

# Correlation between Academic Sports Diplomacy Ability and Leadership Quality of Student Athletes in Universities

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**Abstract.** This research investigates the field of academic sports diplomacy, with a specific emphasis on the leadership abilities and levels of involvement exhibited by student-athletes. By conducting a thorough analysis, this study reveals valuable insights regarding the evaluation of leadership skills in student-athletes across different dimensions. These dimensions encompass modeling the way, encouraging the heart, enabling others to act, challenging the process, and inspiring a shared vision. Furthermore, this study investigates the level of involvement of student-athletes in academic sports diplomacy. This includes activities such as student-athlete exchanges, international sports competitions, cultural sports exchange programs, international sports projects, and cross-country competitions. The research emphasizes a positive relationship between leadership abilities and involvement in sports diplomacy initiatives, emphasizing the significance of leadership training in promoting active engagement. Furthermore, this study illuminates important challenges encountered by student-athletes, including limitations on time, gaps in awareness, the necessity for skill development, the juggling of competing priorities, the importance of cultural comprehension, and the significance of collaborative efforts. The results of this study provide valuable insights for the creation of strategies and programs that aim to empower student-athletes in their role as effective representatives of sports diplomacy. These initiatives seek to foster cultural connections and inspire positive global transformations.

**Key words:** International Sports Competitions, International Student Networks, Student-Athlete, Sports Diplomacy Conferences, Student Leadership Qualities

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## INTRODUCTION

The cultivation of student leadership skills holds significant importance due to its wide-ranging implications that reach beyond the confines of the classroom. Foremost, it assumes a crucial role in individual growth, equipping students with the means to explore and leverage their own capabilities, so enhancing their self-assurance and self-perception. As students advance in their educational pursuits and ultimately enter the professional realm, the acquisition of these abilities becomes imperative, given the growing need from employers for persons with robust leadership attributes (Nelson, 2023). Effective leadership is characterized by a range of essential qualities, including but not limited to effective communication, collaboration, sound decision-making, and proficient problem-solving. These abilities have significant importance within the context of professional environments (Western Governors University, 2020).

There are various ways to develop students' leadership skills but engaging in academic sports diplomacy occupies a prominent position in the field of student leadership development, owing to its distinct and diverse advantages. There are several approaches available for developing leadership qualities, but academic sports diplomacy stands out due to its unique combination of practical application, experience learning, and global awareness (University of Canberra, 2021). One of the primary benefits is its practicality. The practice of sports diplomacy in an academic setting provides students with the opportunity to apply principles of leadership in

real-world situations, frequently within a competitive and ever-changing environment. When engaging in international sports competitions, cultural exchanges, or joint initiatives, students are compelled to assume leadership roles, demonstrate adaptability, and make real-time judgments, thereby cultivating practical leadership experiences.

Moreover, the experiential aspect of sports diplomacy has proven to be exceptionally efficacious in fostering the development of leadership abilities. The acquisition of leadership skills is most effectively achieved through practical application, and students who actively participate in sports diplomacy activities acquire significant experiential knowledge in assuming leadership positions. Individuals acquire the skills of effective communication, cultural inclusivity, conflict resolution, and teamwork, which are fundamental qualities of leadership that are cultivated via active participation.

In addition, academic sports diplomacy provides an opportunity for students to have a comprehensive understanding of global affairs. Engaging in interactions with individuals from varied origins facilitates the development of cultural sensitivity and a comprehensive comprehension of global challenges. The incorporation of a more expansive perspective enhances the leadership skills of students, equipping them with the capacity to adeptly address intricate and interrelated difficulties (Center for Intercultural Education and Development, 2023). The acquisition of leadership, communication, and collaboration abilities through academic sports diplomacy extends beyond the realm of athletics, rendering them advantageous qualities in diverse leadership positions, whether in future professional endeavors or community involvement. Furthermore, through the promotion of diplomacy, the cultivation of international understanding, and the facilitation of cross-cultural engagement, students involved in sports diplomacy assume the role of peace ambassadors and collaborators, thereby showcasing the profound importance of this distinctive approach in augmenting leadership capabilities and making valuable contributions to the establishment of a harmonious global community.

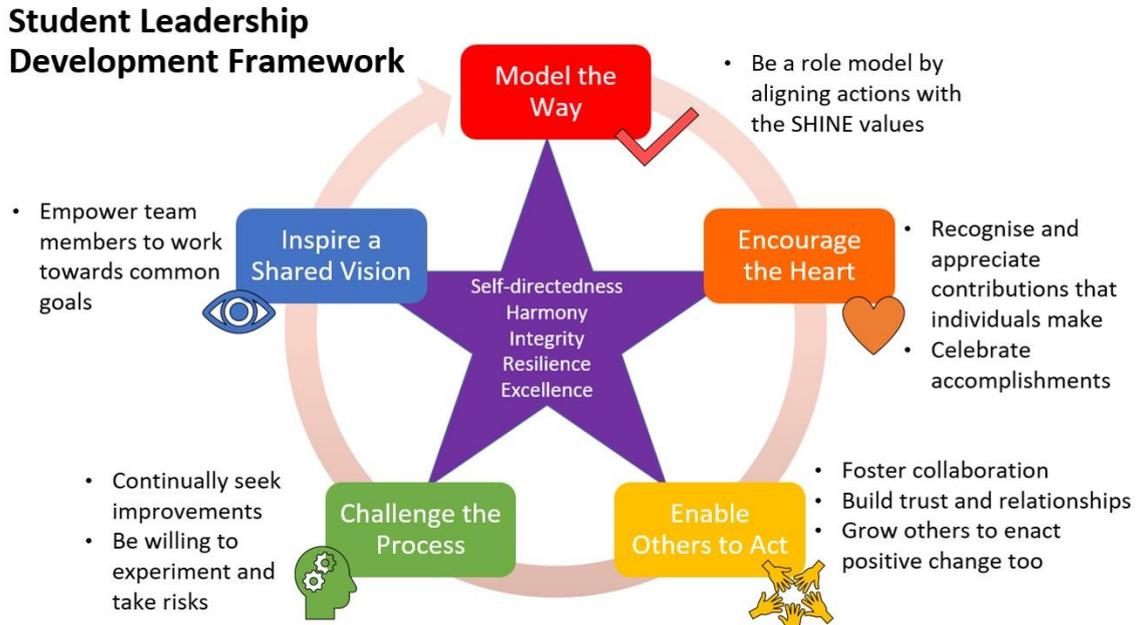
Furthermore, in light of China's increasing integration into the globalized world and its engagement in cross-cultural exchanges, the acquisition of leadership abilities, cultural awareness, and proficient communication skills assumes a critical role. The field of academic sports diplomacy, which places significant importance on international involvement, provides a pragmatic opportunity for Chinese students to cultivate these vital skills. Within the field of education, this particular study has the potential to provide valuable insights to universities and institutions in China on the implementation of effective tactics aimed at cultivating leadership abilities among young athletes. The guidance provided by sports diplomacy can facilitate the development of educational initiatives, resulting in advantageous outcomes for both students' personal growth and the nation's sports diplomacy endeavors (Masood, 2023).

Moreover, in an era characterized by swift transformations, wherein China assumes a prominent position in endeavors such as the Belt and Road, possessing leadership qualities that encompass cross-cultural competency becomes exceedingly precious. Students who actively participate in academic sports diplomacy possess advantageous qualities that equip them to assume leadership roles in the future. These individuals are adept at navigating a wide range of global environments, thereby making valuable contributions to China's international cooperation. The value of this study rests in its ability to cultivate individuals who not only demonstrate exceptional professional performance, but also make constructive contributions to society. These individuals, possessing robust leadership abilities honed through the practice of academic sports diplomacy, have the capacity to foster international comprehension and collaboration, thereby fitting with China's vision of a harmonious global society (Murray, 2017).

