

AMERICAN STUDENT-ATHLETES' AND SOUTH KOREAN STUDENT-ATHLETES' COLLEGE EXPERIENCES PARTICIPATING IN ATHLETICS

by

Hyerim Lee  
A Thesis  
Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty  
of  
George Mason University  
in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree  
of  
Master of Science  
Sport and Recreation Studies

Committee:

_____	Chair
_____	
_____	
_____	Academic Program Coordinator
_____	Academic Program Coordinator
_____	Dean, College of Education and Human Development
Date: _____	Summer Semester 2015 George Mason University Fairfax, VA

American Student-Athletes' and South Korean Student-Athletes' College Experiences  
Participating in Athletics

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Science at George Mason University

by

Hyerim Lee  
Bachelor of Arts  
National Institute for Education, 2008

Director: Christopher Atwater, Assistant Professor  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  
College of Education and Human Development

Summer Semester 2015  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA



This work is licensed under a [creative commons attribution-noncommercial 3.0 unported license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/).

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the American and South Korean college student-athletes who put a lot of effort into college athletics and the professionals who commit their lives to improve college athletic environment. It is hoped that this work will enrich college athletic experiences of college student-athletes.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank the many friends, relatives, and supporters who have made this happen. In particular, my parents who gave me moral support and encouraged me to complete my study. I would like to thank my friends who prayed for me to accomplish my interview and research. Additionally, I would like to thank my former instructor who helped me in contacting South Korean student-athletes. I would like to thank my thesis committee chair, Dr. Chris Atwater, who provided much in the way of direction, guidance, and motivation for my research. I also would like to thank the other members of my thesis committee, Dr. Robert Baker and Dr. Pierre Rodgers who provided advice and guidance for my research. Finally, large thanks go out to the Sport and Recreation Studies program and the School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism faculty for providing me with a great graduate program that helped me pursue my academic goals and passion for sports.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract .....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Background for the Study .....	1
Overview of the Study.....	7
Rationale for the Study.....	8
Statement of the Problem .....	9
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature .....	11
The Benefits Associated with Being Student-Athletes .....	11
The Challenges of Being Student-Athletes .....	15
Academic and Sport Motivation .....	20
The Student Athletes' Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ).....	21
Major Findings from Previous Studies that Will Be Used in a Qualitative Fashion ....	27
Synthesis of Literature .....	28
Chapter Three: Methodology .....	30
Research Questions .....	30
Research Design and Instrumentation.....	30
Research Setting .....	31
Data Collection.....	31
Data Analysis .....	33
Credibility Enhancement for Qualitative Case Study Research.....	34
Chapter Four: Results .....	36
Chapter Five: Conclusions.....	57
APPENDIX A.....	68
APPENDIX B .....	72
References.....	74

## **ABSTRACT**

### **AMERICAN STUDENT-ATHLETES' AND SOUTH KOREAN STUDENT-ATHLETES' COLLEGE EXPERIENCES PARTICIPATING IN ATHLETICS**

Hyerim Lee, M.S.

George Mason University, 2015

Thesis Director: Dr. Christopher Atwater

The aim of this study was to explore American student-athletes' and South Korean student-athletes' college experiences while participating in college athletics. A qualitative method design was used for this study. American student-athletes and South Korean student-athletes participating in college athletics (N=12, age range 18 – 22 years) were interviewed in person. Interview questions were asked to discover student-athletes' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of being student-athletes and their academic and athletic motivation. The results revealed that South Korean student-athletes were more athletically motivated while American student-athletes tried to keep balance between academic and athletic motivation. In this regard, they experience difficulties in balancing academic and athletic demands which caused many student-athletes to consider the academic support services from the schools as a benefit of being student-athletes. Conversely, South Korean student-athletes did not experience difficulties in balancing between academic and athletic work as their academic demands were much less and they were more likely to enjoy tangible benefits provided by the schools.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### *Background for the Study*

A number of countries have established organizations to administer and regulate their college sports systems, and one example is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in the United States. The NCAA is “a membership-driven organization dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of student-athletes and equipping them with the skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom and throughout life” (NCAA, n.d. para. 1). Therefore, it would be wise to gain some understanding of the NCAA in order to gain insights into college sports system in the United States. Based in Indiana, the NCAA is responsible for all college sports in the U.S., and all college athletic programs and their student athletes are under its management and regulation. More than a thousand colleges in the U.S. are registered as members of the NCAA. The NCAA divides colleges and universities into three divisions and each division sets its own guidelines for administrative purposes. Also, the NCAA makes its own rules to regulate the progress of tournaments, the operation of college athletic programs, and the enforcement of punishment against those who violate the rules. The organization also puts forth much effort in raising funds for better management of college sports systems. It is markedly noticeable that the college sports system exhibits commercial traits since it is mostly sponsored by many businesses, particularly its largest revenue source, the NCAA men’s basketball March Madness tournament. This sponsorship has been possible due to the high level of enthusiasm from many college sports fans in the United States.

Therefore, the financial capacity of the NCAA is a driving force in the success of college sports in the U.S.

The NCAA heavily emphasizes student-athletes' athletic, academic and personal development, and much effort has gone into improving student-athletes' college experiences. Since the early 1900s, the NCAA has implemented regulations and programs that help student-athletes develop the skills to succeed in both athletics and academics in higher education (Watt & Moore, 2001). High school athletes not only need to perform well on their sport team, but are also required to meet academic requirements in order to enter the college sport program of their interest. Student-athletes would not be able to compete in their chosen sport team if they were not qualified academically due to failure in class or a low GPA. Indeed, each college operates a tutoring system for college athletes in order to help them maintain their educational progress and operates a counseling program to aid their balance between academic and athletic lives. Therefore, the majority of student athletes try their best to study for their classes and examinations after their workouts and training.

The South Korean college sports model is different from the model in the United States. South Korea does not have a major association like the NCAA, but the Korean Olympic Committee (KOC) is responsible for international college athletic activities including both Universiade and the World University Championships. In fact, most college athletic competitions are organized by the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Cultures, Sports, and Tourism (MCST), Korea Council of Sport for All, and National Sports Federations (Korean Olympic Committee, n.d.). As these organizations

are sponsored by the government, people find it difficult to develop a college sports business or to promote college athletic programs.

The major mission of Korean sports focuses on elite youth sports and professional sports rather than amateur college sports. South Korean colleges have allowed student-athletes to focus solely on their athletic goals and put less emphasis on their academic development. Much of the focus is on being professional athletes rather than being students, which has positive and negative effects on Korean student-athletes. A large percentage of the Korea National team members are college student-athletes, and they have contributed to winning medals at the Olympics and major international competitions. However, student-athletes are less likely to receive academic support from colleges or to recognize the importance of academic experiences and ability.

There are few student-athletes who participate in athletics for health, social networking or any other benefits of playing sports in any level of education, while student-athletes who want to become professional are more likely to participate in athletics. Student-athletes are more likely to demonstrate a lower level of academic motivation and performance. Student-athletes' low academic abilities and their insecure career and life have been a concern. Student-athletes do not develop enough academic integrity and do not receive an education which is necessary for their career or future life. After graduating from college, some competitive student-athletes hope to go to a professional team and continue their career as professional athletes. However, collegiate student-athletes who are no longer able to compete find it difficult to change their career path. Because of this, parents are reluctant to encourage their children to play sports when

they enter secondary education because of career instability, and most student-athletes who are not competitive at the international level do not participate in athletics. As a result, the overall number of student-athletes playing in secondary and higher education have decreased in South Korea.

As concerns about Korean college athletics and student-athletes' college experiences have increased significantly, the Korea University Sport Federation (KUSF) was established in 2010 to develop the Korean college sports environment, and currently, 52 Korean colleges are registered as members of the KUSF (n.d.). The KUSF is committed to protecting student-athletes' learning experiences and academic competencies, enhancing good sportsmanship and amateurism, promoting student-athletes' rights and well-being, and improving student-athletes' athletic performance by conducting research and supporting student-athletes' academic experience, educational management, and resources. The KUSF has implemented new college operational systems and changed the competition system from a tournament to a league system for basketball, soccer and volleyball so that student-athletes can attend classes during the weekdays and compete on weekends. As a result, the new league system has increased the chance for student-athletes to have better academic experiences. The KUSF also studies the management of Korean college sport teams and educates coaches in order to revitalize the teams. The KUSF offers financial aid covering training and equipment expenses to selected collegiate teams and encourages student-athletes to value their academic experiences. The organization also rewards student-athletes who have demonstrated academic and athletic excellence. The KUSF operates a college sports blog

site which delivers news coverage of sporting events and covers interview articles with student-athletes and people working in the college sports business (KUSF, n.d.).

Sports are an integral part of people's life in South Korea and interest has been increased greatly. Sports are intimately associated with Korean political authority, economic development, and social change that affected South Korean people's perceptions of sports which will be described further below.

According to Son (2002), the military regime led by the Park administration took control of South Korea in the 1960s. The Park administration supported the growth of elite sports that exhibited the symbol of the military regime. During this period, however, the elite sports were not developed due to the fact that the Korean economy was challenged by high inflation from the Korean War and inflation in oil prices, causing people to live in poverty.

In the late 70s, as a result of the continuous effort on poverty reduction by the government in South Korea, the national economy entered a stage of growth, eliminating a large portion of poverty. During that period, the Jun administration took over the government by military power. At the time, the Korean economy entered a price stabilization period because of the decline in the international finance rate, oil prices, and the dollar bear. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the Bank of Korea (as cited in Son, 2002), the average annual growth of GDP from 1960 to 1980 was 7.2% and the GDP per capita in South Korea increased from \$80 to \$1,647. The growth in economy caused people to become interested in health and welfare in general. The Jun

administration also showed great interest in elite sports and distributed a large amount of funding for sports.

In the 80s, to facilitate the successful operations of the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and 1988 Seoul Olympics, the government started investing a large amount of funds into elite sports. In the 1990s after the Olympic Games, the government started paying special attention to sports for all everyone, and people became interested in professional sports. Meanwhile, people pursued a comfortable life from the country's economic growth and monetary support for elite sports was declined significantly (Lee, 2013). However, the Korean economy entered a period of stagnation because of the social democratic movement, leading to speculation in real estate, a demand for higher wages, and an anti-corruption campaign. Also organizations, including well-known banks and conglomerates, went into bankruptcy as they failed to ensure returns and profits; and foreign exchange reserves were insufficient to satisfy the demand for dollar currency.

In 1997, Korea sought a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As a result of the IMF crisis, the Kim (DaeJoong Kim) government significantly cut the budget for elite sports and sports for all. Many professional sports teams were disbanded due to financial crisis, and many schools and universities had to cut budgets for sports teams, too. Though the Korean economy faced a financial crisis, the county overcame the 1997-98 IMF crisis by the end of 1999. In 2002, Korea and Japan successfully staged the 2002 World Cup and there was a significant increase in the number of sporting facilities throughout Korea (Son, 2002).

A study by Jung (2009) showed the problems of current sports in South Korea. Even though South Korea placed 7<sup>th</sup> in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, many problems occurred in sports organizations in South Korea. For instance, the number of student athletes and both school and professional teams decreased. According to the KOC and the Ministry of Education and Science Technology (MEST) (as cited in Jung, 2009), the number of student athletes was 95,150 out of 11 million students, accounting only for 0.95% of the total student population in 2009.

Also, organizational violence by coaches and senior members played a big role in reducing the number of student-athletes; many parents of student-athletes were reluctant to send their children to join sports teams to prevent further violence. As a result, the Korean sports organizations depended on a small number of athletes and enforced stricter and harsher trainings for the athletes (Jung, 2009).

