

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETES AND STRESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES' ADMINISTRATORS

Arturo Rodriguez

Assistant Professor of Management
University of Louisiana at Monroe
College of Business and Social Sciences
Monroe, Louisiana

ABSTRACT

This article explores the difficulties that international student-athletes encounter while attending an institution of higher education in the U.S. Most international student-athletes are able to quickly adapt to their new environment; however, there are some that struggle to integrate themselves into the new culture and the new team environment. Many stressors are the same for international students and international student-athletes; however, student-athletes face additional stressors related to maintaining a scholarship and on-court / on-field performance, as well as team dynamics and their relationship with their coach or coaching staff. Student athlete stressors and coping mechanisms are explored and analyzed in the grounded theory study. Implications for college and university administrators, as well as coaches are also explored.

INTRODUCTION

Demand for premium higher education, coupled with globalization and an expanding middle class in developing countries have increased the number of international students that pursue degrees in the United States. The total number of international students increased by 8% in 2008/2009, while new enrollments increased by 16% during the same period. This represents the largest percentage increase in new enrollments since 1980. The total number of international students who are pursuing higher education degrees in the United States totaled 671,616 during the 2008-2009 academic year; while the previous year the total was 623,805; this represents a 7.7% increase. The highest number of international students comes from countries like India (15.4%), China (14.5%), South Korea (11.2%), and Canada (4.4%) (Open Doors 2009).

International students provide several benefits to U.S. universities' classrooms. According to Lee and Rice (2007, p. 1), these benefits include increased diversity in college campuses that generate different opinions and points of view within the classroom, and an increased awareness of different cultures that domestic students gain from international students. Furthermore, international students also bring knowledge and expertise in technical areas such as engineering, technology, and sciences.

International students have received much attention from academic researchers throughout the years; however, the fact that a good portion of international students are also athletes has been largely ignored. According to the

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), during the year 2008-2009, 8.4% of all student-athletes in all divisions (divisions I, II, and III) of NCAA sanctioned sports are international student-athletes (NCAA Ethnicity Report, 2010, p. 6). The organization reports that there were 420,000 student-athletes participating in 23 sports at 1,000 member institutions during the 2008-2009 academic year. If the proportion of international student-athletes is 8.4%, then there are approximately 35,000 international student-athletes competing in NCAA sanctioned sports. This number does not include other collegiate athletic associations such as the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), which also sanctions intercollegiate sports and which undoubtedly has international student-athletes in its ranks. These athletes represent a significant portion of the U.S. international student population who may be exposed to increased levels of stress related to culture shock and adaptation issues, university life, academic requirements, as well as on-court/on-field performance requirements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Would-be international students trying to pursue an education in the U.S. may encounter difficulties before they even set foot on American soil. More stringent immigration regulations make it harder to obtain student visas. In addition to the immigration difficulties that international students may encounter, social factors also affect these individuals ability to succeed as international students. Moreover, additional stress is placed on students when

trying to determine basic academic procedures, living arrangements, and forging meaningful social relationships. International students have to contend with daunting cultural adjustments, yet the educational institutions places the responsibility of adapting to the new environment solely on the students, instead of at least attempting to accommodate some of their needs (Lee & Rice).

Culture Shock

The use of the term "culture shock" is widespread amongst international students. Culture shock is nothing more than an attempt to describe the difficulties that individuals encounter when making the transition from one culture (their own, or one to which they are familiar) to a different one. This transition is characterized by feelings of disorientation and loss that are related to the cultural differences to which the individual is exposed. Additionally, this transition may precipitate social isolation that can be caused by actual or perceived racial discrimination, lack of English proficiency, as well as conflict with the host culture, which the individual may not be able to grasp (McLachlan & Justice, 2009).

As previously stated, all new learning situations bring about feelings of anxiety, fear, loss, disorientation, and stress. For an international student, the need to adopt the host culture as a new way of life may just be a defense mechanism, as well as a strategy of adaptation and an attempt to social belonging. Nonetheless, this process of adaptation is not an easy one because it "demands a process of resocialization, involving the unlearning of old social patterns and their substitution by new ways of thinking and behaving" (Brown & Brown, p. 345, 2009). Conflict arises in an individual when the realization surfaces that there are dissimilarities in cultural values from an individual's home country and the host country. This conflict is often characterized by high levels of uncertainty and normlessness which will prevail until the individual makes proper adjustments (Brown & Brown).

