



Navigating the Globalisation of Sports Coaching: Case Ice Hockey.

Vladislav A. Bepomoshchov

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Degree Name – Master's in Sports Coaching and Management

Report Type – Research-based Thesis

Report Completion Year – 2023

Abstract

Author(s) Vladislav A. Bepomoshchnov
Degree Masters in Sports Coaching and Management
Report/Thesis Title Navigating the Globalisation of Sports Coaching: Case Ice Hockey.
Number of pages and appendix pages 53
<p>Purpose: The success of Finnish ice hockey teams on the international arena has been fuelling the demand for coaches and players from this country worldwide. Yet, despite the increasing trends of migration of the workforce in sports, there is limited research that is conducted on the experiences of foreign coaches. Thus, this study aims to expand our understanding of the work of high-performance coaches in the globalised sports context to offer pragmatic insights to inform the work of transnational coaches, coach developers, and sports administrators.</p> <p>Theoretical background: The project has utilised an ecological lens of understanding the inter-linked nature of the relationship between person and environment. The context of coaching has a substantial impact on the perceived effectiveness of the coach and requires the practitioner to be aware of the needs and demands of the stakeholders. When a coach is exposed to a new culture, the acculturation is evident in the adaptation of the practices and personality of the individual that are then expressed in the development of cultural competence and intercultural effectiveness. Similarly, new inhabitants are likely to alter and reshape the environment around them.</p> <p>Method: A case study design was adopted. The participants were 14 Finnish high-performance head coaches with transnational career experiences across 11 nations. Qualitative data was collected via semi-structured interviews. Reflexive thematic analysis guided this work to generate themes through deductive and inductive reasoning.</p> <p>Results and Discussion: The major themes that have been identified from the qualitative data were centered around preparation practices, acculturation, and emerging learning experiences. Specifically, preparation was studied through the lenses of an outsider (when you can't physically be there) and an insider (worked or lived in the environment before). Acculturation experiences shed light on how coaches managed power structures, new challenges that the sports context has presented, and reflection on personal evolution. Lastly, coaches offered practical strategies for colleagues to consider when working abroad.</p> <p>Conclusion: The findings were in line with the existing literature on the work of transnational sports practitioners where acculturation occurs for both parties – the host environment and the newly arriving member (coach). The personal agency of coaches and communication skills were recognized as crucial components for the development of cultural competence. The findings could be utilised by coach developers when preparing practitioners to work in new cultural settings, club administrators to further inform their decisions when recruiting and working with foreign coaches, and sports governing bodies to develop policies to support coaches' acculturation in the new country.</p>
Key words Acculturation; Professional Sports; Case Study; Culture

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Theoretical Background.....	3
2.1	Ecological Perspective on Coaching	3
2.2	Coach Effectiveness.....	5
2.3	Acculturation in Sports	6
2.4	Culture Competence and Intercultural Effectiveness	9
3	Methods	12
3.1	Objectives and Research Questions	12
3.2	Philosophical assumptions and methodological considerations.....	12
3.3	Participants	14
3.4	Data collection.....	14
3.5	Data analysis.....	15
4	Results	17
4.1	Pre-Transition – Coming to know.	17
4.1.1	<i>Learning as an outsider – In search of knowing.</i>	17
4.1.2	<i>Learning as partial insider – Insights from within</i>	19
4.2	Acculturation – Attuning the identity and practice.	20
4.2.1	<i>Power structures – Managing up and down.</i>	20
4.2.2	<i>Sports context – (Re)learning the game.</i>	23
4.2.3	<i>Evolving identity – extending cultural self-awareness</i>	26
4.3	Lessons – Navigating into and through globalisation of coaching.....	28
4.3.1	<i>Knowing where you are going</i>	28
4.3.2	<i>Choosing your attitude</i>	31
5	Discussion.....	35
6	Conclusion	39
7	References.....	40

1 Introduction

Despite the recent travel challenges that were emerging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, global mobility of workforce has been rising across numerous disciplines. Sports industry is not an exception from the common trends of globalization (i.e. Crossan, 2019; Nauright & Pope, 2017; Smith, 2016). It is common for sports organizations to recruit coaches or athletes from other countries in the search for competitive edge and in motor sports there has been a saying “*If you want to win, hire a Finn*” (Thorogood, 2017). Hiring someone from abroad is particularly common in high-performance environments (i.e. Jansen & Engbersen, 2017; Norcliffe & Decosse, 2022; Wicker, Orłowski, & Breuer, 2018) Also, the countries where the know-how of the sport is not as developed tend to turn to foreign coaches and players in the hopes that they are going to contribute to the developmental and performance outcomes (Lenartowicz, 2023, 47; Tao, Rynne, & Mallett, 2019, 2). Recent success of Finnish national teams on international ice hockey arena with top-tier medals at world championships (gold – 2019, 2022; silver – 2021) and Olympics (2022) placed Finland at the top of the men’s international rankings (Merk, 2022). Thus, it would be intuitive to suggest that the demand for the coaches from this country is likely to be high.

It is hard (if not impossible) to separate coaching from the socio-cultural context (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2015, 11) as it requires coaches to engage in daily interactions with different social groups surrounding them – administrators, officials, athletes, parents and many others (Cassidy, 2010, 440). Nevertheless, it would be intuitive to suggest that the coaches are amongst most important sports stakeholders due to their profound impact on the lives of people that they work with. Jowett (2017) has highlighted this notion by pointing out that “coaches and athletes are inseparable entities within the context of coaching whether it is participation or performance” (p.6). While the motivations of coaches to move abroad might differ from search of new experience to financial incentives (Borges & al., 2015, 597; Kerr & Obel, 2018, 624; Orłowski, Wicker, & Breuer, 2016, 13), moving to a new country is likely to be a stressful experience due to the unfamiliar social practices, cultural values and sports contexts. Facilitating effective coach-athlete relationships, designing a quality learning environment and preparing athletes to succeed in competitions are rather challenging and, at times, chaotic (Bowes & Jones, 2006, 242). Yet, doing those effectively in a foreign environment only adds to the complexity to these processes (Kerr & Moore, 2015, 193).

The intriguing topic of culture in sports has sparked my interest due to my multi-cultural background as I have played and coached ice hockey in a foreign country. Furthermore, my daily work as a coach developer and pedagogue requires me to interact with colleagues and students from a wide range of cultural, professional and sports backgrounds. Hereby, equipped with enthusiasm and passion for this topic, I decided to proceed forward with the thesis that would allow me to

expand my horizons of cultural competence in the field of sports coaching and coach development. The following sections are going to examine the theoretical rationale that guided this work, outline methodological considerations that were taken into account in order to carry out this project, present the data, which is going to be reflected upon later in the discussion section that is going to reflect on the results to put forward practical considerations that could be drawn from this study as well as suggest future directions for the research in the field of acculturation in sports.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Ecological Perspective on Coaching

In recent years, the field of sports science has been enriched by scholars who adopt an ecological view of expertise development in sports (i.e. Woods & al. 2019; Ramos & al., 2020; Zahno & Hossner, 2022). At the heart of the ecological dynamics perspective is the interconnected nature between the individual and performance environment (Davids, Button & Bennett, 2008, 28). The key theoretical pillars that inform this concept are derived from ecological psychology (Bernstein, 1967; Warren, 2006) and complex systems theory (Clarke & Crossland, 1985). In sports, athletes and teams are recognised as adaptive complex systems (Rickles, Hawe & Shell, 2007; 933) that are continuously evolving to satisfy contextual demands of performance environment (Araujo & Davids, 2011, 16-17). For example, the decision making of a ball carrier in the invasion game is dependent on numerous variables (constraints) that include the positioning of the opponents, availability of teammates, technical repertoire of the ball carrier, level of fatigue and/or score of the game. The decision is then based on the affordances (opportunities for actions) that the ball carrier is able to detect and exploit.

The ecological understanding of sports could be then further explained through Gibson's (1979) theory of affordances and Newell's (1986) constraint theory. These two theories have been utilised to inform the work of scholars in the fields of skill acquisition (Davids & al., 2013), sports science (Glazier, 2017), pedagogy (Chow, 2011; 2016) and coaching (O'Sullivan & al., 2021; Woods & al., 2020). Renshaw & al., (2019, 14) defines constraints as boundaries imposed on a performer within which one explores functional movement patterns afforded by the environment, where movement pattern is classified as functional or dysfunctional based on the attainment of the desired intention of the individual. According to Newell (1986, 348) constraints are broken down into three categories – organismic, environmental and task-specific. Organismic (or performer) constraints refer to the physical and psychological characteristics of an individual, environmental constraints resemble tangible (i.e. humidity, temperature, lighting) and non-tangible (i.e. values, cultures) properties, and, lastly, task constraints refer to the design of the training sessions (Button, 2020, 36-37). In the sports context, it could be argued that coaches have limited impact on the first two types of constraints as those are bounded by other components of complex system (i.e. biological maturation, global trends in sports culture, etc.). Nevertheless, sports coaches have a considerable amount of influence on the task constraints, which have a significant impact on the behaviour of the athletes, as they shape the immediate (training) environment around them. Through intentional constraint manipulation coaches may guide the attention of the individual to search for available affordances to deploy idiosyncratic movement solutions (Gibson 2000, 33; Renshaw & al., 2019, 77). Examples

of different constraints in training session design could be the use of modified equipment (Buszard, Reid & Farrow, 2022, 455), playing area or number of players (Correia & al., 2012, 245; Woods & al., 2019, 320), and integration of representative visual cues (Pinder, Renshaw & Davids, 2009, 470; Pinder & al., 2011, 795). While each of the constraints resemble unique properties, they do not act in isolation, but rather closely interlinked and have a nonlinear relationship (Glazier, 2017, 4). The perception-action coupling is guiding the recognition and selection of the affordances to act upon (Renshaw, 2019, 18). Value-directedness and motor capabilities of an individual are then affecting the selection of the action based on the situational and contextual demands that are culturally bounded (Vaughan & al., 2021, 7).

Considering the impact of socio-cultural constraints on motor skill acquisition, the attention of the scholars was dedicated to studying the impact of these contextual properties on the selection of the movement strategies of individuals (Rothwell, Stone & Davids, 2019, 243). Thus, a bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; 2005) has been utilized to study the impact of social ecology on talent development pathways (i.e. Henriksen & Stambulova, 2017). The theory points out the importance of the environment in shaping the development pathways of human beings as we are embedded in the complex interaction of numerous social and cultural contexts in which we are situated that are continuously evolving over time (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, 7). The contexts are referred to as systems – micro-system is the immediate environment (i.e. sports team), meso-system contains the interaction of two or more micro-systems (i.e. family and sport club), exo-system has properties of socio-cultural context around the person (i.e. city or country) and macro-system that overrides the general socio-historic trends of the society (i.e. political views or economic systems; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, 796).

Let's now consider some examples. Uehara & al. (2016, 9; 2018, 174; 2021, 11) has shed light on the impact of the socio-cultural, economic and historic factors on the development of such flamboyant football culture in Brazil that leaves spectators in awe every time when the Brazilian national team is performing on the international stage. Movement cultures of capoeira and samba, that are then paired with notions of *malandro* (being 'street smart' or cunning) *ginga* (direct translation as 'sway', which resembles creative dribbling and juggling of the ball) and *pelada* (pick up football), leave a mark on individual's perceptions of good movement (Uehara & al., 2021, 3). While narrow streets of the urban cities in South America require players to utilise skilled actions and short passing sequences in order to outplay the opposition and, thus, avoid the long and high passes that are afforded by spacious fields in northern Europe (Wilson, 2013, 128). Also, within the same sport Vaughan & al. (2019, 4; 2021, 10; 2022, 9) has been examining the impact of the environmental constraints and path dependencies in the talent development pathway of players in Stockholm (Sweden), where the national culture, global trends and club's vision of the sport are continuously

contesting the value-directedness of an individual between competition and collaboration. Nevertheless, while these examples come from football other sports haven't been far behind from highlighting the impact of socio-cultural constraints on talent development, where Henkrisen, Stambulova & Roessler (2010a,b; 2011) studied the environments of the successful Scandinavian clubs in kayaking, sailing and track & field, and O'Sullivan, Bepomoshchnov & Mallet (2021) and Røsten & al. (2023) presented case studies of talent development (i.e. social constraints that promoted sports in Soviet Union) and identification (i.e. cultural perceptions of talented athletes in Norway) in ice hockey. Thus, the rationale above encourages sports coaches to be mindful of the impact of the environment in which they and their athletes are situated as the knowledge of the subtle details of the particular culture (i.e. sport, region, country) may positively contribute to the effectiveness of the design of the training sessions that are going to accommodate idiosyncratic tendencies of the athletes.

2.2 Coach Effectiveness

The emphasis on the importance of coaching context then further resonates with a one of the most cited works in the field of sports coaching by Côté & Gilbert's (2009) on the conceptualisation of coaching effectiveness. The authors have defined it as 'the consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection and character in specific coaching contexts" (p. 316). It is evident that the definition is comprised of numerous building blocks that together encapsulate this concept – coach's knowledge, athlete outcomes and coaching context.

The coach's knowledge is then further broken down into three components – interpersonal, intrapersonal and professional (Côté & Gilbert's 2009, 309). Interpersonal knowledge is recognized as the ability of the coach to communicate and interact with individuals and groups of stakeholders involved in sports (i.e. staff members, administrators, athletes, parents, etc.). It is then followed by the intrapersonal knowledge or one's ability evaluate own actions through self-reflection. Lastly, authors define professional knowledge as sport-specific expertise when it comes to training and performance practices. Athlete outcomes are comprised of the competence (performance in the particular sport), confidence (positive self-esteem), connection (relationships with teammates) and character (engaging in prosocial behaviour; Côté & Gilbert's 2009, 312-313). Lastly, the work of Côté & al. (2007, 10-13) has been utilized to differentiate between four different coaching contexts – participation coaches for children, participation coaches for adolescents and adults, performance coaches for young adolescents and performance coaches for older adolescents and adults. Each of the context has its own domain specific needs and demands that require coaches to adopt their practices in order to achieve desired learning and performance outcomes.