Another reason for the reduction in the number of student-athletes is the excessive pursuit of higher education; parents of student-athletes believed that being in a team would interfere with their children's learning development and their successful career paths. Jung (2009) argued that people in South Korea were generally enthusiastic toward national sports but the parents in South Korea abandoned it. The government must provide a friendly sporting environment for the knowledge-focused society, family and parents.

### ***Overview of the Study***

This study explored American student-athletes' and South Korean student-athletes' college experiences, including the benefits and challenges associated with the

US and student-athletes' academic and athletic motivations. The review of literature in chapter two discussed the benefits and challenges of being student-athletes in the United States and student-athletes' motivation toward academics and athletics. Much literature examined the impact of academic support services and social networking on student-athletes' college experiences, the benefits of time management skills, psychosocial problems, stereotypical assumptions and alcohol and drug abuse among student-athletes. The literature analyzed student-athletes' perceptions of participating in college athletics and of faculty attitude toward student-athletes and how these benefits and challenges affect student-athletes' academic and athletic development. Much research examined alcohol and drug abuse and academic motivation between student-athletes and non-athlete students, and the characteristics of student-athletes regarding gender, race, and type of sports. The research on the factors associated with student-athletes' academic and athletic motivation were also studied.

### ***Rationale for the Study***

The purpose of this study was to explore American student-athletes' and South Korean student-athletes' college experiences while participating in college athletics, and the focus was on their academic and athletic experiences. By analyzing those student-athletes' college experiences, this study contributed to a better understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with the US and student-athletes' academic and athletic motivation. It would also contribute to what regulations and programs should be implemented in South Korea to improve student-athletes' college experiences and to help them develop career and life goals. Much research has been done on student-athletes'

college experiences qualitatively and quantitatively in the United States. However, there was little qualitative research that examines South Korean student-athletes' perceptions of their college experiences.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

There was a gap in understanding how two different college models affect student-athletes' college experience and what benefits one can learn from the other. Much quantitative research has been done on student-athletes' athletic experiences and class attendance rate while during their secondary education in South Korea. However, there was little research on how the South Korea college sports model affects student-athletes' college experiences and their motivation toward academics and athletics. Many studies have researched student-athletes' academic and athletic experiences, the factors associated with their academic and athletic motivation, and suggestions and programs in student-athletes' academic, athletic, and personal development in the United States. However, little was known how the US model and South Korean model affect student-athletes' college experiences and whether the US model would be beneficial for countries that have different cultural backgrounds. Thus, there was a need for cross-cultural comparative research that qualitatively focuses on American and South Korean student-athletes' college experiences to develop a college sports model and to benefit student-athletes to succeed in their academic and athletic goals.

As previously mentioned, this chapter serves as the introduction to and overview of the study. Chapter Two provides the review of related literature. The methodology

employed is found in Chapter Three. Chapter Four is where the study's qualitative results are presented. The study's summary and conclusions comprise Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### *The Benefits Associated with Being Student-Athletes*

Even though student-athletes faced many challenges balancing academics and athletics and express negative experiences of being student-athletes, many found it beneficial to participate in college athletics. They believed that their athletic participation has more positive than negative effects on their academics and athletics. Also, the NCAA requires U.S. colleges to provide support programs for student-athletes. In this section, the major benefits associated with being student-athletes were presented.

#### *Academic Supporting Services*

Many colleges provided a number of programs to help student-athletes succeed in their academic goals and their future careers. Faculty and non-athlete students argued that student-athletes did not deserve to receive any special treatment and they consider those special treatments unfair because student-athletes often received special treatment including tutoring, early enrolment, special advising, and review sessions (Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999; Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2007). Another study indicated that being student-athletes enabled them to gain benefits including career preparation services, academic tutoring, and involvement in community services (Chen, Snyder, & Magner, 2010). This supports the research conducted by Paule and Gilson (2010), which revealed that student-athletes often had priority to register for classes and met with their athletic advisors who helped them prepare for exams. Pierce (2007) claimed that engineering students at the University of South Carolina who sought an additional help

from their engineering faculty members received a higher grade point average than those who did not. Many researchers have conducted research assessing the effect of academic support programs in U.S. colleges on student-athletes' academic success.

Many colleges provided Challenging Athletic Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS)/Life Skills programs to help student-athletes in athletics, academics, personal and career development (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). Many colleges provided athletic support programs for student-athletes. All junior and senior student-athletes at The University of Florida were required to attend a class where they could develop a self-marketing plan and write successful resumes and cover letter. In addition, The University of Texas at Austin held "Career Days" to help student-athletes prepare their job applications (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001).

#### *Time Management Skills*

Time management consists of "sound planning, good judgment, and personal responsibility" (Harris, Altekrose, & Engels, 2010, p. 73). Many studies have indicated that student-athletes developed time management skills because of their demanding schedule, and student-athletes considered time management to be as one of the benefits of being student-athletes (Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2007). In the study reported by Paule and Gilson (2010), student-athletes stated their experience of time management, and Lori, a female track and field athlete said, "A couple of weeks ago we went to Florida...well my first year I didn't, I wasn't really on the travel team my first year...But when I started to become competitive, that's when I think my focus changed and I just became more disciplined in all aspects of life and I learned how to better manage my time" (p. 338).

This supported the idea that student-athletes who competed at a high level also learned and used time management skills. Student-athletes who used their time wisely were more likely to achieve their academic goal.

Pierce (2007) examined the academic success of nineteen student athletes who majored in engineering at the University of South Carolina, a member of the NCAA Division I Southeastern Conference. Their grade point average during the spring semester of 2005 was well above 3.00 on a 4.00 scale. Among the number of attributes, these student athletes were shown to excel in time management, organization, and problem solving ability. The author argued that time management played an essential role in their academic success because more than 60% of these students responded that their course planning, guided by their engineering academic advisor, had a positive effect on their success. Also, these excelling students answered that their academic performance was not hindered by their athletic schedule. Another study insisted that time management was one of the essential skills for student-athletes to possess during their college life (Harris et al., 2010). This finding suggested that it is necessary to develop time management skills for student-athletes to fulfill both their academic and athletic responsibilities.

### *Social Networking*

Student-athletes spent much more time with their teammates than with their non-athlete peers. According to Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007), many student-athletes reported that their social and emotional support was influenced by their teammates. Since they lacked the time to interact with other students, their relationship was limited mostly to their teammates. However, a study conducted by Gayles and Hu (2009) showed that

student-athletes did spend time with non-athlete students, and student-athletes in high profile sports had a lower level of interaction with non-athletes than those in low profile sports. In addition, female student-athletes spent more time with non-athlete students than male student athletes. The authors emphasized that social engagement had positive effects on student-athletes' college experience.

Another study indicated that being student-athletes helped them to build personal relationships with faculty (Simons et al., 2007). For instance, a female student said, "The only think I can think of is the fact that I got to know one of my professors better because of my sport. I was lucky to get a personal connection with a professor..." (Simons et al., 2007, p. 265). Student-athletes stated that their situation provided them an opportunity to experience the benefits of college athletics while they interacted with their teammates (Paule & Gilson, 2010). Their team often indicated their central peer group for student-athletes (Simons et al., 1999). For instance, male student-athletes said, "Being part of a team, you know you can't really replicate that. And something about playing, just having your team is a really powerful sort of bond" (Paule & Gilson, 2010, p. 339). This comment indicated that student-athletes felt a strong sense of belonging to their team.

Watt and Moore (2001) argued that working with teammates enabled student-athletes to improve their generosity and understand difference. Potuto and O'Hanlon (2007) claimed that participating in college athletics allowed student-athletes to have more multicultural experiences and more chance to interact with students from different backgrounds than non-athletes students. According to the 2004 NSSE report (as cited in Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2007), 52% of senior student-athletes said that they developed "a

greater understanding of people of other racial and ethnic background” (p. 954). Jolly (2008) emphasized the importance of building relationships between faculty and student-athletes and believed that this could assist faculty in understanding student-athletes’ college experiences and challenges. In fact, the understanding their dual roles of student and athlete would increase faculty members’ willingness to provide academic support for student-athletes and remove student-athletes’ misperceptions of faculty and professors’ stereotypical assumptions about their academic abilities.

### ***The Challenges of Being Student-Athletes***

Student-athletes in the United States spent a great deal of time participating in athletic-related events including practicing and competing, and they also had an obligation to fulfill their academic responsibilities to keep their National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility standard. Their responsibilities in both academics and athletics often caused student-athletes to fail their athletic goals and academic achievement. Student-athletes often expressed negative experiences while being student-athletes, and many previous researchers have also been concerned about these negative impacts on student-athletes’ college experience. This section illustrated the major challenges associated with their athletic participation.

#### ***Psychosocial Problems***

The most common challenge that student-athletes faced was their lack of time to experience campus life and build social networking with people outside of their athletic programs. Much previous research has revealed that college student-athletes faced many challenges associated with their obligatory work in athletics, and they tended to spend

much time with their teammates and people who were related to their athletic programs. Watt and Moore (2001) discussed that student athletes spent much time with their coaches, teammates, and others in the athletic department. These tendencies found among student-athletes caused them to have less opportunity to develop social networking with non-athlete students (Bell, 2009).

Watt and Moore (2001) explained that student-athletes tended to isolate themselves from non-athlete students and were often unwilling to participate in class discussions. Also, this led student-athletes to disregard their role as a student and their responsibility for pursuing academic achievement. Because of time commitments to college athletics, their opportunities to participate in campus activities were very limited (Paule & Gilson, 2010). Carodine, Almond, and Gratto (2001) emphasized that student athletes had less opportunity to develop their social relationships than non-athlete students do. Their lack of social networking and college experience often resulted in student-athletes developing psychological problems and feeling isolated.

In Watson and Kissinger's (2007) research, the Five Factor Wellness Inventory (5F-Wel), Social Self, Essential Self, Creative Self, Physical Self and Coping Self, was used to examine student-athletes' and non-athlete students' levels of wellness. The findings indicated that the student-athletes reported feeling significantly less well than non-athlete students on the Social Self, which focuses on "the constructs of friendships and love" and the Essential Self, which includes "how individuals view themselves and their place in the world through the lenses of cultural and gender identity" (p. 159). Myers and Sweeney (as cited in Watson & Kissinger, 2007) argued that the ability to

develop strong friendships, critical elements of the Social Self, improves people's quality of life and their health, and the Essential Self is a significant factor that shows how people perceive their sense of meaning and purpose in life. However, the results showed that student-athletes' lack of time interacting with the college community could cause student-athletes to experience lower social wellness. Also, the demand of college athletic participation could limit student-athletes' opportunity to develop intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, resulting in the over-identification with their athletic role. This problem would be one source that affects their academics, social, personal development, and their sense of holistic wellness.

#### *Stereotypical Assumptions*

Student-athletes often faced the challenge of being stereotyped by their faculty and peers. Many researchers have found that faculty members and non-athlete students held prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes toward student-athletes' academic motivation and academic ability (Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwen, 1995; Comeaux, 2012; Simons, Bosworth, Fujita & Jensen, 2007, Paule & Gilson, 2010). Comeaux (2012) provided evidence that professors are prejudiced against their intellectual abilities. Student-athletes reported that professors often assumed that they were not as smart as non-athlete students. For instance, student-athletes commented, "The professor stood up asking how many student-athletes are in class. When no one raised their hand, he said good, 'I don't have to slow down then'" (p. 193). Also, faculty members would feel skeptical about student-athletes' grade when they made an A in a class (Engstrom et al., 1995).