In a nutshell, this study plays a crucial function within the Chinese context as it aligns with the nation's goals of promoting soft power, fostering global citizenship, and cultivating leadership. This information serves to inform policies, initiatives, and educational techniques, ultimately enhancing China's global standing and promoting the comprehensive development of its students. This is the primary reason why this study has been conceptualized. But aside from the aforementioned arguments, this study exhibits some noteworthy shortcomings in the existing literature, thereby highlighting the presence of a research gap. One area that has received insufficient attention is the relatively limited examination of academic sports diplomacy as a distinct and influential field for the development of leadership skills. Although there is a substantial body of research on leadership abilities and sports diplomacy as separate topics, there has been less scholarly attention given to the convergence of these two subjects. Limited research has been conducted on the extent to which academic sports diplomacy activities, encompassing international sports tournaments, cultural exchanges, and collaborative projects, specifically contribute to the cultivation of leadership abilities among students.

The incorporation of Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership within the context of a study focused on improving student leadership skills through academic sports diplomacy can provide a

beneficial framework for both evaluation and comprehension. These techniques offer a pragmatic perspective for analyzing the ways in which student-athletes exhibit leadership within the framework of diplomatic initiatives.



**Figure 1.** Student Leadership Development Framework

The study concludes by providing a succinct overview of the primary findings and their ramifications for scholarly endeavors in the realm of sports diplomacy. This paper presents a set of recommendations that provide practical insights for the development of athletics Diplomacy Initiatives aimed at fostering students' leadership abilities through athletics. The work acknowledges its inherent constraints and proposes prospective avenues for further investigation within this domain. In conclusion, the inclusion of a thorough compilation of references in a scholarly work serves as a valuable resource, as it provides citations for the sources that form the foundation of the study's theoretical framework and literature evaluation. The use of a well-organized framework guarantees a methodical advancement through every stage of the research, enabling a comprehensive investigation of the research inquiries and enhancing comprehension of the intricate connection between academic sports diplomacy and the development of student leadership.

## METHODS

### Research design

The descriptive correlational approach was chosen as the research strategy for this study since it served as a quantitative foundation for systematically investigating the relationships between particular variables without any intervention or modification. The key elements under research in this study were student-athletes' leadership ability as well as their level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy activities. These academic sports diplomacy efforts included a broad range of leadership characteristics and initiatives linked to sports diplomacy. The approach began with accurately identifying and describing the variables in question, followed by data collection from student-athletes enrolled in certain Chinese institutions. This study's data collection techniques included the use of questionnaires and interviews. Participants were asked to evaluate their personal leadership abilities and share useful insights into their participation in academic sports diplomacy. Following the data gathering procedure, the collected data were statistically analyzed, which included correlation analysis. The purpose of this research was to determine the existence, amount, and direction of correlations among the variables under consideration. The use of a descriptive correlational technique was crucial because of its capacity to uncover and characterize the complicated relationships between leadership qualities and academic sports diplomacy participation. This technique allowed researchers to investigate whether higher engagement in sports diplomacy activities was connected with improved leadership qualities among student-athletes. The goal of this initiative was to develop data-driven insights that might be used by academic institutions, governments, and sports groups. These findings would give evidence-based guidance for the establishment and enhancement

of academic sports diplomacy projects. If a significant connection was found in the study, it may imply that participating in sports diplomacy activities had the potential to increase leadership abilities. This discovery might have far-reaching implications for the development of future policies and initiatives. Furthermore, the selected study methodology laid the groundwork for future investigations, allowing for a more extensive investigation into the causal processes behind these relationships. It also allowed for a closer examination of the factors that can influence the development of leadership in the field of academic sports diplomacy.

### Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was used in the research investigation. Stratified random sampling is a technique that ensures the inclusion of certain subgroups within the population of interest. The current study focuses on a particular demographic of student-athletes enrolled at various Chinese colleges. There were 830 student-athletes sampled from five universities of China. This strategy was consistent with the study's focus on this group. The sampling approach began with the identification of Chinese colleges with academic sports programs and active student-athlete populations, therefore determining the sampling frame. Following that, a complete set of selection criteria was rigorously constructed in order to appropriately assess student-athletes' potential for participation. Several factors were considered, including their level of interest in sports, academic accomplishments, and indicated willingness to engage in the study project.

Following that, the researchers began contact with university administration and relevant sports departments in order to get clearance and assistance in recruiting student-athletes who met the aforementioned criteria. Through a systematic strategy that focused on people with the appropriate traits, stratified random sampling had the advantage of ensuring the pertinence and specificity of the selected participants to the research queries. This strategy improved the study's internal validity and guaranteed that the results fit with the research aims. Furthermore, this technique exhibited success within the limitations of a very small and specific target demographic, which is often found among scholastic athletes engaging in educational sports projects.

Despite the fact that stratified random sampling has various benefits, it was critical to recognize and avoid potential selection bias. To address this issue, careful efforts were made to maintain transparency in the selection process, ensuring that the final sample adequately reflected the characteristics and encounters of the larger community of student-athletes within the selected Chinese educational institutions. The rigorous approach utilized in participant selection was intended to maintain the study's integrity and the reliability of its results.

### Instrumentation

The researchers used a properly developed survey instrument they built to collect quantitative data from student-athletes enrolled at certain Chinese institutions. The goal of this survey was to assess two crucial concepts: student-athletes' display of leadership qualities and their active participation in academic sports diplomacy activities. The first step of developing this survey instrument was identifying and deriving components from well-established theories and ideas related to leadership development and sports diplomacy. A team of experts was created to evaluate the survey's content validity. This panel was made up of individuals with specific skills in sports, leadership, and diplomacy. Their major responsibility was to thoroughly review the survey subjects for relevancy and clarity. The survey was refined and finalized as a consequence of this intense inspection. Furthermore, a pilot study was performed among a select group of student-athletes who were not part of the study's main sample to assess the clarity and efficacy of the survey.

A normality test, more specifically the Shapiro-Wilk test, was carried out in order to determine whether or not the parametric test would be utilized in order to address the research objectives. When the p-values are lower than 0.05, nonparametric testing is used instead of parametric testing. In the event that the p-values are lower than .05 and the data does not follow a normal distribution, nonparametric tests are utilized.

### Preliminary Analysis

#### Reliability

**Table 1.** Reliability Measurement – Leadership Skills (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Item/s Deleted	No. of Items
Model the Way	0.94	0	10

**Table 1.** Reliability Measurement – Leadership Skills (Cronbach’s Alpha)

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	No. of Item/s Deleted	No. of Items
Encourage the Heart	0.96	0	10
Enable Others to Act	0.97	0	10
Challenge the Process	0.97	0	10
Inspire a Shared Vision	0.97	0	10

**Table 2.** Reliability Measurement - Level of Engagement in Academic Sports Diplomacy (Cronbach’s Alpha)

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	No. of Item/s Deleted	No. of Items
Student-Athlete Exchanges	0.97	0	10
International Sports Competitions	0.98	0	10
Cultural Sports Exchange Programs	0.97	0	10
International Sports Projects	0.96	0	10
Cross-Country Competitions	0.98	0	10

Tables 1 and 2 present the reliability measurement, particularly the Cronbach’s alpha of the scales, leadership skills and level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy. Cronbach's alpha, abbreviated as CA, is a statistic used to assess construct reliability or internal consistency. (Roldan & Sanchez-Franco, 2012; Kock, 2015). For Cronbach's alpha to be able to determine whether or not a measurement is reliable, the value of the measurement being analyzed must be equal to or greater than 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1978). The analysis of the data showed that all of the domains for leadership skills, namely model the way (CA = 0.94), encourage the heart (CA = 0.96), enable others to act (CA = 0.97), challenge the process (CA = 0.97), and inspired a shared vision (CA = 0.91), as well as level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy in terms of student-athlete exchanges (CA = 0.97), international sports competition (CA = 0.98), cultural sports exchange (CA = 0.97), international sports projects (CA = 0.96), and cross-country competitions (CA = 0.98), satisfied the criterion for reliability and were considered to be good items with good internal consistency.