While Côté & Gilbert's (2009) conceptualisation of coaching effectiveness offers elegant simplicity of the concept, Lyle (2021) generated further discussion to highlight the challenges of defining such complex phenomenon as it would "most appropriately understood as a contextualized and layered concept" (p. 273). In his work, the author is further discussing the role of the coaching context and the impact of the wider socio-cultural environment that is surrounding the sport, which often drives the expectations (e.g. performance outcomes) that are then defining the 'effectiveness' of the work of the coach that are at times could be driven by motivations that could be contrasting to the ones of the coach (e.g. development objectives; Lyle, 2021, 272). Indeed, the ecology of high-performance sports setting is likely to resemble different needs and demands compared to the participation domain (Barker & al., 2014, 6; Szathmári, & Kocsis, 2022, 5). The predominant culture of professional sports is situated around wins and medals as a quality criteria upon which coaches are being evaluated on the effectiveness of their work and at times these practices are being transferred to junior sports organisations (Cushion & Jones, 2012, 294). However, Lara-Bercial & Mallett's (2016) research on serial winning coaches has highlighted that despite the pressures of the outcome driven environment, high-performance coaches expressed a key operational principle - *driven benevolence* that authors have defined as "the purposeful and determined pursuit of excellence that hinges on an enduring and balanced desire to considerably support oneself and others" (p. 237).

It is also important to acknowledge other scholars who put forward their ideas regarding this quest for definition of coaching effectiveness. While there are numerous aspects of these definitions that highlight the unique disciplinary lens through which authors have been approaching this concept (i.e. Jowett, 2017; Rylander, 2016; Santos & al., 2019), yet the importance of the context, relationship building with others and pragmatic actions to foster outcomes that are appropriate for a particular setting are the overlapping components that seem to have interdisciplinary support (Horn, 2008, 262; Nash & Mallett, 2019, 110). Thus, taking into account that national and sports culture plays a crucial role in shaping coaching practice, the following sections are going to address the concepts that are going to explore the processes that coaches undergo when moving to another culture and skills necessary to work effectively across cultures.

2.3 Acculturation in Sports

Acculturation is a term that is derived from cross-cultural psychology (Berry, 1997, 6). Chirkov (2009, 98) points out that the term could be dated to as early as work of Redfield, Linton & Herskovits (1936) from the field of anthropology that defined acculturation as an inquiry that "comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either

or both groups” (p. 149). The process of change requires an individual to adopt his/her cognitive (i.e. emotions and thoughts) and behavioural (social relationships) patterns when being exposed to a foreign environment (Brow & Strachan, 2022, 134; Schinke & McGannon, 2014, 68). Ryba & al., (2018, 10) recognised the need for researchers to keep in mind an important aspect of terminology when conducting studies regarding sports migration. While the authors refer to athletes, the terminology is likely to be applicable to coaching population. Namely, *mobility* refers to a temporary relocation, *migration* is recognised as long-term transition. In addition, Ryba & al., (2018) point out that the motivation of settlement in a new country is characterising *immigrant* athletes (coaches), while the *transnational* athletes (coaches) engage in “travelling back and forth from their origin, constructing their careers through across-borders practices and, thus, undergoing cyclic acculturation processes” (p.10).

The acculturation research in sports has utilised the framework of Berry (1997; 2005) as a frame of reference to study the experiences of migrant athletes (i.e. Battochio & al., 2013; Kontos, 2009; Ryba & al., 2012; Schinke & McGannon, 2014) and coaches (i.e. Hall & al., 2021; Schinke & al., 2015; 2013). At the core of the framework is the interplay between retention of the cultural practices of origin and the acquisition of the cultural elements of the new environment. Berry (1997) identifies four key strategies of acculturation that individuals adopt when interacting with a foreign culture (See Figure 1). The first two strategies are mutually exclusive and reside on two different ends of the spectrum, where *assimilation* occurs when an individual adopts the norms, values, and practices of the new culture, and rejects their own cultural identity, while *separation* requires the individuals to maintain their own cultural identity and reject the norms, values, and practices of the new culture (Berry, 1997, 9). The two strategies require an individual to lean to either side, which may in turn cause a considerable amount of stress that is also shared when one is experiencing *marginalization* (i.e. both own and new cultures’s identities are rejected by the individual) which facilitates exclusion and discrimination within the host society and loss of identity (Berry, 2005, 705). Yet, the *integration* is the most desired form of acculturation when an individual maintains their own cultural identity, but also adopts the norms, values, and practices of the new culture, which is then facilitating positive psychological outcomes. Nevertheless, Berry (1991, 31; 1997, 19; 2005, 707) highlights that integration can be successful only if the receiving society has a potential for multi-cultural interaction where foreign views, values or practices are accepted.

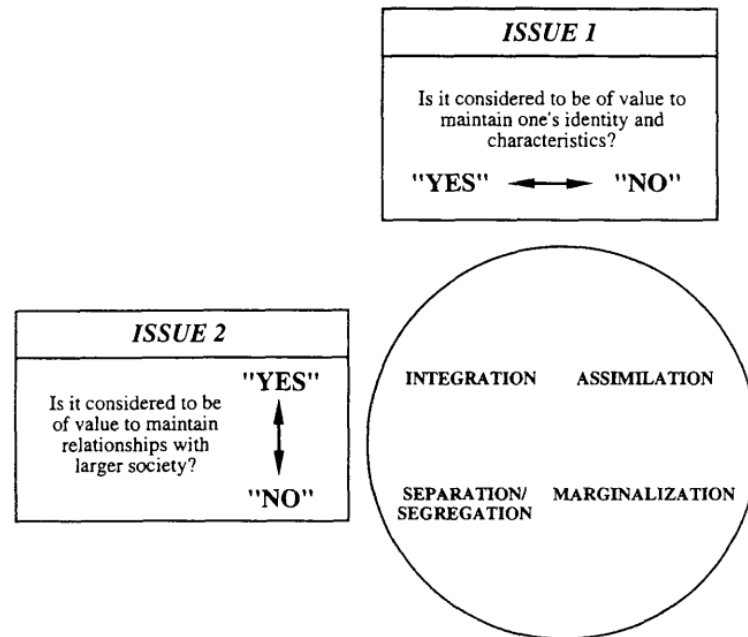


Figure 1. Berry's (1997) Acculturation Strategies

There are also a number of authors that have been studying the perspectives of coaches abroad yet not explicitly using these acculturation strategies as a frame of reference. The studies that compare contrasting cultural values vividly illustrate the challenges that coaches undergo in order to situate themselves in the new civil life environment, facilitate relationships with athletes and administrators to achieve desired performance outcomes. Studies on the Chinese coaches that migrated to Western countries showcased how the cultural emphasis on high-performance sport from as early as middle school affects their perception of effective coaching practices (Lenartowicz, 2023, 47; Tao & al., 2019, 3). Similarly, the coaches from Soviet Union who migrated to New Zealand and Canada faced challenges to navigate through the culture landscape of sports in those countries, where the differences were emerging from the perception of the sport by the society, attitudes of athletes towards training, relationships with club administrators and sports governing bodies (Kerr & Moore, 2015, 193; Schinke & al., 2013, 1685). Nevertheless, overtime, the majority coaches were able to adopt the ways of being and practicing their craft to match the socio-cultural demands of each of the environments (Kerr & Moore, 2015, 192; Tao & al., 2019, 2), while others remained resistant which led to negative personal experience and athlete outcomes (Borges & al., 2015, 14; Lenartowicz, 2023, 51).

Hereby, the responsibility to successfully manage the relationship between foreign coaches and organizations/athletes is a two-way street, where each of the parties is responsible to "keep

reminding themselves to be flexible and open to innovation and learning” (Tao & al., 2019, p. 13). A case study on rugby coaches that were managing multinational teams has highlighted that successful coaches were deliberately employing proactive strategies to help themselves and their athletes to integrate into the new environment (Hall & al., 2021). Yet, without exposure to international experience of living or working abroad, the coaches are limited in their toolkit when working with multi-cultural teams in mono- or multi-cultural settings (Borges & al., 2022, 8; Şahin & Gürbüz, 2014, 406; Engle & Crowne, 2014; 41).

2.4 Culture Competence and Intercultural Effectiveness

Both concepts are comprising a set of qualities that are inter-related, and it would be hard to separate them into two distinct subsections. Each has a strong presence in the literature within the fields of medicine (Matthews & al., 2021), business (Hofstede, 2009), military leadership (Abbe & Halpin, 2009) and education (Keengwe, 2010). Nevertheless, to this day researchers in sport coaching and coach development haven’t yet explicitly adopted these concepts despite the implicit and explicit calls for the recognition of the importance of culture competence in coaching context (i.e. Borges & al., 2022; Woodburn, Bespomoshchnov, & Saarinen, 2023). Prior to reviewing these concepts, I would like to make an attempt to define the term *culture* and how it is going to be used throughout this project. Chirkov (2009) pointed out that at times authors seem to overlook the definition and properties of a particular environment when conducting acculturation research and in their work “there is no culture in the studies on the psychology of acculturation” (p. 99).

In the extensive review of culture in sports psychology research Ronkainen & Blodgett (2020) adopted the definition of culture by Berry & al., (2011) as the “shared way of life of a group of people” (p. 4). By taking into account this definition, culture could be recognised through numerous contexts (i.e. nation, region, sport, team, etc.) and be enacted in a form of values, symbols, beliefs and behaviours as “culture does provide demand characteristics and display rules for the behavioural expression” (McAdams & Pals, 2006, p. 211). The scholars in sports science who adopt an ecological lens (i.e. Rothwell, Davids & Stone, 2018; Vaughan & al., 2022) have utilised the term *form of life* that was put forward by a German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) who elucidates it as “behaviours, skills, capacities, attitudes, values, beliefs, practices, and customs that shape the communities we live in” (Rothwell & al., 2018, p. 2). Therefore, culture could be considered as a multi-layered concept, and it might potentially explain why some authors tend to utilize the metaphor of iceberg when they write about culture to highlight the visible (i.e. artifacts or behaviour) and invisible (i.e. values and motivations) characteristics that cultures resemble (e.g. Schein, 1990; Hall, 1989). Also, the personality of an individual resembles similar qualities where the interplay between evolutionary based, culturally bounded and situationally dependent

characteristics that have an impact on the selection of values an individual chooses to embody and enact in their behaviour (McAdams & Pals, 2006, 210; Schwartz, 2012, 4). Nevertheless, an important factor that is absent from the iceberg metaphor is the evolution of culture (and personality) as it is always in a dynamic state and changes over time (Schein, 1990, 4; 2010, 273).

Consequently, getting an insight into the how a given culture affects one's ways of being may give an advantage for a sports practitioner when working with colleagues or athletes from different cultures. There have been numerous definitions of culture competence from different fields (i.e. Alizadeh & Chavan, 2016; Brottman & al. 2020; Campinha-Becote, 2002; Gallegos, Tindall, & Gallegos, 2018) and Stevens & al. (2018) highlighted that the majority share in common the "need to understand one's own culture, an awareness of cultural differences, and an understanding that there is also likely a wide variation among individuals within a given culture" (p.651). In other words, culture competence implies sensitivity and awareness of cultural diversity, where intercultural effectiveness is the successful integration of culture competence into your actions in order to achieve the desired outcome when working with others.

To further illustrate the relationship between these two concepts lets turn to the framework put forward by Abbe, Gulick & Herman (2007, 3) that captures the interplay between culture competence and intercultural effectiveness and identifies the complimentary components that impact those (See Figure 2). The model consists of three components that are interrelated. Antecedent variables refer to the individual's make up and upbringing, where cross-cultural competence is comprised of three components – Knowledge (knowledge of the cultural practices of a particular social group), Affect/Motivation (empathy to others and desire to adopt own cultural biases) and Skills (interaction with others, communication and flexibility). Regional knowledge and language are recognised as valuable assets, yet not as sole predictors of success when working abroad as the prerequisites to the cultural knowledge acquisition and its application is the curiosity of the individual, affection and the openness to the diversity (Chiu et al., 2013, 844; Deardorff, 2006, 252). Thus, our personal agency plays a crucial role in being successful when working in multi-cultural settings. The intercultural effectiveness in this model strongly resembles the qualities of Côté & Gilbert's (2009) triad of knowledge, where the application of culture competence is manifested in job setting (professional knowledge), personal adjustment (intrapersonal knowledge) and interpersonal relationships (interpersonal knowledge).

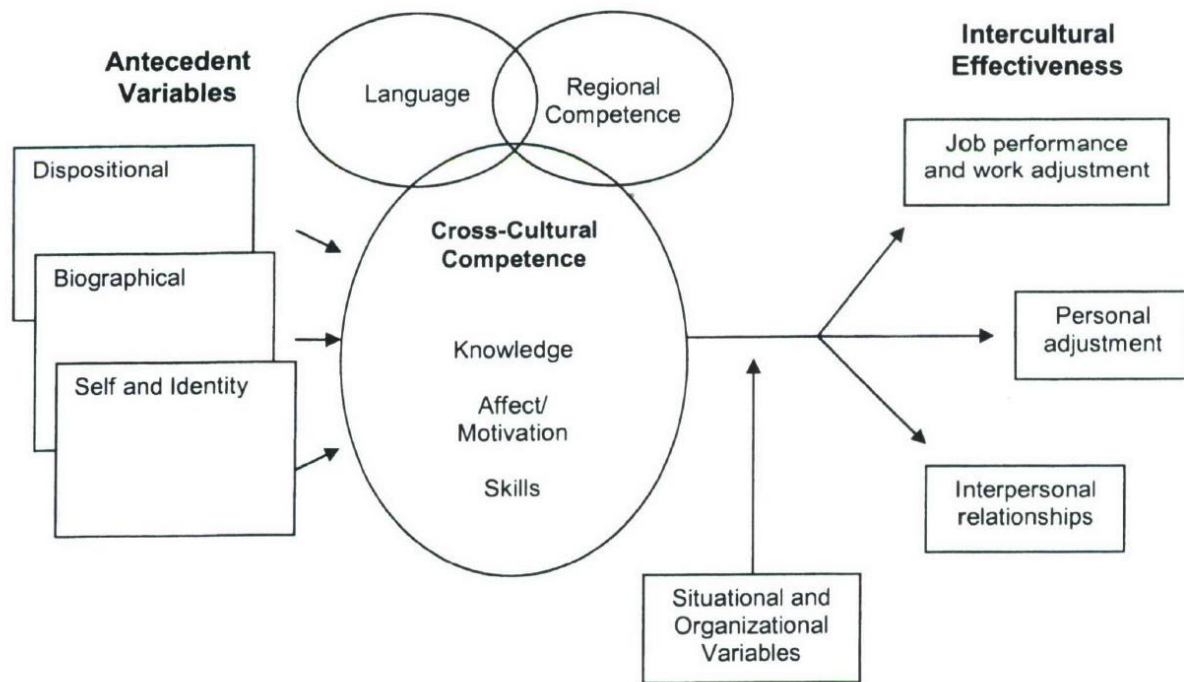


Figure 2. Abbe & al., (2007) general framework for cross-cultural competence.