Some student athletes expressed that their professors and peers often had stereotypes about their academic motivation and believed that student-athletes were not interested in academic achievement (Comeaux, 2012). For instance, a female student-athlete said, “A lot of my professors assume that if you are an athlete then you are going to take them for granted, not come to class, and just assume [you’ll receive] a good grade for being an athlete” (Paule & Gilson, 2010, p. 342). This comment reflected that professors held stereotypical assumptions about student-athletes’ academic motivation.

These negative stereotypes were also related to race and gender. African American athletes expressed their negative experience of stereotypical assumptions about their intellectual ability (Simons et al., 2007). Sailes (1993) provided evidence that racial stereotyping indeed existed in college sports. For instance, whites and males tended to hold prejudicial attitudes toward African American student-athletes. They believed that African American athletes had lower academic performance than other students because such athletes were not as smart as other students. Also, people assumed that white student-athletes were more intelligent than African American athletes.

#### *Alcohol and Drug Abuse*

Many studies have found that student-athletes were more engaged in the use of alcohol and drugs (Yusko, Buckman, White, & Pandina, 2008; Wechsler, Davenport, Dowdall, Grossman, & Zanakos, 1997). Much research concluded that student-athletes were more likely to report the consumption of alcohol than non-athlete student (Grossbard, Geinser, Mastroleo, Kilmer, Turrisi, & Larimer, 2009; Martens, Dams-O’Connor, & Beck, 2006; Yusko et al., 2008). Yusko and colleagues (2008) conducted a

study to compare the prevalence and pattern of alcohol and drug use of college athletes to those of non-athlete students. In comparison to male non-athlete students, male student-athletes had a higher number of heavy drinking episodes and were more likely to report that they used illegal performance enhancing drugs and smokeless tobacco. Instead, male non-athlete students were more likely to answer that they abused cigarettes and social drugs when compared to male athlete-students.

Female athlete students answered that they consumed alcohol less frequently compared to female non-athlete students, who reported a significantly greater number of heavy drinking episodes (Yusko et al., 2008). Female athlete students were also less likely to report the use of cigarettes, social drugs, and weight-loss products compared to female non-athlete students. However, female athlete-students were more likely to answer that they used illegal performance-enhancing drugs and nutritional supplements when compared to female non-athlete students.

Researchers also compared drug and alcohol use by male athlete-students during athletic season to off-season use (Yusko et al., 2008). The result showed that male athlete students were more likely to report the use of drug and alcohol during the off-season than the athletic in-season. Indeed, the percentage of off-season drug and alcohol use was double that of the athletic season use. The incidence of social drugs and hallucinogen abuse by female athlete students quadrupled during the off-season (Yusko et al., 2008). Research by Martens et al. (2006) indicated that student-athletes tended to consume more alcohol per week than non-athlete students and were more likely to experience negative consequences caused by alcohol consumption. According to Nelson and Wechsler

(2001), student-athletes experienced negative consequences from alcohol consumption, such as getting into police-related troubles, having unplanned sexual activity, and being hurt and injured.

### ***Academic and Sport Motivation***

Student-athletes demonstrated different academic and athletic motivation, and some student-athletes had a better ability to balance academic and athletic goals than their peers do. In the study by Althouse (2007), academic motivation was defined as the degree to which student athletes devoted energy toward attending to their academic tasks and roles, whereas sport motivation was defined as the degree to which student athletes devoted energy toward attending to their athletic tasks and roles. It is important to evaluate what student-athlete motivations were and understand what students' perceptions were about their abilities to succeed in college (Gaston-Gayles, 2014).

Student-athletes' academic and athletic motivation was studied based on Deci and Ryan's theoretical framework. Deci and Ryan (2000) defined the different types of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic Motivation (IM) was defined as doing an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence. Extrinsic Motivation (EM) referred to doing an activity simply for the enjoyment of the activity itself, rather than its instrumental value.

Simons et al. (1999) examined the relationship of motivational orientation to academic performance and identification. The findings suggested that female and nonrevenue athletes were more likely to manage their dual role and demonstrate higher academic motivation than male and revenue student-athletes did. Female athletes had a

higher commitment to academic tasks than the revenue male student-athletes did, and they put more emphasis on their academics and athletics. However, revenue athletes had a higher commitment to athletic tasks because of the extrinsic reward, recognition, and social support they received and they were also more likely to fail to balance academics and athletics.

In a recent study by Sherry and Zeller (2014), the findings indicated that female basketball players valued both their academic and athletic success. Many female players were confident about their ability in athletics and about getting a good Grade Point Average (GPA). Although they responded that they perceived their identities as athletes and sport was one of the most important aspects in their lives, they worked hard to succeed in academics and the reason for attending college was to earn a degree.

***The Student Athletes' Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ)***

Measuring academic and athletic motivation would help provide a better understanding of athletes' academic and athletic performances and enhance the student-athletes' college experiences. The SAMSAQ was developed in a study published in 2002 by Gaston-Gayles to measure the factors associated with student-athletes' academic and athletic motivation. The purpose of study was to develop an instrument to a) measure academic and athletic motivation of student-athletes, b) examine differences in academic and athletic motivation by gender and sport, and c) explore the predictability of the scale on future academic performance.

In this study by Gaston-Gayles (2002), 236 student-athletes from a large university in the Midwest were asked to complete the SAMSAQ. The questionnaire consisted of a total 30 items measuring academic and athletic motivation, and student-athletes were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement measured on a six-point Likert-scale ranging from a score of one (very strongly disagree) to a score of six (very strongly agree). The questionnaire consisted of 15 items to measure academic motivation and 15 items to measure athletic motivation.

Theories of achievement motivation expectancy value, attribution, and self-efficacy theories were used to construct the items on the SAMSAQ. This helped provide an understanding of student-athletes' attitude and behavior toward academic and athletic tasks.

The expectancy value theory was defined by Spence and Helmreich (as cited in Gaston-Gayles, 2002, p. 36) as “an function of two major components: 1) the probability that an individual will successfully complete a task; and 2) the value associated with successful completion of the task Based on this information, individuals who played sports such as football and basketball would work hard to reach the professional level because they valued the extrinsic reward associated with playing at such a level.” Moreover, Eccles (as cited in Gaston-Gayles, 2002, p. 36) argued that “expectancy or probability of success was influenced by individuals' self-concept of [their] ability to successfully complete the task, and of level of difficulty associated with completing the task.”

The second theory was attribution, Weiner (as cited in Gaston-Gayles, 2002, p. 39) stated that “individuals seek explanations for the causes of behavioral outcomes.” Based on the definition, individuals who chose to approach success would attribute success to ability and efforts, and attribute failure to a lack of hard work and effort. Those who chose to avoid failure tended to attribute success to luck or chance, and attribute failure to a lack of ability. Tuckman (as cited in Gaston-Gayles, 2002) indicated that individuals used three sources of information to determine causes of behavioral outcomes. These sources were: past history of success and failure, the performance of others doing the same task, and the amount of time spent on the task.

Another achievement motivation theory was self-efficacy. Bandura (as cited in Gaston-Gayles, 2002, p. 37) defined as “individuals make judgments about their ability successfully to complete a task.” Related to this definition, individuals would avoid tasks when they thought that they could not finish them successfully, but they would do tasks when they thought that they could finish successfully. Four types of information referred to individuals’ self-efficacy expectations: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal.

The SAMSAQ was intended to yield two factors, but the results of exploratory factor analysis on structure of the scale showed that a three-factor model was appropriate and the items that loaded on each factors were found to share some common characteristics (Gaston-Gayles, 2002). The factors were identified as student athletic motivation (SAM), academic motivation (AM), and career athletic motivation (CAM). The SAM subscale measured a general desire to excel in sports but not necessarily the

intention to pursue sports as a career, while the CAM subscale measured the specific intention or desire to play at an elite or professional level. The AM subscale measured the extent that student-athletes desired to excel in academics. The example of an item on the SAM subscale is, “Achieving a high level of performance in my sport is an important goal for me this year.” The example of an item on the AM subscale is, “I am willing to put in the time to earn excellent grades in my courses” The example of an item on the CAM subscale is, “I am confident that I can make it to an elite level in my sport (Professional/Olympics).”

The results of this study by Gaston-Gayles (2002) indicated that low profile male athletes had the highest American College Testing (ACT) scores, followed by low profile females, high profile females, and high profile males, respectively. However, female athletes had higher academic motivation than male athletes; and low profile males had the lowest academic motivation scores of all groups. Though it was assumed that high profile athletes would have lower academic motivation than low profile athletes, there was no significant difference in academic motivation between high and low profile athletes. The student athletic motivation was related to gender in that male athletes had higher student athletic motivation than females did. More male athletes demonstrated motivation to excel in sports than females did. The career athletic motivation had a positive relationship to the profile of sport. High profile athletes had a higher desire to compete on the professional level than low profile athletes did.

Gaston-Gayles (2002) found that academic motivation and ACT score were significant in predicting actual academic performance, and career and student-athletic

motivation were insignificant predictors of actual academic performance. This study contributed to a better understanding of how student-athletes are motivated toward academic and athletic tasks. This understanding could help educators and administrators create effective programs and services to help student-athletes demonstrate high levels of academic and athletic motivation. The results of this study provided the relationships between motivation and academic performance of student-athletes, which could benefit coaches and athletic administrators in a recurring process. In fact, understanding the predictors of academic achievement helped them recruit student-athletes with higher potential for success in the classroom and on the field.

Gaston-Gayles (2002) suggested that the SAMSAQ should be used for student-athletes participating in Division II and III programs and in individual sports to examine the differences between individual and team sports. Also, a qualitative analysis would be useful to understand the in-depth characteristics of student-athletes who have high motivation toward academics, athletics, and career.

In Gaston-Gayles' (2004) study, the same SAMSAQ instrument was used to examine the influence of academic and athletic motivation in predicting academic performance. In this study, 211 student athletes from eight varsity team sports completed the SAMSAQ. Gaston-Gayles found that ACT score, ethnicity, and academic motivation were influential in predicting academic performance, which was consistent with the previous study.

The results (Gaston-Gayles, 2004) indicated that white student-athletes with higher ACT scores and academic motivation had a higher GPA than did minority

students with lower ACT scores and lower academic motivation. While academic motivation in this study was found to be an important predictor of academic success, career athletic motivation and student athletic motivation were not significant.

In 2005, Willis investigated female basketball student-athletes' motivation by using the SAMSAQ. The results of the study indicated that student-athletes' academic standing had no significant relationship to academic motivation, athletic motivation, or career athletic motivation. Also, ethnicity was found to be insignificantly related to academic motivation and athletic motivation, while ethnicity had a significant relationship to career athletic motivation.

In Gaston-Gayles' (2005) another study, an expectancy-value framework was used to examine the factor structure and reliability of the SAMSAQ. The sample of 235 students-athletes participating in eight varsity sports at a Division I university in the Midwest responded to the SAMSAQ for this study.

The findings indicated that female athletes had the highest academic motivation scores among the entire group and that they were more motivated toward academics than athletic related tasks. Their academic motivation scores were higher than their career athletic motivation and student athletic motivation scores. Conversely, minority and revenue athletes had higher career athletic motivation and student athletic motivation scores compared to their academic motivation score. Also, student-athletes participating in revenue sports had higher student athletic motivation relative to academic motivation.

This scale could be beneficial in understanding the factors associated with student-athlete motivation and to help student-athletes succeed in balancing between academics and athletics.

