moderate duration timeframe for leadership programs, and this is important for student-athletes learning the breadth and depth of their leadership development journey.

Leadership Development and Identity Development. Carroll and Levy (2010) state that a method for achieving self-authorship was working on developing a person’s identity. While identity formation is ever-changing and fluid, developing a person’s identity is a tool for developing leadership (Carroll & Levy, 2010). A prominent theme that emerged from the data was identity development outside of sport. Kaya said, “I’ve done a lot of rebuilding who I am this year. I’ve learned what I stand for and who I want to be.” Separately, the components of the LID model related to identity work, *exploration and engagement* stage and *developing self* category, aligned with a large number of categories from the data. The *consciousness of self* value of the social change model aligned with more categories in the data than any other value. Therefore, the identity work and development that student-athletes experienced during the SALA program aids in their commitment to the *consciousness of self* value.

Zheng and Muir (2015) note when individuals develop an understanding of their identity at large, their leadership identity also becomes more salient. As seen in chapter four, student-

athletes developed an awareness of their identity outside of sport and gained a greater understanding of privilege and bias. This finding supports previous research on the relationship between identity development and leadership development contributing to self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2008; Baxter Magolda, 2014). The NCAA (2020) places a strong emphasis on athletic departments holistically developing student-athletes. Because many student-athletes felt they did not have an identity outside of their sport, this could mean that the current structure of the athletic department does not contribute to self-authorship through participation in sport alone. For example, Ryan said, “Before the [SALA], I couldn’t describe myself as anything other than an athlete. I’ve figured out who I am outside of [sport].” The quote regarding personal and leader development from chapter four demonstrate how the student-athletes did not identify as a leader at the beginning of their SALA experience and then moved through the *leader differentiated*, *generativity*, and *synthesis* stages and *broadening view of leadership* category as they came to identify themselves as leaders. This change and growth represent how the student-athletes’ leadership identity increased as they experienced identity development.

Service Learning

Eich (2003, 2005) found that service opportunities and experiential learning for college students increase the effectiveness for teaching leadership. Through the data analysis, the SALA components supported both service and experiential learning. Service opportunities in the SALA could be seen through the community service requirement, emphasis on social change, and the international service immersion trip. The *generativity* stage of the LID model correlates with the concept of service learning, and as such, the categories within the data that align with the *generativity* stage, as seen in Table 4.3, would also be related to service learning. The *group values* and *societal values* of the social change model also relate to service, and therefore, the

categories within the data that align with these values would also be related to service learning. The service-learning component was heavily stressed during the international service immersion trip where student-athletes were able to implement and place into action the lessons they learned throughout the year.

Separately, the SALA uses the social change model to teach the importance of social responsibility. Through class interactions and as shown in the quotes in chapter four, the student-athletes demonstrated understanding of their platform as an athlete and the importance of social responsibility. Tristan said, “I’ve learned the real influence that sport, and me as an athlete, can have in society. Not only on a personal scale, but on a global scale. Sport brings people together and can create lasting change.” As individuals who often maintain a high profile on a college campus or who may move into professional sports, the importance of social responsibility and service becomes increasingly visible and more important. Allowing the student-athletes to dedicate themselves to service and understand social responsibility early in their leadership journey may increase the positive impact the student-athletes have as they continue their athletic and leadership journeys.

Specialized Leadership Programs

Deal and Yarborough (2020) state, “Leadership development is most effective when students can put their new knowledge and self-awareness into practice.” (p. 8). For student-athletes, their campus involvement is primarily within their sport. Focusing on leadership development in terms of sport or in application to their role on their team provided an immediate opportunity for application similar to orientation leaders taking a leadership development course prior to orientation sessions. Deal and Yarborough (2020) found that the most effective leadership programs are those connected most closely to the student’s extracurricular interests.

The SALA, being a specific leadership program for student-athletes, supported Deal and Yarborough's (2020) claim that specialized leadership programs remain crucial to the success of the leadership program and effectiveness of leadership development.