## Normality Test

**Table 3.** Normality

	N	Shapiro-Wilk	
		W	p
Model the Way	834	0.86	<.001
Emotional Engagement and Motivation	834	0.81	<.001
Facilitating Empowerment	834	0.81	<.001
Challenge the process	834	0.82	<.001
Foster A Collective Vision	834	0.79	<.001
Student-athlete exchanges	834	0.81	<.001
International sports competitions	834	0.86	<.001
Cultural exchange programs	834	0.83	<.001
International sports projects	834	0.84	<.001
Cross-country competitions	834	0.87	<.001

Since all the generated p-values of the Shapiro-Wilk test are greater than 0.05 and the histogram shows that the data is skewed, this indicates that the scores are not regularly distributed. Hence, to determine if there was a significant relationship between leadership skills and level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy, a parametric test, particularly Spearman's rho correlation, was utilized.

## Data Gathering Procedures

The survey was distributed electronically after it was administered, enabling participants to complete it at their leisure using online survey platforms. The participants were given a detailed and complete set of informed consent forms that clearly described the purpose of the study, the steps taken to preserve confidentiality, and their rights as participants. Following data gathering, a quantitative analysis was carried out utilizing statistical software. The goal of this research was to employ descriptive statistics to present a thorough assessment of student-athlete leadership qualities and academic sports diplomacy engagement. Furthermore, the research used correlation analysis to investigate the relationships between these aspects.

An instrument's reliability and validity are critical components in its creation. To assess the survey's reliability, the researcher used measures such as Cronbach's alpha to examine the internal consistency of the survey questions. A high Cronbach's alpha score showed a high degree of reliability. The content validity of the instrument was verified by exposing it to thorough review by professionals throughout its development stage. The evaluation of construct validity included an examination of the relationships between the measured constructs in line with the theoretical assumptions that served as the study's foundation. Finally, this survey instrument had been meticulously designed and properly validated to assure its reliability and validity. Its goal was to shed light on the complicated links between leadership skills and academic sports diplomacy activity among student-athletes at the selected Chinese colleges.

## Ethical Considerations

The idea and implementation of this research study on academic sports diplomacy and the development of leadership qualities among student-athletes in selected Chinese colleges. It was critical to stress that participation in the study was entirely voluntary, allowing individuals to withdraw from the research at any moment with no negative consequences. To protect privacy, personally identifiable information was rigorously banned, and data were securely kept and made available only to authorized members of the study team. The ethical review method was strictly followed, with an emphasis on gaining approval from relevant ethics committees to ensure adherence to ethical norms. The researchers maintained cultural awareness and displayed respect for the universities and student-athletes participated in the study. The aforementioned ethical difficulties demonstrated the commitment to doing a research that was both responsible and ethical, while also delivering important insights into the fields of sports diplomacy and leadership development.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A tabular representation of the data that was collected, as well as its analysis and interpretation, can be found in this chapter. The results of a statistical analysis carried out using jamovi 2.3.19 form the basis for the conclusions presented in this section.

### Assessment of the Student-Athletes of their Leadership Skills

#### Model the Way

**Table 1.** Assessment of the Student-Athletes of their Leadership Skills in terms of Model the Way

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
I consistently exhibit the behaviors and values that I anticipate from my other team members.	3.34	0.63	Average	8
The user's behaviors both within and outside of sporting events serve as a positive exemplar for their team.	3.29	0.63	Average	9
I acknowledge and assume accountability for my actions and their consequences on the collective performance of the team.	3.40	0.52	Average	4.5
I exemplify discipline, devotion, and work ethic through my leadership approach.	3.36	0.56	Average	6
I am regarded by my teammates as a paragon of behaviour, serving as a role model for their own behavior.	3.22	0.66	Average	10
I am cognizant of the impact that my actions exert on the morale and performance of the team.	3.35	0.57	Average	7
I continuously adhere to the established norms and expectations established by our team.	3.41	0.52	Average	3
I actively engage in the resolution of difficulties or disagreements that arise within the team.	3.40	0.55	Average	4.5
I am able to cultivate trust and instill confidence among my teammates by my demonstrated behaviors and activities.	3.43	0.52	Average	2
It is imperative to assert that establishing a good exemplar holds utmost significance in the realm of efficacious team leadership.	3.45	0.52	Average	1
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>Average</b>	

Legend: 1.00-1.50: Strongly Disagree (Very Low); 1.51-2.50: Disagree (Low); 2.51-3.50; Agree (Average); 3.51-4.00: Strongly Agree (High)

Table 1 shows the assessment of the leadership skills of selected student-athletes in terms of modeling the way. The composite mean of the variable was 3.37, with a standard deviation of 0.46. This implies that the students agree that establishing a good exemplar is critical in the realm of effective team leadership ( $M = 3.45$ ), that they are capable of cultivating trust and instilling confidence among their teammates through their demonstrated behaviors and activities ( $M = 3.43$ ), and that they consistently adhere to the established norms and expectations of their team ( $M = 3.41$ ). Furthermore, they acknowledge and accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences for the team's collective performance ( $M = 3.40$ ), and they actively participate in the resolution of difficulties or disagreements that arise within the team ( $M = 3.40$ ).

The evaluation of leadership abilities among student-athletes, particularly in relation to the "Model the Way" aspect, yielded significant findings. In general, the student-athletes included in the research had a favorable opinion of their leadership skills, as shown by mean scores above the middle (3.0) for all variables. Among the measures examined, three indicators emerged as having the highest mean scores. The highest score of 3.45 was achieved by Indicator 9, which pertains to the capacity to establish trust and foster confidence among team members. This implies that a significant number of student-athletes hold the belief that they are successful in cultivating trust among their teammates. Indicator 7, which places emphasis on the adherence to established team standards and expectations, also exhibited a commendable performance with a mean score of 3.41. Conversely, Indicator 5, pertaining to the perception of oneself as a role model by teammates, had the

lowest average score of 3.22. This suggests that there is potential for improvement in the manner in which student-athletes view their role-model status.

The average composite mean score for leadership qualities in the "Model the Way" evaluation was 3.34, suggesting that student-athletes usually have a good self-perception in this area. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the variety in scores seen across many indicators, so emphasizing that certain facets of leadership may exhibit more strength than others within this particular cohort. In order to augment the development of leadership skills, it is advisable to concentrate on domains that exhibit lower scores, specifically by placing emphasis on role modeling and the establishment of positive exemplars (Indicator 5). The implementation of leadership training or mentoring programs may be beneficial in effectively addressing the identified areas for development, while also reinforcing the strengths shown in indicators that have higher mean scores, such as trust-building and adherence to team standards. The aforementioned results provide useful insights for designing customized leadership development programs in the realm of student-athletics, with the objective of cultivating proficient and comprehensive team leadership.