3 Methods

3.1 Objectives and Research Questions

The objectives of this thesis are formulated through a pragmatic lens. The first objective is to provide insights into the experiences of Finnish high-performance coaches from the trenches of ice hockey arenas around the globe. There have been numerous publications that explored the experiences of transnational ice hockey athletes (i.e. Elliot & Maguire, 2008; Maguire, 1996; Schinke et al., 2007; Battochio & al., 2013), yet there is limited research that examining the experiences of the coaches in this sport. The second objective of this work is to offer practical tools for coaches who are working abroad to effectively manage acculturation and facilitate effective performance preparation practices. The following research questions guided this work: (1) What were the strategies that coaches deployed to prepare to work abroad and why?; (2) How did the coaches negotiate and manage their acculturation and coaching practice when encountering challenges in new coaching environment? (3) What were key learnings after spending numerous seasons working in a foreign cultural setting?. By answering these research questions, it would be possible to further enrich the toolkit of strategies that coaches and coach developers may use to work effectively in international environments.

3.2 Philosophical assumptions and methodological considerations

While sports science has largely been dominated by the traditional research methods that are rooted in positivist paradigm (Kaag, 2015, 208), this project requires us to go beyond the assumptions of the 'single true reality' that could be captured solely by quantitative methods of research (Guba, 1990, 20). Considering the research questions that were posed by this project, an interpretivist paradigm has been chosen (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020, 542). Interpretivist researchers recognise that the reality cannot exist independently from the participants and that one's interaction with the world and others shapes one's interpretations and meaning of it (Scotland, 2012, 11). Thus, I am going to adopt constructionist epistemology (i.e. ways of knowing) and relativist ontology (i.e. nature of reality; Creswell, 2014, 38). Relativist ontology implies that "realities exist in a form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content of the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p.27). When it comes to the epistemology, constructionism is at times interchangeably used with constructivism, and while both may resemble linguistic similarities, they do not share similarity in their epistemological beliefs. Individual agency is at the heart of constructivist view of knowledge construction (Zajda, 2018, 72), yet constructionism is taking into account the social nature of knowledge due to the numerous social contexts and relationships that do not simply allow someone to discover the knowledge in isolation but instead collectively create it in collaboration with others (Packer and

Goicoechea, 2000, 229). Thus, in the light of the dynamic nature of the globalisations across numerous disciplines of our lives (Risse, 2007, 127) and the scope of this project constructionist epistemology may further advance our understanding of international reality (Hyde, 2020, 135).

The philosophical assumptions are then further informing the design and selection of research methods. Hereby, a case study design was adopted to the phenomenon of interest as it allows "...to gain a deep holistic view of the research problem" (Baškarada, 2014, p.1), which is going to take into account the contextual conditions, in which the phenomenon is taking place (Yin, 2009, 18). This case study shares *instrumental* (i.e. provide insights to inform theory – acculturation of sports coaches) and *intrinsic* (i.e. particular unique phenomenon – Finnish high-performance ice hockey coaches; Stake, 1995, 3) characteristics with the intention of this inquiry to benefit specific audiences (i.e. coaches, administrators, coach developers) to further inform their practice (Stake, 1978, 5). Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis have been chosen as those are commonly used to gain an in-depth understanding of human experiences, behaviours and social phenomena (cultures, attitudes, beliefs; Sparkes & Smith, 2014, 14). Qualitative approach to investigation of the phenomena can provide the needed rich and comprehensive description of the issues under the investigation within the cultural psychology that quantitative methods and the positivist lens fails to deliver due to the intentions to predict the behaviours, while qualitative inquiry aims to understand it (Chirkov, 2009, 97).

Quantitative research methods are largely based around the quality criteria of validity and reliability, where statistical methods offer a useful mode of quality monitoring (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, 78). Yet, while it is challenging to transfer quantitative measures of quality to qualitative research, there are other measures of quality that researchers may utilise to promote rigor when undertaking qualitative inquiry. The work of Sarah Tracy (2010) that conceptualised "eight *universal* hallmarks for high quality qualitative methods across paradigms" (p. 837; italics in original) has been used in order to guide methodological decisions of this project. The eight hallmarks are: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. Worthy topic requires researchers to engage with work that is uncovering something that hasn't been known before or has access to contexts that might have been overlooked. Rich rigor is challenging the researchers to collect an abundant amount of data, be transparent with the methods used to collect and analyse (Smith & McGannon, 2018, 18). Sincerity of the researcher refers to the openness about potential biases and being frank about their impact on the research process (Morse, 2015, 1215). Credibility of the study is measured through the thick description of a particular behaviour in context with "enough detail that readers may come to their own conclusions" (Tracy, 2010, p.843), which could be done through multivocality (i.e. numerous views are acknowledged; Tracy, 2010, 844), member-checking (i.e. participants review the work to validate the

interpretations; Brit & al., 2016, 1803), and/or triangulation (i.e. diversity in theories and/or sources/types of data collected; Tobin & Begley, 2004, 392). Resonance and significant contribution refer to the transferability of the findings to other contexts and can help improve practice in the field (Morse, 2015, 1213). Ethical considerations when working with human participants in this project were aligned with the guidelines of Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK that were approved on 7th of May 2019. Lastly, meaningful coherence encapsulates the alignment of the work with the objectives, review of the literature and methodological considerations that eventually achieve the stated purpose (Tracy, 2010, 848).

3.3 Participants

Purposeful sampling has been used in this project to identify the individuals that would be “especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest” (Palinkas & al., 2013, p.534) The recruitment of participants was carried out via phone, text message and email. The criteria of importance included Finnish citizenship, experience of coaching on professional level in Finland and abroad. The total sample of this study was consisting of 14 participants. The coaches of the sample have been rather experienced ($M = 22.4$, $SD = 10.3$) with considerable number of years spent abroad ($M = 7.8$, $SD = 5.1$). The foreign countries in which coaches worked included Sweden, Slovakia, Austria, England, Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Russia, United States, Germany and Slovenia. To protect the identity of the participants, the responses were anonymised, and the participants are going to be referred to by pseudonyms throughout this text.

3.4 Data collection

Semi-structured interview was chosen as a method of data-collection. The advantage of this method is that it offers a flexibility for the researcher to collect an in-depth insight into the experience of the participants (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, 84), which might explain its overrepresentation in sports psychology research (McGannon & al., 2017, 9). When a researcher is conducting a semi-structured interview he or she has a script that provides structure to the conversation and keeps the topics of interest covered, yet it does not limit the use of the prompts in order to further expand a particular topic within the interview process (Smith & Sparkes, 2016, 105).

Two interviews were conducted in person, one over the phone and the rest ($n = 11$) were carried out using the video communication platform Zoom. It was a convenient method as the majority of the coaches at the moment of the interview have been working abroad. After the consent for the interview was received, the participants were invited to a virtual meeting space to record the interview. The interviews were conducted in two languages – Finnish and English. The average length

of the interview was 42 minutes (SD = 11). The recordings and transcripts of the interviews were stored on the password protected cloud platform.

3.5 Data analysis

The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and anonymised to protect participant's identities. The author has re-listened audio recordings and re-read the transcripts of interviews numerous times in order to familiarize with the data prior to proceeding to further analysis. Abductive reasoning was utilized in order to organize data, where both inductive (bottom-up) and deductive (top-down) approaches have been used (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, 54). The guidelines that were put forward by Ryba & al., (2018; 2016) and research questions were utilized to deductively organise and categorise data into three higher-order themes (See Table 1).

Once the data was organised into the three big categories an inductive analysis was carried out to generate lower-order themes. The author carried out coding of key ideas and concepts that were then reviewed and grouped into lower-order themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013, 225). The codes and lower-order themes were examined by critical friends (i.e. colleagues) to offer feedback, contest meanings and offer alternative interpretations of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 590; Norris, 1997, 174;). Such practice is essential for the reflexive thematic analysis (TA) as it "is the product of deep and prolonged data immersion, thoughtfulness and reflection, something that is active and generative" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 591).

The author spent over a decade in Finnish ice hockey context in various roles including three years as a player, four years as a coach and three years as a coach developer. Thus, as a researcher he occupies the space in the middle of the insider-outsider continuum (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, 60) and his assumptions, biases, and interpretations of data were actively reflected and reviewed to minimize potential biases and enhance the rigor of the analysis. The colleagues who were insiders (Greene, 2014, 2) with extensive experience in Finnish ice hockey, coaching, and coach development engaged in iterative peer review of this manuscript to critically examine the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data. Within reflexive TA the subjectivity of additional voices in data analysis is seen as "a valuable resource that can be tapped to illuminate both the phenomenon under investigation and to situate research design and practices more generally" (Gough & Madill, 2012, p. 382).

Table 1. Higher and Lower Order Themes

Higher order themes	Lower order themes
Pre-Transition	Learning as outsider
	Learning as partial insider
Acculturation	Power structures
	Sports contexts
	Evolving identity
Lessons	Knowing where you are going
	Choosing your attitude

4 Results

The results section is going to be presented through three sub-sections that are named after the higher-order themes – Pre-Transition, Acculturation and Lessons. The first one captures the journey of the coach which starts with the deliberate planning prior to the arrival at the new destination. Acculturation is introducing the experiences of coaches when navigating through the new cultural landscape. The last section captures the best practices and advises from the participants for current and forthcoming transnational practitioners.

4.1 Pre-Transition – Coming to know.

The following two lower order themes illuminate the experiences that have been shared by coaches and strategies they adopted to proactively get to know the foreign work environment. The first lower-order theme is going to shed light on the experience of coaches that moved directly from Finland to the foreign country in the head coaching role or were not acquainted with the country beforehand. Whereas the second lower-order theme represents episodes when coaches have been working abroad in assistant positions or spent time in the country earlier.

4.1.1 *Learning as an outsider – In search of knowing.*

When you are abroad and cannot physically be present in a foreign country, there is only so much that one can do in order to get to know the new environment and prepare to work effectively there. Fortunately, the resources online are at anyone's service and coaches did not shy away from them. Particularly the available videos of the games of the future team have been used as a frame of reference.

“As the first foreign coach I analysed the games of my future team very carefully. I watched everything, how they attacked, how they defended, how they pressured, how they would play as individuals, how did the tactics change, if they did, when playing different opponents. I looked at all those things very carefully and then started to take the pieces that I think we needed to succeed in international hockey arena.”

(Coach 3)

While Coach 5 has utilised the web resources to study club's history “...I a little bit looked at team history from Wikipedia to learn couple of things because I had interviews with their management and I wanted to show that I am acquainted with their organisation”. Coach 7 preferred to take a precise look at player personnel and study the roster of the team “...I wanted to see the history of players. Where they played and what was their background, how many points they had, under

what coach they played and so on". The last part of the quote is then guiding to the next method that coaches utilized in order to learn more about the foreign environment.

In addition to the online tools all coaches utilized the existing network of friends and colleagues in order to gain insights and learn from someone who worked or played in a particular country. Coach 1 has stated that "I tried calling here and there and ask who knows what, and whether anyone knows someone who could help me to get to know the country and the sport there". Coach 13 has utilised a friend from his playing days to learn about the country "...a friend of mine played there [Switzerland] and he gave me good pointers on what to expect and what things I had to keep in mind". The other coach has mentioned that he asked his family members, as they lived in the country earlier, which helped him to shape the understanding of the broader context that goes beyond the sports considerations.

"...the first thing was that of course I wanted to know how the league is, what has happened in the in the past like recent history of the league, what kind of teams there are and of course, like the country itself [Switzerland]. I have lived there when I was one year old. I don't remember anything from it, but my parents lived there one year and I asked them about Swiss mentality. Also, we have friends who have lived in Switzerland, and I talked to many of them about the culture and the people."

(Coach 5)

Coach 6 has commented that one of his colleagues had the cultural background of the country in which he is going to be working and knew the language, which was an asset in preparation phase to establish clarity.

"...[name] helped me to translate the boards with my values and game principles. It was a big help because comes this language dilemma. For me to take the coaching forward, I had to have clear boards that we made, where we have a really clear and simple game system, like in a way big principles that need to be shown in the game and the values that were required for everyone."

Yet, many have mentioned that it is extremely hard to learn the ways of being in a foreign country without living there as you are missing the first-hand look at the traditions and practices that other culture exercises.

"I have been in international competition myself [coaching junior and senior national teams] as well as lived abroad and in terms of my own development the experience of being able to work in these [different] cultures and to see why they did things the way they do and the way they don't. You can't understand it from the outside by reading a book or something

like that, of course you can get some understanding but only if you get inside you can truly learn.” (Coach 6)

4.1.2 Learning as partial insider – Insights from within.

Many coaches reported that spending time in the host country and working there had a great number of benefits that they utilised as a part of their preparation phase. Specifically, the experience of being an assistant coach was pointed out as a steppingstone towards cultural competence as it does not place a considerable amount of stress on the individual.

