IMMIGRANT YOUTH LEADERSHIP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SPORT PARTICIPATION IN A NEW COUNTRY

Adem Kaya[1i],
Paula E. Faulkner[2],
Thomas Martinek[3],
Jerono P. Rotich[4],
Ceola Ross Baber[5]
[1]Sport Management,
Bowie State University,
USA
[2]North Carolina A&T State University,
USA
[3]Kinesiology at UNC Greensboro,
USA
[4]Department of Kinesiology and Recreation,
North Carolina Central University,
USA
[5]Leadership Studies & Adult Education,
North Carolina A&T State University,
USA

Abstract:
The purpose of the study was to explore how immigrant youth develop leadership identity through sport participation in a new country. A purposive sample of 15 immigrant and refugee youth participating in a local sport club in the southeastern United States was selected for the study. All of the participants were male; ranged in age from 13 to 18 years old. The country of origin for one was Mexico, while the remaining 14 came from eight different countries in sub-Saharan Africa. This instrumental case study involved in-depth interviews twice with each participant and a group interview with all of them. The researchers used several strategies to establish credibility, including adherence to IRB guidelines for human subjects' research. Inductive analyses yielded two major categories with several themes for each; (a) sport participation, and (b) leadership skills. Findings related to these themes led to several implications for schools, community-based organizations, and sport clubs that provide programs for immigrant and refugee youth.

[i] Correspondence: email akaya@bowiestate.edu

1

Keywords: immigrant youth, sport participation, leadership development, youth leadership, youth sports

1. Introduction

Youth development has been a top priority for the development of sustainable societies and has been in the spotlight for the last several decades (Hellison, Martinek, & Walsh, 2008). Youth development is referred to as both a philosophy and an approach to policies and programs that serve youth. In its early infancy, youth development researchers' and practitioners' tendencies had been to view adolescence as a time of rage and stress. It was associated with a deficit-reduction approach, whereby researchers examined ways to prevent and reduce problems adolescents may encounter (Martinek & Hellison, 2009a).

However, over the past 20 years, a new vision of youth development has emerged and become labeled as positive youth development (PYD) (Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., . . . Ma, L. 2005; Holt, 2016). Common understandings of PYD view youth as having the potential for positive developmental change while regarding them as a resource to be developed rather than a problem to be solved. Youth development scholars (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006; Hellison, 2011; Newman, Kim, Tucker, & Alvarez, 2018) consider PYD an asset-based conception of development rather than a deficit-reduction approach.

A committee of youth policy experts at the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002) undertook a two-year review of theoretical research and promising programs to determine which features of positive developmental settings were most effective. They found that programs were more successful if they provided youth with an environment that was physically and psychologically safe, had an appropriate program structure, provided supportive relationships, created a feeling of belonging, had positive social norms, supported - efficacy of mattering, provided opportunities for skill-building, and fostered program integration of family school, and community (NRCIM, 2002). Martinek and Hellison (2009a) claimed that the deficit model failed to support the youth development field's principles. Instead, an asset-based model builds on youth's strengths; it is inclusive and realistic and gives youth a sense of ownership and empowerment. Funding organizations and researchers have developed strategies and theories to promote the implementation of PYD.

One of the promising PYD models is 5Cs model which emphasizes the strengths of adolescents and, as a consequence, enables youth to be seen as resources to be developed. The 5Cs model was originally developed by Lerner et al. (2005) based on five constructs:

1) Competence: Positive view of one's actions in domain-specific areas including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational. Social competence pertains to interpersonal skills (e.g., conflict resolution). Cognitive competence pertains to cognitive abilities (e.g., decision making).

2) Confidence: An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy; one's global self-regard, as opposed to domain-specific beliefs.

3) Connection: Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bidirectional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.

4) Character: Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.

5) Caring: A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.

The model has been used in different contexts by many researchers. For example, Jones, Dunn, Holt, Sullivan, & Bloom (2011) modified and used the 5Cs to find out if these characteristics can be gained through sport. They classified the set of 5C indicators as (a) measures of positive identity and self-worth (to represent confidence), (b) academic and social competence (to represent competence), (c) personal values and social conscience (to represent character), (d) sympathy for disadvantaged and for those in pain (to represent caring/compassion), and (e) connection to family and community (to represent connection)

1.1 Sport-based Youth Development Programming

One of the prime processes for delivering the principles of PYD is through sport-based youth development (SBYD) programming (Camire & Kendellen, 2016; Holt, 2016). SBYD participation is widely accepted in the international arena and research related to socialization and youth development. Research shows that sport is correlated with numerous positive developmental signs, such as improved self-esteem, emotional regulation, problem-solving, goal attainment, healthy development, social skills, and academic performance (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Martinek & Lee, 2012).