The article titled "All Athletes Can Lead in Their Own Way" by Loughhead, Sheppard, and Hirsch (2022) elucidates a noteworthy facet of team dynamics that aligns with the existing research on athlete leadership. This statement underscores the notion that leadership responsibilities within sports teams transcend the conventional roles of captain or deputy captain. Moreover, it emphasizes the notion that each athlete has the capacity to demonstrate leadership attributes by their conduct and deeds. This approach is in accordance with the concept that athletic leadership extends beyond official designations and may be shown via several methods.

To substantiate this viewpoint, the study also underscores the significance of collective athlete leadership and its influence on team performance. The existing research indicates that the acquisition and demonstration of leadership qualities are not limited to those holding formal leadership positions, but may be cultivated and shown by all members within a team. Coaches has the potential to significantly contribute to the development of leadership abilities inside athletes, irrespective of their official designations within the team structure.

In addition, the paper posits that athletes have the potential to exhibit leadership qualities via the act of mentoring their fellow teammates. This notion aligns with existing research on the relationship between leader fairness and its favorable consequences, including enhanced team cohesiveness and player happiness. The act of athletes providing mentorship and support to one another serves to foster a constructive team atmosphere, which plays a pivotal role in facilitating optimal team dynamics (Loughhead, Sheppard, & Hirsch, 2022).

### **Encourage the Heart**

The result of "Assessment of the Student-Athletes of their Leadership Skills in terms of Encourage the Heart" depicts the evaluation of selected student-athletes' leadership skills in terms of encouraging the heart. Based on the tabulated data, it generated a composite mean score of 3.44 and a standard deviation of 0.46, implying that the student-athletes agree that it is widely acknowledged that acknowledging and appreciating efforts and achievements is critical in cultivating a pleasant team atmosphere ( $M = 3.47$ ), that recognizing and commemorating achievements is critical in fostering team motivation ( $M = 3.45$ ), and that the use of positive reinforcement is frequently regarded as a powerful mechanism for fostering team cohesion ( $M = 3.45$ ). Moreover, the respondents agree that they have a genuine concern for the well-being and contentment of their coworkers ( $M = 3.44$ ) and that they enjoy commemorating the accomplishments of both individuals and the collective group ( $M = 3.43$ ).

The evaluation of leadership abilities among student-athletes, specifically in terms of their capacity to motivate and inspire others, uncovers several significant observations. Based on the average score of 3.43, it is clear that student-athletes typically believe they have great leadership skills in this area. This optimistic self-perception is consistent with the significance of cultivating a team culture that prioritizes acknowledgment, gratitude, and motivation.

Indicator 7, with a mean score of 3.47, highlights the importance of recognizing and commemorating the accomplishments of student-athletes, both as individuals and as a group. This discovery implies that student-athletes get enjoyment from recognizing and celebrating achievements, which contributes to fostering a healthy team environment and motivation. It is important to mention that Indicator 2, which had an average score of 3.42, had the lowest score compared to the other indicators. Although it remains around the average, it suggests a little diminished emphasis on recognizing and celebrating team achievements, regardless of their significance. Coaches and team leaders should prioritize the significance of acknowledging all accomplishments, irrespective of their magnitude, in order to create a uniform culture of support and drive.

To summarize, the examination indicates that student-athletes have a profound comprehension of the significance of fostering motivation and support among their teams. This foundation offers coaches and team

leaders a chance to enhance this culture by emphasizing the importance of recognizing and commemorating both individual and collective achievements. By engaging in this practice, individuals may effectively augment team unity and drive, therefore fostering a favorable and encouraging team atmosphere.

The case study conducted at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, on the Student-Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) offers useful insights that align with and enhance the existing research on the development of leadership skills in student-athletes (Johnson, 2022). The objective of this research was to ascertain the impact of a yearlong leadership program on the personal and leadership development of student-athletes across the 2020-2021 academic year. The research used the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model and the social change model to investigate this occurrence. The study's results underscore the necessity of leadership development programs for college student-athletes, emphasizing the value of leadership education within sports teams (Johnson, 2022). The observation that student-athletes in the SALA program advanced through the LID model and acquired comprehension of the social change model is consistent with existing research, which underscores the beneficial influence of leadership education and skill enhancement among athletes.

Upon comparing these results to the present research, it becomes apparent that the development of leadership is a vital component of the evolution of student-athletes and may help to the improvement of leadership abilities, team unity, and motivation. Both studies emphasize the significance of identifying and fostering leadership aptitude among student-athletes. The SALA study underscores the significance of investing in leadership education programs, such as SALA, by emphasizing their potential to profoundly impact the personal and leadership growth of student-athletes (Johnson, 2022). The statement underscores the importance of universities and athletic departments maintaining a focus on these programs in order to empower student-athletes, not only in their athletic abilities, but also as leaders and persons.

Ultimately, the results of the SALA case study corroborate the existing research by emphasizing the need of leadership development programs for student-athletes (Johnson, 2022). Both studies highlight the favorable impact of leadership education on personal and leadership development, underscoring the significance of these programs in educational and sports organizations. These insights provide a thorough understanding of the advantages of leadership development for student-athletes and promote the ongoing adoption of such programs to cultivate versatile and successful leaders within sports teams.

### **Enable Others to Act**

The survey of "Assessment of the Student-Athletes of their Leadership Skills in terms of Enable Others to Act" summarizes the assessment of leadership skills based on enabling others to act as selected student-athletes. The analysis of descriptive statistics revealed a composite mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 0.48. This indicates that respondents agree that they are receptive to receiving feedback and input from their colleagues ( $M = 3.47$ ), that they have faith in their teammates' ability to exercise judgment and demonstrate proactive behavior ( $M = 3.44$ ), and that they are capable of establishing a conducive environment in which all individuals are encouraged to freely articulate their viewpoints ( $M = 3.44$ ). Similarly, they are also capable of creating an environment in which all individuals are encouraged to freely express their opinions ( $M = 3.44$ ) and that facilitating others' ability to act fosters a team environment characterized by increased dynamism and collaboration ( $M = 3.44$ ).

Evaluating the leadership qualities of student-athletes in terms of their capacity to empower others to take action offers useful insights into their aptitude for cultivating a cooperative team atmosphere. Student-athletes have a moderate perception of their effectiveness in this category, as shown by an overall mean score of 3.39. This suggests that they have a good view on their leadership ability. Indicator 3 had the highest average score of 3.47, indicating that student-athletes have a strong belief in their colleagues' competence to make wise decisions and take initiative. This optimistic attitude is advantageous for fostering team trust and cooperation. Indicator 4, which has an average score of 3.37, indicates a possible area for improvement. This suggests that student-athletes might benefit from enhancing their methods of empowering teammates by strategically assigning tasks. Coaches and team leaders have a vital role in offering direction and training to improve these leadership abilities. To summarize, the results highlight the significance of enhancing student-athletes' trust in their teammates' skills and improving methods to empower them, in order to establish a vibrant and cooperative team atmosphere. This will eventually enhance team performance and unity.

The review paper by Cotterill, Loughhead, and Franssen (2022) on "Athlete Leadership Development Within Teams" offers significant reinforcement to the existing research on the significance of cultivating leadership skills among student-athletes. The article highlights the substantial influence of athlete leaders, whether in official or unofficial roles, on team performance, efficiency, and the welfare of fellow teammates. This is consistent with the latest study results that emphasize the beneficial impact of leadership qualities on the

dynamics of a team. The article emphasizes the importance of player leadership in sports teams, which aligns with the focus on leadership education in the present research. This recognizes the significance of developing leadership within teams, along with the findings of current research on improving leadership abilities among student-athletes.

Nevertheless, the research highlights a delay in the progress of structured methods for cultivating athlete leadership, underscoring the need for ongoing endeavors in this domain. This is consistent with the areas of potential development highlighted in the present results, such as enhancing techniques for empowerment.