“When I first moved to the foreign culture, I was an assistant coach and everything was done under his guidance. Yet, after few years when I was offered a head coach position, I was able to take that challenge with the knowledge that I was able to acquire by jumping into the deep end and experiencing the culture from the inside. Things like getting to know the people, what do the players buy and not buy, and also learning the language, and I had a book that I was reading but you can’t learn these things by reading you need to get out and start getting to know others.” (Coach 8)

When he was asked later in the interview whether he could prepare for this job without this experience he replied “No way...If I would not have had this experience. I think I would have overreacted many times and, who knows what might have been the consequences of my actions”. Many coaches deliberately paid attention to behaviours of others around them in various situations to learn about the new people around them (i.e. colleagues, players, other staff members, etc.) and it was expressed by Coach 9 as “How do people in that culture react when things are going well? How do you treat them? How are they behaving when things go badly? What happens then? You have to see all these things with your eyes and experience them”. Another perspective of a coach has showcased his multi-cultural background as an advantage “...spending the time abroad and being raised in an international family helped better understand the motivations and values that other cultures embody and I guess that’s why when I go to coach in Europe I feel like a fish in the water, I am comfortable working with others who come from different culture” (Coach 12).

Coach 5 has highlighted that experience in the league has helped him to make decisions regarding the roster “...when I was given an opportunity to become the head coach position in the [club] I knew some of the players as I have played against them. I had a look at their statistics and so on to refresh my memory. Yet, despite my biases about their performance in the past, I still wanted them to show me what they got and how they changed, if they did, over the years...”. In addition, many coaches highlighted the valuable experience of working in the system of the national team as

it offered an abundance of opportunities to watch the games in many leagues to become acquainted with different cultures.

“...when you work with the national team you have a bit more time to follow [*watch and visit*] the games of other leagues than if you are a part of a club team. You get to know the leagues, players and coaches. Especially if you played or coached before in a certain club you tend to follow how things are there a little bit even through you wouldn't be working in that league.” (Coach 14)

4.2 Acculturation – Attuning the identity and practice.

The first lower-order theme captures the considerations that coaches had to take into account in cultures that have a different heritage of leadership practices compared to Finland when interacting with administrators of the club or players. The second theme has been centred around the sports component (ice hockey) in a particular country and how it affected their work. Lastly, the third theme has brought forward the moments of personal growth that coaches outlined as a result of acculturation in a foreign country.

4.2.1 Power structures – Managing up and down.

The coaches who worked in Slovakia, Czechia, Slovenia and Russia highlight the contrasting role of the coach and athletes compared to Finland. The hierarchical understanding of the relationship between coaches and athlete did not challenge the coaches to find ways to establish their coaching practice as Coach 1 pointed out that “It was really easy for me to get the respect and authority. I did not have to battle for acceptance by the group. They respected my views and it was easy to sell my ideas”. Similarly, Coach 3 has quipped that “I really liked the Slovakian players, the type of playing style, and they were very humble and ready to work and ready to listen”. While such power distance might ease the buy in, at times, it creates challenges for the Finnish coaches as they are used to a two-way communication with their athletes. Coach 1 shared his experience of working in the environment that echoed the Communist regimes in Eastern European countries.

“I saw strong heritage of authoritarian coaching. I was asking player's opinions on certain matters like what options he sees in this game situation or how does he feel after the game and he said to me that ‘I don't really know, I have never been asked these questions before, so I don't know what I should answer’. Over the years they began to communicate more freely yet, I could still feel that they were afraid to do or say something silly or funny as they were afraid that I am going to punish them.”

Also, Coach 6 has highlighted that despite Finnish leadership has a legacy of authoritarian coaching approach it has been rapidly evolving "...when I started coaching in Russia, I felt that I went 20 or 30 years back in time. In Finland we coached in a hierarchical manner – I tell you what to do and that's it. But its different nowadays. Certainly, there are authoritarian coaches but there is more dialogue than monologue nowadays...". Furthermore, there was a pushback from the management of the club when Coach 6 was attempting to integrate athletes into coaching process "...it was then after pre-season when the club administrator came to me and said that you can't talk to players individually as it is unfair to the rest of the team as you don't share this knowledge with others..". Later in the interview, he has further reflected that "...I guess that's the culture there, as a coach you are required to have tough discipline, have to share the same knowledge to everyone and have the same standards, which you demand from every player on the team".

In central Europe such power distance is exercised in the culture outside the ice rink setting and coaches noticed that when their kids went to school "...especially when you go to German speaking school you have to address the teacher by Herr and they learn it from the young age to operate with respect to authority" and it is then translated to ice hockey setting "...in Switzerland they called me 'Hey Coach!' I said that 'hey, I am not [profanity] Coach, I am [name], please call me [name]" (Coach 8). It was unusual for Finnish coaches to be addressed in such manner to avoid creating distance between players that might create the unwanted barriers for coaches to get to know their athletes.

"...when I joined [team] they addressed me Mr. [last name] and I said to them, please never ever call me that and when athletes see that you come down from the level of being 'Mister' you get a little bit different level of connection when they relax a little bit and get comfortable. They have always been told what do to from the up top. It doesn't matter if it's school or whatever and it's just about results, results....that's all. And when you play that down with the players than you get nice feedback from them." (Coach 14).

The relationship between coaches and management of the club also varied. After spending numerous years in Finland, the coaches were used to ways of the native environment, which was different in the new host country and Coach 5 expressed it as "...our ways of being are more direct and honest. I noticed that it could be at times scary for others [people from different country] when I am being upright and straight to the point as its different here [Austria] because usually in first 30 minutes of the meeting nothing is happening just discussion and nobody is addressing any problems that we were supposed to discuss". The other issue was the strong hierarchy of the culture that was reflected when decisions had to be made regarding player management "...our general

manager had to always ask for a permission and if we needed to sign a new player, I had to always triple-check whether the process is still going” (Coach 7) and “...if we wanted to organise an evening with coaches or family event for the whole team, it was impossible, you have to ask for permission numerous months in advance, but in Finland it would be one week and its done” (Coach 12).

Another aspect that coaches reported is a greater involvement of owners and sponsors of the sports organisations in the operations of the team compared to Finland. The majority did not see it from a positive perspective as it often intervenes with the coaching process.

“...at the end of the season we had a meeting that was organised by the president of the club where he pretty much told to a lot of people that they are [*profanity*]. He also said to one of the players that CEO of [name of the company] said he hasn’t seen him play so well for the past four years. First of all, owners can say what they want and they are allowed to have their own opinions, but these comments should never come back to the players. They think if they are sponsors, they can be in on it.”
(Coach 2)

Furthermore, Coach 11 quipped that “I really appreciate the GMs [general managers] who respect my ways of doing things because if I show them that I am willing to listen, I expected them to do the same”. Yet, on some occasions, involvement of owners has been seen as a positive thing, it just required sophisticated planning and timing of the request from the ownership of the club to match the emotional component. As Coach 6 mentioned “I recall that if we needed to sign a star player, it could only be done after the Friday’s home game victory at the restaurant when owners were celebrating but after Sunday’s away loss it was hard to negotiate finances to sign the player”.

Another example of differences in leadership came from coaches that worked in Switzerland where capitalist and neoliberal values have been driving the coaching and management culture. It was vividly illustrated by Coach 5 “...the turnover of coaches is high in the league. You can be fired rather quickly. Swiss players were used to the North American coaches who come for a short term, they say we do things this way and that’s it. No explanation or justification. If results followed, they stay, if not, they leave...”. Such heritage of outcome driven environment might have led some of the players to question the development-oriented methods that were used by Finnish coaches “...our staff wanted to show to players that we are not their enemies. They have been used to be like pawns in a chess game. Nobody talked to them like people. It was strange to them” (Coach 10). Yet, the coaches have highlighted that when they adopted individual coaching approach the positive feedback was overwhelming “...when we had the captain leadership group meetings, they

told us that in first year we did not believe you that you cared about us, but now we see that you really do” (Coach 4).

4.2.2 **Sports context – (Re)learning the game.**

The experiences of coaches have been ranging from working in the countries where ice hockey is a well-established sport with a strong presence in society (i.e. Sweden, Russia, or Czechia) and the countries where ice hockey is not as represented in the fabric of the nation (i.e. Italy, Slovenia, Poland or Austria). An example of it could be the experience of a Coach 10 coming to Austria and discovering that he had to adjust his thinking to match his practices to the demands of the environment “...when I got there I really had to start with basics. Tactics, technical skills on ice, dryland physical training, all these things have been far behind. So, I had to think for myself, hey, I need to go back to grassroots level and start all over again”. Specifically, the physical training was seen as something that is missing not just on professional level “...I was surprised to see that in central Europe juniors almost did not do any physical training, when my son played in numerous countries he was the only one who went running and then others were joining him after a while” (Coach 3).

The lack of sports knowledge was also reflected in the management’s perceptions of the demands of the coaching role and required equipment needed for the staff to execute their responsibilities.

“It took two months to get the board members to understand that we need computers to do our work like videos, presentation slides, spreadsheets for statistics and so on. Trust me, it was not a question of money. The player budget was 12 million and I am sure the club could afford computers for one and a half thousand. Then of course we got state-of-the-art computers but it was strange for them that we needed them to do our work.” (Coach 7)

Also, Coach 7 further added that “...it was hard to convince them [*board members*] that there was a need for a goalie coach. It was unusual to have a staff of four coaches. It was just a head coach, one assistant and that’s it”. Similar experience was shared by Coach 13 “...I have been here now for numerous years and there are still things that are keep surprising me about club management and decisions, so I have to take initiative and educate them about the things that in Finland are common practice”.

Lack of the sports expertise may also explain the emotional component of the demands that are placed on the coaching staff. Coach 10 has highlighted that “...when we play at home and the fans and owners are present, I have to play aggressive hockey. Meaning that we pressure with four players, yet when we are playing away, I can just play passively to win games and get points for the standings and nobody is going to tell me anything”. The emotional aspect may play a role in

decision-making regarding the employment of coaches “...our staff was fired two games before the end of the season because we lost the derby games that are important for fans and owners...if we would win half of these [derby] games I don't think we would have been fired” (Coach 11). While the knowledge may not resemble similar depth as in Finland, coaches pointed out the support from the fans that was fuelling the entourage when the games were played. Coach 9 mentioned that “...the fans make the game atmosphere unforgettable here, they cheer and celebrate, which also creates a good pressure for us to perform” and Coach 2 has highlighted that “...I miss at times the game day feeling that the environment [*club's staff and fans*] was able to create in order to trigger emotions every time when we have been playing at home”.

On the other hand, cultures with a strong presence in hockey posed a different set of challenges. When reflecting on his experience in Russia Coach 4 shared that “In this country they believe in amount of repetitions, would that be school, sports or work. Since young age, they are used to it there. You learn to skate by skating. So, they skate and they skate a lot, which eventually leads to players that are extremely skilled after all the repetitions that they go through...” Similarly, Coach 5 has subscribed to the same view of Russian players to possess high level of sports expertise “...I had to leave the offensive game to their creativity and pay attention only to the defensive game as Russian players are so skilled since the very young age, it is something quite incredible” and Coach 3 then further reinforced this perception.

“I didn't have to teach the Russians how to play hockey offensively. I had to teach them how to play defensive game together as a unit. In other words, it wasn't worth it for me to go to a country like that, where almost every player has great attacking skills and attempt to teach them those. I didn't have to provide any instructions on attacking skills. Instead, we focused exclusively on playing defence as a team.”

The prejudice that one experience about someone could only be dismissed when you get to meet different players in person and make your own conclusions and the examples came from coaches that worked in numerous multi-national settings. Coach 3 showcased that through his experience “...Swedish guys are quite similar guys [to Finns]. Of course there can be some that are a little bit softer than some Finnish guys which [are seen as] little bit more like tougher. But there are tough Swedish guys and softer Finnish ones so players are quite similar”. Also, it was brought to light that its not just these two nations that demonstrate variability to the common prejudice regarding the on-ice behaviour that players tend to display. Coach 9 provided this comment, which captures this particular view.

“Again, question of recruitment. You need to know the players that you sign and agents that you work with. The best North American players are either in Russia or Switzerland and their stereotype of being skilled or tough doesn’t translate to the others that come play in the rest of Europe where there is not enough money to get good ones and they could be soft, selfish and only thinking about the next contract and own points...Finnish players are known to be humble and coachable, that’s why many want to sign them, but being humble doesn’t make you a good goal scorer, yet there in Switzerland our players do well [leading scorers]...but only because those are best of the best of our players.”

Furthermore, coaches pointed out that they developed professional knowledge through the exposure to different tactical repertoire of their opponents in different countries. Coach 9 recalls that “...Swiss league was very different and there have been at least four different tactical ways of playing the game but in Finland it’s only one. It was nice to see that you can win a championship with different style of hockey”. Conversely, some coaches preferred the Finnish traditions of the game “...I like how Finnish teams are playing the game and I don’t think I want to change it. Of course I adopt it, but my tactical understanding of the game and training still have the Finnish flavour to it” (Coach 14). The rich diversity in cultural and professional backgrounds of the coaches in the leagues has continuously been challenging coaches to prepare for every opponent through sophisticated tactical analysis of the tendencies as Coach 7 further described.

“I really liked pre-scouting and game day preparation because you have to really focus on different things and find different ways of presenting as teams were constantly changing. I learned so much more through those things than I had learned here, because here in Finland it’s the same way. It’s the same way for every team almost. And then we do the same things over and over again. And with the national team, of course you learn certain things, but it’s also very narrow when you play against Norway, USA, Canada, Sweden, Russia or Czechia. So tactically I learned probably more than I had learned for many years.”

Furthermore, the coaches’ cultural backgrounds largely dictate the style of ice hockey that is played in the country “...you see in Germany there are quite a lot of coaches who come from Canada and the game is a little bit primitive because the skill and talent that the players have doesn’t always reflect the level of play as most of the tactics are like chipping the puck out of the zone through the glass” (Coach 14). Yet, coaches acknowledged that tactical strategies and playing styles are not static entities but in a state of a constant flux and Coach 14 offered an insightful comment.