One of the most effective ways of preparing youth for the future is to enhance their leadership capabilities (Martinek & Hellison, 2009b). The importance of developing leadership skills transcends time and is well recognized as critical for the survival of any community or nation (Gould, Chung, Smith, and White, 2006). Researchers have found that acquiring leadership skills has become the most significant way for youth to navigate life's pathways (Intrator & Siegel, 2014).

Northouse (2010) defines leadership as "*a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal*" (p. 3). In the social change model of leadership development (SCM), Astin and Astin (1996) categorize leadership values around individual dimensions for growth (consciousness of self, congruence with one's values, and develop commitments) as well as around group dimensions for growth (learning to be collaborative, handle controversy with civility, and develop a common purpose).

Petitpas, Cornelius, and Van Raalte (2008) conducted a study focused on programs that used sports to help youth develop leadership skills. The programs targeted personal development goals; emphasized positive social relationships and a caring, supportive environment; and demonstrated data-based evidence of effectiveness. While they identified several challenges--such as consistency management, the recruitment, training,

and retention of the caring adult mentors, and supervision--they asserted that youth development programs are only as effective as the adults who deliver them.

1.2 Theoretical Orientation: Leadership Identity Development (LID) Model

The fields of leadership and leadership development have been enriched, especially related to how youth learn leadership skills (Day & Harrison, 2007). Also, several leadership scholars have begun to focus on leadership identity development, especially in terms of how young adults perceive leadership identity. For example, Franko (2015) describes leadership identity as one's physical and mental presence, attitude, and readiness to take on new challenges and make an impact; it drives one's decisions toward big-picture leadership goals and reflects one's values, mindset, actions, and responses. Through a study conducted on students' descriptions of their leadership journey, they were found to reflect on ways to conceptualize approaches to leadership (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen, 2005). Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, and Osteen (2006) developed a leadership identity development (LID) model that explained in six stages how leadership identity develops over time.

In LID's Stage One – Awareness, individuals become aware that there are leaders "out there" who are external to the self. Stage Two – Exploration/Engagement is where individuals engage with others and participate in a variety of groups. Stage Three – Leader Identified, group participation is more intentional where individuals begin to view leadership as the actions of a positional leader, emphasizing the hierarchical nature of relationships in groups; one sees oneself as a leader only when in a specific leadership role. Stage Four – Leadership Differentiated, individuals understand that leadership is also non-positional and is a shared group process; they recognize the difference between being a leader and holding a leadership role—leadership is relational, not positional. Stage Five – Generativity involves individuals who commit to developing leadership in others and move toward influential leadership. Stage Six – Integration/Synthesis involves "leaders" acknowledging their leadership capacity in diverse contexts and claiming a leader identity without having to hold a positional role; here, the person has developed leadership efficacy and "earned" a leadership identity.

Komives et al. (2006) argued that the key transition occurs at the end of stage three because young adults begin to value working independently with others rather than having a dominant leader with followers. Based on these pertinent stages for development, the LID model was adopted as a theoretical framework to guide this study for exploring immigrant youth's leadership identity development process in sport because immigrant youth who participate in sports can experience and develop many leadership characteristics and skills; as they may transition through the personal and social changes outlined by Komives et al.

1.3 Immigrant Youth Participation

Researchers have examined how leadership identity development occurs for individuals based on gender (Gonda, 2007), race (Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2008), and sexual

orientation (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). Each of these studies provided ways that development is impacted by participants' unique representations. For example, in 2007, Gonda's study supported the LID stages, especially for exploration and engagement and leadership differentiation with females. In Dugan et. al.'s study, it was revealed that race was the most salient identity factor for students of color.

The variables gender, religion, and cultural ideologies all intersect the assimilation process for immigrant youth (Kennett, 2005; Stodolska & Alexandra, 2004). According to Coakley (2017), sports become the sites for questioning, opposing, and challenging the dominant forms of their new setting. Sports have the potential to inform youth about mainstream society and enable them to engage in their settings successfully.

For policymakers, institutions, and organizations to be effective in this realm, they must increase their understanding of how immigrant youth develop into leaders. There is a recognized gap in the literature addressing immigrant youth's experiences and their development of a leadership identity through sport participation. The study aimed to explore how immigrant youth develop leadership identity through sport participation in a new country. The research questions developed to guide this study include:

Research Question 1: What are the immigrant and refugee youth' perceptions toward sport participation?