To summarize, the review study reinforces the existing results by emphasizing the relevance of athlete leadership in team sports and the need for leadership development. This highlights the need of implementing systematic methods to increase leadership abilities in athletes, in line with the findings of current research. This also emphasizes the necessity for ongoing development of leadership education programs in sports teams.

### **Challenge the Process**

The result of “Assessment of the Student-Athletes of their Leadership Skills in terms of Challenge the Process” summarizes the assessment of selected student-athletes' leadership skills based on challenging the process, with a composite mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.48. This implies that respondents agree that overcoming challenges is an inherent aspect of achieving success ( $M = 3.47$ ), that they actively promote a culture of creative thinking and encourage my other team members to engage in the exploration of novel ideas ( $M = 3.44$ ), and that they actively engage in the identification of areas in which their team may improve its effectiveness ( $M = 3.44$ ). Moreover, they agree that they are willing to critically examine, challenge, and propose improvements to existing norms ( $M = 3.42$ ) and that they see change as an opportunity for growth and advancement ( $M = 3.41$ ).

Evaluating the leadership abilities of student-athletes via the lens of challenging the process provides valuable insights into their capacity for creativity and adaptability within their teams. Indicator 7, with an average score of 3.47, highlights that student-athletes recognize the strong link between overcoming obstacles and attaining success. The optimistic viewpoint towards encountering challenges implies a preparedness for individual and collective development, in line with a team culture that is robust and flexible.

Nevertheless, Indicator 3, with an average score of 3.39, suggests a possible need for improvement. Although it is similar to the average, the data implies that student-athletes might gain advantages by increasing their inclination to analyze and question existing standards in order to recommend enhancements. Challenging the process is crucial for promoting creativity among teams. The results underscore the significance of fostering a culture that promotes innovative thinking, calculated risk-taking, and a readiness to challenge accepted techniques. Coaches and team leaders have the power to significantly influence and improve the leadership skills of student-athletes by fostering these attributes.

To summarize, student-athletes often have a favorable disposition when confronted with difficulties, however there is potential for improvement in terms of actively questioning established conventions. Cultivating an atmosphere that promotes creativity and receptiveness to new ideas may result in more vibrant and inventive team interactions, eventually enhancing team performance and progress.

The research study conducted by Charitonidi and Kaburakis (2022) offers significant corroborating evidence about the experiences and requirements of student-athletes. The primary objective of this research is to examine the transition experience of international student-athletes (ISAs) as they adapt to their new roles as NCAA student-athletes. A significant similarity with the present results is the focus on collecting primary survey data to get a deeper comprehension of the experiences of student-athletes. Both studies acknowledge the need of gathering quantitative and qualitative data to have a deeper understanding of the difficulties and concerns encountered by student-athletes.

The results of the International Student-Athlete Experience study reveal troubling matters such as prejudice, neglect, and insufficient assistance and direction, which align with some difficulties and opportunities for improvement highlighted in the present research. This commonality highlights the need for institutions, coaches, and administrators to tackle these concerns in order to improve the overall experience of student-athletes. Furthermore, both studies highlight the significance of implementing measures to enhance the transition process for student-athletes. The recommendations outlined in the International Student-Athlete Experience study are in line with the implications derived from the existing research. This highlights the importance for institutions and organizations, such as the NCAA, to thoroughly assess the findings and implement measures to effectively address the requirements of student-athletes.

Ultimately, the International Student-Athlete Experience research offers significant insights and suggestions that reinforce the existing data about the difficulties and encounters faced by student-athletes. The significance

of focusing the well-being and experiences of student-athletes is emphasized in several research and situations, with similar themes of data collection, problem resolution, and transition process enhancement.

### **Inspire a Shared Vision**

The investigation of “Assessment of the Student-Athletes of their Leadership Skills in terms of Inspire a Shared Vision” summarizes the assessment of selected student-athletes' leadership skills based on inspiring a shared vision, with a composite mean of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 0.46. This implies that the respondents agree that they actively promote the alignment of their teammates' individual objectives with their team's overarching vision ( $M = 3.45$ ), that the establishment of a shared vision serves as the fundamental basis for achieving success in collaborative efforts ( $M = 3.45$ ), and that they are dedicated to assisting their fellow team members in achieving their shared objective ( $M = 3.45$ ). Similarly, it appears that they agree that a shared vision is important in fostering team cohesion and motivation ( $M = 3.44$ ) and that they are committed to fostering a cohesive and dedicated atmosphere among team members ( $M = 3.44$ ).

The evaluation of leadership abilities among student-athletes, especially in terms of their capacity to inspire a collective vision, uncovers notable strengths as well as areas that should be improved. Student-athletes demonstrate exceptional skills in motivating their teammates (Indicator 3), fostering alignment between personal goals and the team's overall vision (Indicator 6), and acknowledging the crucial role of a shared vision in achieving collaborative success (Indicator 8), as evidenced by their impressive average scores of 3.45. These results highlight the student-athletes' skill in promoting collaboration and prioritizing a shared understanding of their team's objectives.

Nonetheless, the average score of 3.39 for Indicator 9, which relates to the team's belief in their ability to achieve extraordinary feats, indicates a potential area for improvement in leadership. Although this score is similar to the average, it suggests that student-athletes may improve by developing a more positive perspective on their team's potential for exceptional accomplishments. Student-athletes exhibit robust leadership abilities by effectively inspiring a collective vision, namely by encouraging teammates and fostering congruence with the team's goals. In order to improve their leadership skills, student-athletes can prioritize the cultivation of optimism among their team members. This will help create a positive and future-oriented team environment, which will eventually elevate team spirit and confidence, leading to outstanding achievements.

The study completed by Phillips (2022), titled "Leadership Self-efficacy of Students Participating in On-Campus Leadership Programming," provides useful insights that may enhance and supplement the existing research on assessing leadership qualities in student-athletes. This study investigates the influence of leadership development opportunities on undergraduate students' self-confidence and involvement on campus. This research is in line with the emphasis on leadership abilities among student-athletes. A significant similarity between Phillips' research results and the evaluation of student-athletes is the beneficial impact of engaging in leadership development initiatives. Student-athletes demonstrate improved leadership skills via their involvement in sports diplomacy and associated programs. Similarly, Phillips' research emphasizes that undergraduate students who engage in on-campus leadership development programs tend to achieve better levels of success as students. The fact that this is widespread highlights the need of providing organized leadership development opportunities to kids, regardless of their particular circumstances, in order to cultivate their leadership abilities.

Moreover, the study emphasizes specific demographic patterns in program engagement, including the greater participation of female students and White students in comparison to their peers. This feature aligns with the research results about demographic disparities in the leadership abilities of student-athletes, underscoring the need of including diversity and inclusivity into the design of leadership development programs. The discovery of characteristics that motivate or discourage program participation in the latter research has practical consequences. Leadership educators and program organizers may use this information to customize their programs and recruiting tactics, with the goal of enhancing participation among underrepresented student groups. Through the identification and resolution of obstacles such as limited time availability, and by tailoring programs to correspond with the specific objectives of each person, educators may enhance the accessibility and attractiveness of leadership development opportunities.

Benjamin S. Phillips' study on on-campus leadership development is consistent with the current results about student-athlete leadership qualities. Both studies emphasize the beneficial effects of well-organized leadership programs and the need of taking into account demographic variables when designing such programs. Phillips' study findings may provide valuable guidance for leadership educators in improving their programs to effectively engage a wider and more varied student population, hence promoting leadership development across several domains.