Eich (2008) identified 16 programmatic attributes to high-quality leadership programs and found one attribute of high-quality leadership programs is the inclusion of students who share a common identity and engage in this smaller group. The SALA provided a space where student-athletes who were or who desired to be leaders on their team could share with other student-athletes to grow in their leadership development and be vulnerable and honest with one another. This was noted in the *community* category from the data. Allowing students the space to practice their leadership skills is another attribute to high-quality leadership programs (Eich, 2008). One student-athlete said, "Being a part of this community has changed my life. It's made me understand who I am and who I want to be. I'm forever grateful for this family." In the SALA, having a group of student-athletes who learned leadership skills and could immediately return to their teams to practice the skills allowed the students to "find their voice, gain self-efficacy ... and think about what leadership is in broader and inclusive ways" (Eich, 2008, p. 182). Therefore, having a leadership program tailored to the student-athletes can benefit leadership development programs while also providing a strong community for the students.

Unique Findings

The existing literature emphasizes the importance of assessing student learning throughout leadership programs to understand effectiveness. Roberts and Ullom (1989) argue that leadership programs should assess student learning throughout the program. At the end of the first semester of classes in the SALA, the student-athletes presented an individual reflection on their leadership development journey which demonstrates a self-assessment. However, after

this individual reflection, the SALA curriculum, assignments, or overall experience did not include formal assessments on student learning outside of group reflections on the international service immersion trip.

Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) suggest that there are short-term and long-term favorable outcomes to leadership programs. This study provides insight into the short-term favorable outcomes by following the leadership development journey of the student-athletes during their SALA experience. However, long-term favorable outcomes of a yearlong leadership program for student-athletes are unknown. Additionally, Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) state that leadership programs provide institutional and community improvements, and due to the nature of this study, improvements on the athletic teams, in the athletics department, or for the institution were not identifiable. As previously mentioned, the student-athletes did not experience the *awareness* stage of the LID model during their SALA experience. The literature on the LID model does not mention the possibility of certain student-leaders entering the model at different stages. The literature only noted that students are able to regress and progress through the model and that the model is not circular (Komives et al., 2009).

One key finding in the data was the sense of community that the student-athletes derived from their SALA experience. Student-athletes inherently compete on a team, and a team environment would ideally and should produce community. However, it was clear that the student-athletes did not find true community on their teams, and the environment of the SALA provided a sense of *true* community. A *true* community is defined by Scott M. Peck as an inclusive community that has experienced all stages of community, is conflict-resolving, and is focused on the good of the group rather than the good of the individual (Peck, 1987). Some student-athletes were able to identify gaps on their team where they were lacking community.

For example, Kaya said, “Learning about what an inclusive community actually means really hit me. Because I realized that my team is just a group of people with a collective interest. Not actually a community that is trying to actively better one another.” The sense of community, trust, vulnerability, and grace when making mistakes that the student-athletes found in the SALA was not their experience outside of the SALA community.

Another unique finding in the data was the increased understanding of the larger platform and influence that collegiate student-athletes possess compared to the general student population. Because student-athletes are often in the spotlight on a campus, the student-athletes in the SALA learned how to use their platform to create positive change. Some student-athletes from non-revenue generating sports teams (i.e., tennis, swimming, track and field) noted that they did not believe they had a platform because they were not as well-known as some student-athletes who play basketball or football. However, these student-athletes understood that just by being an athlete on campus, they have a larger platform and an ability to make change. Similarly, student-athletes participating in leadership programs have an immediate location, their team, to implement the lessons they are learning in the program with their team. This can be different than general population students participating in a leadership program who may not have a space to immediately execute the skills and lessons they learn in the program.