Research Question 2: What are the immigrant and refugee youth' perceptions toward leadership dispositions?

Research Question 3: What is the connection of immigrant and refugee youth' perceptions between participation in sports and leadership identity development?

2. Material and Methods

To conduct this study, an instrumental case study was employed to conduct a purposive, convenience sampling to understand immigrant youth's leadership identity development through sport participation in a new country. Once approval from the Institutional Review Board was received, data collection occurred. The researchers established credibility by ensuring trust with participants' information and adherence to ethical standards, such as maintaining the receipt of signed parental consent forms and the confidentiality of data and anonymity of participants and the research sites. The researchers used pseudonyms for participants' identification to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

2.1 Case Study Design
A qualitative instrumental case study is an appropriate design when the purpose of a study is to examine a particular case to illuminate specific patterns of behavior (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). The instrumental case study design produces data collected from several individuals familiar with the phenomenon under study, then develops an in-depth understanding of the specific case under study by interpreting these statements into themes (Creswell; Stake).

2.2 Participants

A purposive, convenience sampling strategy was used to select immigrant youth participating in a local youth sport club in the southeastern United States. Immigrant youth who lived in an underserved community and enrolled in a local public school system was recommended to participate free of charge by the sport clubhouse. Participants were selected based on the following: (a) had played sports for at least three years; (b) identified as first or second-generation immigrants; (c) demonstrated proficiency in speaking basic English; and (d) were enrolled in grades 8-12. As a result, 18 players (15 males; 3 females) from 9 different countries were initially identified. Even though several attempts were made to select female participants, they decided not to participate due to a lack of parental or guardian support. As a result, only males (n=15) participated in the study. Table 1 provides participants' demographic data.

Table 1: Demographic Profile for Participants

Participants	Country of Origin	Years in the United States	Age	Type(s) of Sport Participation
Abdaul	Niger	2	18	Soccer, Basketball
Abdoula	Ivory Coast	6	16	Soccer, Baseball
Coudra	Burundi	1	16	Soccer
David	Congo	2	16	Soccer, Volleyball
Fidele	Congo	2	15	Soccer
Gus	Liberia	2	16	Soccer and Track
Ines	Central Africa Republic	5	17	Soccer, Volleyball, Track
Jonathan	Congo	2	18	Soccer, Volleyball
Louis	Burundi	7	13	Soccer, Football, Basketball
Makryous	Sudan	7	16	Soccer, Baseball, Football
Mohamed	Sudan	8	16	Soccer and Baseball
Nema	Tanzania	7	15	Soccer, Wrestling, Football
Raul	Mexico	8	14	Soccer, Basketball, Baseball
Sadock	Congo	6	15	Soccer, Wrestling, Baseball, Football
Victor	Liberia	7	14	Soccer

2.3 Instrument

The interview script was developed and administered to guide the discussion and promote consistency and honesty among the youth. Participants were asked to share their experiences in participating in sports. During the first individual interview, participant motivating factors about participation in sports occurred. Examples of questions asked during the first interview included: "Explain how and why you decided to participate in sports?" and "Share what you like most about participating in sports?" During the second individual interview, participants were asked to discuss their leadership development perspectives by participating in sports. Examples of the questions included, "Explain how you believe people become leaders" and "Do you consider yourself a leader on your sport team? Detail why or why not?" and "Do you

think your participation in sports provides opportunities for you to become a leader? Detail why or why not?"

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from June 20, 2016, to August 10, 2016, by administering two audio-taped individual in-depth interviews with each participant at a preferred location of their choice and one audio-taped group interview with all participants at the sport clubhouse. Individual interviews occurred for approximately 35-40 minutes, while the group interview occurred for approximately 35 minutes. Thirteen individual interviews occurred in local public libraries while the remaining two interviews were held at a restaurant, allowing participants to feel comfortable in a natural setting. After completing the interviews, data was transcribed into a document. To ensure reliability and validity, a group of individuals, including one public school language art teacher and two doctorate students, not associated with the study, reviewed the protocol and provided feedback also to ensure clarity and relevance.

After the individual interviews were analyzed, the group interview was developed to clarify participants' individual responses if they wanted to add or change their self-reports. In addition, the group interview questionnaire was developed to gain participants' overall perspective on leadership development through sport participation. During the group interview, participants were asked to discuss motivational factors to participate and leadership development through sports participation. Examples of the group interview questions included; "Discuss your reasons for participating in sports," "What skills do you think leaders should possess?", "How would you describe the character traits of a leader" and "How do you think leaders are developed?"