Stress and Anxiety

Stress among international students

Different studies on stress have demonstrated that stress is felt on an individual basis rather than along the lines of specific cultures. What a specific individual may perceive as a peril, another one may see as a challenge to seize on. The extent to which a student experiences stress depends on a combination of different factors such as language proficiency, level of familiarity with the academic system, and the length of time that the student has spent in the new environment (Sovic, 2008). Some issues that

may be factors in the level of stress international students experience include weather differences, food differences, academic and social differences, feelings of homesickness, loneliness, pressure to perform due to academic and/or financial pressures, and reluctance to seek help (McLachlan & Justice). Other factors may be less evident, such as gender and age. International students can have similar causes of stress as local students; however, international students are more likely to encounter situations in which these stressors are compounded, making it more difficult to deal with such situations (Sovic).

Some international students have reported perception of racism as a cause of stress. Such instances include on-campus interactions with faculty and administrators, as well as the denial of financial assistance, scholarships, and/or job opportunities. Some off-campus interactions in which students experienced discrimination include daily living experiences such as living accommodations and shopping. It is not possible to accurately know how much of those reports corresponds to actual discrimination caused by language barriers, foreign status, or race, and how much is just a case of misperception. However, it is clear that students from Asia, India, Latin America, and the Middle East report considerable more discrimination instances than those from European countries, Canada or New Zealand (Lee & Rice).

According to Abbassi and Stacks, feelings of anxiety amongst international students are universal, meaning that all international students will experience these feelings; however, they also suggest that the intensity of these feelings varies across cultures and gender (2007).

Stress among student-athletes

According to Kimball and Freysinger (2003), student-athletes participation in collegiate sports can be distressing; however, "it was also a source of positive stress and a means of coping, [...] student-athletes constantly negotiate the distress their sport participation engenders" (p. 134). The stress that student-athletes experience is of both a positive (eustress) and negative (distress) nature, and this stress is constantly changing according to different situations and over time. Additionally, the capacity that student-athletes who effectively deal with eustress or distress rely on resources that are available to them and to the abilities that they have developed to deal with stress (Kimball & Freysinger).

Distress in student-athletes can manifest itself due to highly demanding situations that act in conjunction with an individual's limited emotional abilities to effectively cope with those situations. Although stress may not be acute in every single sport, it is nonetheless present in all

sports and experienced by nearly all athletes. For athletes, the ability to effectively cope with stress becomes imperative to achieve a high level of performance (Anshel, Williams, & Williams, 2000).

Aside from academic requirements, student-athletes are required to perform at a high level on the field or court. However, high performance level is not the only stressor that these student-athletes face every time they compete; they constantly face the following stressors:

- a physical or mental error;
- a reprimand from the coach;
- cheating by an opponent;
- an opponent's performance success;
- pain or discomfort;
- an undesirable, or "bad", call by the official; and
- environmental condition (Anshell, et.al., p. 758).

Previous studies have reflected that student-athletes' happiness is significantly correlated to internal personality factors such as self-esteem, lack of distress, and mindfulness. In this instance, mindfulness indicates that student-athletes favor the ability to make adjustments to ever-changing situations, which in turn leads to an increase in happiness levels that is specific to different aspects of life. This is significant, given that these internal personality factors are more significant to a student-athlete's level of happiness than external factors such as scholarships and playing time (Denny & Steiner, 2009).

Coping With Stress

Student-athletes need to cope with stress in two different dimensions. These two different dimensions have to do with the type of stress the individual is facing: stress that is faced while performing in the individual's sport, and the stress that is related to academic and social life.

Successfully coping with stress while on the field or court requires a different mindset than coping with stress in any other setting. While performing on the field or court the individual needs to engage in "preplanned cognitive and motor responses" that will allow him/her to perform at a high level even after having experienced a coach's reprimand, a bad call, or a successful attack by the individual's opponent (Anshel, et. al. p. 758); whereas coping with other forms of stress will consist of defining the problem or issue that is causing distress, generating alternative solutions, evaluating the alternatives, choosing the best suited alternative, and implementing the alternative as a solution to the problem. In the context of being in the field of play

or the court, the athlete may not have the time to engage in such process (Anshel et. al.).