Recommendations and Implications

The data from this research evidenced that student-athletes do not experience leadership development within the LID model the same as their non-athlete peers. The data evidenced that the SALA program components were critical to developing the student-athlete as a person, leader, and athlete, moving the student-athlete through the LID model, and creating social responsibility as seen through a commitment to the social change model. Many student-athletes

had not experienced identity or leadership development before, and through the SALA, the student-athletes presented profound growth in these areas as demonstrated through the quotes and movement through the LID model. Additionally, the study found that many student-athletes are lacking community on their teams, and they found *true* community in the SALA. Lastly, many participants struggled to find joy in their sport which was re-ignited by participating in the SALA experience. Consistent with previous research (cite sources) recommendations, including formal assessments in a student-athlete leadership development program could increase the understanding of the effectiveness of the program on leadership development. The following section provides recommendations based on the research.

Curriculum Components

Because leadership programs in college athletics remain sparse, many student-athletes may receive formal leadership training through specialized leadership programs (Weaver, 2015). This is evidenced by the student-athlete specific leadership programs in the Southeastern Conference. There are no curriculum guides focused on the student-athlete leadership experience and little research on best practices or implementation of athletic leadership programs. In what few programs exist for student-athlete leadership development, there is no evidence that the programs are rooted in theoretical frameworks or the impact on the student-athlete experience. Through the SALA experience, student-athletes were able to move through the LID model and explore and achieve an identity as a leader, as well as experience profound personal growth. The student-athletes also gained an understanding of the social change model and their social responsibility not only as a student-athlete with a platform but as a leader when they leave college athletics.

The LID model is a widely accepted leadership development model for college students and has been applied to leadership programs and student leadership positions nationwide. In understanding the impacts of a two-semester academic course focusing on leadership identity development, sport for social change, and a service immersion trip, it became clear that student-athletes experienced the LID model differently than other students on campus. The exact cause for the difference in the way in which student-athletes experience the LID model is unknown. However, this may be because the SALA program was a yearlong immersive experience, the sense of community within the group, the shared identity as elite collegiate athletes, or due to the nomination and selection process for the SALA. Another contributing factor to why student-athletes may experience the LID model differently than other students could be the nature of participating in collegiate level sports lends itself to having a deeper understanding of leadership prior to entering a formal leadership program.

Athletic departments can craft theory-based leadership development programs that have similar curriculum components and learning outcomes for student-athletes as the SALA program. This research study supports the position that leadership development for student-athletes needs to place emphasis on personal, identity-focused lessons, include discussions on bias and privilege, and encourage vulnerability and trust. Because many student-athletes have not experienced formal leadership development before, the focus on identity outside of sport, the unique demands of life as a collegiate athlete, and leadership development specific to sport will be new and crucial elements to engaging and gaining buy-in with the student-athlete population and coaching staff.

Another crucial element to the curriculum is the social responsibility that student-athletes possess because of their platform on campus (Burton & Peachey, 2013; HERI, 1996; Parrish,

2021) . Having a larger sphere of influence is a trait that is unique to student-athletes participating in leadership programs and a topic that should be considered when developing student-athlete specific leadership programs. Leadership development programs for student-athletes also should strive to develop a true community within the leadership program to provide a safe place that promotes growth as people, leaders, and athletes since student-athletes may not be experiencing community on their respective teams.

While the SALA curriculum and structure provided an incredible growth experience for student-athletes, the program is not a universal approach to student-athlete leadership development. However, the areas of focus as seen in the SALA, including personal and identity focused lessons, discussions on bias and privilege, and vulnerability and trust, should be at the forefront for athletics departments developing student-athlete leadership development programs. Athletic departments can cultivate leadership development in student-athletes and place student-athlete leaders in conversation with other student leaders on campus who experience the LID model. Additional research is needed to understand the transferability of the SALA curriculum components—identity development, experiential learning, trust, vulnerability, servant leadership and others—to a larger percentage of the student-athlete population. If NCAA institutions are truly focused on holistically developing student-athletes and preparing the student-athletes for life after graduation, the number of student-athlete specific leadership programs needs to increase. This study is one example demonstrating that student-athletes are in need of identity and leadership development. If implemented effectively, the SALA experience could promote leadership identity development via the LID model and growth as people, leaders, and athletes for over 500,000 student-athletes in the NCAA (NCAA, 2020).