After administering the individual interviews, the researchers transcribed the tapes and completed preliminary analyses using columns in Microsoft Excel. Data was printed on a large bulletin board so that researchers could review all transcripts. After researchers established an intercoder agreement, they colour-coded and sorted the data. And then, the transcriptions were transferred to a web-based qualitative analysis tool "Saturate app" (http://www.saturateapp.com/). To describe participant responses (i.e., perspectives), Saldana's (2015) framework was used to conduct an inductive, emergent coding framework for qualitative data reduction in analyzing the information. The following axial coding was used to determine connections between sport participation and leadership identity development. Table 2 displays two categories and emergent themes.

Table 2: Categories with Related Themes that Emerged During Data Analysis

Categories	Themes
Sport Participation	Social interaction
	Physical activity and health benefits
	Potential for scholarship
	Professional career and make money
	Competition and recognition
Leadership Skills	Caring
	Respect and trust
	Humility
	Responsibility and Accountability
	Communication
	Serve as a role model.

3. Results

Three research questions guided this study to explore how immigrant youth pursued leadership identity development through sport participation. Based on the collected data from the participants' individual and group interviews, various themes were generated from data analysis of two categories; sport participation and leadership. The following is the detailed reporting with themes for each category.

3.1. Category 1: Sport Participation

The interview analyses revealed several themes under sport participation: (a) social interaction, (b) physical activity/health benefits, (c) and potential for scholarship, (d) professional career and making money, and (e) competition and recognition.

Regarding *social interaction*, all participants reported sport participation led to the development of friendships among their team members and helped improve their social and language skills. They revealed their participation in sports was the only event available that they enjoyed doing.

For example, Mohamed explained: "*I participate in sport because I just love playing… I just cannot stay home because I always want to go out, play sports, and do something*".

A majority of participants viewed sports as a way to improve their English-speaking skills. For example, David and Abdaul, two brothers who immigrated to the U.S., in 2015 acknowledged that due to the intense structural school curriculum and limited free time for socialization among peers at their school, it was difficult to become involved with peers due to their limited English-speaking skills. David expressed, "*I feel comfortable talking with my teammates on the soccer team because they are like me. They all come from different countries. But at school, I have only a few friends, and I don't talk much. When I talk to my friend, it helps me with my English*".

It was evident that sports not only offered the participants opportunities to experience fun, enjoyment, and challenges; it also provided *physical/health benefits*. Participants reported sport participation increased their self-esteem and decreased stress

and boredom. Makryous reported, "*Most of time, I have nothing to do. Sport is so fun time for me, something to do and enjoy, besides it helps me stay healthy*". Similarly, Sadock added, "*Because I want to stay in shape and to be faster, I work out at school and here [sports club]. So, when I play sports, I feel good and energized*". Next, Ines said, "*When you play sports, you feel happy and healthy.*"

While sport participation provided participants the opportunity to be socially and physically active, they also enjoyed the *competition and recognition* that was unavailable in their home country. Mohamed said, "*I just love competition*". Gus explained, there is the joy of participation as "*it is so fun. I want to show people that I got a talent, and I am fast. I can do many tricks, such as backflip*".

Participants valued sports as a way of receiving athletic *scholarships*, which were influential for them in pursuing educational opportunities free of charge. Several participants reported being aware of athletic scholarships offered to student-athletes and hoped that they would become great at playing sports to earn a free education. For instance, Gus said, "*I would like to get an athletic scholarship when I go to college.*" Mohamed highlighted, "*I know you have to pay to go to college. But if you get a scholarship, you don't have to pay. Why not get a free education while you enjoy playing sports*".

Participants expressed their hope that participation in sports would help them pursue a *professional career and make money*. Becoming a professional soccer player was the main desire shared by all. They believed that playing for a professional team would provide financial security. Nema said, "*I want to pay back to my dad for what he did for us. I want to buy him a house from the sport money I am going to be making*". Likewise, Fidele stated, "*When you become rich, you may become a leader of some people or group*". Mohamed chimed in with, "*I think that everyone should try to participate in at least one sport. You get to meet new people, go to different places, eventually if you are good enough, you be a professional and make good money*".

3.2. Category 2: Leadership

Leadership findings revealed six themes: (a) caring, (b) respect and trust, (c) humility, (d) responsibility and accountability, (e) communication, and (f) serve as a role model. It is essential to mention that nine of the 15 participants reported holding leadership positions on either current teams and in the past, such as being team captains.