The problems that international student-athletes face are not new, and these students have found ways in which they can cope with the stresses that they face. Some of these coping mechanisms consist of creating a surrogate family; become close to faculty and finding mentors; make friends fast; make more American friends; develop confidence, independence and openness; and using university services (McLachlan & Justice). Although these coping strategies work well, not all international students are willing to try them. Moreover, international students report that making American friends is a difficult, slow, and frustrating process while also expressing a desire to have more and deeper interactions American students (McLachlan & Justice).

METHODOLOGY

Setting and Sample

The study took place at a public university located in Northeast Louisiana. The name of the student-athletes and the sport in which they compete are not disclosed in order to protect their privacy. The institution in which the study took place has 272 student-athletes, of which 23 are international student-athletes. The research process consisted of interviews with 12 out of a total of 15 international student-athletes who are business majors. The decision to use business majors was made in order to have a more homogeneous sample that would be exposed to similar levels of academic stress. The sample was made up of 2 freshmen, 2 sophomores, 4 juniors, 2 seniors, and 2 graduate students from a non-NCAA sanctioned sport.

Sample descriptive statistics

The sample consists of 7 male athletes and 5 female athletes; additionally, 9 different countries were represented in the sample, and they were distributed as follows: 3 students came from the Czech Republic, 2 from the Republic of South Africa, and 1 each from Israel, Brazil, Jamaica, Holland, France, Sweden and Australia. Four of the students in the sample are native English speakers; moreover, four students who are not native English speakers indicated that they were proficient in English when they arrived to the campus. The sample also indicated that four students had been to the U.S. prior to their arrival to the University, while the rest had never been to the U.S. before. The sports represented in the sample include: tennis (4), water ski (3), golf (3), and track and field (2). All of the students joined their teams as freshmen except for one

student who transferred to the institution from a junior college.

Procedure

Prior to starting the research study, the researcher submitted a proposal for the study and informed consent form to the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher did not provide any financial incentive to the participants of the study, and the student-athletes' participation in the research study was strictly voluntary. Student-athletes also had the option to terminate their participation in the study at any time they wished. The interviews were conducted in the researcher's office and at different places located on or off campus. The interviews were somewhat informal and the questions that were asked often spurred conversations that were unique to the interviewee; but significant to the research study. The interviews lasted 30 to 90 minutes.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data yielded from the interview process was codified and analyzed in order to develop hypotheses and theory as prescribed by the grounded theory method of research, which is an alternative to formal theory development that reduces ethnocentrism. Grounded theory is "derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p 23). Through the use of this method, theory is generated, expanded, and corroborated through the collection and analysis of data that corresponds to the phenomenon of interest. In grounded theory, the researcher does not start with a theory in mind in order to prove it, but, starts with a particular area of research and whatever is relevant to that area of research is then used to develop theory (Strauss & Corbin). Sampling must continue to be conducted until the "point of theoretical saturation" is reached. This saturation point means that sampling will continue to be performed until:

1. No new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category;
2. the category development is dense, insofar as all of the paradigm elements are accounted for, along with variation and process;
3. the relationships between categories are well established and validated (Strauss & Corbin).

FINDINGS

The findings illustrate some of the difficulties that international student-athletes encounter when arriving to the campus as well as experiences gathered throughout their academic careers. A summary table of findings is located in Appendix A.

The Journey Begins: Coming to School in the United States

Initial impressions of their new surroundings

The great majority of subjects reported feeling out of place immediately, or that the place was not very nice or just plain different. Some felt unhappy and lonely, while others noticed that people in the area were "nice and caring". Students noted that it was hard to be at school a week early when the campus is empty because they do not have anybody with whom they can spend time, and most if not all university services are closed.

Characterizing the transition to their new surroundings

In terms of transitioning to their new housing accommodations, campus, and community a minority of students reported hard and slow transitions; it is important to note that the students that claimed to have slow and hard transitions had a hard time integrating themselves into their respective athletic teams, and having difficulties trying to communicate with others. The great majority of those interviewed felt that the transition was easy and almost pain free.

Preconceived ideas about the area/school

When asked about their preconceptions about the school and the area, most students responded that they did not know what to expect. However a few had been in different areas of the United States before, and thought that life in Louisiana would be similar. A couple of students were told (while in their home countries) that the area had very conservative and religious views and that they should keep their views and opinions to themselves.