Adaptability to Other Institutions

The SALA program is well-funded and supported by the administration at a large, Division I institution. The program has three athletic department staff members dedicated to teaching the curriculum and is donor funded. Few collegiate athletic departments likely have the financial or staff capacity to support a program similar to the SALA. A more focused curriculum or different leadership framework, a shorter program duration, or a partnership approach to delivering the content would be useful in providing leadership development to student-athletes. For example, athletics departments can partner with student affairs staff who have leadership development expertise to create student-athlete specific leadership development programs (Wildfire, 2021).

Some institutions have weekend leadership retreats or monthly trainings for leadership development for student-athletes; however, the benefits of having a yearlong program of bi-weekly classes were clear for the SALA participants. If a yearlong curriculum of academic courses were not possible, institutions should try and maintain a moderate duration program (Dugan & Komives, 2010) and retain the same student-athletes in the program throughout the experience to emphasize the community aspect of the program. Additionally, instead of an international service immersion trip, institutions without the fiscal means to travel abroad could participate in a domestic trip or serve their local communities. It would be important for these service experiences to be immersive, include multiple days, and take student-athletes away from campus for a period of time to allow the group to be invested in their work and away from their daily routines.

Finding Joy in Sport Again

Student-athletes heavily rely on their athletic identity where competition becomes the focus of their time and goals. Many of these student-athletes lose their passion or joy for their sport because of the level of competition, stress, and nature of playing at an elite level. The lack of joy in playing their sport that many student-athletes experienced should be a point of concern for athletic department staff. With increased mental health issues, societal pressures, and other stresses, athletic departments need to place an emphasis on ensuring student-athletes find joy in sport, especially considering the amount of time and fiscal resources spent for each student-athlete to play. As evidence in the SALA, fostering connections between student-athletes of different sports and focusing on the positive change that sport can create in society, allowed student-athletes to grow personally and as leaders in their respective athletic environments. This leadership program experience can help student athletes find their “why” once again and re-discover joy in their sport which could lead to increased performance and have positive effects on the student-athlete outside of sport.

Community

Many student-athletes in the SALA stated how their experience was “life changing” and one they would never forget. The positive impact that the community within the SALA and the SALA leadership development experience cultivated within the student-athletes is a huge incentive for future student-athletes to participate in the SALA program. The student-athletes in the SALA commented on how they had never experienced true community before and would never have built relationships with athletes from other sports without the SALA experience. The lack of community that student-athletes experience on their teams and within the athletic department as a whole should be a point of concern for athletic department staff. Athletic

department leadership should take notice of the desire and importance that community played in the student-athletes' lives and strive to develop this true community between student-athletes on their campuses.

Additionally, when creating a leadership development program, athletic department staff should be cautious not to promote exclusivity in selecting student-athletes for the program. Some student-athletes in the SALA noted that before they were accepted into the program, they believed the program was elite or exclusive, but after participating, they found a community of supportive peers. This is a point of concern for athletic departments that create leadership programs with an application or nomination process. While staff may want student-athletes to be committed and dedicated to the leadership development journey, the lessons learned from a leadership development program are important for the entire student-athlete population. As such, whenever possible, it is important to implement the leadership and identity development lessons for a greater population of student-athletes to aid in their holistic development and encourage the skills needed for life after graduation. This could be completed during individual team meetings, retreats, or monthly trainings open to all student-athletes in addition to a program like the SALA for student-athletes who want to commit and dedicate themselves to a yearlong leadership development program.

Future Research

This study began in 2020, the year the COVID-19 pandemic spread across college campuses, which had substantial effects on the SALA program. Student-athletes were placed in quarantine and had to attend class via Zoom, class activities were altered to promote social distancing, and overall attitude towards sport and athletics changed. This undoubtedly impacted the data; therefore, this study could be replicated to produce similar and/or different findings.