Caring emerged during the interviews with participants. Athletes and coaches can demonstrate a caring behavior by taking a genuine and ongoing interest in each other as a person. Participants discussed that players and coaches who demonstrated caring behaviors often generated more positive attitudes towards their coaches and teammates and generated greater commitment to the sport. For example, Ines addressed how he encourages his teammates to do their best while being caring: "*When they make a mistake, I try to tell them, "hi, do not worry, it is ok; you will fix it next time." Everybody makes mistakes, but we just have to encourage and tell them, "you can do better; you fix it next time.""*

The participants discussed the importance of demonstrating caring by building friendships, how they care about each other and try to get together and socialize as much as they can. The relationships that the participants developed during sports lead to many different positive outcomes and bonding by communicating via phone or social media. For example, Sodack said, "*I get to go to Nema's house, or he comes to my house all the time because we became good friends, and we care for each other.*"

Demonstrating *respect and trust* was another valued leadership disposition shared by participants. It was recognized that one being successful and credible as a leader depended on earning respect and trust. For instance, Ines emphasized that. "*Leaders become leaders by showing others how to do things right. They become leaders by respecting and helping each other*". Fidele said, "*You just have to keep working harder and behave yourself good.*" Sadock explained. *"Maintaining a respectful manner day after day, week after week, season after season separates the leaders from the other players.*" Louis reflected on his difficulty maintaining such respect and trust when he said, "*Earning and then maintaining respect is a difficult job that requires self-control, sincerity, confidence, and determination.*"

Humility is a theme that extends beyond personal successes; for instance, participants considered humility as a virtue for their inner well-being. It was discussed that humble athletes are courteous in defeat and modest in victory. For instance, Mohamed pointed out that being a leader was not an individual role in which a leader orders others around. Instead, they are viewed as leaders who do not allow their egos to become involved.

When participants shared playing sports daily, they reported constant pressure from coaches, teammates, or opponents to show humility. For instance, they addressed the necessity of humility and defined it as a low view of one's importance. Participants believed that humility was an asset for self-improvement. Nema explained, "*I want to be a leader on my sport team, but I cannot. I mean, like I am a younger person than most on my team. I need to be mature enough to be a leader*".

Responsibility and accountability were revealed as strong themes of participants' leadership dispositions. Responsibility was viewed as accepting that one has control over his/her actions and is accountable for the consequences. As participants felt that both principles, namely responsibility, were often practiced in a sport, they openly shared stories about how being responsible and accountable can improve leadership skills. For instance, Louis pointed out, "*A leader is a person who gets the team up, a person who people can follow a person, one who you can count on.*" Similarly, Gus added, "*I become a leader by taking full responsibility of myself and my actions. I always do my best. Because I play sport on a team, where all of my teammates depend on me, and they trust me*".

One of the main leadership skills reported by participants as being important during sport participation was *communication*, which involves good speaking and listening skills. For many immigrants, communication was reported often being intimidating, but also acknowledged the importance of possessing the skill, especially during sports events. David said, "*They [leaders] communicate and listen to people well. Coudra explained, "You lead your team, first of all, by communication. I think that*

communication is the most important skill one can possess". Makryous described the value of effective speaking and listening as "*Sport gives one the opportunity to be a leader because you talk to your teammates and tell them what to do. As a leader, you help motivate them to improve*".

Another theme discussed was the importance of being a *role model* during leadership skill development. Role models are often respected not only for their athletic abilities but also for their integrity, humility, generosity, respect, passion, and morality. Athletes who have a strong sense of integrity with strong values are considered great role models for younger individuals. Participants shared that role models often take responsibility for their own actions and demonstrate good character, both verbally and non-verbally. Mohamed described role models as individuals who may help individuals achieve a goal, such as winning a game. Gus said he considers himself a role model as the captain of his sport team, he shared "*whenever we play sports, if my coach asks me for something, I always raise my hand ready to help him. I always encourage my friends and tell them, "we can do it!"*".

4. Discussion

4.1. Participant's Perceptions Related to Sport Participation
Based on the study findings, it was revealed that participants shared similar experiences in sport participation, such as how to face challenges such as limited resources and lack of facilities. These same challenges were reported in similar studies (Aizlewood et al., 2006; Olliff, 2008; Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004). After participants arrived and settled in their new country, their coaches, family members, teammates, and peers were revealed as key facilitators for making the process a smooth transition. Participants also reported that these same individuals were motivating factors for their participation in sports. The coach-player relationship revealed that coaches play a critical role in immigrant youths' sport participation and leadership development (Nesbitt & Grant, 2015). While coaches guide and teach immigrant youth how to apply technical and tactical aspects of the sport, they also serve as mentors and role models. Role models were reported as being important by participants for their leadership skill development.