“...look at the Swiss League right now, the interesting thing is that I don't think you can win in the Swiss league if you don't have Scandinavian defensemen. I think there's only one North American defenseman that I would consider within top defensemen in the in the league right now and that's Ryan Gunderson of Fribourg. But if you watch the defensemen in Biel, they're Finnish and Swedish. Geneva is the same thing. Zurich is the same thing. Zug has Swedish defensemen. Davos has Swedish defenseman. There's a different rhythm, there's different skating, there's different understanding of which passes to make, when to slow the game down, when to go quicker and Scandinavian defensemen have a different concept of time and space and timing on the ice than North American players, especially in a in a bigger rink.”

Also, the coaches that worked in Sweden have mentioned that the structure of the league has been challenging them as professionals to constantly stay alert as the teams that miss play offs at the end of the season can face relegation to the lower league. Coach 11 reflected on his experience as “Yeah, the league has been open here [opportunity for relegation] and at the end of the season you can't think to yourself that okay we can relax now and in Finland at times it is the case because the league is closed. But it's something special here, it definitely brings out more passion out of everyone and you can't experience it by being in Finland”.

The experience of working abroad wasn't only broadening the tactical repertoire of coaches but also their training design methods. Coach 9 mentioned that “...I had assistant coaches who played many hundred games in NHL and we always had in-depth discussions on how to make our training better. Coach 11 summarised his evolution of training design practices as follows.

“...I had to really challenge myself when planning the training. In Finland we are used to a game-like training. But in Sweden the perception of good training is different. They like to battle, they like to play games that really challenge the creativity like with three nets and no precise directions that players and goalies have to constantly think but I had to come up with ways how to work in my way that would take into account the training culture of this country.”

4.2.3 *Evolving identity – extending cultural self-awareness*

The reflection of coaches has been largely situated around the practices and views of the world that are commonly accepted in Finland, yet were contrasting in other countries. One example was brought to light by Coach 10.

“I think in Finland we have a perception of a perfect world that we strive to achieve, but there is not such thing because culture differences are so drastic. Every day in the preparation phase I kept on repeating to myself ‘there is no perfect world’ because yes, we should try to get there, but we have to realize that we can’t and should take one step at the time.”

“...working with the foreign team I had to also realize that you can’t change everything. You have to analyze it [environment] carefully and be cautious of what to change and how because if you change too many things that the system changes and they don’t know what they [athletes] are doing.”

Numerous coaches have also acknowledged the intercultural aspects of the countries in which they have been working in that has challenged their coaching skillset to work effectively in those countries. Coach 6 acknowledged that “...when you are in Switzerland you should realize that the country has three parts with their own sub-cultures and with German-, French- and Italian-speaking population, where each has its own tendencies and thousands of years of evolution” and that “...when you enter the locker room you have to always be aware of the different personalities that you have that then manifested through different cultural lenses as you might have five to six import players”. Another example was brought to light by the coaches who worked in Russia “...think about it how many time zones there are in the country and how wide is the cultural landscape” (Coach 7) and “I noticed that quite a lot of Russian players are religious and have icons in their locker room places you don’t see it that often in other countries” (Coach 9).

The knowledge acquired when spending time abroad was captured in the following statement by Coach 10 “...when you talk to players about their lives, girlfriends, money, abortions, it’s all part of the story. No school in the world can teach you these things about those people and nations”. Also, experience of working in a foreign environment helped coaches to better understand their own culture as Coach 2 has reflected on his journey when working in numerous cultural settings and in the comic manner expressed his thoughts as follows.

“...I think Finnish players are somewhere in between Sweden and Russia. You know, if you say in Russia to players that you have to run 100 kilometres, they might look at you yet they still do it. But this is in Russia. If you do it in Sweden, no way [profanity]... there will be a player union meeting the next day. In Finland, if our players are not happy, they are not, but generally they want to do what the coach says and if you have a good result they are happy... after many seasons they can say [profanity], but when we win championship it’s the best that we can have...very simple you know like all sportsmen, if you win you are always happy.”

Furthermore, Coach 2 highlighted that many coaches that were abroad had become valuable assets for the development of Finnish ice hockey and he stated that “I think Finland has been the winner of this globalisation when coaches are going to Russia or Europe. We took the little things from everywhere. Like we had Jalonen in SKA, Summanen in Omsk, Martikainen and many others”. Coach 4 recognised that working in another culture regardless of how contrasting it might be ends up being a valuable learning experience for an individual to reflect on personal values and professional practices.

“I would never change the years that I spent abroad. It helped me challenge my own assumptions, yet also reinforce beliefs in my own aptitude. I was put to a test whether I can go against my values, and it has certainly a great lesson. In Finland we are used to support each other and our players as there are just so few of us. We should focus more on training because we are a coaching country and North America [United States and Canada] is a scouting country. We should be looking for competitive advantage in coaching the talent not just selecting the top and neglect the rest.”

4.3 Lessons – Navigating into and through globalisation of coaching

In the last part of the interview the coaches have been asked for an advice which they would give to their colleague if one would reach out to them. The two lower-order themes have been centred around the broader socio-cultural context, colleagues and personal agency. As a coach there is a great deal of things that are dependent on you, yet you are bounded by the relationships with players and staff around you, which are then embedded in a particular cultural setting.

4.3.1 *Knowing where you are going*

Majority of the coaches pointed out the turnover of workforce behind the bench in the team and the league as one of the factors that one should consider prior to signing the contract. Coach 10 expressed it as “...you should know the rate of getting fired in the league. Say you go to Switzerland and there the majority of import coaches are fired before the second year is over”. Thus, other important considerations that were put forward by coaches were the timing of the arrival at the respective club and the environment that you inherit as the successor. The importance of the timing has been highlighted through the experience of Coach 5.

“...quite a lot depends on when you are going to sign the contract with the club. Is it at middle of the season, like around January or February or then beginning of the season like August. If you arrive early, you still have an opportunity to build the team for the coming season. Otherwise, you just survive [until the end of that season], while at the same time starting to build the team for the next season.”

Coach 7 shared his experience of arriving at the new place as "...I knew that before me the club was in quite big turbulence with being at the bottom of the table and coaches fired. So the Finnish style of coaching was easy to adopt as it would promote discipline, calmness and empathetic leadership", whereas Coach 11 had another perspective to offer.

"...I was the first foreign coach and English language was never spoken in the locker room of this team and I had to be really mindful of how I approach the team. They have their own culture of managing the team and building the coaching process. For example, first two weeks I felt that I spoke alone in the locker room. It wasn't for my language skills or their understanding of English, it was just they [players] were not used to being asked questions or engage in discussion with the coach when they would receive different kind of feedback not just pointing out mistakes and blaming them."

The majority of coaches placed an emphasis on getting to know the leadership of the club. Coach 11 mentioned that "...you have to really get to know your general manager and then dig deeper to understand the meaning of the club in the area and how it is seen in that area". Particularly, when arriving at the country where ice hockey is competing with other popular sports in the country.

"...with not many people involved in the sport, you need take the best out of these people and you work together to find the best way to stay in the race and to develop to stay competitive. You have to use people skills, tactical skills, physiological skills to have even a small chance. Because other countries have more talent and resources. And if I think the best way to describe it is with in one word – cooperation."

(Coach 14)

Coach 7 urged coaches to have courage and ask questions as early as the initial interview in order to get insights that are imperative to learning about the new employer and their expectations.

"...you have to be brave enough to begin talking to club's management a little bit about these things. What do they expect from me? What are you waiting for? What are you doing here? A little about game like their vision of good hockey and of course what is important in their culture? Because you know, even in Finland the coaching cultures and expectations are different even between the local clubs and you can't coach the same way in Kärpät as in HIFK. Same country but different clubs."

(Coach 7)

Coach 11 has then further emphasized that when you fail to become acquainted with leadership it may become a major stressor along the way "...at times it is so frustrating when you have to explain your philosophy and values again to the leadership of the club like that players are important, they are the ones who are playing the game and making the results". Yet, it is not always the easiest thing to do in the culture of professional sports where "all the money and bonuses are dependent on winning" (Coach 13) and "...you can really lose your job just because you lost a derby game against the rival" (Coach 11).

Another aspect that was recognised as important is the life outside the rink. Coach 6 has mentioned that "for me moving wasn't hard, but for example for my assistant coach who is here for the first time the support of civil life is crucial like going to shop or doing the papers for work visa". Also, it was highlighted by coaches that marital status is something that one should consider when you are signing a work contract with a foreign team.

"Especially if you have family, its crucial to establish clarity about the financial matters. When I was in [country] the salary was paid in three different currencies and when you open your bank account you struggle to understand the sum of all the transactions in euros and in case you have mortgage to pay, it might be a challenge."
(Coach 1)

While at times coaches had to experience extremely challenging cases that coaches had to experience when working in Slovakia "...we haven't had salary paid for almost a year because there have been financial challenges from the management side" (Coach 4) or "...once the management decided to punish the team for bad performance and make a home game free entrance, where the costs of the tickets of the people that attended the game were covered from the salaries of players and coaches" (Coach 9).

The civil life could be different from country to country that may significantly affect how one chooses to engage in social activities "I recall in Sweden our goalie could not even go out in here, when people see him in the bar or restaurant they tell him 'hey you have to start stopping pucks' and its pressure that you can't avoid" (Coach 5). Similarly, the pressure was experienced in Finland "when the team is not doing well, it is even hard to go for groceries" (Coach 13). But in central Europe it could be different "yeah, I could go for a coffee or if I go out here [Switzerland] and nobody will know who I am, but in Finland if I decide go out then there will be negative publicity and that's why I prefer to stay at home. It's your personal choice after all" (Coach 11) or "...in case I would need some time off I can hop into car drive few hours and I can be in Italy or Austria or wherever, that I could just relax and spend time with my family" (Coach 10).

Lastly, the coaches urged their transnational colleagues to account for the impact of history on the development of cultural practices in the new country. Coach 9 mentioned that "...I wouldn't even start the preparation from hockey and encourage others to look at the bigger picture like 'why do they speak German in this part of Italy?'. Well, because of the interconnected history with Austrian empire and the aftermath of World Wars in 20th century. So think how it will affect your coaching". Yet, going far in history should not blur the recent trends that are emerging worldwide "...the equality is huge in Sweden, and whatever men's team was getting it was the same for the women's team".

4.3.2 Choosing your attitude

All coaches have pointed out the importance of being flexible and open minded when arriving at the new workplace "...you can prepare only so much, but you need to have room for improvisation, you can't go and work abroad with 'black and white' thinking..." (Coach 3) and Coach 13 took it to an extreme stated that "...just forget everything that you knew before, whatever you did in Finland it stays there. In other countries people don't think the same way as we do, so when you arrive you have to be open to do things differently". Also, many coaches found it useful to book the time to just observe when you arrive, and Coach 12 shared a best practice that worked in his experience "...wherever I arrived I booked at least a week or two to just watch from stands. Assistant coaches would run practices and I would talk to players individually and get to know them". But Coach 14 offered a different approach to this strategy "...you can't just change everything, you need to give the players a little bit of time to get to know you too before you attack them with all kinds of questions".

On the other hand, coaches pointed out that adopting and adjusting your ways of working should not compromise your personal values. Through the prism of his experience of working as a part of foreign national and club teams Coach 10 stated that "...respect the culture around you but you can't just copy other people, be yourself and be ready to push and pull a little bit to find the balance. Give them what they are used to but bring something new for them as well, because after all that's what you have been hired for". Coach 11 added that "when I was in Russia, I couldn't be like a Russian coach, but I had to respect how they have been coached before, yet still have confidence to introduce new things and showcase my coaching skills and knowledge".

Working on a professional level in a foreign country is placing large demands on the individual and many coaches identified self-confidence as a vital marker of success when coaching abroad. Coach 12 stated that "...belief in self is the first thing that I think every coach should remember and I think you get the confidence through experience, like my work in Finland have prepared me for the job in Russia, and it set me up further to work in other countries". Coach 8 also brought to light

that “Finnish coaches are well respected, and you should not shy away from being yourself but also be willing to explain to others why you make certain decision”. However, it should not be overwhelming to others.

“...I would be a bit careful with going in and saying this is how we do it in Finland and this is how we do it here because I don't think it shows the respect [to others and their culture] and it wears out on people too. I don't think it's very interesting for people to hear for that long what you've done in the past. You know they are only interested in knowing what happens today, tomorrow and in a few weeks. So, when I arrived here [club] I did not do the whole sentimental history lesson. But of course, you take bits and pieces, like things that worked before but you don't need to make a big deal out of it.” (Coach 14)

Being proactive in communication has been frequently mentioned by coaches as a mindset that will set the coach to be effective when it comes to management of personal relationships and culture competence. Coach 1 offered a pragmatic insights when he has been reflecting on his years working abroad.

“...taking it a step further, I think, you should have courage to talk to people, right from the handshake onwards. There's no point in avoiding the interaction with others like you are a practice and go back to your hotel to browse the internet. No, it's not the way as the face-to-face meetings are one of the most important things. Why? Because the people are constantly communicating with you even if you do not ask them directly. The body language and behaviour are very good messengers. What I mean is that you should create a social network around you instead of being alone. Some, of course, bring their family or partner with them. But the worst situation is that you go alone, and you stay there alone and you don't even try to do anything about it. Throughout the year, the experience of loneliness abroad may crash you and it will be no good.”

“When I was a player in Switzerland, my coach [name] said that ‘connect yourself with the Swiss players. Make sure you integrate yourself with the Swiss players. Don't just be an import there who just hangs out with the imports. You need to get to know the Germans and Swiss people and you need to learn the language’. So that's the advice that I kept when I started coaching.” (Coach 14)

Thinking of the social support network inside the ice rink Coach 10 brought to light the importance of a coaching team “...if you have an opportunity you are better off hiring an assistant coach who

you know. Few years ago I had to cut a certain amount of my own salary to make sure that someone who I can trust can be working with me. Being abroad and being alone it is very challenging and stressful". Being proactive within the network of your team is beneficial, yet going beyond the boundaries of professional level may positively contribute to the relationships with other stakeholders in the club as it has been highlighted by Coach 10.