***Major Findings from Previous Studies that Will Be Used in a Qualitative Fashion***

The SAMSAQ was used to understand student-athletes' academic and athletic motivation in the previously mentioned studies. In this study, the major findings from the previous studies were converted to interview questions. The major findings were listed below:

- Though most of the athletes were confident that they would get a good GPA, they often had difficulty balancing between academic and athletic situations (Sherry & Zeller, 2014).
- There was no significant relationship between an athlete's level of profile and academic motivation (Gaston-Gayles, 2002).
- Female athletes had a greater emphasis on academic-related tasks than athletic-related ones (Gaston-Gayles, 2005).
- Student athletes in revenue sports showed higher athletic motivation than they did their academic motivation (Gaston-Gayles, 2005)
- Student-athletes' academic standing had no significant relationship to academic motivation, athletic motivation or career athletic motivation (Willis, 2005)

These findings above were then converted to the interview questions indicated in Appendix B.

### *Synthesis of Literature*

A study of student-athletes' perceptions of college experience indicated the impact of the college sports model in the U.S. The U.S. college sports model had both negative and positive effects on student-athletes' college experiences.

Among the benefits of being student-athletes, academic support services they received seemed to benefit their academic development and accomplishment. Tutoring and academic advising were mainly discussed as the most beneficial academic support services. Time management skills were developed while participating in college athletics. Student-athletes possessing these skills succeeded in their academics as they were able to balance between academics and athletics. Social networking was another benefit of being student-athletes. Student athletes were able to interact with students from different backgrounds and with professors who were interested in sports. Also, they developed a strong sense of belonging to their team.

Among the challenges of being student-athletes, psychosocial problems indicated that student-athletes' lack of time to experience the college community and to interact with people outside of athletics caused them to feel isolated which had a negative impact on their development. Stereotypical assumptions that were another negative aspect of college athletics indicated that professors and peers held assumptions about their intellectual ability and academic motivation. Racial stereotyping between white and African American student-athletes occurred in college sports. Alcohol and drug abuse indicated that female and male student-athletes used illegal performance-enhancing drugs and their number of drinking episodes was higher during the off-season than in-season.

A study of student-athletes' motivation toward academics and athletics provided a better understanding of student-athletes' academic and athletic performance while participating in college athletics. The factors associated with academic and athletic motivation would help enhance student-athletes' college experiences.

The SAMSAQ was developed to measure student-athletes' attitude and behavior toward academic and athletic tasks. Theories of achievement motivation expectancy value, attribution, and self-efficacy theories were used to construct the items on the SAMSAQ. Expectancy value theory was defined as an individual's perception about a given task based on the value associated with the completion of that task. Attribution was defined as individuals having certain beliefs about the causes of their successes and failures. Self-efficacy was defined as an assumption that individuals make judgments about their ability to successfully complete a task.

Previous research indicated that female student-athletes had higher academic motivation than male student-athletes. Athletic motivation and career athletic motivation had a negative impact on their academic performance. Also, student-athletes' level of performance and academic classification had no relationship to academic motivation. However, their ethnicity affected their level of athletic motivation. Additionally, student-athletes participating in revenue sports had higher athletic motivation compared to their academic motivation.

The SAMSAQ was used to develop interview questions regarding how student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Questions***

The research questions developed for this study included two concepts. The first concept indicated in the overview of this study is the central question, “How do American student-athletes’ and South Korean student-athletes’ perceive their college experience while participating in college athletics?” From the central question, the study moved towards a series of subquestions that were designed to offer a better understanding of themes associated with the central questions. The subquestions were listed as follows

1. How do American student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation?
2. How do South Korean student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation?
3. How do American student-athletes describe the benefits and the challenges of participating in college athletics?
4. How do South Korean student-athletes describe the benefits and the challenges of participating in college athletics?

### ***Research Design and Instrumentation***

A cross-cultural qualitative research design was used for this study. Research questions one to four were approached through qualitative research by interviewing student-athletes. Independent variables are student-athletes’ background characteristics including gender, race, major, academic classification, type of sport, number of credits they are taking, and years of collegiate athletic experience. The interview questions were derived from the major findings from the literature review of academic and athletic

motivation in conjunction with the literature review of student-athletes' perceptions of participating in college athletics indicating the benefits and challenges associated with being student-athletes as well as psychosocial issues. The list of interview questions is included in Appendix B. Interview questions were submitted to and approved by George Mason University's Institutional Research Board (IRB) in accordance with ethical considerations for conducting research.

### ***Research Setting***

The study was conducted at South Korean universities registered in the KUSF and American universities in NCAA's Division I. The participants in this study were selected from student-athletes enrolled in universities that offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs and a variety of college athletic teams. Six South Korean student athletes and six American student-athletes ranging in age from 18-22 years old were selected from the men's and women's team sports and individual sports. Sports for men included baseball, basketball, swimming/diving, field hockey, and track and field. Sports for women included field hockey, shooting, cycling, lacrosse, volleyball, and basketball.

### ***Data Collection***

The qualitative study was conducted by interviewing each of the participants. The participants were recruited through contacting faculty members to find appropriate student-athletes. The interviews of South Korean student-athletes were conducted during the 2014 winter break and the interviews of American student-athletes were conducted during the Spring 2015 semester.

South Korean student-athletes were contacted via phone provided by the faculty members and scheduled interview at a time and location convenient for each participant. American student-athletes were contacted via email provided by the faculty members and scheduled interview at a time and location convenient for each participant. All of the interviews were one-on-one face to face interviews. The interviews were conducted by the researcher who was a student-athlete for 10 years in South Korea so her experiences and understanding of the participants' college experiences helped the process of the interviews. Most interviews with South Korean and American student-athletes were conducted in a campus cafeteria while three were in coffee shops near their home. Student-athletes from both South Korean and American universities who agreed to an interview completed a consent form after they had all their questions answered before conducting the interview. The consent form is illustrated in Appendix A. The interviews ranged from 30 to 40 minutes in length, and the participants' responses were recorded with their permission.

The goal of the qualitative study was to develop a better understanding of student-athletes' college experiences, including the benefits and the challenges of being student-athletes and their academic and athletic motivation. The interview was developed using the main themes elicited throughout the literature review and the major findings from the research used the SAMSAQ. The sample interview questions included "Talk to me about any benefits you associate with participation in college athletics," "Talk to me about what motivates you from an academic standpoint," and "Talk to me about the balance between both your academic and athletic motivations." The interview questions in English were

translated by the researcher into Korean for student-athletes in South Korea and the questions were asked in the same order for all the participants in South Korean and the U.S.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis for the qualitative study followed the seven steps by Creswell (2014). In *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*, Creswell illustrated six steps for qualitative data analysis. The first step was to organize and prepare the data analysis. This involved transcribing the interview, making notes, scanning and cataloging material, and arranging the data into different types depending on the information. The second step was to read or look at all the data and to identify theme. In margins of each transcript or set of notes, the researcher noted general thoughts about the data. The third step was to start coding all of the data. This involved gathering the initial themes together. Tesch (as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 198) illustrated the eight steps typically used in forming codes.

1. Read all the transcription and jot down some ideas.
2. Pick one most interesting interview and try to find its underlying meaning.
3. Cluster together similar topics.
4. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text.
5. Turn the descriptive wording into categories and try to reduce the total list of categories by grouping related topics.
6. Decide the final abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.
7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and do preliminary analysis.

8. If necessary, recode the existing data.

The fourth step was to use the coding process to generate a description including information about people, place, or event in a setting, and themes or categories, which are major findings in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2014). The fifth step was to represent the themes and description in a qualitative narrative. This involved discussion of several themes, or with interconnecting themes. The final step was to qualitatively interpret the findings. The lessons from the study could be personal culture, history, and experiences. Also, it would be a meaning derived from a comparison of the findings with information derived from the literature or theories.

### ***Credibility Enhancement for Qualitative Case Study Research***

Credibility was one of the key criteria used to guide qualitative studies, and it established that the findings of the research were believable (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In order to enhance the credibility of this study, the strategies identified in “*Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry*” by Creswell and Miller was used. These strategies are (1) member checking and (2) peer debriefing.

*Member checking* – This involved collecting data and clarifying the data or the descriptions with participants. Researchers might take back the findings to participants and check whether the themes and categories were accurate. This was considered one of the most important strategies to strength the credibility of qualitative studies, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). This enabled the participants to boost the credibility of the qualitative study. This strategy was used to demonstrate the accuracy of the data

obtained. Student-athletes from the U.S. and South Korea were asked to confirm if the theme and categories have been analyzed as they intended.

*Peer debriefing* – This involved the review of the data and research process by a peer who had knowledge on the research. Peer debriefers provided help, asked questions about methods, objected to researchers' assumptions, and played devil's advocate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because peer debriefers could give feedback and provide ideas, they contributed to the enhancement of the qualitative study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Six American student-athletes and Six South Korean student-athletes who agreed to an interview were selected to participate in this study. Three American female and three Korean female student-athletes and three American male and three Korean male student-athletes were interviewed and these student-athletes were selected from women's team and individual sports and men's team and individual sports. All the background information of participations was collected in the beginning of the interviews. All identifiable information of individual participants were removed and identified by a pseudonym below:

Greg - Track and Field

Woo - Field Hockey

Sam - Basketball

Kang - Swimming

Jake - Baseball

Min - Baseball

Jane - Volleyball

Yuna - Shooting

Gracie - Lacrosse

Mina - Field Hockey

Katie – Basketball

Hana - Cycling

### *Research Question #1*

How do American student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation?

### *Overview*

American student-athletes discussed their perceptions of motivation.

Questionnaires regarding student-athletes' motivation included two categories: academic and athletic motivations. In terms of their academic motivation, the common themes are that American student-athletes perceived that family member is the source of their academic motivation. Also, they reported that they are working hard to maintain their GPA at certain levels. In terms of their athletic motivation, no significant common trend was found among the student-athletes. They all have different reasons to participate in athletics. However, student-athletes perceived that their academic motivation seemed to be related to their athletic motivation. The common theme associated with the relationship between academic and athletic motivation was that student-athletes perceived that their academic performance affected their athletic performance and vice versa.

#### *Academic Motivation: Family Members*

Half of American student-athletes reported that their family is the primary source of academic motivation. When asked about what motivates you from an academic standpoint, Greg, a male track and field athlete stated, "My biggest motivation is just to graduate. I'm the first person in family member to go to college right out of high school and I will be the first person in my family graduating 4 year so that's my biggest motivation because my mom she graduated when I was in high school from college so she wanted me go to college and she wanted me graduate at young age because she had to work and go to school. My biggest motivation academically is my parents, they really helped me out. They are always doing for me." Sam, a male basketball player responded,

“My family members. My dad he went to college and my uncles they went to college and graduate college so knowing that it’s standard in your family and you have to do well and you have to set the bar somewhere and you have to achieve a goal graduating. Graduating with understanding. Now just graduating, you have to have a certain GPA.”. Katie, a female basketball player answered, “My mom is a doctor so she is very academic. All my sisters and brothers are layers and doctors. I am the only one who plays sport. So it’s always some type of competition between me and my sisters and brothers. My mom told me that do something for me, you can prove that you can study.”

*Academic Motivation: Maintaining a GPA*

Five of six American student-athletes answered that maintaining a certain level of GPA is important. In terms of maintaining a GPA, student-athletes had different reasons for managing their GPA. Jake, a male baseball player who discussed the importance of maintaining a GPA in order to keep the eligibility responded, “If you don’t have good GPA, you cannot play on field. So, you really have to make sure that you are on top of the school and stay eligible to play. For the most part, academics over athletic performance.” Katie, a basketball player, also discussed that she keeps track of her grades to meet the eligibility requirement, mainly playing in her team. She responded, “You have to have a 2.0 GPA to be eligible to play. As long as you are above that, you are fine...I have a 2.5 cumulative GPA so obviously I put more focus on basketball but I am still making sure that I am graduating.” Jane, a female volleyball player reported that she wants to have a good GPA because she can have her own study hours. She stated, “Knowing that if I don’t perform well in the classroom then I will be back in study hall.