Sport participation was evident in this study as participants reported their coaches facilitated social interaction, built bridges of friendship among team members, and encouraged them to meet new people from different cultures. The coaches were reported as also inspiring participants to move into mainstream society so that they could achieve common goals. This finding is supported by Erickson, Wilson, Horton, Young, and Côté (2007), who reported that they are provided with a safer environment for youth where they teach teamwork and character development through sports and coaches.

Next, participants reported a desire to play sports because they recognized it as a fun activity. In addition, participants were highly motivated to attend college to make a better life for themselves and their families. Obtaining a scholarship through sport participation was reported as vital because participants considered achieving a higher education as a path out of poverty. Findings from this study are consistent with previous

research that their social and personal development is influenced by the level of their participation in sports at the school, club or neighborhood (Aizlewood et al., 2006; Coventry, 2002; Kennett, 2005).

4.2. Participant's Perceptions about Leadership Dispositions

Most participants understood leadership as being a collective process rather than an individual set of skills or characteristics. A collective process requires strong dispositions and skills such as caring, respect, trust, accountability and responsibility, good communication, and role modeling. As a result, participants' understanding of leadership aligned with Northouse's (2010) definition, which is the process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. In addition, Participants viewed leadership through sport participation as a way to become change agents, especially for inspiring the new generations in their families and communities. These findings are consistent with Franko's (2015) research in which he described leadership as one's readiness for taking on new challenges and making an impact in surroundings.

Participants were given opportunities to practice different leadership dispositions that included caring, respect and trust, humility, responsibility and accountability, communication, and role modeling. This occurred through building significant friendships among team members while practicing or playing games. It was revealed that strong relationships were established in a caring manner during sport participation. For instance, participants indicated that they frequently communicated on and off the field through texting and social media sites because they cared about one another's success. These findings are consistent with other studies that purported that youth can develop leadership dispositions and can learn social and personal responsibility through sport participation (Jones et al., 2011; Martinek & Hellison, 2009a, 2009b).

This study revealed that participants applied their leadership skills through sport participation. They were involved in dynamic, fast-paced, athletic activities during practices and games, which required them to use multiple leadership skills, including tactical and technical skills, by taking direct action in sports. Coaches and parents expected that participants be more organized and responsible and serve as change agents. According to Hellison (2011), youth gain valuable lessons through sport participation such as respecting others, controlling one's negative emotions, resolving conflict quickly, and achieving self and social responsibility goals.

4.3 Connection between Sport Participation and Stages in the Development of a Leadership Identity

It was evident that participants developed a leadership identity through sport participation. Leadership identity is a dynamic process related to the youth development process and the level of involvement in group activities (Komives et al., 2005; Komives et al., 2006). Collectively, all participants demonstrated how their development aligned with

Stage 1 (awareness), Stage 2 (*exploration/engagement*), Stage 3 (*leader identified*), and Stage 4 (*leadership differentiated)*, which make up the first four stages of the leadership identity development (LID) model in sports used to guide this study.

Stage 1, *awareness*, involves one being aware there are leaders around one, external to self (Komives et al., 2006). Participants demonstrated an awareness of the effectiveness of leaders, such as their coaches and family members. Even as followers who sought friendships and affirmation, they also viewed themselves as leaders with particular dispositions and skills such as caring, showing humility, and serving as role models.

In Stage 2 of the LID model, *exploration/engagement* included youth often possessing an interest in making a difference in the collective group setting, by taking on more responsibility and understanding the need for leadership skill development (Komives et al., 2006). It was clear that participants in this study had experienced Stage 2 through their reported participation in sports, which was a collective group setting. They identified confidence, responsibility, and accountability as leadership dispositions which they possessed. They discussed how friendships among team members helped develop leadership dispositions of caring, respect, and trust. According to research conducted by Hall (2015) and Komives et al. (2006), youth transition through Stages 1 and 2 mainly during elementary and middle school since they view examples of leadership around them in their teachers and coaches. They gained an interest in the collective process to take responsibility and receive encouragement from peers for their participation, which supports all participants in this study who were in the first two LID stages of awareness and engagement.