Additionally, this study was conducted at a large, southeastern Division I university, and the results could differ for institutions of varying sizes, faith-based institutions, or with focus participants of different sports and backgrounds. Topics that emerged during the study which could provide additional research topics include: the impact of the SALA experience on student-athletes after graduation, the impact of the SALA program on individual versus team sport athletes, the impact of the SALA program on revenue generating sports versus non-revenue generating sports, and the impact of the SALA program for specific populations of student-athletes including race, gender, religion, nationality, or class. Future research could also focus on identity achievement, or the process of exploring and committing to identity, outside of leadership identity (see Marcia, 1989; Day et al., 2014).

This research study represented the leadership development of student-athletes as they experienced the SALA program. The coaches who nominated the student-athletes for participation in the SALA program had strong relationships with them. The coaches could be able to contribute valuable insights on how they noticed individual student-athletes developing as leaders or how SALA participants have impacted their teams. Another key aspect of the SALA program was the international service immersion trip. While the trip had a clear personal impact on many of the student-athletes, research could explore whether leadership development differs for student-athletes who attend the trip versus those that were unable to attend (transferred schools, competition season, COVID-19 restrictions, etc.).

Sally G. Parrish published the Student Athlete Leadership Identity Development Model is acutely relevant to the research in this study (Parrish, 2021). Future research could include an analysis of the data in this study or of the SALA program using the Student Athlete Leadership Development Model (Parrish, 2021). Jessica Wildfire published a phenomenological study of the

influence on leadership identity and social responsibility of former student-athletes who participated in a leadership program. Similar to this study, Wildfire found that student-athletes experience leadership identity development differently than their non-athlete peers. Future research could use Parrish's Student Athlete Leadership Identity Development model to conduct a case study of student-athletes during and after they complete a leadership program, combining the methods used in this study and the method's used in Wildfire's phenomenology (Parrish, 2021; Wildfire, 2021). Additionally, to better understand if student-athletes experience the *awareness* stage of the LID model, future research could examine student-athletes awareness of leadership prior to their entry into the SALA program.

Conclusion

The discussion on leadership development for student-athletes needs to be a larger discussion for athletic departments. Athletic departments have a responsibility to commit to the holistic development of student-athletes, including their leadership development. If these programs are developed correctly, more student-athletes will experience formal, research-based leadership development. By using an existing theory or leadership development model, such as the LID and social change models, the leadership development journey of student-athletes can be more clearly identified, assessed, and compared. This research study followed the leadership development journey of 20 student-athletes in a yearlong leadership development program, which included two academic courses and an international service immersion trip. Data collection and analysis evidenced the impact the program had on the leadership development of the student-athletes, revealing that they moved through the LID model, identified themselves as leaders and gained a broader understanding of their role as leaders. Additionally, the results showed student-athletes understood the values in the social change model and the importance of

using their platform as a student-athlete and leader to create positive change. SALA participants experienced profound personal and leadership growth through their experience and developed skills that positively influenced their personal and athletic identities. Most importantly, the student-athletes learned how to be impactful leaders in their sport and in life beyond sport which could have lasting impacts for years to come.

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Appendices

Appendix A Informed Consent Document

The [REDACTED] Experience Informed Consent Form

You are invited to be part of a research study being conducted by Hannah Johnson and my advisor, Dr. Patrick Biddix, at [REDACTED]. You are being invited because you are participating in the [REDACTED]. Being in this research study is voluntary, and you should only agree if you completely understand the study and want to volunteer to allow your information to be used. This form contains information that will help you decide if you want to be part of this research study or not. Please take the time to read it carefully, and if there is anything you do not understand, please ask questions.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the leadership and identity development of student-athletes in [REDACTED]. I plan to write a dissertation, submit publications, and make conference presentations to share the results of this research.