So in my freshmen year, we had 8 hours of study hall a week and then after freshmen year, as long as you keep all the grades above C then you don't have any study hall and we kind of have a standard in our team that you have probably like I think it's maybe a 3.2 or 3.3 cumulative GPA so as long as you stay above that, you don't have any study hall hours. So, I think that kind of motivates me to work really hard and in the classroom, on my own studying because I don't have to do study hall." Gracie, a female lacrosse player, also reported that getting a good GPA is her academic motivation. She stated, "I'd like to get good grades if makes me feel good so I always do my work out in study because I don't wanna drop my GPA or anything. It's really important to me that I have good grades." When asked how to balance between academics and athletics, she responded, "there is not professional lacrosse so I am not gonna go play lacrosse and make money so I really have to remember that this is right now long term is my grades and how I do in school gonna help me." Greg also mentioned that he studies hard to have a good GPA: "I have a 2.7 GPA so I've been working at it. I want to graduate at 3.5 that's my biggest goal so I'm working hard this semester trying get my GPA up."

#### *Relationship between Academic Motivation and Athletic Motivation*

Five of six American student-athletes responded that there is relationship between academic motivation and athletic motivation when asked how to balance between academic motivation and athletic motivation. Among those five student-athletes, three student-athletes felt that their academic performance affected their athletic performance and vice versa. Sam, a male basketball player stated, "I think if you are working harder on one, you are gonna work harder on other. If you are working hard to be a good

student, you are gonna work hard to be a good athlete and it goes vice versa.” Jake, a baseball player, spoke about how he perceived his academic performance would affect his athletic performance and vice versa. He stated, “If you are doing well in school, you are not usually stressed out at all about anything so baseball becomes a lot more fun and you can focus easier and I almost feel sometimes if I am doing really well in baseball, it gives me a little bit more motivation to get my work done. If I’m doing bad in baseball, I don’t wanna do homework or anything but If I’m doing good, okay I am doing.” Gracie, a female lacrosse player, went into detail about how her academic performance would affect her athletic performance and vice versa: “When I get a good grade on a test, like on last on that I had a test and I got an A so right after that I was like oh year like it’s gonna be a good day so I go to practice and I feel like I do better. So if I do well in one aspect, it translates to the other.”

Jane, a volleyball player, perceived her academic motivation would affect her athletic motivation. She said, “If I don’t do well on an assignment or in a test, then that I might be thinking about it so then when I go to practice then I probably don’t have very good practice either.” On the other hand, Katie, a basketball player, stated, “I would say athletics affect academics because you don’t have much time and especially pre-season, for example, you know how students stay up and put all hours study but I can’t do that because weighting conditioning at 6 am and I have a practice. Athletics is a job, it pays for school...so athletics affect academics.”

### *Research Question # 2*

How do South Korean student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation?

### *Overview*

South Korean student-athletes discussed their perceptions of motivation toward their academics and athletics. In regard to their academic motivation, the common trend was that Korean student-athletes perceived that pursuing teaching certification is the primary source of enrolling in universities. In regard to their athletic motivation, the common trend is that they perceived that they want to achieve their personal goals in athletics. Also, Korean student-athletes put more emphasis on their athletic performance than their academic performance. Another common trend was that Korean student-athletes perceived that academic motivation and athletic motivation has no relation regarding to performing academic tasks and athletic tasks.

### *Academic Motivation: Teaching Certification*

More than a half of student-athletes in South Korea perceived that pursuing teaching certification is the most significant academic motivation. When asked about what motivates you from an athletic standpoint, Hana, a female long-distance cyclist responded, “My career goal is to become a physical education teacher. I study because I want to accomplish my goal. I think it is career-related motivation.” Woo, a male field hockey player, expressed his thought regarding the importance of pursuing teaching certificate: “My major is physical education and this is the only school one could obtain teaching certificate in my university so I decided to attend here after quitting my professional career. I study mainly to obtain the certificate.” When asked about how he

balanced between academic motivation and athletic motivation, he also added, “I tend to study until late night even after intense practice because I really want to earn teaching certificate. I believe academics is more important to me.” Mina, a female field hockey player, also mentioned, “I need to keep an average grade of B on all the classes in order to qualify for teaching certificate when I graduate so that I can teach physical education in school after retiring from professional team.” Min, a baseball player, reported that he decided to attend this school because he can qualify for teaching certificate: “I can get the teaching certificate when I graduate.”

#### *Athletic Motivation: Goal Achievement*

Half of Korean student-athletes stated that personal goal achievement is the primary athletic motivation. When asked about what motivates you from an athletic standpoint, Kang, a male swimmer responded, “I feel pleased when I achieve better record and it gives me bigger motivation to do better next time. I want to be pleased again and it drives me to train more.” Yuna, a female shooting athlete said, “I came to this school mainly because I did not have a great record to play in a professional league. I think I can focus on my performance and improve my record so that I could go to a professional team after graduation. I want to achieve a good record that I can satisfy with.” Hana also mentioned that achieving her goal in cycling motivates her to work hard. She stated, “Participating in competitions motivates me to work harder in cycling. I can test myself in competitions and I know my hard working out affects the result in competition and my record which motivates me to work even more hard. I determine to break my best record and try to work harder than ever before.” Mina, a female hockey

player said, “I love hockey and I want to play well and become a better player so that I can go to professional team after graduation.”

### *Emphasis on Athletic Performance*

Throughout the interview, four of six Korean student-athletes discussed that their athletic performance is more important than their academic performance. When asked how to balance between academic motivation and athletic motivation, Min, a baseball player responded, “I pay more attention to athletic tasks to play well in baseball. I believe that athletic performance is more important than academic performance because my focus is on entering professional league in the future. I think academics do not help my athletic performance.” Yuna, a female shooting athlete expressed similar thought regarding their motivation between academics and athletics. She stated, “I tend to focus more on athletics so I have a stronger athletic motivation. I have not academically motivated. I also take athletic tasks more seriously than academic tasks.” She also added, “There are many factors that can affect my athletic performance in competitions, but I believe the luck and the effort I make can play an important role in determining my condition and performance in a competition. So, I try my best to balance between these two tasks, but I tend to focus more on athletics. I think working out on my athletic performance is more important than attending class in this regard.”

For Kang, a male swimmer, he put a great emphasis on swimming, “I don’t care much about my GPA even though my parents told me to study hard. I believe athletic performance is more important because I like to swim. I still don’t know why I need to study. I set my schedule based on swimming. When practice and class run each other, I

would go to practice.” He continued, “I always prioritize my athletic tasks. I only pay attention to academic tasks when the deadline for an assignment is closer. Mina also mentioned, “I think athletic performance is more important than my GPA at this time. Though I manage my grades, I am not spending my time on studying regularly. I am more likely to study in class and that is it. I usually study the night before the exam to manage my grades. I spend most of my time on practice and something related to athletics.”

#### *No Relationship between Academic and Athletic Motivation*

Four of six Korean student-athletes reported that their academic performance does not affect their athletic performance and vice versa when asked about how they perceive the relationship between your level of athletic performance and level of academic performance.

#### *Research Question #3*

How do American student-athletes describe the benefits and the challenges of participating in college athletics?

#### *Overview*

American student-athletes discussed their perceptions of the benefits and the challenges of being student-athletes. Several common themes associated with the benefits and challenges of being student-athletes emerged. These student-athletes mentioned at least one benefit they have experienced while participating in college athletics in the interviews. The common theme is that participating in college sports provides student-

athletes with academic support services. Conversely, these student-athletes also reported at least one challenge they have experienced while being a student-athletes. The most common challenges they faced while participating in college athletics in the study were student-athletes perceived that it is difficult to manage the demands of athletic work and academic work. As related to their demands, missing classes seems to be a common challenge that student-athletes experienced when they travel for the games. They also mentioned their lack of social interaction with non-athlete students as a psychosocial issue.

#### *Benefits of Being Student-Athletes: Academic Support Services*

Four of six American student-athletes discussed that academic support service is the common theme associated with the benefits of being student-athlete. When asked about any benefits associate with participation in college athletics, Greg, a track and field athlete, mentioned athletes' privileges, "Study hall is something that really help me out. Just having a place I can go studying and it's always quiet. We have people help me out there so I think that would be a benefit... We have free printing so like I don't have to worry about printing stuff." Sam, a basketball player, spoke about the benefits he experienced: "Academic support. I get tutors that we need. We get some days off but the teachers here they really stay helpful for us, come to class and know what we have to do so as academic support as a student athlete, I think it's great in most part we have study hall that opens from 9 to 6, Monday to Friday so I think we have all the need we have access to. You meet the tutors there and academic advisors." Katie, a basketball player, discussed the academic benefits she had: "I feel very fortunate to be a student athlete. We

get tutors free, books are free, and college tuition is paid for... The thing that I like most is tutoring part because I am not the best in school so I need help. In the beginning of every semester, your coach and academic advisor they talk about how much tutoring you need and what class you need tutoring in so for this semester, I only have one tutor once a week on Monday from 10 to 11, but last semester, I had tutoring three times a week. It was Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, different time for different classes depending on and when I took Statistics and Math, I had to have a tutor.” She also discussed the academic support services when asked how to balance academics and athletics, “My coaches helped me with this. If I have study hall hours, then I am required to be in the building on time and study. They have tutors to help me with homework. There is a weekly meeting with academic advisors so they check my school work and grade. Even if you are not good at balancing it on your own, there is whole entire community that helps you. They are making sure that I graduate on time every semester.” Gracie, a female lacrosse player, also agreed: “We have mandatory study hall but we can get so through that we can get free tutors and like anything you need like I can get a writing tutor.”

#### *Challenges of Being Student-Athletes: Demands for Athletic Work and Academic Work*

American student-athletes discussed their perceptions of the challenges associated with participating in college athletics. When asked about any challenges associated with participating in college athletics, the most popular themes student-athletes reported were that they have a hard time to balance the demands of athletic work and academic work. Jake, a baseball player, mentioned: “It’s dealing with your sport hours a week and having

school and then you have to commit both because for baseball you are dealing it for 40 hours a week for that's only baseball and then you have your 12 to 15 credits everybody takes so when we travel, a lot of people do homework. We have a long bus trips we do homework on the bus um so that's the biggest challenges keeping up with school during your season."

Jane, a volleyball player mentioned, "Sometimes it's hard to balance because you might have a group meeting or your professor's office hour might be in the right in the middle of practice and you kind have to decide. I think it's kind of hard sometimes because you are here for education but they are also paying for it. So you kind of have to balance that. I go to study hall. Even though I don't have to have study hall hours now it's not mandated for me to go. Sometimes I go just to make sure that I get my work done. If for some reason I can't go to practice then I am supposed to make it up.

Athletically, if for some reason I can't attend practice, I am supposed to make it up."