The collective process that begins in Stage 2 becomes more critical when youth move on to Stage 3, *leader identified*. In Stage 3, leadership was revealed as a person in a formal position such as a team captain. In this stage, leadership is viewed as a positional role held by self or others, recognizing the hierarchical nature of relationships in the group (Komives et al., 2006). At this stage, participants are more willing to become part of groups they choose to join and become more specific in selecting a group by narrowing down their personal interests. They discussed how leaders and followers on teams engage and demonstrate leadership disposition and skills. Their discussion of leader dispositions and skills showed that they were developing a complex and multi-faceted leadership concept.

Research shows that some youth involved in teamwork develop better leadership skills, which aligns with Stage 4, *leadership differentiated*, which refers to non-positional leadership and leadership views as a shared group process (Komives et al., 2005; Komives et al., 2006). In addition, according to Hall (2015) other studies were found as key transitions in the LID model from the shift from Stage 3 to Stage 4, because individuals making this transition understand that (a) people in the group are interdependent; and (b) leadership is a group process, where a leader needs to shift his or her focus to ensure that the entire membership is actively involved in the group's activities. While in Stage 4, individuals recognize the difference between being a leader and holding a leadership position.

Based on the findings, characteristics of each stage, and level of the sport participation in the group, were revealed as most evident in the current study that most participants were aligned with the Stage 3 *leader identified*, while a few aligned with Stage 4 (*leadership differentiated*). For example, while most participants held team captain positions on their current or past teams, they viewed being a leader as one who goes beyond the team captain's rank. It was critically important for them to be willing to help others and the coach without being asked. Those who held a positional role on the team shared the responsibility and encouraged others to participate, while those who did not have a positional role always sought a way to contribute to the group process. The leadership dispositions and skills they gained through sport participation aligned with Stage 4's notion that leadership is a process, not a position involving collective work where everyone in the group depends on everyone else.

During Stages 3 and 4, participants developed useful dispositions and skills that affected their team's success and shaped their viewpoints on life and their future goals. For the participants in this study, the development of a leadership identity was transformed from an individualistic process (awareness) to a collective process (shared leadership) through sport participation. So, involvement in a collective sport setting had a profound social and personal impact on the immigrant youth, moving them through the stages of developing a leadership identity.

While the Komives et al. LID model originally provided a rich conceptualization of leadership identity development for college students, it fell short in explaining the experiences people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds may have during the process. Because their 2005 study had only one participant, out of 13, with an immigrant background, Komives et al. (2005) failed to provide any specific information regarding how people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds might experience leadership identity development. However, some of the findings that emerged from this study support their 2006 model. Participants in this study identified factors that contributed to their development of a leadership identity that, in many ways, echoed Komives et al. (2005) illustration of the developmental model their participants experienced.

5. Recommendations

While this study was carefully designed and adhered to qualitative research principles for establishing credibility, there are limitations. Due to the study including 15 immigrant and refugee youth at a local youth sport program in southeastern North Carolina in the USA, the findings may not be transferable beyond the youth sport organization and club setting. Secondly, as a purposive, convenience sampling was employed, all participants were male immigrant refugee youth which infers that the findings cannot be transferable to female immigrant youth. In addition, since the female players were unable to participate in the study due to cultural issues, it is important that further research focus on the youth leadership identity development of female immigrant and refugee youth through sport participation.

Although it was not within the boundaries of this study to examine the effect of demographic variables (e.g., country of origin, age) on leadership identity development and sport participation, this microanalysis is very worthy of further research; a mixed-methods study, in particular, would be helpful. Participants in this study emphasized that coaches were major facilitators of their leadership identity development process; further research is needed to better understand the impact of coaches on the positive development of immigrant and refugee youth. We agree with the conclusion of the past researchers (e.g., Lin et al., 2015; Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004; Suárez-Orozco, Motti-Stefanidi, Marks, and Katsiaficas (2018), that more studies specific to immigrant and refugee youth are needed--beyond the United States, Canada, and Europe since most studies have been conducted in these counties.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how immigrant youth develop leadership identity through sport participation in a new country. Based on the findings, from conducting Inductive analyses, several themes emerged under two categories, which include: (a) immigrant youth sports participation and (b) leadership identity development through sport. Based on the findings, this study suggests that sport participation can influence immigrant youth to (a) develop a range of leadership dispositions and skills, (b) increase confidence in social interactions, (c) set goals for the future, (d) serve as role models for teammates and family members, and (e) serve as change agents in their family and communities to encourage leadership identity development. Overall, this study's findings are similar to previous studies related to youth development in sport and the implications of the LID model (Coakley, 2017; Franco, 2015; Komives et al. 2006; Martinek, & Hellison, 2009a). These findings affirm what other studies have indicated: sports participation has a positive impact on youth development and the development of a leadership identity for immigrant youth.