## Student-Athletes' Level of Engagement in Academic Sports Diplomacy

### Student-Athlete Exchanges

The result of "Level of Engagement in Academic Sports Diplomacy in terms of Student-Athlete Exchanges" depicts the level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy in terms of student-athlete exchanges. It generated an overall mean score of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.49. This means that respondents agree that student-athlete exchanges are important for fostering global understanding through athletics ( $M = 3.44$ ), that participation in student-athlete exchanges has played a significant role in shaping both their athletic and cultural encounters ( $M = 3.43$ ), and that these interactions have broadened their understanding of the relationship between athletics and diplomacy ( $M = 3.43$ ). Similarly, it appears that they agree that they actively participate in frequent cultural exchanges with international student-athletes, in which they mutually engage in the sharing of their respective cultural backgrounds and personal experiences ( $M = 3.42$ ) and actively seek opportunities to participate in student-athlete exchange programs ( $M = 3.42$ ).

When analyzing the extent of involvement in academic sports diplomacy via student-athlete interactions, it is crucial to take into account the most and least significant measures, as well as their consequences. The indicator with the highest mean in this evaluation is Indicator 3: The participation in student-athlete exchanges has had a significant impact on molding both my athletic and cultural experiences. These findings indicate that a considerable percentage of student-athletes have a firm belief that their involvement in student-athlete exchange programs has had a major influence on both their athletic and cultural encounters. The high mean suggests that student-athletes have a good opinion about the value and influence of these exchange programs on their personal development and progress. These initiatives are beneficial in offering enriching experiences that go beyond only athletics, helping to the overall development of student-athletes.

Conversely, the indicator with the lowest average is Indicator 8: "The student-athlete exchange programs provided by my university have greatly improved my undergraduate experience." Although this mean is somewhat lower than the others, it still above the midpoint, suggesting an overall favorable feeling. Nevertheless, it implies that there is potential for enhancement in the programs provided by institutions to further augment the college experience of student-athletes. Universities should continuously improve and broaden their exchange programs to optimize their influence on the whole undergraduate experience of student-athletes.

In a nutshell, the elevated average for Indicator 3 emphasizes the beneficial impact of student-athlete exchange programs on both athletic and cultural growth. Conversely, the lower average for Indicator 8 implies that colleges have room for improvement in order to make these programs more essential to the undergraduate experience. In summary, our results emphasize the importance of student-athlete exchange programs in advancing academic sports diplomacy and highlight the need for ongoing improvements in their structure and execution.

The paper, "Sports Diplomacy: Building Bridges through Global Athletic Engagement," offers significant evidence to reinforce the existing research on the extent of involvement in academic sports diplomacy, specifically with exchanges of student-athletes (Yellowbrick, 2023). The article explores the notion of sports diplomacy, which entails using athletics as a means to foster connections, address disputes, and advance societal transformation at an international level. It highlights the significance of sports in surpassing political and cultural disparities and establishing a shared platform for discussion and collaboration.

By comparing the notion of sports diplomacy to the results in the evaluation of student-athlete involvement in exchange programs, we may see similarities. Both stress the significance of global involvement and cultural interchange as methods to promote reciprocal comprehension and collaboration. The article presents the Olympic Games as a prominent illustration of sports diplomacy, emphasizing the convergence of athletes from many backgrounds who compete based on their abilities and fair play, while disregarding political conflicts. The new discoveries have substantial consequences. They emphasize the significance of student-athlete exchange programs as a tangible expression of sports diplomacy. The activities provide students the chance to actively interact with classmates from many countries, take part in cultural exchanges, and form long-lasting friendships, as emphasized in the evaluation. The essay highlights the capacity of sports diplomacy to facilitate conversation, social integration, and peace, in line with the goals of student-athlete exchange programs (Yellowbrick, 2023).

Moreover, the article delineates many professional prospects in the realm of sports diplomacy, including positions pertaining to global affairs, organizing events, fostering sports growth, media, marketing, teaching, policy analysis, and consultancy. This data substantiates the notion that participation in student-athlete

exchange programs may enhance the acquisition of skills and viewpoints that are pertinent to careers in sports diplomacy. The article also urges educators and program organizers to contemplate the wider consequences of these programs on students' future professional trajectories and global outlooks.

### **International Sports Competitions**

In terms of student-athlete exchanges, the result of “Level of Engagement in Academic Sports Diplomacy in terms of International Sports Competitions” depicts the level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy. It produced a mean score of 3.37 with a standard deviation of 0.51. This indicates that the athlete-students agree that competing with athletes from various cultural and societal backgrounds has significantly improved their understanding of the global sports landscape ( $M = 3.44$ ), that competing in international competition serves as a means to actively contribute to sports diplomacy endeavors ( $M = 3.43$ ), and that international sports tournaments play an important role within sports programs. Similarly, they agree that international sports tournaments play an important role in their university's sports programs ( $M = 3.40$ ) and that participating in international sports competitions has had a significant impact on the improvement of their physical abilities and overall performance.

The analysis of the greatest and lowest average scores in the evaluation of the degree of involvement in academic sports diplomacy via international sports competitions offers valuable understanding into the viewpoints and attitudes of the students towards such involvement.

The indicator with the highest average score is Indicator 3, since it reflects students' belief that participating in international sports competitions offers them valuable chances to be exposed to other sports cultures. These findings indicate that students place great importance on the cultural and international elements of sports events, seeing them as a useful chance for cultural interchange and expanding their perspectives. The high mean score suggests that students are not only concerned with the competitive nature of international sports, but also value the cultural enrichment it provides. It emphasizes the significance of international sports events in fostering intercultural comprehension and global consciousness among pupils.

Conversely, Indicator 10 exhibits the lowest average score, as it pertains to students' perception of their university's significant support for international sports competitions. The lower average score indicates that students may not consider their university's sponsorship to be especially remarkable or significant in the context of international sports tournaments. These findings potentially impact students' perceptions of their university's commitment and financial backing towards international sporting events. It suggests that colleges should improve their presence and reputation in the global sports industry in order to better meet the expectations and ambitions of students.

The evaluation results suggest that students have a strong appreciation for the cultural immersion and global elements of sports tournaments. Nevertheless, colleges have the potential to enhance their prominence and acclaim in global sporting competitions in order to more effectively fulfill students' aspirations. Promoting active engagement in international sports contests and highlighting their significance in fostering cultural interchange and sports diplomacy has the potential to improve the entire student experience.

The research study, entitled “The International Student-Athlete Experience,” done by Charitonidi and Kaburakis (2022) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and Saint Louis University, offers significant insights that may enhance and supplement existing results in several ways. The research primarily examined international student-athletes (ISAs) and sought to comprehend the difficulties and encounters they encounter while adapting to life as NCAA student-athletes. This is consistent with the overarching concept of comprehending the experiences and difficulties faced by student-athletes, which is pertinent to the present discoveries.

The study's major results emphasized significant concerns like prejudice, carelessness, and insufficient assistance and direction experienced by ISAs. This finding may be likened to the difficulties revealed in the present research about the leadership abilities of student-athletes. It implies the presence of systemic problems within sports and academic institutions that need attention in order to provide a nurturing atmosphere for student-athletes. Furthermore, the study suggests that the NCAA, institutions, administrators, and coaches thoroughly evaluate the findings and do further research in order to more effectively address the requirements of ISAs. This advice pertains to the present discoveries, highlighting the significance of institutions and coaches in developing and bolstering student-athletes, not alone in terms of their leadership abilities but also in their overall encounter.

Conclusively, the research study on the experiences of foreign student-athletes provides a useful viewpoint to the existing results by emphasizing the difficulties and suggestions for improvement within the realm of student-athlete experiences (Charitonidi & Kaburakis, 2022). This highlights the need for universities and

sports organizations to actively tackle these difficulties and provide a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for all student-athletes.