Researching the area or school

Most students did not heavily research the area or the institution prior to coming to school. Most of them did come to the school because other athletes that they knew from their own country were already there. These students relied on personal connections over any other fac-

tors such as school or athletic program reputation, size, location, or team success level. Additionally, the majority of the students (7 out of the 12 interviewed) had other options from which to choose.

Moreover, most students who had additional offers chose this institution because of the type of offer presented to them, while others chose the school because of the warmer climate that is characteristic to the area. A small number of students picked the school because of the description of the team and practice facilities that coaches provided to them.

Adapting to the New Environment

Biggest obstacles

The main obstacle that students encountered when they got to the school was the lack of adequate public transportation and the need for a car; hence the need to rely on teammates who already had a car. Another big obstacle for them was the cafeteria food, which most characterized as "not good", most found that it was difficult to perform at a high level while undergoing abrupt changes in diet. Additionally, students reported time management as being a challenge, since they have to be able to successfully juggle academic as well as athletic requirements.

Developing friendships

Students reported that it is very easy to make friends on campus. All students reported having more international friends than American friends; however, these friends tend to be international student-athletes as well. It appears that international student-athletes do not share meaningful relationships with international students who are not athletes. A few international student-athletes did mention that they had a diverse group of friends; however, most of those friends were athletes.

Factors that help students to adapt

All students reported that the team environment helped them adapt to their new environment. Some also mentioned the coach as being an important factor, as well as having teammates that are from the same country. A few students mentioned that friends who are enrolled at other schools also helped them to adapt to their new surroundings. Additionally, some of them thought school academics were less demanding than they had anticipated.

Negative and Positive Feeling Ideation

Negative feelings experienced while transitioning

Most students reported feeling homesick; moreover, they reported that feelings of homesickness and loneliness were more prevalent while being alone in their dorm room, or while doing school work. Some of them reported feeling overwhelmed over the amount of schoolwork they had to do at one time. They did specify, however, that the feeling of being overwhelmed was not something they would consider to be stressful. Yet, a couple of students reported second-guessing their decision to come to the United States to pursue a college degree when feeling overwhelmed with schoolwork, or when having to take general education classes. They mentioned experiencing an "identity crisis" and thinking to themselves "who am I, and what am I doing here?" Other students voiced their displeasure with the fact that they had to take general education classes as opposed to just classes that are related to their field of study.

Coping with negative feelings

When asked what they did to cope with negative feelings, most students replied that they would spend time with friends and/or teammates, do fun things to distract themselves, or talk to parents on the phone or internet. A small minority did mention that they would just "tough it out".

Positive experiences

Students reported competition as their top positive experience. Coupled with competition, winning awards and/or being recognized for their efforts on the field or court was also highly ranked. Others commented on how well they felt when interacting with their friends and/or teammates, as well as traveling around the country and seeing different places.

Experiencing adverse situations

The most common adverse situation reported was experiencing conflict with coaches. Additionally, experiencing conflict with teammates was also a problem for these students. Some students reported that coaches were tough during practices and during competition; this situation caused these students to stop enjoying practices and competition. Some of the interviewees (who were not in the football team) reported thinking that coaches were treating them like "football players", and felt coaches were not able to adequately discipline, motivate, or offer constructive criticism.

Coping with adverse situations

Students held meetings within the team to resolve conflict between teammates and coaches. They also mentioned that a lot of the time they just ignored those teammates that were a negative force within the team. Some of them asked their parents for advice on how to deal with conflicts with teammates and coaches.

Theory Development

The data collection phase yielded responses that were similar to the findings of the literature review. After coding the responses from the survey participants, several common responses were found that allow the researcher to develop several hypotheses:

1. International student athletes are more likely to successfully adapt to their new environment when they are able to integrate themselves into their respective athletic teams.
2. International student athletes tend to form strong relationships primarily with other international student athletes regardless of whether or not they are part of the same athletic team, or from the same country.
3. Competition and practice help international student athletes cope with the stress of academic life in a foreign country.
4. International student athletes believe that the presence of conflict within their team affects their performance in academic and athletic life.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION

The first issue that all levels of the university (especially coaches and athletic counselors) need to realize is that, primarily, international student athletes come to the United States to obtain a college education. A small percentage of these athletes join the professional ranks after their university career is over; however, most of these international student athletes' priorities and focus are to obtain their college degree.