Sam, a basketball player stated, "Just competing every day. Going on a practice and three hours practices, two hours practices and then going on a class is like. It takes toll on your body, takes toll on your mind so you have to have a strong mental. During season, it's definitely difficult. Two hours a day, I am not counting it together it may be like when if you get hurt if you have to do a recovery time, you have treatment take care and it may take about 6 hours for everything like you have to show up to practice early, you have watch film but two hours we are on the court for two hours but as far as everything else it's about 6 hours a day and you are taking classes at the same time. If you miss the class, you have to make up the work that every undergraduate student has to do." Gracie, a

female lacrosse player, expressed her thought regarding her time demands: “Lack of free time I guess. I have a decent amount of free time, but at the same time, there is like a study hall that I have to do. I have get 8 hours a week as a freshman. So I have 8 hours a week of that and then we have practice two and half hours of the day.”

#### *Challenges of Being Student-Athletes: Lack of Social Interaction*

Four of six American student-athletes reported their lack of experiences in building a social network with friends outside of their teams in this study. However, these students also mentioned at the end of the interview that their lack of social interaction with non-athletes was not a significant problem to them. When asked about any challenges associated with participating in college athletics, Jane, a volleyball player reported, “Sometimes it’s harder to find friends outside of volleyball. I would say my friends are athletes but not very many people are other than that because we don’t really have the same type of schedule.” Gracie, a female student-athlete, made comments regarding lack of social interaction: “I guess that most of my friends are just like athletes and don’t really have many who do not play sport. That’s kind of hard I only get interaction with other athletes. That can be nice because they can understand my whole schedule but at the same time, I wish I had people that I can talk to about I can talk about lacrosse who are not my team so I can spend time with them, tell them what are annoys me.” Jake discussed about his experiences in social networking with people outside of his team when asked about any psychosocial issues associated with participating in college athletics. He mentioned, “I would say the biggest social issue would be you lose contact with friends you usually have been in contact from high school. I’ve been.. because my

first two summers, I played in summer league so I was sent to North Carolina so I wouldn't be at home at all and I mean some people understand your schedule and some don't so I would say that you lose some friends but you gain a lot more from the other student-athletes in your team and so because they are usually on a same schedule as you are." He continued to talk about his experiences with non-athlete students: "I still feel stressful because it's probably the hardest with the group projects and other people don't understand that we are travelling and we can't be there and then that grades are then affected...I would say a lot of other students and sometimes teachers don't understand that there is a lot of stuff going around for being a student-athlete and the times that baseball time is so heavy if we have a game on Friday. It starts at 3pm and we have to be there by 12 until 6 or 7 so it's a lot of time that's been taken out of the day so that's the challenging part." Katie agreed: "I am a people person and I would like to talk. I would say I kind of get isolated so your friends are only athletes. I don't have friends that are non-athletes. All my friends play either basketball or track but I don't have any friends that are non-athletes. That's one issue. Circle gets small and you don't get to know people outside and athletes tend to just stick together."

#### *Challenges of Being Student-Athletes: Missing Classes*

American student-athletes discussed their perceptions of missing classes for games. When asked about any challenges associated with participating in college athletics, the most popular themes in this study were participating in college sports caused them to miss classes because of the games which made student-athletes have a hard time balancing academics and athletics. Jane, a volleyball player, mentioned her

experiences regarding how to balance between her class and practice: “It’s definitely challenging like trying to balance school work and volleyball, especially in the fall when we travel. We travel almost every weekend so for now playing at home then we are travelling.” Jake, a male baseball player, spoke about his thought regarding the challenges he faced while being a student-athletes: “Usually it’s we travel 7 times a year so it’s usually split with home games and away games it’s similar. At the beginning of the season we travel a lot so first month we travel and then from there it’s depending on how the leagues schedule home and away games. So you miss a lot of class during a season and then so we try to schedule best as we can to have class not interfere with the game time when we have to leave.” Sam, a basketball player reported, “Sometimes, we come off to the road at 3 o’clock in the morning and we have class at 12 and nobody really want to go to class but you have to do it so that’s a real challenge. You are going to class and staying on top of your school work while you’re not in class. Some days, we miss three days per week out of school so we still have to the work as student athlete has to do. Teachers pretty much understand that we are missing class because of travelling but we still have to make up the work that we missed. Homework, assignment, class assignment but you still have to make everything up.”

It is believed that their travelling for games caused them to miss their classes and find it difficult to catch up on their class work, which makes student-athletes experience difficulty in doing both class and sports. Gracie, a lacrosse player agreed: “We travel for games so I miss classes so that’s hard. I have a Thursday class that’s like 3 hours Thursday night and I missed twice already so stressed me out because I am missing

classes. She also mentioned, “I am always worried that they are gonna say something that but they helped me out like I can like text tem out my classmates hey what did I miss and they can tell me but what if like the teachers say something that is gonna be on our test that I have missed that is not in the book or if there is like a pop quiz or test. If I have to make up the test in my free time. That stressed me out when I have to coordinate with my teacher hoping that they are free when I am free which most of the time they are not.”

#### *Research Question #4*

How do South Korean student-athletes describe the benefits and the challenges of participating in college athletics?

#### *Overview*

South Korean student-athletes discussed their perceptions of the benefits and the challenges of being student-athletes in this study. The most popular theme associated with the benefits while participating in college athletics was that student-athletes perceived that professors understand their athletic demands. More than half of these student-athletes also mentioned the financial aid from schools as the benefit of being student-athletes. South Korean student-athletes have faced different challenges while participating in college athletics. The challenges were varied and no common challenges emerged among these student-athletes.

#### *Benefits of Being Student-Athlete: Having Academic Exceptions*

Four of six South Korean student-athletes reported that their professors understood their athletic scheduling and made academic exceptions for student-athletes that would not make for any other students. When asked about the benefits associated with participating in college athletics, Yuna, a shooting athlete mentioned, “There was insufficient amount of time for a practice always in high school, but I could effectively focus on practice and athletic performance in college. I could ask my professors for an excuse because professors understand that my athletic goal is more important than academics.”

Kang, a male swimmer, had this thought regarding the benefit of being a student-athlete: “I like the fact that I can focus mainly on swimming and don’t worry about my GPA because professors are more considered and help us to get a good grade. Professors understand my athletic demands as a student-athlete well so they are not strict about missing classes when I have practices or competitions. For instance, I had to submit the list of my competitions in the beginning of the semester and I met several professors. When I explained my athletic schedule including practices and competitions that interfere with my classes, professors understood my schedule and advised what I need to do when I miss classes.” Hana, a female cyclist reported, “The professors understand that I am a student-athlete. They are not strict in evaluating student-athletes, not every professors does, but when student-athletes participate in class every time and show our interest in class like sitting in the first row or when we do well on the exams often professors appreciated our effort and are more likely to give extra credits. This semester, however, the professors evaluated our grade based on the result of the exams.” Wook, a field

hockey player, discussed the advantages he had as a being student-athlete: “My professors understand my athletic demands as a student-athlete. I miss many classes and have trouble keeping up with the class because of travelling and professors understand it. So, they often provide us with extra academic support. For instance, not every professor does this but some professors make the exams with the questions have a low level of difficulty or make the exams based on the material discussed in the class which we could attend.”

#### *Benefits of Being Student-Athletes: Financial Aids*

South Korean student-athletes discussed their perceptions of receiving financial aid from colleges. Four of six these student-athletes mentioned the tangible benefits they receive as being student-athletes. When asked about the benefits associated with participating in college athletics, Min reported, “I don’t need to pay my tuition. The school provided scholarships covering my tuition, fees, equipment, and travelling when I don’t receive an “F” in the classes and fail to attend classes. We don’t have any competitions that interfere with my academic schedule so we must attend our classes.” Hana, a female cyclist stated, “As a student athlete, school pays for my tuition, registration fees, housing, and food. Student-athletes are exempted from everything. I don’t spend any money on something related to school stuff. Also, school supports the cost of off-season training so it is really nice. I don’t have to pay for it.” Wook, a male field hockey player, discussed the financial aid he received: “There is a cafeteria only for student-athletes in the school so student-athletes have better food choices than what regular students have. Also, I receive a scholarship so I don’t need to pay for my

education and housing. In addition, for field hockey, I can get hockey gear for free. I don't pay anything related my competitions." Mina agreed: "Every sport teams get financial support from the school so every student-athlete gets scholarship. As a student-athlete, I don't have to pay my tuition. The nice thing is that I do not need to pay tuition, food, and housing while participating in college athletics."

### *Summary of Findings*

American student-athletes and South Korean student-athletes discussed their college experiences including the benefits and the challenges of being student-athletes and their motivation toward their athletics and academics. The first two interview questions focused on their athletic and academic motivation. Interview questions three and four focused on their perception of the benefits and the challenges while participating in college athletics.

In the first research question, American student-athletes discussed their perceptions of their motivation and several common themes were emerged in this study. American student-athletes perceived that their family members motivated them to get a degree. The most popular common theme associated with their academic motivation was that they understand the importance of maintaining a certain level of GPA while participating in college athletics. It is also interesting to see that student-athletes believed that their academic performance does affect their academic performance and vice versa.

In research question two, South Korean student-athletes discussed their perceptions of their motivation toward academics and athletics and revealed that student-athletes perceived that getting teaching certification after graduation is the source of their

academic motivation. They believed that being eligible to teach in sports after graduation is the extra benefit while competing in sports. In regard to their athletic motivation, student-athletes perceived that it is important to perform well in their sports. They try to achieve their personal goal in sports. In relation to their athletic motivation, many student-athletes put a great emphasis on their athletic performance rather than academic performance. They believed that it is important to demonstrate their athletic ability. Many student-athletes also see their academic performance and athletic performance does have any relationships.

Research question three illustrated American student-athletes' perceptions of the benefits and the challenges associated with participating in college athletics. The most common theme that emerged associating the benefits of being student-athletes was that student-athletes believed that they received academic support services including tutors, study hall, and academic advisors. Conversely, American student-athletes perceived that their demands for athletic and academic responsibilities is challenging as being a student-athletes. Missing classes due to travelling for the games is also another challenge they faced while competing in sports. Student-athletes also believed that it is hard to make non-athlete student relationships because of athletic tasks.

Discussion of South Korean student-athletes explored their perceptions of the benefits and the challenges while participating in college athletics in research question four. The common theme associated with the benefits of being student-athletes was that Korean student-athletes agreed that professors give them special academic exceptions. Professors are more likely to understand their demands for athletic work. Student-athletes

also believed that they could receive financial aids from school while competing in sports including tuition, housing, food, fees, gear, and travelling. In regard to the challenges of being student-athletes, no common challenges emerged in this study. They faced different challenges while participating in college athletics.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

### *Summary of the Purpose of the Study*

This study examined American student-athletes' and South Korean student-athletes' perceptions of their college experiences. This primary research question was studied by discussing the benefits and the challenges associated with participating in college athletics and their academic motivation and athletic motivation. These objectives were examined by conducting a qualitative research method. The interviews were used to explore how American and South Korean student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation and how American and South Korean student-athletes describe the benefits and the challenges while participating in college athletics. This study will contribute to a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages associated with the US and South Korean college sports models.

### *Summary of Findings*

American student-athletes perceived that they are academically motivated by their family members and they believed that it is important to maintain a GPA as a student-athlete to play their sports. In regard to their athletic motivation, student-athletes have different motivations and this study does not explore the common themes associated with their athletic motivation. However, an interesting concept emerged throughout the interviews with American student-athletes. They believed that their academic performance could affect their athletic performance and vice versa because they cannot focus on one when they did not well in the other one. South Korean student-athletes'

academic motivations were that they believed getting teaching certification is a benefit after graduation while still competing in sports. Their athletic motivation is found to be achieving their personal goal in sports. Many student-athletes in this study also agreed that they put more emphasis on their athletic performance rather than their academic performance.