"We are in constant communication with our colleagues who work with juniors [U20] and women's team. One example actually happened last week, when the head coach of the women's team sent a message in WhatsApp that his assistants could not come and whether we could assist him. Of course, my assistant coach and I have agreed to help. It was a great experience to show that no task is too small for us. The players were happy to see us there and they were cheering and supporting us."

Another common denominator was language in a foreign environment. Coaches that worked across numerous cultures have realised that learning the basics of the language that is spoken in the country is going to be an asset, which is going to have positive contribution to communication and relationships with your athletes. Coach 1 has pointed out that "...in the countries that I worked in the past, it was very appreciated that I learned couple of words in their language as it shows to others that you are willing to get to know their culture". Also, Coach 14 pointed out that he noticed his language skills helped him to bridge the culture gap with his athletes "I can talk to players in German and coach them in German so that it brings the barrier down a little bit from this guy is a complete foreigner versus he is a little bit closer". Similarly, you can make a good first impression when communicating with administrators of the club "...even in my job interview I tried to speak Swedish, even if I did not know the words, I used gestures or then of course used English. In Finland, it is our second language that we learn in school so it was an easy language to pick up" Coach 5.

English language was recognised as a necessity for an individual to succeed when working abroad. Coach 4 mentioned that "...you can't get anywhere without English, it's the primary language that is spoken in the locker room as leagues are allowing around five import players per team. Of course, I could speak Finnish or Swedish with our Scandinavian players in individual meetings and despite my basic skills in German, I prefer English as a language in which I address the whole team". Nevertheless, English isn't always able to act as a medium when athletes aren't able to speak it. It was vividly illustrated by Coach 8 "...in the heat of the game you need to get message to the players quickly about the penalty kill forecheck and if you can't speak their language you have to use your assistant and explain it first to him and then he would translate it to the player, but by the time it is done, the moment is gone". Lastly, despite the English being the

language spoken in the locker room it is often the second language for the majority of the people and coaches have addressed that at times it leaves room for ambiguity.

“...yeah well, from the very beginning communication is the key thing, especially when you are talking in the language [English] that is foreign for both parties and you have to constantly pay attention to it and provide more details. I had to constantly ask myself – what did they understand from what I said? How do I make sure that they understand me? Did I say it in the right way? Does he understand me the same way as I think he understood? All these things are challenges but enormous learning experiences.” (Coach 1)

5 Discussion

When it comes to the first research question, the results revealed that it was crucial for the coaches to be creative in the search of information to prepare for the new work environment. When the coaches had only remote access to knowledge regarding the host culture as outsiders they had to rely on the insights offered by their network of transnational colleagues and friends, video review of the games of the league and take a deep dive into books or websites. Without any other opportunities to become acquainted with the culture they were required to engage in “reasonable and rational use of stereotypes” (Stevens, 2018, p. 652) and then be willing to update their schema regarding the country with the newly acquired information upon arrival.

In the works of Battocchio & al., (2013, 108) and Schinke (2007, 284) it was brought to light that foreign ice hockey players who moved to North America have been reaching out to their country mates in order to learn about the new environment and specifically looking into existing hierarchy systems in the new team. Similarly, the coaches in this study turned to their network of colleagues with shared cultural background for advice in the search of valuable insights regarding the country of their future employment. For example, look for subtle meanings of behaviours of others that someone from your country may share that you cannot acquire from anywhere else as the colleague from the same culture is likely to interpret the event in a similar way as you would. Hereby, expanding the network is crucial for coaches to grow their social capital to reach out to colleagues or former players, who could eventually become an enabling force for knowledge acquisition and career advancement (Rynne, 2010, 310).

On the other hand, like it was mentioned by coaches who happen to experience the culture firsthand either by living abroad or working in assistant coach role that it is not possible to gain similar valuable knowledge when you are on the outside. It strongly resonates with notion of direct perception in ecological understanding of expertise acquisition. Gibson (1966, 91) differentiates between two types of knowledge – knowledge *about* (symbolic cognition, in-direct perception (i.e. ex situ) and abstract comprehension) and knowledge *in* (perceptual cognition, direct perception (i.e. in situ) and embodied-embedded knowledge). O’Sullivan & al., (2021) draw the distinction between the two by stating that “reading a recipe does not mean an individual can actually cook or that reading about a plant signifies gardening skill” (p.3). The earlier works of Tao & al. (2019) and Kerr & Moore, (2015) have found that only the experience of being abroad led coaches to begin challenging their existing cultural schema and begin negotiating cultural praxis of quality coaching through interaction with administrators and athletes in the host community. Furthermore, other scholars (Borges & al., 2022, 7) have identified the experience of living abroad is a valuable asset to the

development of culture competence and the subsequent skills necessary to better understand the culture around you (Rasmussen & Sieck, 2015, 6).

In response to the second research question, managing up (i.e. working with senior management) and down (i.e. staff and players) was a skill that transnational coaches had to master in order to work effectively in the foreign culture (Hall & al., 2021, 35; English, Nash & Martindale, 2021, 7). Thus, coaches were to be proactive when working with the athletes and club administrators to collaboratively negotiate the norms being. The collective approach to culturally informed leadership allows coaches to get to know the environment and practices that have been employed in the past to further inform their decisions. Yet, the results-oriented lens of the senior management often creates the conflict with some of the developmental objectives that could be set by coaches (English & al., 2021, 10). While this might be a characteristic of an occupational or corporate culture of professional sports setting, we should not dismiss the impact of national culture. For example, the Finnish coaches are likely to inherit the egalitarian values (i.e. social welfare; Viggiano, 2019, 257) that are common in Finland and other Scandinavian countries (Giulianotti & al., 2019, 541; Ahola-Launonen, 2016, 449). Yet, such values are continuously contested by the contrasting to neoliberal thinking (i.e. corporate capitalism, competitiveness; Harvey, 2007, 64). The continuous interaction between different world views and sports understanding are then further supporting the ongoing learning process between foreign sports practitioners and host environments as “acculturation process at its best is engaging of all members in the sport context as they learn cultural and performance practices from one another” (Schinke & al., 2015, p.26).

Conversely, some coaches preferred to remain in the realm of certainty of their own coaching methods and offered only limited amount of space for flexibility as the uncertainty on the edge of chaos may only feed the stress levels of coaches. In order to cope with the ambiguity their choice of coaching methods was falling onto the familiar practice to ensure a relative level of stability – like planning training sessions or engaging in individual coaching. Not surprisingly, that self-efficacy is one of the key traits for an individual to engage in successful cultural transition and act as a stress coping strategy (Demes & Geeraert, 2015, 317; Rasmussen & Siek, 2015, 5). Also, the coaches brought to light that belonging to the Finnish ice hockey traditions is an asset when it comes to working in a foreign culture as it implicitly supports the perception of competence that in some cases would ease the process of facilitating change. Yet, it is not always an easy task as the coaches are embedded in tightly knitted complex system of national (i.e. country), organisational (i.e. ice hockey club) and occupational (i.e. coaches and managers) cultures (Schein, 2015, 8).

Results also revealed that coaches were keen on creating a dialogue with players as it is becoming a commonly accepted practice of the Finnish sports coaches (Hämäläinen & Blomqvist, 2016, 335)

that is rooted in integration of athletes perspectives into performance preparation to promote an autonomy-supportive motivational climate (Mallett, 2005, 420). Finnish coaches have utilised different tools to integrate athletes into the coaching process. It was possible to see the examples that coaches wanted to connect with athletes on the deeper level despite some of the barrier in communication through individual meetings and active engagement of 'captain group' as a strategy to gain insights into the psychological and physical state of the team. Such practices characterise qualities of athlete leadership (Cotterill Loughhead, & Fransen, 2022, 5) that Finnish coaches brought with them to other cultures which has been shown to positively contribute to performance and wellbeing outcomes of the teams in elite (Cotterill 2017, 22; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016, 123), collegiate (Duguay & al., 2016, 162; 2022, 270) and junior settings (van Kruijsbergen, Pijpers, & Hutter, 2020, 167).

Furthermore, coaches' professional knowledge development was also positively influenced by the exposure to different cultural challenges through continued preparation for tactical innovations that other transnational practitioners have been adopting over the years. Yet, not surprisingly that the overwhelming majority of the foreign coaches are coming from North American background and bringing the traditions of results-driven values that contradict with the Scandinavian development-oriented philosophy (Ogden & Edwards, 2016, 318). The competition within player populations that exists in countries with an overwhelming number of players like Canada (513,613) or United States (551,006) that significantly higher than in Sweden (61,547) or Finland (66,687; International Ice Hockey Federation, 2022, 76-77) is then placing the emphasis on scouting of the talent instead of the development. However, due to the differences in cultural tendencies in the styles of play the game on the European rink (greater ice surface) may not be the best environment to accommodate North American traditions of playing the game in aggressive manner with plenty of body contact as a result of fast-paced defensive and offensive tactics that are built around pressure (Allain, 2008, 469; Alsarve, 2022, 1963; Lemoyne & Bepomoshchnov, 2022, 79)

Coaches engaged in careful observation upon arrival in order to navigate the rocky landscape of the new professional ice hockey in the foreign country. The results were in line with previous findings of Hall & al., (2021, 36) and Ryba & al., (2016, 8) where the insights gathering upon arrival to the host culture was a strategy that coaches employed in order to inform their decision-making. Yet, while the new knowledge should help the coaches to adjust their communication and competition preparation strategies, the participants recognised the importance of acting with integrity to own values and be analytical when making decisions. Such qualities were characteristics of authentic leaders (Walumbwa & al., 2008, 92) who do not compromise own values in their actions, which had a positive impact on the performance and wellbeing outcomes (Bandura & Kavussanu, 2018, 969; McDowell & al., 2018, 11; Weiss & al., 2018, 12).

Concerning to the last question, the results underscore the importance of learning through on the job experience (Rynne & Mallett, 2012, 521; 2014, 17). Coaches have been actively engaged in continuous reflection-in-action (i.e. gaining knowledge while experiencing something) and reflections-on-action (i.e. gaining knowledge from experience; Knowels & Gilbourne, 2010, 508) to examine socially accepted norms of host environment and coaches' personal values in their development over the years (Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993, 75). The reflection was an integral part of the acculturation process and development across the three areas of knowledge: interpersonal (i.e. relationships with others), intrapersonal (i.e. own ways of being) and professional (i.e. coaching practice and sports knowledge; Côté & Gilbert's 2009, 309). Reflection on own cultural practices helps coaches to reinforce the culture competence and further advance their own learning as a coach (Lara-Bercial & Mallett, 2016, 231).

Lastly, language was explicitly brought to light by the coaches in this study amongst key factors when working abroad. Similar findings were reported by Tao & al., (2019, 9) for the coaches to successfully communicate with the sports stakeholders in the foreign environment in order to manage relationships and effectively engage in teaching of the sport. Likewise, the importance of language acquisition was reported by the transnational ice hockey players arriving to North America (Battochio & al., 2013, 106). Nevertheless, both cultural settings have English as their first language. Yet, in Europe the bouquet of language is rather diverse. Thus, placing the emphasis on strong verbal and nonverbal communication skills that could be complimented by the necessary phrases from the foreign language that are vital for the particular task at hand (Ramussen & Siek, 2015, 10). The langue is also shown to be an asset when it comes to the acceptance of the host society and integration of an individual into the ways of being of a new culture (Elbe & al., 2016, 9).

One of the limitations of this work was its exclusive reliance on qualitative data, where mixed-methods approaches may further enhance the rigor (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, 114). For example, quantitative instruments (Borges & al., 2022, 3) may add additional lens regarding the coaches' experience to further enrich our understanding of the acculturation of foreign coaches. Moreover, the voices of athletes that were playing under these coaches would help reveal further details regarding the practices that coaches employed when working with multi-national teams. Such data could be collected either through primary (i.e. interviews, surveys) or secondary (i.e. media publications; McGannon & al., 2012, 28) data sources. Another limitation of this study is the sample consisting of exclusively of male professional coaches with mono-cultural background. Therefore, the results may not generalise to other populations such as coaches who work with junior athletes or female transnational coaches that work with female athletes. Future research should take into consideration the perspectives of coaches who come from different cultural and professional backgrounds.

6 Conclusion

This project shed light on the experiences of Finnish high-performance coaches that worked abroad. The findings showcase the nonlinear nature of acculturation that occur through continuously evolving sports, national and occupational cultures. Such dynamic environment required coaches to adjust their coaching styles, identifying most effective communication strategies and engage in ongoing interpretation of athlete and administrator behaviours. While challenges that coaches experienced when they were exposed to different cultural norms were sources of stress, they often presented opportunities to extend coaches' professional and cultural competencies.

Furthermore, findings illuminated that when coaches were encountering a new cultural setting, they actively draw comparisons with their own culture and learn to appreciate the similarities and differences between the two. The experience of spending time abroad was a valuable learning opportunity for the coaches that constantly required them to reflect on their experiences and find balance between introducing the new elements and respecting the already existing norms of being as "people create, alter and destroy environments. The changes they produce in environmental conditions, in turn, affect their behaviour and the nature of future life" (Bandura, 1986, p.23). Thus, a large emphasis is placed on the personal agency of coaches when choosing actions and attitudes that they are going to exercise when they are settling in a new environment. Coach developers should consider these aspects when working with transnational or immigrant practitioners to further remind them about the importance of being flexible and be willing to adjust their practices according to the demands of the specific sports context that is embedded in a particular national and regional culture.

Essentially, the findings elucidate the importance of communication skills (verbal and non-verbal) for coaches to be able to harness the reciprocity between understanding others and being understood by others. These skills come to the forefront when an individual doesn't have the benefit of familiarity with the cultural setting. Thus, this case study encourages the interaction between administrators of sports organisations and their foreign recruits to openly negotiate expectations and address any potential variance in perspectives regarding daily operations that may emerge as a result of idiosyncratic socio-cultural backgrounds. As it was highlighted earlier (Ryba & al., 2018, 12; Tao & al., 2019, 13) when practitioners arrive from another country the acculturation is a shared experience for the coach and the environment. Thus, the findings of this research may further contribute to the work of sports governing bodies to inform policy development to proactively support coaches with settlement in the new country by offering guidance to navigate bureaucracy of the host's legal system, sports culture of the nation and athletes' expectations (Schinke & al., 2015, 26).