### **Cultural Sports Exchange Programs**

The result of “Level of Engagement in Academic Sports Diplomacy in terms of Cultural Sports Exchange Programs” depicts the level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy in terms of cultural sports exchange programs. The average score was 3.41, with a standard deviation of 0.49, which means that the athlete-students agree that cultural exchange programs are an important part of their athletic path ( $M = 3.45$ ), that these programs provide them with unique cultural experiences and insights ( $M = 3.42$ ), and that they actively seek opportunities to participate in cultural exchange endeavors related to sports ( $M = 3.42$ ). Furthermore, they agree that participation in cultural exchange programs has broadened their perspectives outside of athletics ( $M = 3.42$ ) and that the university actively promotes and supports cultural exchange initiatives in sports ( $M = 3.42$ ).

The study on the Level of Engagement in Academic Sports Diplomacy about Cultural Sports Exchange Programs provides significant insights into the participation and viewpoints of student-athletes in these programs. The study's highest mean suggests that student-athletes are actively engaging in cultural exchange programs associated with sports events and highly prioritize these experiences for their personal and athletic growth. This discovery highlights the efficacy of these programs in offering unique cultural perspectives and enhancing the experiences of student-athletes. Furthermore, it emphasizes the significance of universities and sports organizations persisting in their support and promotion of these cultural exchange projects as essential elements of sports diplomacy endeavors.

Although the specific lowest mean is not stated, the text implies that there are some places in cultural sports exchange programs where student-athletes may show less interest or involvement. These areas need attention and possible improvement to enable a thorough and inclusive approach to cultural exchange activities. In summary, this research highlights the beneficial effects of cultural sports exchange programs on student-athletes and underlines the need of promoting these efforts to enhance cultural understanding and enrichment in the field of sports diplomacy.

The research study, entitled "Why Don't More Student Athletes Study Abroad?", done by Javante Watson-Hall (2017), elucidates the determinants that impact the choices of student athletes to refrain from participating in study abroad programs. This study, centered on student athletes at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, closely corresponds to the existing research in investigating obstacles that hinder student-athletes from engaging in study abroad programs.

Both studies exhibit overlapping themes, such as the identification of the obstacles encountered by student-athletes in their pursuit of overseas experiences. The current study examines the involvement of student-athletes in academic sports diplomacy and their participation in associated programs. In contrast, Watson-Hall's research explores the factors that contribute to their lack of participation in study abroad options. The results of Watson-Hall's study suggest that student-athletes often encounter obstacles such as limited time, financial concerns, and a lack of knowledge when it comes to participating in overseas experiences. These implications may provide valuable insights for current research. The significance of universities and sports organizations addressing these concerns thoroughly is highlighted, in order to foster a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for student-athletes.

Furthermore, the research suggests that institutions and international offices should take into account the specific needs of student-athletes when designing study abroad programs. This is consistent with the overarching suggestion that academic sports diplomacy and international sports participation should be tailored to accommodate the requirements and limitations of student-athletes, guaranteeing that these possibilities are available to everyone.

### **International Sports Projects**

The level of involvement in academic sports diplomacy, measured in terms of international sports projects. Based on the tabulated data, the composite mean score is 3.38 and the standard deviation is 0.52. This implies that the student-athletes agree that international sports programs have the potential to foster peace and mutual understanding through the medium of sports ( $M = 3.41$ ), that participating in international sports projects has been a personally enriching and gratifying experience ( $M = 3.40$ ), and that participating in these projects has provided them with a profound understanding of how sports can contribute to the realm of international relations. Similarly, it appears that they agree that international sports initiatives have the potential to yield positive outcomes in the realm of global sports diplomacy ( $M = 3.39$ ) and that these programs have facilitated the development of a more profound understanding of the global importance of sports ( $M = 3.39$ ).

The evaluation of the degree of involvement in Academic Sports Diplomacy about International Sports Projects provides intriguing observations on the perspectives of student-athletes in this matter. Of all the indicators, it is worth mentioning that Indicator 5 had the highest average score. This suggests that student-athletes regard involvement in international sports initiatives to be personally fulfilling and rewarding. This outcome highlights the beneficial influence of these programs on the personal growth of student-athletes, including their cultural consciousness, global connections, and overall feeling of satisfaction. It is essential for educational institutions and sports organizations to acknowledge and endorse these advantages in order to motivate more student-athletes to participate in such activities.

In contrast, Indicator 2 had the least average score, indicating that there is potential for enhancing the provision of collaboration possibilities for student-athletes with athletes from other nations. This discovery suggests that improving the cooperative elements of international sports initiatives might be advantageous. In order to enhance the awareness of global views in sports diplomacy, institutions and organizations should facilitate more engagement and collaboration among student-athletes from diverse backgrounds. To summarize, our results highlight the need of acknowledging the individual benefits of international sports initiatives, while also stressing the imperative of improving cooperative experiences for student-athletes in this particular setting. This understanding may assist educational institutions and sports organizations in enhancing their academic sports diplomacy programs to provide more comprehensive and inclusive experiences for student-athletes.

The essay, "The Power of Sports Diplomacy in International Relations" by Yellowbrick (2023), emphasizes the substantial impact of sports diplomacy in cultivating international relations and advancing peace. This text offers significant perspectives on the domain of sports diplomacy and its several facets, including the use of athletics as a means for conversation, fostering connections, and tackling global challenges. This essay corroborates the conclusions of the present research regarding academic sports diplomacy, highlighting the significance of athletics in surpassing political disparities and fostering relationships based in similar values and interests.

Furthermore, the essay highlights the Olympic Games as a prominent illustration of sports diplomacy in practice, supporting the notion that significant athletic events, like global sports initiatives, possess the capacity to foster cultural interchange and comprehension among participants. The study's results further support the concept that engagement in international sports initiatives may enhance human development and foster global consciousness. In addition, the essay highlights the potential career prospects in sports diplomacy, not just in international sports organizations but also in other industries. This aligns with the need for institutions and organizations to strengthen their academic sports diplomacy programs. Institutions may enhance the preparation of student-athletes for careers in the area of sports diplomacy and contribute to its development by acknowledging its potential in international relations and providing appropriate educational programs.

In a nutshell, this article contains substantial evidence that supports the conclusions of the present research. It underscores the importance of sports diplomacy in the context of international relations, illustrates its practical implementation via many instances, and underscores the potential career prospects it presents. It supports the study's findings by highlighting the significance of establishing academic sports diplomacy to equip student-athletes for active engagement in this dynamic domain.

### **Cross-Country Competitions**

The result of "Level of Engagement in Academic Sports Diplomacy in terms of Cross-Country Competitions" shows the level of participation in academic sports diplomacy as measured by cross-country competitions. The composite mean score is 3.25, with a standard deviation of 0.62 based on the tabulated data. This suggests that respondents agree that cross-country competitions contribute positively to sports diplomacy efforts ( $M = 3.34$ ), that participation in cross-country competitions fosters a heightened sense of the global scope of athletic endeavors ( $M = 3.33$ ), and that participation in cross-country championships has significantly improved their understanding of other sports cultures on a global scale ( $M = 3.32$ ). Furthermore, they agree that the institution actively promotes and facilitates participation in cross-country events ( $M = 3.32$ ), and that participating in cross-country competitions allows them to interact with athletes from various cultural and social backgrounds ( $M = 3.26$ ).