Participation

As you know, I have been sitting in on the [REDACTED] classes this year as part of an independent study to learn about conducting research. I have been taking notes and observations during class sessions. For most of you, if you agree to participate in the study, I will analyze the notes for my dissertation. Because these notes were taken during classes that are part of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] agreeing to participate in the research will not require any additional time.

In addition, I have worked with a few of you to submit journals and complete interviews with you for my independent study. If you agree to participate in the study, the journal entries and the interview recordings will also be used for in the research. I would also like to continue the journal and interview processes during and after the trip [REDACTED], if you are willing.

Benefit

You may not receive any direct benefit from allowing your information to be used in the research project, but we hope to learn things that will benefit the [REDACTED] and the field of college athletics in the future. You may find it rewarding, however, throughout the course of the study, to reflect on your own experiences within the [REDACTED] and have the opportunity to share your voice regarding how this leadership education training impacted or changed you.

Risks

This research is considered to be no more than minimal risk, which means there is no more expected risk to you than what you might experience during a typical day. There is the risk of possible loss of confidentiality, as someone could find out you were in the study or see your study information, but we believe that risk is unlikely because of the procedures we will use to protect your information.

It is also possible that you may feel pressured to agree to be in this study due to many factors. For that reason, my advisor, Dr. Biddix, will collect these consent forms and store them for the rest of the semester. I will not know whether you consent to my using your information or not until after grades are submitted.

Confidentiality

If you agree to allow your information to be used in the research, I will assign you a pseudonym (fake name) and use that instead of your name on all of the materials before I begin analyzing them for the research study. These materials will be stored in a password-protected storage drive. No information which could identify you will be shared in publications and presentations about this study.

Your name, sport, and race, will not be used in the report of results. Gender and whether you plan a team/individual sport may be used to describe participants, but no other details that might allow you to be identified. The results of this research will be shared with the staff of [REDACTED]. However, they will not know who agreed to be in the research and who did not.

Future Research

Your information may be used for future research studies or shared with other researchers for use in future studies without obtaining additional informed consent from you. If this happens, all of your identifiable information will be removed before any future use or sharing with other researchers.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, please contact me, Hannah Johnson, at hjohns56@utk.edu or 770-241-0416 or my advisor, Patrick Biddix, at pbiddix@utk.edu or 865-974-6157. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of [REDACTED]. You may also contact the IRB with any problems, complaints or concerns you have about a research study.

Voluntary Participation

It is completely up to you to decide to be in this research study. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind at any time by telling Dr. Biddix or myself. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer, or if you change your mind and stop being in the study later. If you do not wish to be in the research, it is not necessary to do anything, as I cannot use your materials without your consent.

Consent

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I understand that my participation in this research study includes allowing Hannah Johnson to use my information for research purposes. I agree to be included in this study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B

Participant Recruitment Email

Participant Recruitment Follow Up Email

Dear *[insert name]*,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study about the journey of a student-athlete through the [REDACTED]. The goal of the study is to determine how a student athlete develops as a person, leader, and athlete throughout the [REDACTED] experience. I obtained your contact information from [REDACTED], and you are eligible to participate because you are in the [REDACTED].

If you decide to participate in this study, you agree to have information recorded in my class observation notes used for research purposes. Additionally, some of you have participated in interviews and journals which, if you agree, will be used in the research project. you will be asked to write a journal response each week and participate in one interview per month (up to 90 minutes). Your identity will not be used in data collection.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. My advisor, Dr. Patrick Biddix, will be coming to class soon to review the project and obtain a signed consent form from you. Please take time to review this form before class on [INSERT DATE].

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Hannah Johnson

Hjohns56@utk.edu

770-241-0416

Appendix C

IRB Approved Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol with COVID-19 Considerations

It is important to note that the research team will take every precaution to ensure the health and safety of both the participants and the researcher amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The research team will abide by all [REDACTED] health and safety guidelines.