College of business and social sciences administrators and faculty

Based on the responses derived from the interviews, it was clear that the university's college of business was doing a good job at satisfying the needs of international student-

athletes. College of business administrators, however, need to be cognizant of the additional stress to which international student athletes are subjected; thus scheduling the classes that these athletes need to take at times when their practices typically take place disrupts the students' ability to fulfill their commitment to their teams.

Faculty need to be flexible in their scheduling of exams or major evaluations so that these students are able to make up major assignments and exams if they missed those due to travelling requirements imposed by their sport. Faculty members should also be cognizant of low levels of academic performance from international student athletes, as this may be a sign of additional stress faced in the students' personal life or a sign of conflict within the students' team. Faculty members also need to be aware that a lot of these student athletes' first language is not English; therefore, offering additional support, explanation of some concepts or words that may not be clear to these students would help these students to be successful in the classroom.

University administration and staff

University administrators need to develop systems and procedures that minimize stress when a new international student arrives on campus. International students in general reported that being on campus a week early is very tough on them because the campus is empty and nothing around campus is open. Moreover, most international student athletes are used to being part of a team. Being on campus alone with no teammates around may exacerbate feelings of loneliness and distress. Coaches need to make sure that they (or a teammate) are available to mentor these students prior to the start of the semester; this would minimize the feelings of stress to which international students athletes are often subjected when they first arrive to their new environment. According to the survey participants, the registration process at this particular university is extremely confusing for them; thus, it is recommended that the athletic teams assign a mentor that could provide guidance to international student athletes through the initial process of registration as well as the other administrative procedures of which they need to take care upon arriving.

Conflict resolution between coaches and team members

International student-athletes would like a clear understanding of what to do and in whom to confide when problems arise with their coaches. International student athletes are typically afraid of bringing to light conflicts with coaches to university administrators due to fear of

retaliation or loss of scholarship support. Due to this fear, athletic counselors should be trained to listen to these athletes when they complain about their coaches or assistant coaches. Having a coordinator that oversees the coaches' performance for the university as a whole may not suffice if the issues are not brought up to the coordinator's attention. Therefore, the counselors could become the point of contact for student athletes to voice their concerns, especially if more than one complaint has been raised against one specific coach or coaching staff. The coordinator can then launch an investigation and can protect student athletes from retaliation. This type of process would better encourage international student athletes to come forward with situations that may have arisen with their coaches or teammates. Furthermore, these counselors should also be able to spot lower levels of academic and athletic performance, as this could be a sign of increased levels of stress. Once lower performance levels are spotted, the athletic counselor can set up a meeting with the athlete in question to determine the cause of the dip in performance. A high level of trust must be first developed between individual athletes and their counselors by ensuring confidentiality in all of their conversations.

Faculty and coaches

Most of the interviewees reported not feeling stressed about the prospects of losing their scholarship due to their academic or athletic performance. Most of the stress these student-athletes felt was self-inflicted because they wanted to make a good first impression. However, not all stress was self-inflicted as some international student athletes mentioned that their coach put excessive pressure on them during competition and practices, making it very difficult for them to perform at a high level. The same group of athletes mentioned that seeing one of their teammates quit the team during practice due to the coach's pressure put additional stress on them. Most of these athletes were in the same team and reported instances of excessive force bordering on abuse, punitive practices to those who complained, and favoritism towards other members of the team exhibited from their coaches. Some of the members of this team also made it clear that they do not want to invite friends from their home countries to play for their team, and firmly believe that there are better schools for whom to play to pursue their college education; thus, by conducting tough practices these coaches are hurting their own athletic programs and making recruiting more difficult for themselves.

Coaches need to be sensitive to the fact that the way in which they conduct their practices has an effect on the athletes' motivation, academic and athletic performance, and in the way the team members will relate to each other.

By engaging in the type of practices that are mentioned above, the team as a whole performs in a poorer manner, team members feel alienated, and may ultimately start to question their decision to pursue their education in the United States.