7 References

- Abbe, A., & Halpin, S. M. 2009. The cultural imperative for professional military education and leader development. *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters*, 39(4), pp.20-31.
- Abbe, A., Gulick, L. M., & Herman, J. L. 2007. *Cross-cultural competence in Army leaders: A conceptual and empirical foundation*. Arlington, VA: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
- Ahola-Launonen, J., 2016. Social responsibility and healthcare in Finland: The luck egalitarian challenge to Scandinavian welfare ideals. *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, 25(3), pp.448-465.
- Allain, K.A., 2008. "Real fast and tough": The construction of Canadian hockey masculinity. *Sociology of sport journal*, 25(4), pp.462-481.
- Alsarve, D., 2022. Historicizing machoism in Swedish ice hockey. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 38(16), pp.1688-1709.
- Alizadeh, S. and Chavan, M., 2016. Cultural competence dimensions and outcomes: a systematic review of the literature. *Health & social care in the community*, 24(6), pp. 117-130.
- Bandura, A. 1986. *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Bandura, C. T., & Kavussanu, M. 2018. Authentic leadership in sport: Its relationship with athletes' enjoyment and commitment and the mediating role of autonomy and trust. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 13(6), pp. 968–977.
- Barker, D., Barker-Ruchti, N., Wals, A. and Tinning, R., 2014. High performance sport and sustainability: a contradiction of terms?. *Reflective Practice*, 15(1), pp.1-11.
- Başkarada, S. 2014. Qualitative case study guidelines. *The Qualitative Report*, 19, pp. 1–25.
- Battochio, R.C., Schinke, R.J., McGannon, K.R., Tenenbaum, G., Yukelson, D. and Crowder, T., 2013. Understanding immigrated professional athletes' support networks during post-relocation adaptation through media data. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), pp.101-116.
- Berry, J.W., 1991. Understanding and managing multiculturalism: Some possible implications of research in Canada. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, 3(1), pp.17-49.

- Berry, J.W., 1997. Lead article: Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), pp.5-68.
- Berry, J.W., 2005. Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), pp.697-712.
- Berry, J. W., Poortinga, Y. H., Breugelmans, S. M., Chasiotis, A., & Sam, D. L. 2011. *Cross-cultural psychology: Research and applications* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. 2016. Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26, pp.1802–1811.
- Borges, M., Rosado, A., Lobinger, B., Freitas, F. and de Oliveira, R.F., 2022. Cultural intelligence in sport: An examination of football coaches' cross-cultural training needs. *German Journal of Exercise and Sport Research*, pp.1-9.
- Borges, M., Rosado, A., de Oliveira, R. and Freitas, F., 2015. Coaches' migration: A qualitative analysis of recruitment, motivations and experiences. *Leisure Studies*, 34(5), pp.588-602.
- Bowes, I. and Jones, R.L., 2006. Working at the edge of chaos: Understanding coaching as a complex, interpersonal system. *The Sport Psychologist*, 20(2), pp.235-245.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2019. Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 11(4), pp.589-597.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp.77-101.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. 1999. Environments in developmental perspective: Theoretical and operational models. In S.L. Friedman & T.D. Wachs (Eds.), *Measuring environment across the life span: Emerging methods and concepts* (pp. 3–28). American Psychological Association.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. 2005. *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. 2006. The bioecological model of human development. In R.M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology. Theoretical models of human development* (Vol. 1, 6th ed., pp. 783–828). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Brottman, M.R., Char, D.M., Hattori, R.A., Heeb, R. and Taff, S.D., 2020. Toward cultural competency in health care: a scoping review of the diversity and inclusion education literature. *Academic Medicine*, 95(5), pp.803-813.

Brown, C. and Strachan, L., 2022. Exploring Structure and Culture in the Lived Acculturation Experiences of Newcomer Varsity Athletes in Manitoba. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 6(2), pp.133-147.

Buszard, T., Reid, M. and Farrow, D. 2022. Scaling Children's Sport to Augment Motor Skill Acquisition. In M. Toms & R. Jeanes (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Coaching Children in Sport* (pp. 452-464). London: Routledge.

Campinha-Bacote, J., 2002. The process of cultural competence in the delivery of healthcare services: A model of care. *Journal of transcultural nursing*, 13(3), pp.181-184.

Cassidy, T., 2010. Holism in sports coaching: Beyond humanistic psychology. *International journal of sports science & coaching*, 5(4), pp.439-501.

Cassidy, T.G., Jones, R.L. and Potrac, P.A., 2015. *Understanding sports coaching: The pedagogical, social and cultural foundations of coaching practice*. London: Routledge.

Chirkov, V., 2009. Critical psychology of acculturation: What do we study and how do we study it, when we investigate acculturation?. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(2), pp.94-105.

Chiu, C.Y., Lonner, W.J., Matsumoto, D. and Ward, C., 2013. Cross-cultural competence: Theory, research, and application. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 44(6), pp.843-848.

Chow, J.Y., 2013. Nonlinear learning underpinning pedagogy: evidence, challenges, and implications. *Quest*, 65(4), pp.469-484.

Chow, J.Y., Davids, K., Button, C. and Renshaw, I., 2022. *Nonlinear pedagogy in skill acquisition: An introduction*. (2nd Edition) London: Routledge.

Clarke, V. and Braun, V., 2013. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Successful Qualitative Research. Thousand Oakes, California: Sage Publication.

Clarke, D.D. and Crossland, J., 1985. *Action systems: An introduction to the analysis of complex behaviour*. London: Methuen Publishing.

Côté, J., & Gilbert, W. 2009. An integrative definition of coaching effectiveness and expertise. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 4(3), pp. 307-323.

Côté, J., Young, B., North, J. and Duffy, P. 2007. Towards a Definition of Excellence in Sport Coaching. *International Journal of Coaching Science*, 1(1), pp. 3-17.

Cotterill, S.T. 2017. Developing leadership skills in sport: A case study of elite cricketers. *Case Studies in Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1, pp. 16–25.

Cotterill, S.T., & Fransen, K. 2016. Athlete leadership in sport teams: Current understanding and future directions. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 9, pp. 116–133

Cotterill, S.T., Loughead, T.M. and Fransen, K., 2022. Athlete leadership development within teams: Current understanding and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.

Correia, V., Araújo, D., Duarte, R., Travassos, B., Passos, P. and Davids, K., 2012. Changes in practice task constraints shape decision-making behaviours of team games players. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 15(3), pp.244-249.

Creswell, J. W. 2014. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Crossan, W., 2020. Expanding game, expanding opportunity: the effect of athlete migration on Czech ice hockey from 1993 to 2018. *Sport in Society*, 23(3), pp.377-398

Crozier, A.J., Loughead, T.M., & Munroe-Chandler, K.J. 2013. Examining the benefits of athlete leaders in sport. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 36, pp.346–364.

Cushion, C.J. and Jones, R.L., 2014. A Bourdieusian analysis of cultural reproduction: Socialisation and the 'hidden curriculum' in professional football. *Sport, education and society*, 19(3), pp.276-298.

Davids, K., Button, C. and Bennett, S. 2008. *Dynamics of skill acquisition: A constraints-led approach*. Champagne, IL: Human Kinetics.

Davids, K., Araújo, D., Vilar, L., Renshaw, I. and Pinder, R., 2013. An ecological dynamics approach to skill acquisition: Implications for development of talent in sport. *Talent Development and Excellence*, 5(1), pp.21-34.

Deardorff, D.K., 2006. Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of studies in international education*, 10(3), pp.241-266.

- Demes, K. A., & Geeraert, N. 2015. The highs and lows of a cultural transition: A longitudinal analysis of sojourner stress and adaptation across 50 countries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109(2), pp.316–337.
- Duguay, A.M., Loughead, T.M., Hoffmann, M.D. and Caron, J.G., 2022. Facilitating the development of shared athlete leadership: Insights from intercollegiate coaches. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 34(2), pp.251-272.
- Duguay, A.M., Loughead, T.M., & Munroe-Chandler, K.J. 2016. The development, implementation, and evaluation of an athlete leadership development program with female varsity athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 30, pp.154–166
- Dwyer, S.C. and Buckle, J.L., 2009. The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 8(1), pp.54-63.
- Elbe, A.M., Hatzigeorgiadis, A., Morela, E., Ries, F., Kouli, O. and Sanchez, X., 2018. Acculturation through sport: Different contexts different meanings. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 16(2), pp.178-190.
- Elliott, R. and Maguire, J., 2008. “Getting Caught in the Net” Examining the Recruitment of Canadian Players in British Professional Ice Hockey. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 32(2), pp.158-176.
- Engle, R. L., & Crowne, K. A. 2014. The impact of international experience on cultural intelligence: an application of contact theory in a structured short-term programme. *Human Resource Development International*, 17(1), pp. 30–46.
- English, C., Nash, C. and Martindale, R., 2021. Exploring the coach–administrator relationship within the SA cricket development environment. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 21(4), pp.466-483.
- Gallegos, J.S., Tindall, C. and Gallegos, S.A., 2008. The need for advancement in the conceptualization of cultural competence. *Advances in Social Work*, 9(1), pp.51-62.
- Gibson, E.J., 2000. Perceptual learning in development: Some basic concepts. *Ecological Psychology*, 12(4), pp.295-302.
- Gibson, J.J. 1979. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Giulianotti, R., Itkonen, H., Nevala, A. and Salmikangas, A.K., 2019. Sport and civil society in the Nordic region. *Sport in society*, 22(4), pp.540-554.

Glazier, P.S., 2017. Towards a grand unified theory of sports performance. *Human movement science*, 56, pp.139-156.

Gough, B. and Madill, A., 2012. Subjectivity in psychological science: From problem to prospect. *Psychological Methods*, 17(3), p.374.

Hall, A.J., English, C., Jones, L.W., Westbury, T. and Martindale, R., 2021. The Acculturation Experiences of Elite Rugby Union Coaches. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 9(1), pp.30-39.

Hall, E. T. (1989). *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor.

Hämäläinen, K. and Blomqvist, M., 2016. A new era in sport organizations and coach development in Finland. *International sport coaching journal*, 3(3), pp.332-343.

Harvey, D., 2007. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press

Henriksen, K. and Stambulova, N., 2017. Creating optimal environments for talent development: A holistic ecological approach. In J. Baker, S. Cobley, J. Schorer, & N. Wattie (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of talent identification and development in sport* (pp. 270-284). New York: Routledge.

Henriksen, K., Stambulova, N. and Roessler, K.K., 2010a. Holistic approach to athletic talent development environments: A successful sailing milieu. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11(3), pp.212-222.

Henriksen, K., Stambulova, N. and Roessler, K.K., 2010b. Successful talent development in track and field: considering the role of environment. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 20, pp.122-132.

Henriksen, K., Stambulova, N. and Roessler, K.K., 2011. Riding the wave of an expert: A successful talent development environment in kayaking. *The Sport Psychologist*, 25(3), pp.341-362.

Hofstede, G.J., 2009. Research on cultures: how to use it in training?. *European Journal of Cross-Cultural Competence and Management*, 1(1), pp.14-21.

Horn, T. S. 2008. Coaching effectiveness in the sport domain. In T. S. Horn (Ed.), *Advances in Sport Psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 239-267) Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Hyde, B. 2020. Constructivist and Constructionist Epistemologies in a Globalised World: Clarifying the Constructs. In J. Zajda (Ed.) *Globalisation, Ideology and Education Reforms* (pp. 125-138). Dordrecht, NL: Springer.

International Ice Hockey Federation. 2022. IIHF Season Summary. URL: <https://blob.iihf.com/iihf-media/iihfmvc/media/downloads/annual%20report/seasonsummary2022.pdf>. Accessed 10 April 2023.

Jansen, J. and Engbersen, G., 2017. Have the Olympic Games become more migratory? A comparative historical perspective. *Comparative migration studies*, 5 (1), pp.1-15.

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. B. 2004. *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Johnson, R.B., Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Turner, L.A., 2007. Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(2), pp.112-133.

Jowett, S. 2017. Coaching effectiveness: The coach-athlete relationship at its heart. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 16, 154–158

Jussim, L., Crawford, J.T. and Rubinstein, R.S., 2015. Stereotype (in) accuracy in perceptions of groups and individuals. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24(6), pp.490-497.

Kaag, J. 2015. Pragmatism and the philosophy of sport. In M. McNamee & W. J. Morgan (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Sport*. (pp. 207-218). London: Routledge.

Keengwe, J., 2010. Fostering cross cultural competence in preservice teachers through multicultural education experiences. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38, pp.197-204.

Kerr, R. and Moore, K., 2015. Hard work or child's play? Migrant coaches' reflections on coaching gymnastics in New Zealand. *World Leisure Journal*, 57(3), pp.185-195.

Kerr, R. and Obel, C., 2018. The migration of gymnastics coaches from the Former Soviet Union to New Zealand: An actor–network theory perspective. *Leisure Studies*, 37(5), pp.615-627.

Knowles, Z. and Gilbourne, D., 2010. Aspiration, inspiration and illustration: Initiating debate on reflective practice writing. *The sport psychologist*, 24(4), pp.504-520.

Lara-Bercial, S. and Mallett, C.J., 2016. The practices and developmental pathways of professional and Olympic serial winning coaches. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 3(3), pp.221-239.

Lemoyne J. & Bespomoshchnov V. A. 2022. From zone entries to expected goals: Using modern hockey analytics to describe the 1972 Summit Series. In T. McKee (Ed.) *Reaching the Summit: Reimagining the Summit Series in the Canadian Cultural Memory* (pp. 75-98). Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press.

Lyle, J. 2021. Coaching effectiveness: A personal discourse on bringing clarity to an overused concept. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 8(2), pp. 270-274.

Maguire, J. 1996. Blade runners: Canadian migrants, ice hockey, and the global sports process. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 20(3), pp.335–360.