American student-athletes described that academic support services provided by school is the benefit they enjoy. On the other hand, they found it difficult to balance the demands for athletic and academic duties as a student-athlete. Their frequent travelling also caused them to miss several classes which is viewed as a challenge. Their lack of social interaction with non-athlete students was another common theme associated with the challenges they faced in this study. South Korean student-athletes discussed many privileges they get while participating in college athletics. They believed that professors are more likely to understand their schedule and provide academic support; receiving financial aid from school is another benefit while participating in college athletics.

#### *Research Question # 1- Findings and Discussion*

How do American student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation?

Discussion with American student-athletes explored several common themes associated with their academic and athletic motivation. In reviewing American student-athletes' motivation, their family members play a role in academic motivation and many student-athletes' academic motivations were influenced by maintaining their GPAs. In regard to their motivation, the relationship between academic performance and athletic performance was found to be a common theme.

American student-athletes perceived their family members affect their academic motivation. Family members were able to convince student-athletes of the importance of education and emphasized the benefits of earning a college degree. Thus, their family members made them more motivated to attend school while competing in their sports. Their responses revealed that student-athletes who described family members as the source of academic motivation do focus more on graduating school rather than having higher GPAs.

Student-athletes reported that they need to maintain a certain level of GPA and this motivated them to do their best in academics. It is interesting to note that student-athletes described the importance of managing their GPAs with different reasons. The most common reason discussed in this study was to keep the eligibility requirement as being student-athletes so that they can compete in their sports. It is suggested that many student-athletes are aware of the eligibility requirement in order to play their sports and they would manage their grades well though they do not have academic interests. Other reasons described as the factors motivating their academics were to keep scholarship, get a good job, raise GPA, and avoid study hall hours.

In regard to American student-athletes' motivation, the relationship between academic performance and athletic performance was found to be the popular common theme discussed throughout the interviews with these student-athletes. They described their academic performance can affect their athletic performance and vice versa. It is believed that for some student-athletes, when they do not well on exams, they do feel stressed out by thoughts that their exam score would negatively affect their grades which

can disrupt their concentration in practice and they feel in the same way when the athletic performance comes first.

Among the student-athletes, Jane, a student-athlete who has higher academic motivation, described that her academic performance could affect her athletic performance. Yet, Katie, a student-athlete who has higher athletic motivation, reported that only her athletic-related work affected her academic performance. The results indicated that student-athletes' level of academic and athletic motivation would affect the relationship between two motivations. It might help understand whether student-athletes have higher academic motivation or higher athletic motivation.

#### *Research Question # 2 – Findings and Discussion*

How do South Korean student-athletes describe their academic and athletic motivation?

Discussion with South Korean student-athletes indicated the common themes associated with their academic and athletic motivation. They described getting teaching certification as a source of their academic motivation. Student-athletes perceived that they can become eligible for getting teaching certification after graduation when they successfully manage their grades. Though it is unknown how many those student-athletes are going to teach in the future, it seems that regardless of their future jobs, they consider it as one of the benefits they can get while participating in college athletics.

In the interviews with student-athletes, they reported that student-athletes put a great deal of effort into achieving their athletic goals. Specifically, student-athletes wanted to exceed their personal best and develop their skills and they believed that this would help them go to a professional team after graduation. Their perceptions of athletic

motivation illustrated that Korean student-athletes are trying to demonstrate a professional level of performance and skills while in school in hopes of becoming a professional player after graduation.

In relation to academic and athletic motivation, it is interesting to note that Korean student-athletes believed that their athletic work is more important than their academic work. It is found that when dealing with their academic and athletic demands, student-athletes tend to focus more on their athletic work and do care about the performance. Discussion with student-athletes indicated that they understand their athletic responsibilities and develop their athletic goals while participating in college athletics; however, they were not able to set their academic goals other than obtaining teaching certification. Their responses also illustrated that student-athletes do not experience difficulty balancing between academic and athletic responsibilities as much as American student-athletes and their GPA is pretty manageable with minimum efforts, enabling student-athletes to focus on their athletics. It is believed that their emphasis on athletic work is influenced by their future direction as many student-athletes wanted to play on a professional level.

This finding supported the common theme that emerged from the interviews with Korean student-athletes. Unlike American student-athletes, many Korean student-athletes do not perceive that their academic performance affects their athletic performance and vice versa. In general, student-athletes do not put much emphasis on their academic performance and they would not mind their grades, especially when they do well in

athletics. Their academic performance would not make any difference in determining their level of athletic performance.

### *Research Question # 3 – Findings and Discussion*

How do American student-athletes describe the benefits and the challenges of participating in college athletics?

American student-athletes described academic support services as the benefit of being student-athletes while their dual demands for academic and athletic tasks, missing classes, and lack of social interaction with people outside of their sports were described as the challenges they experienced while participating in college athletics. Student-athletes believed that they received many privileges that help their academic work. Many of them agreed that tutoring is really beneficial that aid student-athletes in understanding their academic material. They were able to follow the academic schedule and manage their grades with academic advising. The study hall hour assigned to student-athletes was described as a useful academic supporting requirement. American student-athletes believed that this creates an environment to study and they were able to get academic advising at the study hall as well. It is interesting to note that although those services are requirements, not optional for student-athletes, student-athletes still considered it as one of the privileges they get from the school. Academic support services provided by school would play an important role in developing their academic motivation and helping student-athletes succeed in their class. Also, student-athletes considered those services as the benefit of being student-athletes because it actually helps them deal with their both academic and athletic demands.

Discussion associated with the challenges of participating in college athletic explored several common themes from the interview with American student-athletes. Many student-athletes described their dual responsibilities for their academic and athletic related work is the challenge they faced. Their schedule with class and practice discussed in this study illustrated that student-athletes experienced difficulty balancing their academic and athletic duties. Student-athletes who have a good GPA and are at the top with their team must put a great deal effort on keeping their motivation toward both. In fact, they could develop good time management skills that help them balance between academic and athletic work while participating in college athletics.

In relation to their demands for academics and athletics, the common theme associated with the challenges of being student-athletes was described as missing their classes because of travelling for the games. They believed that their travelling in the season caused them to find it difficult to balance between class and athletic related work and often they get stressed out as they have to make up the missing classes. It is also interesting that they have to interact with professors regarding class work when they missed classes because of the games. While participating in college athletics, student-athletes also need to develop good communication skills as they have to explain their schedule and ask questions to professors. It is also important to note that professors can play a role in developing student-athletes' academic motivation and understanding their dual role of student and athletes would help student-athletes deal with their academic and athletic work.

Student-athletes' dual responsibilities of academic and athletic tasks would be related to another challenge they experienced while competing in sports. American student-athletes perceived that meeting people outside of sports is challenging. Their time commitment to academics and athletics does not allow them to interact with new people and it is hard to keep contact with friends who do not play sports. It is believed that they do not have free time to interact with people and it takes some time for people to understand student-athletes' schedules and know each other; but student-athletes are not able to spend time regularly with non-athlete students. Thus, there is less chance to expand their social networking outside of their sports.

#### *Research Question # 4 – Findings and Discussion*

How do South Korean student-athletes describe the benefits and the challenges of participating in college athletics?

Discussion of the benefits and the challenges of participating in college athletics with South Korean student-athletes revealed several common themes that are interesting. Having academic exceptions by professors was viewed as the most popular benefit by student-athletes and the financial aid from school was described as another common benefit while competing in sports. Student-athletes believed that their professors give academic exceptions to student-athletes. They also understand their athletic schedule considerably. Thus, student-athletes described that they can focus on their athletics much more than academics. It is believed that professors do not push student-athletes as much as they do regular students and probably understand that student-athletes' athletic responsibilities. Though student-athletes considered having academic exceptions by

professors as a benefit of being student-athletes, it does affect their academic motivation negatively. As discussed in research question two, professors can play a role in increasing student-athletes' academic motivation; however, their understanding enables them to disregard their role of student and put less effort to manage their grades and to prepare for their exams. This also explains why Korean student-athletes are not as academically motivated as discussed in the research question two associated with their motivation. It is found that student-athletes do not experience difficulties in regard to managing their grades as much as American student-athletes. It is crucial to note that it is unknown whether professors understand their schedule or they are just not interested in student-athletes' academic achievement. Having academic exceptions can be viewed as a benefit in a short period. The exceptions to student-athletes, however, can be viewed as a challenge when it is considered their academic performance is important in a long run.

Financial aid student-athletes received from school is another common benefit discussed in this study. Korean student-athletes perceived that they can receive many financial supports from school including tuition, fees, food, housing, gear, and travelling cost. The financial aid provided to student-students seemed to reduce the economic burden they might face while not making money in school. Though some student-athletes described that the financial aid from school is not enough to cover the cost for competing in sports, most student-athletes appreciated their financial assistance.

### *Limitations*

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, this study was conducted in two different countries which would have affected the nature of the responses from the participants. Regardless of the two-sport model in the U.S. and South Korea, these student-athletes were educated in different cultural settings that might influence their college experiences. Public expectations about student-athletes and the role of family, peers, coaches, professors in school and sports can be different from America to South Korea which would allow student-athletes to hold different life values.

Another limitation is that the findings of this study cannot be representative of the greater population because the sample size was limited. For example, the majority of the participants were senior students which would have limited the assortment of responses as they have more experiences in college athletics and face different life challenges. The South Korean participants of this study were also limited to student-athletes participating in nonrevenue sports which may affect their responses. Future research is needed to examine more diverse student-athletes playing different sports.

Another limitation is that the common themes associated with American student-athletes' athletic motivation were not found and the common themes associated with the challenges of being student-athletes were also not found among South Korean student-athletes; so future study is needed to conduct a quantitative research at both sites to explore the common themes related to student-athletes' college experiences. The findings may present different themes of student-athletes' perceptions of their college experiences. However, this study was able to gain insight into student-athletes' college experiences

and obtained descriptive perceptions of the benefit and challenges of being student-athletes and their academic and athletic motivations.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

**TITLE:** US Student-Athletes' and South Korean Student-Athletes' College Experiences

**GMU IRB NO.:**

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the study investigator to explain any words that you do not clearly understand. You may review unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to explore US student-athletes' and South Korean student-athletes' college experiences, including the benefits and challenges associated with participating in college athletics and their motivation toward academics and athletics. This is intended to add to the body of knowledge in this area of study.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT**

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you. This study involves the participation of student-athletes in interviews that will last approximately 30 minutes to 40 minutes. The student-athletes will be asked to discuss topics associated with the benefits and challenges of being student-athletes. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded, but no names will be recorded. After the interview, the recording will be transcribed and participants may be asked to review the transcript to ensure accuracy. It is anticipated that approximately 6 US student-athletes and 6 South Korean student-athletes will be interviewed during this study.

#### **RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

It is not anticipated that talking about issues related the benefits and challenges of being student-athletes will cause any psychological or emotional discomfort. However, you do not have to talk about any subjects that you would prefer not to address and you can stop the interview at any time.

#### **BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS**

You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but by offering your insights and perceptions, this study may contribute to a better understanding of factors associated with what are the benefits and challenges associated with participating in college athletics in

United States and South Korea. Though prior research indicates US student-athletes' college experiences and their motivation toward academics and athletics qualitatively and quantitatively, there is little research on South Korean student-athletes' perceptions of participating in college athletic and their motivation toward athletics and academics. Also, there is a gap in understanding how two different college models affect student-athletes' college experiences.

### **COSTS**

There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend participating in the interview.

### **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There is no payment or compensation for participation in this study.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The alternative is to not participate in the study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of interview notes and audio recordings. The interview data is being collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by a pseudonym, not your actual name, and will be stored on a password protected personal computer until the conclusion of the study, at which point it will be erased and deleted.