The interviews will take place via Zoom in order to limit additional in-person interaction. Zoom interviews will be password protected, and all interviews will be recorded with participant's knowledge and consent. Interviews will take place once per month.

Participant involvement also includes weekly journaling of participants growth and development throughout the course. To avoid passing paper journals between participants and the researcher, journaling will take place via the [REDACTED] private Google Drive. Only the one participant and the researcher will have access to the shared Google Drive. The participant will type the answers to the journal prompts rather than writing answers in a journal. To encourage detailed journaling and ease of the process for student athletes, the researcher will allow participants to voice record responses to the journal prompts if preferred. The researcher would then transcribe the voice recordings. The researcher will then thematically code and analyze the typed or recorded responses.

Interview Questions

1. What have you learned about yourself as a person within the past month?
 - a. As a leader?
 - b. As an athlete?
2. Do you notice any changes in your perception of yourself or others? If yes, please explain.
3. Do you notice any changes in your interactions with others? If yes, please explain.
4. What skills have you obtained from the [REDACTED] class within the past month?
5. What is the lesson that impacted you the most in the past month?
6. Share your thoughts and experiences with [REDACTED] from the past month.

Journal Prompts

1. What is the biggest lesson you learned from [REDACTED] class this week?
2. What did you learn about yourself this week? (Think: as a person, leader, and athlete.)

Appendix D IRB Approval



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

February 09, 2021

Hannah Marie Johnson,

UTK - Stokely Family Residence

Re: UTK IRB-21-06246-XP

Study Title: [REDACTED]

Dear Hannah Marie Johnson:

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application for the above referenced project. It determined that your application is eligible for expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1), **category/ies (5) (6) and (7)**. The IRB has reviewed these materials and determined that they do comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes full approval by the IRB of your application (version 1.0) as submitted, including Informed Consent v 1.0, Interview Protocol with COVID v 1.0, and Recruitment Materials v 1.0 that have been dated and stamped IRB approved. You are approved to enroll a maximum of 20 participants. Approval of this study will be valid from 02/09/2021 to 02/08/2022.

Please note that restrictions are in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and all in-person contact with research participants is on hold until further notice.

- Newly-approved studies with in-person interactions may not begin enrollment until further notice from the IRB/HRPP. Please submit a UTK Request to Resume In-Person Research Activity During COVID-19 if you wish to receive an exception to institutional restrictions. See <https://irb.utk.edu/covid-19/> for complete forms and instructions.
- Newly-approved studies with no in-person participant interaction may begin after receiving IRB approval.

The in-person activities to be analyzed for research purposes in your study are carried out as instructional activity, not as research activity, and thus do not require approval of a Request to Resume In-Person Research Activity.

Please monitor the COVID-19 Updates at <https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/faq/> for the latest information. Human Subjects Research updates are being filed under Information for Instructors/Research.

Any revisions in the approved application, consent forms, instruments, recruitment materials, etc., must be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subjects or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, re-approval of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,



Lora Beebe, Ph.D., PMHNP-BC, FAAN

Chair

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement
1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7697 865-974-7400 fax irb.utk.edu

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Flagship Campus of the University of Tennessee System 

Vita

Originally from Georgia, Hannah M. Johnson fell in love with sports at an early age. Playing soccer, basketball, volleyball and swimming, the innate competitive drive and ability to grow and learn from sports led Hannah to be passionate about this research topic. Hannah attended Berry College where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and competed on the NCAA swim team. While at Berry College, Hannah also participated in many leadership activities leading to the initial interest in leadership through sport. Hannah attended the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for a Master's in Science in College Student Personnel where she had the opportunity to work first-hand with student-athletes and further her passion for student-athlete development. Hannah continued to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Higher Education Administration while continuing her research interest in student-athlete development. She is incredible grateful to her faculty, colleagues, staff, family, and friends who encouraged, supported, and challenged her through her graduate studies and beyond.