Organizational Socialization for Student-Athletes with a Different Cultural Background: Scale Development

Evelyn Su Jara-Pazmino, University of South Carolina
Bob Heere (Advisor), University of North Texas

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In order to win in the hypercompetitive industry of collegiate athletics, coaching staffs have turned to national and international recruiting. According to David Ching, Senior Contributor of Forbes, “Nearly every Power Five college athletic program spends more than $1 million per year on recruiting” (Ching, 2018). Heightened by the fact that the four-year eligibility rule warrants a constant influx of athletes. Theory regarding organizational socialization offers a promising framework to examine how sport teams manage initial entry experiences because it presumes that teams are active agents in newcomer socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Ideally, the socialization process will achieve an effective adjustment and maximize outcomes for the individual as well as the group such as increasing the commitment to the team as well as achieving the expected athletic and academic performance and reducing the number of transfers and dropouts.

The author focuses on freshman student-athletes that have a different cultural background (SADC) from their new team. Cultural difference is a factor that influences the effectiveness of the socialization process within an organization (Schwesinger, Muller and Lundan, 2015). However, coaches face a challenge when trying to find a balance between accommodating SADC and finding ways to create a homogeneous culture for their team. The results from Jara, Heere, Regan, Blake & Southall (2017) proposed the use of a socialization process with five constructs (custom coaching, mentorship, introduction to norms and roles, prosocial behavior and introduction to supporting services). In collegiate athletics, the head coach has the major responsibility of establishing a socialization process for his/her newcomers. Nevertheless, very little is known about the effectiveness of this socialization process. The purpose of this study is to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure the student-athletes’ perceptions of the tactics used by their coach during the socialization process into college athletics, based on the eight-step scale development procedure by Churchill (1979).

In the first step, specify domain of construct, the author performed an extensive literature review in order to define the domain of the constructs. The author conceptualized the terms proposed by Jara et al., (2017) into five constructs (coach’s cultural competence, mentorship, introduction to norms and roles, prosocial behavior and introduction to supporting services). The second step, generation of items follows an inductive approach, known also as “classification from below” (Hunt, 1991). The author used information from the previous qualitative study Jara-Pazmino, et al., (2017) in addition to conceptual definitions grounded in theory in order to develop items. The third step is the collection of data for the pilot study. The researcher will use a pilot study of 150 responses, targeting newcomer freshman student-athletes of NCAA collegiate athletic institutions. The instrument will be distributed through Qualtrics. The data collection process will start in November 2018, assuming that the subjects already had experienced the socialization process during the previous months. After analyzing the data, the author will purify the measure and collect data with the new instrument. Finally, reliability and validity will be assessed before developing norms for the new scale.