I will not tell anyone the information you provide; however, information from the study and the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by George Mason University. Further, your choice to participate will be kept strictly confidential.

What I find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

As described, the interviews will be audio taped, but no names will be recorded. At the beginning of the interview, you will be asked to use first names only so that no full names are recorded. During the transcription process your first name will be changed to a pseudonym. After the information from the audio recording is transcribed into an electronic file, the recording will be destroyed.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer specific questions that are asked during the interview. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

## **QUESTIONS**

In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

Hyerim Lee  
Graduate Student, Master of Science in Sport and Recreation Studies  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  
George Mason University  
703-593-1252  
hlee31@gmu.edu

You may also contact my thesis chair directly:

Dr. Christopher Atwater  
Assistant Professor, Sport and Recreation Studies  
George Mason University  
MS 4E5, 10900 University Blvd  
Manassas, VA 20110  
(703)-993-7608  
catwater@gmu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office of Research & Economic Development  
George Mason University  
MS 6D5, 4400 University Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
703-993-2268

*You may also contact this number for general questions, concerns or complaints about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else. Additional information about participation in research studies can be found at <http://research.gmu.edu/>*

## **CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

*I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of the consent form once I have agreed to participate.*

Participant name printed

Participant signature

Date

---

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent  
Discussion / Witness  
(Printed)

---

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent  
Discussion / Witness

---

Date

---

Investigator Signature (if different from above)

---

Date

**CONSENT FOR RECORDING**

*I understand the information about this study and that the interview will be recorded with my permission. Questions that I wanted to ask about the recording and transcription of the interview have been answered. I have checked the box below that indicates my permission or declination of the recording of the interview.*

- YES, I give my permission to have the interview recorded.
- NO, I do not give my permission to have the interview recorded.

## APPENDIX B

### *Interview Protocol*

#### **Background:**

Tell me about yourself:

- What is your major in college?
- What is your academic classification?
- Which sport do you play?
- How many credits are you taking?
- How long have you been participating in college athletics?
- What got you interested in competitive athletics?

#### **Benefits of Being Student-Athletes:**

Talk to me about any benefits you associate with participation in college athletics?

- Personal Benefits?
- Academic Benefits?
- Athletic Benefits?

#### **Challenges of Being Student-Athletes:**

Talk to me about any challenges you associate with participation in college athletics?

- Personal Challenges?
- Academic Challenges?
- Athletic Challenges?

#### **Psychosocial Issues:**

Talk to me about any psychosocial issues you associate with participation in college athletics (definition of psychosocial issues provided if required by interviewee).

#### **Academic and Athletic Motivations:**

Talk to me about what motivates you from an academic standpoint.

Talk to me about what motivates you from an athletic standpoint.

Talk to me about the balance between both your academic and athletic motivations:

- The balance between GPA and athletic performance.
- The relationship between your level of athletic performance and your academic performance.
- The balance between academic tasks and athletic tasks.

**Closing Question:**

- Is there anything else you would like to include that is helpful in understanding your college experiences and your perception of participation in college athletics?

## REFERENCES

- Althouse, J. N. (2007). *Testing a model of first-semester student-athletes academic motivation and motivational balance between academics and athletics*. (Doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University). Retrieved from <https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/paper/7827/3114>
- Bell, L. F. (2009). Examining academic role-set influence on the student-athlete experience. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, (Special Issue), 19–41. Retrieved from <http://csri-jiia.org/>
- Carodine, K., Almond, K. F., & Gratto, K. K. (2001). College student athlete success both in and out of the classroom. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2001(93), 19–33. doi:10.1002/ss.2
- Chen, S., Snyder, S., & Magner, M. (2010). The effects of sport participation on student-athletes' and non-athlete students' social life and identity. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 3, 176–193. Retrieved from <http://csri-jiia.org>
- Comeaux, E. (2012). Unmasking athlete microaggressions: Division I student-athletes' engagement with members of the campus community. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, 5(2), 189-198. Retrieved from <http://www.humankinetics.com>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1477543?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Education Psychology*, 25, 54-67. doi:10.1006/ceps.1999.1020
- Engstrom, C. M., Sedlacek, W. E., & McEwen, M. K. (1995). Faculty attitudes toward male revenue and nonrevenue student-athletes. *Journal of College Student Development*, 36(3), 217–227. Retrieved from [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_college\\_student\\_development/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_college_student_development/)
- Gaston-Gayles, J. L. (2002). *A study of student athletes' motivation toward sports and academics* (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University). Retrieved from [http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc\\_num=osu1214837869](http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=osu1214837869)

- Gaston-Gayles, J. L. (2004). Examining academic and athletic motivation among student athletes at a Division I university. *Journal of College Student Development, 45*(1), 75–83. doi:10.1353/csd.2004.0005
- Gaston-Gayles, J. L. (2005). The factor structure and reliability of the Student Athletes' Motivation toward Sports and Academic Questionnaire (SAMSAQ). *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(3), 317-327. doi:10.1353/csd.2005.0025
- Gaston-Gayles, J. L. (2014). Engaging student athletes. In S. J. Quaye & S. R. Harper (Eds.), *Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations* (2nd ed.). (pp. 208-218). New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Y3Y9BAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA209&dq=Engaging+student+athletes&ots=dH79fWdU4h&sig=xc5Ac3F9SIg1NWtAYuKEwILlQcw#v=onepage&q=Engaging%20student%20athletes&f=false>
- Gaston-Gayles, J. L., & Hu, S. (2009). The influence of student engagement and sport participation on college outcomes among Division I student athletes. *The Journal of Higher Education, 80*(3), 315–333. doi:10.1353/jhe.0.0051
- Grossbard, J. R., Geisner, I. M., Mastroleo, N. R., Kilmer, J. R., Turrisi, R., & Larimer, M. E. (2009). Athletic identity, descriptive norms, and drinking among athletes transitioning to college. *Addictive Behaviors, 34*(4), 352–359. doi:10.1016/j.addbeh.2008.11.011
- Harris, H. L., Altekruze, M. K., & Engels, D. W. (2003). Helping freshman student athletes adjust to college life using psychoeducational groups. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 28*(1), 64–81. doi:10.1177/019339202250079
- Jolly, J. C. (2008). Raising the question # 9 is the student-athlete population unique? And why should we care? *Communication Education, 57*(1), 145-151. doi:10.1080/03634520701613676
- Jung, H. (2009). *Evolving society, regressing sports: Structural changes of Korean sports and dearth of athletes in knowledge society* (Doctoral thesis, Dong-A University, Busan, South Korea). Retrieved from <http://dlps.nanet.go.kr/DlibViewer.do?cn=KINX2010008068&sysid=nhn>
- Korean Olympic Committee. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.sports.or.kr/index.jsp>
- Korea University Sport Federation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://kusf.or.kr/>

- Lee, I. (2013). *A study on construction of objectives and contents in sports history education* (Doctoral thesis, Korea National University of Education, Chung-Buk, South Korea). Retrieved from <http://dlps.nanet.go.kr/DlibViewer.do?cn=KDMT1201330731&sysid=nhn>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. Retrieved from [http://books.google.com/books/about/Naturalistic\\_Inquiry.html?id=2oA9aWINEoC](http://books.google.com/books/about/Naturalistic_Inquiry.html?id=2oA9aWINEoC)
- Martens, M. P., Dams-O'Connor, K., & Beck, N. C. (2006). A systematic review of college student-athletes drinking: Prevalence rates, sport-related factors, and interventions. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, 31*, 305-316. doi:10.1016/j.jsat.2006.05.004
- National Collegiate Athletic Association. (n.d.) Who we are. Retrieved from <http://www.ncaa.org/about/who-we-are>
- Nelson, T. F., & Wechsler, H. (2001). Alcohol and college athletes. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise, 33*, 43-47. Retrieved from <http://www.acsm.org/access-public-information/acsm-journals/medicine-science-in-sports-exercise>
- Paule, A. L., & Gilson, T. A. (2010). Current collegiate experiences of big-time, non-revenue, NCAA athletes. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport, 3*(2), 333-347. Retrieved from <http://www.humankinetics.com>
- Pierce, C. E. (2007). An academic survey of engineering student athletes at a Division I university. *College Student Journal, 41*(4), 801-812. Retrieved from [http://www.projectinnovation.com/College\\_Student\\_Journal.html](http://www.projectinnovation.com/College_Student_Journal.html)
- Potuto, J. R., & O'Hanlon, J. (2007). National study of student-athletes regarding their experiences as college students. *College Student Journal, 41*(4), 947-966. Retrieved from [http://www.projectinnovation.com/College\\_Student\\_Journal.html](http://www.projectinnovation.com/College_Student_Journal.html)
- Sailes, G. A. (1993). An investigation of campus stereotypes: The myth of black athletic superiority and the dumb jock stereotype. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 10*(1), 88-97. Retrieved from <http://journals.humankinetics.com.mutex.gmu.edu/ssj>
- Sherry, M., & Zeller, K. (2014). Gender and motivation: A study of athletic and academic motivations of Division I female college basketball players. *Women's Studies: An Inter-disciplinary Journal, 43*(1), 73-92. doi:10.1080/00497878.2014.852425

- Simons, H. D., Bosworth, C., Fujita, S., & Jensen, M. (2007). The athlete stigma in higher education. *College Student Journal, 41*(2), 251-273. Retrieved from [http://www.projectinnovation.biz/college\\_student\\_journal](http://www.projectinnovation.biz/college_student_journal)
- Simons, H. D., Van Rhee, D., & Covington, M. V. (1999). Academic motivation and the student athlete. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*, 151-162. Retrieved from <http://www.jcsdonline.org/>
- Son, S. (2002). *Changes of Korean sports in accordance with economic growth* (Doctoral thesis, Yong-in University, Yongin, South Korea). Retrieved from <http://dlps.nanet.go.kr/DlibViewer.do?cn=KDMT1200247304&sysid=nhn>
- Watson, J. C., & Kissinger, D. B. (2007). Athletic participation and wellness: Implications for counseling college student-athletes. *Journal of College Counseling, 10*(2), 153-162. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1882.2007.tb00015.x
- Watt, S. K., & Moore, J. L. (2001). Who are student athletes? *New Directions for Student Services, 93*, 7-18. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>
- Wechsler, H., Davenport, A. E., Dowdall, G. W., Grossman, S. J., & Zanakos, S. I. (1997). Binge drinking, tobacco, and illicit drug use and involvement in college athletics: A survey of students at 140 American colleges. *Journal of American College Health, 45*(5), 195-200. doi:10.1080/07448481.1997.9936884
- Willis, K. J. P. (2005). *Female basketball student-athletes' motivation: Analyzing academic standing and ethnicity at Atlantic Coast Conference institutions* (Dissertation, The Florida State University). Retrieved from <http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/etd>
- Yusko, D. A., Buckman, J. F., White, H. R., & Pandina, R. J. (2008). Alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, and performance enhancers: A comparison of use by college student athletes and nonathletes. *Journal of American College Health, 57*(3), 281-290. Retrieved from <http://www.acha.org/>

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Hyerim Lee graduated from Gaepo High School, Seoul, South Korea, in 2005. She received her Associate of Arts from Dong Seoul University in 2007 and Bachelor of Arts from National Institute for Education in 2008. She joined the national triathlon team for 6 years while attending high schools and colleges and was employed as a triathlon athlete in Chungnam County Sports Council for 7 years after graduating high school. She is expecting to receive her Master of Arts in Sport and Recreation Studies from George Mason University in summer 2015.