An analysis of the involvement of student-athletes in academic sports diplomacy during cross-country events yields significant findings. The factor with the highest mean score is the notion that involvement in cross-country events enhances awareness of the global nature of sporting pursuits. These findings indicate that student-athletes see these events as excellent chances to enhance their comprehension of sports at an international level. Nevertheless, the formation of durable connections with athletes from various nations via cross-country sports has the lowest mean score. Although these contests contribute to increasing global

awareness, they may not be as efficient in fostering enduring international ties. However, the generally favorable assessment of cross-country races emphasizes their ability to contribute to sports diplomacy and emphasizes the significance of institutional backing in promoting these chances. These results highlight the need of improving the ability of cross-country events to promote long-lasting partnerships among players from different backgrounds, while also recognizing their significance in advancing global awareness and sports diplomacy.

The scholarly essay titled "Sport diplomacy: an integrative review" authored by Postlethwaite, Jenkin, and Sherry (2022) offers significant insights into the domain of sport diplomacy, so enhancing our understanding and placing the existing results in a relevant framework. The study emphasizes the increasing cross-disciplinary fascination in sport diplomacy in the fields of politics, history, and international affairs. This study examines the development of scholarly literature on sport diplomacy and highlights important characteristics of research in this field. An interesting observation from the study is the notable surge in peer-reviewed scholarly works on sport diplomacy, which signifies the escalating significance and pertinence of this domain. This is consistent with the latest research, which highlights the significance of academic sports diplomacy in the lives of student-athletes.

Moreover, the analysis highlights many issues in the current sport diplomacy literature, including an excessive dependence on case studies, a dearth of theoretical coherence, and the prevalence of research conducted in wealthier nations. These problems might provide contextualization to the results of the present study and accentuate areas that need more investigation and enhancements.

In a nutshell, the comprehensive examination of literature on sport diplomacy affirms the notion that sports has significant potential as a diplomatic weapon and in fostering international relations. This aligns with the issues investigated in the present research. Furthermore, this highlights the need of researchers in bridging disciplinary disparities and actively involving themselves in implementing sport diplomacy in order to enhance our comprehension of the topic.

The correlation matrix depicts the measurement of the relationship between student-athletes' leadership skills and their level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy. The Spearman's rho correlation showed that all of the domains had p-values less than the 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis will be rejected and there is a significant relationship between the variables. Specifically, leadership skills that include modeling the way, emotional engagement and motivation, facilitating empowerment, challenging the process, and fostering a collective vision are correlated with the level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy in terms of student-athlete exchanges, international sports competitions, cultural exchange programs, international sports projects, and cross-country competition, with correlation coefficients that range from 0.69 to 0.84 (strong to very strong relationship). The correlation coefficients are positive, indicating that as the level of leadership skills increases, so does the level of engagement in academic sports diplomacy, and vice versa.

The correlation matrix shown in the table provides valuable insights on the connection between leadership traits and involvement in academic sports diplomacy. Strong positive connections were discovered between many facets of sports diplomacy engagement and all dimensions of leadership, including "Model the Way," "Emotional Engagement and Motivation," "Facilitating Empowerment," "Challenge the Process," and "Foster a Collective Vision." The associations, which range from 0.69 to 0.84 and are all statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), highlight the important role that leadership plays in promoting involvement in academic sports diplomacy.

The implications of these findings are significant. Foremost, universities and sports organizations that want to advance academic sports diplomacy should give priority to the development of leadership skills among student-athletes. This involves cultivating attributes linked to successful leadership, since persons with these characteristics are more inclined to actively participate in sports diplomacy endeavors. Furthermore, the consistent correlations observed across diverse leadership dimensions highlight the universal significance of leadership behaviors in multiple aspects of sports diplomacy, including student-athlete exchanges, international competitions, cultural exchanges, sports projects, and cross-country competitions. The fact that this constancy exists suggests that endeavors to develop leadership abilities may significantly influence involvement in sports diplomacy.

Moreover, these findings indicate potential avenues for the creation of focused tactics to advance sports diplomacy. Universities and sports organizations may successfully boost student-athlete involvement in sports diplomacy activities by implementing programs and opportunities that foster leadership development. Moreover, these discoveries provide opportunities for additional investigation into the cultivation and enhancement of leadership characteristics among student-athletes, perhaps resulting in more efficient approaches for promoting sports diplomacy. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the precise processes

by which leadership behaviors impact involvement in academic sports diplomacy may provide useful insights for the creation of programs, eventually promoting a more dynamic and involved sports diplomacy community.

The result of "Issues Related to Student Leadership Qualities within the Context of Academic Sports Diplomacy" offers a thorough summary of the factors associated with student leadership attributes in the realm of academic sports diplomacy. These challenges are expressed by identifying key components and the viewpoints of informants, who are student-athletes recounting their actual experiences. The inferences derived from these concerns illuminate the complex obstacles that student-athletes confront as they manage the convergence of athletics, academics, and diplomacy.

Firstly, the problem of "Time Constraints" arises as a major obstacle, as student-athletes struggle to find enough time for sports diplomacy due to their demanding training and competition schedules. To address this situation, it is necessary to use adaptable methods and efficient time management techniques in order to enhance their involvement in diplomatic endeavors. Secondly, there is a clear absence of "Diplomacy Awareness" among student-athletes. There is a lack of awareness about the notion of sports diplomacy and the potential prospects it offers. It highlights the need of educational initiatives, both inside teams and institutions, to increase awareness and provide clear understanding of the importance and potential of sports diplomacy in cultivating student leaders. Thirdly, the matter of "Capability Building" emerges as a promising factor. Student-athletes who have participated in sports diplomacy recognize the significant enhancement of their abilities in leadership, dispute resolution, and negotiation. These findings indicate that sports diplomacy programs may function as useful platforms for cultivating versatile and competent student leaders. Fourthly, student-athletes have an ongoing challenge of "Balancing Priorities" as they strive to manage their academic obligations, athletic pursuits, and the demands of sports diplomacy. Proficiency in time management and prioritization skills is crucial for achieving success in these areas, underscoring the need of support structures and resources to assist students in achieving a harmonious equilibrium. Then, "Cultural Understanding" is emphasized as a vital element of sports diplomacy. Student-athletes acknowledge that participating in diplomatic activities has expanded their cultural understanding and improved their capacity to value and embrace diversity. Integrating cultural sensitivity training into educational programs may enhance the ability of student leaders to negotiate varied backgrounds with more effectiveness. Student-athletes highlight the relevance of successful cooperation and diplomacy in many elements of sports diplomacy, highlighting the importance of collaboration and diplomatic skills. Training programs should give priority to these abilities, creating an atmosphere where student leaders can thrive in collaborative efforts and proficiently manage problems.

In a nutshell, the finding highlights the complex nature of student leadership development in the context of academic sports diplomacy. These obstacles and possibilities provide useful knowledge for schools and organizations seeking to assist and empower student-athletes in their responsibilities as future leaders in the area of sports diplomacy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Student-athletes often express a favorable assessment of their leadership abilities, specifically highlighting their ability to set an example and motivate others. These findings indicate that student-athletes possess a solid basis of leadership attributes that may be used and enhanced. Secondly, student-athletes actively participate in academic sports diplomacy via their involvement in student-athlete exchanges, international sports contests, and cultural exchange programs. This underscores the fervor and curiosity shown by student-athletes in worldwide involvement via sports. Thirdly, there exists a notable positive association between the leadership abilities of student-athletes and their degree of involvement in academic sports diplomacy. It suggests that incorporating leadership development programs into sports diplomacy activities might amplify their effectiveness. Finally, student-athletes have difficulties in managing their academic, athletic, and diplomatic obligations as a result of limited time availability. These limitations may impede their engagement in sports diplomacy endeavors. Hence, the implementation of support systems and the use of flexible scheduling are crucial in order to properly tackle this issue.

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