Most student-athletes reported that when the season for their sport is ongoing, it is very easy to fall behind in their academic work; thus careful planning is a must for them. Most students plan on a weekly basis, a situation that sometimes causes them additional stress. Most international student athletes reported that their coaches were flexible when the athletes' amount of academic work they had to complete increased, but some teams have coaches who are not as experienced managing a team and who may cause these athletes to add increased levels of stress to their daily lives by scheduling practices that are too long during the season, and by not allowing students enough time to take care of their academic work. Once again, sensitivity and empathy on the part of the coaches is important when scheduling practices when the season is ongoing.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

A number of limiting factors may have affected the conclusions reached in this study. The total number of participants (n = 12) is not by any means ideal; however, the total number of student-athletes who are business majors is 15; thus, a sample of size 12 would be a good indicator of the total population.

The sports in which most international student-athletes participate are not the main sports in American campuses (basketball, football, and baseball); therefore, the pressure to perform coming from the overall student body and the community as a whole may not be as prevalent. Additionally, a great portion of the student-athletes that participated in the study were either European or from English speaking countries, which are notorious for having highly demanding high school curriculums. A more diverse sample of student-athletes may have yielded very different responses related to adaptation to the English language and American academic requirements.

CONCLUSION

The process of adapting to a new way of life in American campuses for international students is not easy. Coping with language proficiency, a new culture, administrative hurdles, inexperienced or insensitive coaches and/or faculty, a forced change in diet and an empty campus upon arrival are some of the issues that these students immediately encounter. Adding the requirement (whether or not self-imposed) to perform on the field or court does not make the transition any easier.

Stress due to negative feelings or questioning their own decision to come to the United States to pursue a college education is something that the majority of student-athletes experience during the course of their college career. International student-athletes mainly deal with these negative feelings by surrounding themselves with teammates and friends who have experienced or are going through the same situation. These international student-athletes also relieve their stress by immersing themselves in the practice of their respective sports. Sadly, when conflicts arise within the team, with their coaches, or due to increased practice work load, international student-athletes lose an important factor that helps them to relieve some of the stress they feel. Coaches should be aware that most student-athletes find practices to have beneficial cathartic effects, and should be instrumental in helping students to release at least some of their stress during their practice sessions.

The most positive experiences and main adverse situations to which international student-athletes were exposed involved their on-field or court performance, and interacting with teammates and coaches; therefore, coaches should foster a positive team atmosphere, and be sympathetic to their needs.

Administrators should be aware that complex administrative processes also have a negative effect on most, if not all international students. Helping these international students navigate through all of these processes would also help these student-athletes minimize their stress levels.

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APPENDIX A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS		
Question	Responses	#
Initial impression of surroundings	Negative impressions	9
	Neutral response (the place is different)	3
	Campus was empty when I arrived	2
	Other	8
Transitioning to new environment	Easy time adapting	9
	Uncomfortable due to different factors but not a hard transition	6
	Hard and slow transition	5
Preconceived ideas about the area/school	No preconceptions. Very little knowledge	12
	Thought it would be like the rest of the U.S.	2
	Other	3
Researching the area/school	Did not research the area	9
	Researched the area	3
Did student have other options?	Yes	7
	No	5
If options were available, why this school?	Because of the offer presented to student	3
	Because of the weather in the area	2
	Because of team environment and facilities	2
	Other	5
Biggest obstacle to adaptation	The need for a car	5
	Interpersonal communication and language	5
	Cafeteria food perceived as "not good"	3
	Other	15
Factors that helped students to adapt	The team	10
	Easy to make friends	5
	The coach	3
	Other	13
Negative feelings experienced while adapting	Loneliness and homesickness	9
	Felt overwhelmed due to having too much to do	4
	Questioning decision to come to the U.S.	4
	Other	6
How did students cope with negative feelings?	Spending time with friends	6
	Talking to parents on the phone or internet	4
	Doing fun things	3
	Tough it out	2
Positive experiences	Competing in their sport	5
	Spending time with friends and teammates	3
	Achieving on the field, course or court	3
	Other	6
Adverse situations experienced	Conflict with coaches	10
	Conflict with teammates	3
	Academic problems	2
	Other	3
Coping with adverse situations	Held meetings with coaches and teammates	4
	Held meetings with teammates	2
	Ignored the sources of conflict	2
	Other	5
Mix of friends of international student athletes	More international friends than American friends	6
	Diverse group of friends, most of whom are athletes	5
	Other	1

*Some categories show more responses than the sample size due to the fact that respondents usually had more than one response to each question.