Mallett, C.J., 2005. Self-determination theory: A case study of evidence-based coaching. *The sport psychologist*, 19(4), pp.417-429.

Matthews, E.J., Clune, L., Luhanga, F. and Loewen, R., 2021. The impact of cultural immersion in international learning experiences on cultural competence of nursing students: A critical integrative review. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 37(5), pp.875-884.

McAdams, D. P., & Pals, J. L. 2006. A new Big Five: Fundamental principles for an integrative science of personality. *American Psychologist*, 61(3), pp. 204–217.

McDowell, J., Huang, Y., & Caza, A. 2018. Does identity matter? An investigation of the effects of authentic leadership on student-athletes' psychological capital and engagement. *Journal of Sport Management*, 32(3), pp.227-242.

McGannon, K.R., Hoffmann, M.D., Metz, J.L. and Schinke, R.J., 2012. A media analysis of a sport celebrity: Understanding an informal “team cancer” role as a socio-cultural construction. *Psychology of sport and exercise*, 13(1), pp.26-35.

McGannon, K.R., Smith, B., Kendellen, K. and Gonsalves, C.A., 2021. Qualitative research in six sport and exercise psychology journals between 2010 and 2017: An updated and expanded review of trends and interpretations. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 19(3), pp.359-379.

Merk, M. March 2022. Canada, Finland lead World Rankings. URL: https://www.iihf.com/en/news/32627/canada_finland_lead_world_rankings. Accessed: 20 April 2023.

Morse, J. M. 2015. Critical Analysis of Strategies for Determining Rigor in Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(9), pp. 1212–1222.

- Nash, C., & Mallett, C.J. 2019. Effective coaching in football. In E. Konter, J. Beckmann, & T.M. Loughhead (Eds.), *Football psychology: From theory to practice* (pp. 101–116). London: Routledge.
- Nauright, J. and Pope, S., 2017. The twenty-first-century SportsWorld: global markets and global impact. *Sport in Society*, 20(12), pp.1817-1820.
- Newell, K. M. 1986. Constraints on the Development of Coordination. In M. G. Wade, & H. T. A. Whiting (Eds.), *Motor Development in Children: Aspects of Coordination and Control* (pp. 341-360). The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht.
- Norcliffe, G. and Decosse, S., 2022. Global player production networks: Gaining value in the National Hockey League. *Geoforum*, 136, pp.101-111.
- North, J. 2017. *Sport coaching research and practice: Ontology, interdisciplinarity and critical realism*. London: Routledge.
- Norris, N. 1997. Error, bias and validity in qualitative research. *Educational Action Research*, 5(1), pp. 172–176.
- Ogden, J. and Edwards, J.R., 2016. Are Canadian stakeholders resting on their laurels? A comparative study of the athlete pathway through the Swedish and Canadian male ice hockey systems. *Journal of Sport Management*, 30(3), pp.312-328.
- Orlowski, J., Wicker, P., & Breuer, C. 2016. Labor migration among elite sport coaches: An exploratory study. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 53(3), pp. 335–349.
- O'Sullivan, M., Woods, C.T., Vaughan, J. and Davids, K., 2021. Towards a contemporary player learning in development framework for sports practitioners. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 16(5), pp.1214-1222.
- O'Sullivan, M., Bespomoshchnov, V.A. and Mallett, C.J., 2021. Davel Datsyuk: Learning, development, and becoming the “Magic Man”. *Case Studies in Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 5(1), pp.173-183.
- Packer, M. J., & Goicoechea, J. 2000. Sociocultural and constructivist theories of learning: Ontology, not just epistemology. *Educational Psychologist*, 35(4), 227–241.
- Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S.M., Green, C.A., Wisdom, J.P., Duan, N. and Hoagwood, K., 2015. Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42, pp.533-544.

- Pinder, R.A., Renshaw, I. and Davids, K., 2009. Information–movement coupling in developing cricketers under changing ecological practice constraints. *Human movement science*, 28(4), pp.468-479.
- Pinder, R.A., Renshaw, I., Davids, K. and Kerhervé, H., 2011. Principles for the use of ball projection machines in elite and developmental sport programmes. *Sports medicine*, 41, pp.793-800.
- Ramos, A., Coutinho, P., Davids, K. and Mesquita, I., 2021. Developing Players' Tactical Knowledge Using Combined Constraints-Led and Step-Game Approaches—A Longitudinal Action-Research Study. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 92(4), pp.584-598.
- Rasmussen, L.J. and Sieck, W.R., 2015. Culture-general competence: Evidence from a cognitive field study of professionals who work in many cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48, pp.75-90.
- Rickles, D., Hawe, P. and Shiell, A., 2007. A simple guide to chaos and complexity. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 61(11), pp.933-937.
- Risse, T. 2007. Social constructivism meets globalisation. In A. McGrew & D. Held (Eds.), *Globalisation theory: Approaches and controversies* (pp. 126–147). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ronkainen, N. J. & Blodgett, A. T. 2020. Culture. In D. Hackfort & R. Schinke (Eds.), *The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Sport and Exercise Psychology. Volume 1: Theoretical and Methodological Concepts* (pp. 83-96). London: Routledge
- Rothwell, M., Stone, J., & Davids, K. 2019. Exploring forms of life in player development pathways: The case of British Rugby league. *Journal of Motor Learning and Development*, 7(2), pp. 242-260.
- Rothwell, M., Davids, K. and Stone, J., 2018. Harnessing socio-cultural constraints on athlete development to create a form of life. *Journal of Expertise*, 1(1), pp. 1-11.
- Røsten, S., Sæther, S.A., Aspvik, N.P. and Bjørndal, C.T., 2023. Embedded, embodied, enculturated, and enabling processes: The identification and evaluation of sporting talent by ice hockey coaches in Norwegian youth national teams. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, (aop), pp.1-11.
- Ryba, T.V., Haapanen, S., Mosek, S. and Ng, K., 2012. Towards a conceptual understanding of acute cultural adaptation: A preliminary examination of ACA in female swimming. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 4(1), pp.80-97.
- Ryba, T.V., Stambulova, N.B., and Ronkainen, N.J. 2016. The work of cultural transition: An emerging model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, pp. 427.

- Ryba, T.V., Schinke, R.J., Stambulova, N.B. and Elbe, A.M., 2018. ISSP position stand: Transnationalism, mobility, and acculturation in and through sport. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 16(5), pp.520-534.
- Rylander, P. 2016. Coaches' bases of power and coaching effectiveness in team sports. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 3(2), pp. 128–144.
- Rynne, S., 2014. 'Fast track'and 'traditional path'coaches: Affordances, agency and social capital. *Sport, Education and Society*, 19(3), pp.299-313.
- Rynne, S.B. and Mallett, C.J., 2012. Understanding the work and learning of high performance coaches. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 17(5), pp.507-523.
- Rynne, S.B. and Mallett, C.J., 2014. Coaches' learning and sustainability in high performance sport. *Reflective Practice*, 15(1), pp.12-26.
- Şahin, F. and Gürbüz, S., 2014. Cultural intelligence as a predictor of individuals' adaptive performance: A study in a multicultural environment. *International Area Studies Review*, 17(4), pp.394-413
- Santos, F., Corte-Real, N., Regueiras, L., Dias, C., Martinek, T.S., & Fonseca, A. 2019. Coaching effectiveness within competitive youth football: Youth football coaches' and athletes' perceptions and practices. *Sports Coaching Review*, 8(2), pp. 172–193.
- Schein, E. H. 1990. Organizational culture. *American Psychologist*, 45(2), pp.109–119.
- Schein, E. H. 2010. *Organisational Culture and Leadership* (4th Edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.
- Schein, E.H. 2015. Organizational psychology then and now: Some observations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 2(1), pp.1–19.
- Schinke, R.J., Gauthier, A., Dubuc, N.G., and Crowder, T. 2007. Understanding adaptation in professional hockey through an archival source. *The Sport Psychologist*, 21 (3), pp. 277–287.
- Schinke, R.J. and McGannon, K.R., 2014. The acculturation experiences of (and with) immigrant athletes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 12(1), pp.64-75.
- Schinke, R.J., McGannon, K.R., Battochio, R.C. and Wells, G.D., 2013. Acculturation in elite sport: A thematic analysis of immigrant athletes and coaches. *Journal of sports sciences*, 31(15), pp.1676-1686.

- Schinke, R.J., McGannon, K.R., Yukelson, D., Cummings, J. and Parro, W., 2015. Helping with the acculturation of immigrant elite coaches in Canadian sport contexts. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 6(1), pp.17-27.
- Schwartz, S.H., 2012. An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values. *Online readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), pp. 3-20.
- Scotland, J. 2012. Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), pp. 9–16.
- Smith, G. 2016. Migratory career contingencies of elite level soccer coaching talent. *Soccer & Society*, 17(4), pp.407–432.
- Smith, B., & McGannon, K. R. 2018. Developing rigor in qualitative research: problems and opportunities within sport and exercise psychology. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), pp. 101–121.
- Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. 2016. Interviews: Qualitative interviewing in the sport and exercise sciences. In B. Smith & A. C. Sparkes (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise* (pp. 103–123). London: Routledge.
- Sparkes, A.C., & Smith, B. (2014). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: from process to product* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Stake, R. E. 1978. The case study method in social inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, pp. 5-8.
- Stake, R. E. 1995. *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stevens, S. T., Jussim, L., Stevens, L. A., & Anglin, S. M. 2018. Cultural Competence: A form of stereotype rationality. In C. L. Frisby & W. T. O'Donohue (Eds.), *Cultural Competence in Applied Psychology* (pp. 651-664). Springer.
- Szathmári, A. and Kocsis, T., 2022. Who cares about gladiators? An elite-sport-based concept of Sustainable Sport. *Sport in Society*, 25(8), pp.1469-1488.
- Tamminen, K. A., & Poucher, Z. A. 2020. Research philosophies. In D. Hackfort & R. J. Schinke (Eds.). *The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. Volume 1: Theoretical and Methodological Concepts (pp. 535-549). London: Routledge.

- Tao, Y.C., Rynne, S.B. and Mallett, C.J., 2019. Blending and becoming: Migrant Chinese high-performance coaches' learning journey in Australia. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 24(6), pp. 582-597.
- Tavory, I., & Timmermans, S. 2014. *Abductive analysis: Theorizing qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Thorogood, M. July 2017. If you want to win, hire a Finn. URL: <https://www.motorsportmagazine.com/articles/rally/if-you-want-win-hire-finn/>. Accessed: 21 April 2023.
- Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. 2004. Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(4), pp. 388–396.
- Tracy, S. J. 2010. Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), pp. 837–851.
- Tudge, J.R. and Winterhoff, P.A., 1993. Vygotsky, Piaget, and Bandura: Perspectives on the relations between the social world and cognitive development. *Human development*, 36(2), pp.61-81.
- Uehara, L., Button, C., Falcous, M. and Davids, K., 2016. Contextualised skill acquisition research: A new framework to study the development of sport expertise. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 21(2), pp.153-168.
- Uehara, L., Button, C., Araújo, D., Renshaw, I. and Davids, K., 2018. The role of informal, unstructured practice in developing football expertise: the case of Brazilian Pelada. *Journal of Expertise*, 1(3), pp.162-180.
- Uehara, L., Button, C., Saunders, J., Araújo, D., Falcous, M. and Davids, K., 2021. Malandragem and Ginga: Socio-cultural constraints on the development of expertise and skills in Brazilian football. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 16(3), pp.622-635.
- van Kruijsbergen, M., Pijpers, J.R. and Hutter, R.I., 2020. Determining and improving shared leadership in an elite junior volleyball team. *The Sport Psychologist*, 34(2), pp.162-169.
- Vaughan, J., Mallett, C.J., Davids, K., Potrac, P. and López-Felip, M.A., 2019. Developing creativity to enhance human potential in sport: A wicked transdisciplinary challenge. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, pp.1-16.
- Vaughan, J., Mallett, C.J., Potrac, P., López-Felip, M.A. and Davids, K., 2021. Football, culture, skill development and sport coaching: extending ecological approaches in athlete development using the skilled intentionality framework. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, pp.1-13.

- Vaughan, J., Mallett, C.J., Potrac, P., Woods, C., O'Sullivan, M. and Davids, K., 2022. Social and cultural constraints on football player development in Stockholm: influencing skill, learning, and wellbeing. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 4, pp. 1-18.
- Viggiano, T., 2019. Global responsibility in Finland: Egalitarian foundations and neoliberal creep. *Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education*, 4, pp.245-262.
- Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S., & Peterson, S. J. (2008). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based Measure. *Journal of Management*, 34(1), 89-126.
- Warren, W.H., 2006. The dynamics of perception and action. *Psychological review*, 113(2), pp.358–389
- Weiss, M., Razinskas, S., Backmann, J., & Hoegl, M. 2018. Authentic leadership and leaders' mental well-being: An experience sampling study. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(2), pp.309-321
- Wicker, P., Orlowski, J. and Breuer, C., 2018. Coach migration in German high performance sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 18(1), pp.93-111.
- Woodburn, A.J., Bepomoshchnov, V.A. and Saarinen, M. 2023. Cultural competence and Intercultural effectiveness in coaching and coach development. In C. Nash (Ed.) *Developing Sport Coaches* (pp. 215-235). London: Routledge.
- Woods, C.T., McKeown, I., Shuttleworth, R.J., Davids, K. and Robertson, S., 2019. Training programme designs in professional team sport: An ecological dynamics exemplar. *Human movement science*, 66, pp.318-326.
- Woods, C.T., McKeown, I., O'Sullivan, M., Robertson, S. and Davids, K., 2020. Theory to practice: performance preparation models in contemporary high-level sport guided by an ecological dynamics framework. *Sports medicine-open*, 6, pp.1-11.
- Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case study research: Design and methods* (4 ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Zahno, S. and Hossner, E.J., 2022. Creative actions in team sports are rooted in motor skills rather than in a divergent thinking ability. *German Journal of Exercise and Sport Research*, pp.1-11.
- Zajda, J. 2018. Effective constructivist pedagogy for quality learning in schools. *Educational Practice & Theory*, 40(1), pp.67–80