Participants in this study were selected from one sport setting, soccer, and they were all males. So, additional research using quantitative research is needed regarding how youth in different sport settings and different gender, religious, racial/ethnic, and cultural backgrounds can pursue a leadership identity through sport participation. A quantitative study with large samples would provide a more generalizable perspective on the process of leadership identity development and understanding of how immigrant youth overcome challenges and develop leadership skills through sport participation.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors
Adem Kaya (PhD) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sport Management at Bowie State University. His research agenda includes youth and sport participation,

immigrant and refugee acculturation, and traditional sports and games in society. akaya@bowiestate.edu, orcid.org/0000-0003-3485-0540

Paula E. Faulkner (PhD) is a professor in the Department of Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agriscience Education at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Her research focus addresses the needs of underrepresented groups in agricultural-related fields. pefaulkn@ncat.edu, orcid.org/0000-0001-6729-1330

Thomas Martinek (EdD) is a professor in Kinesiology at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. His research focuses on community youth sport development and youth leadership. tjmartin@uncg.edu

Jerono P. Rotich (PhD) is a professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Recreation Administration at North Carolina Central University. She has published extensively in the areas of immigrant and refugee acculturation, global and international education, and cultural competence as a viable solution for decreasing health disparities and obesity. jrotich@nccu.edu. orcid.org/0000-0002-6651-6582

Ceola Ross Baber (PhD) is a professor in the Department of Leadership Studies and Adult Education at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Her research focus includes equity and justice in K-20 institutions, social justice leadership, and home-school-university-community collaboration. crbaber@ncat.edu, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6241-9259

References

Aizlewood, A., Bevelander, P., & Pendakur, R. (2006). Recreational participation among ethnic minorities and immigrants in Canada and the Netherlands. Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 4(3), 1-32.

Astin, H. S., & Astin, A. W. (1996). A social change model of leadership development: Guidebook: Version III: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Hamilton, S. F., & Sesma, A. (2006). Positive youth development: Theory, research, and applications: Wiley Online Library.

Camire, M., & Kendellen, K. (2016). Coaching for positive youth development in high school sport. In N. Holt (Ed.) Positive Youth Development through Sport (pp. 126-136). New York: Routledge.

Coakley, J. (2017). Sport in society: Issues and controversies. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Coventry, L. (2002). Wealth of all nations: Identification of strategies to assist refugee young people in transition to independence. Hobart, Australia: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies for the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Day, D. V., & Harrison, M. M. (2007). A multilevel, identity-based approach to leadership development. Human Resource Management Review, 17(4), 360-373.

Dugan, J., Komives, S., & Segar, T. (2008). College student capacity for socially responsible leadership: Understanding norms and influences of race, gender, and sexual orientation. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 45(4), 927-952.

Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). The impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (NJ1).

Erickson, K., Wilson, B., Horton, S., Young, B., & Côté, J. (2007). Involving immigrants in youth sport coaching: Part 1. A literature review and quantitative profile. International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching, 2(4), 435-448.

Franko, A. (2015). Building a leadership identity starts with a personal brand. Retrieved from https://www.td.org/Publications/Blogs/Human-Capital-Blog/2015/09/Building-a-Leadership-Identity-Starts-with-a-Personal-Brand

Gonda, W. V. (2007). The development of leadership Identity: A study of young, professional women: Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Mercyhurst College. Pennsylvania. The United States of America.

Gould, D., Chung, Y., Smith, P., & White, J. (2006). Future directions in coaching life skills: Understanding high school coaches' views and needs. Athletic Insight, 8(3), 28-38

Hall, S. L. (2015). Linking the leadership identity development model to collegiate recreation and athletics. New Directions for Student Leadership, 2015(147), 33-41.

Hellison, D. (2011). Teaching personal and social responsibility through physical activity. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Hellison, D., Martinek, T., & Walsh, D. (2008). Sport and responsible leadership among youth In N. L. Holt (Ed.), Positive youth development through sport (pp. 11). New York, NY: Routledge.

Holt, N. L. (2016). Positive youth development through sport. New York, NY: Routledge.

Intrator, S. M., & Siegel, D. (2014). The quest for mastery: Positive youth development through out-of-school programs. Harvard Education Press. 8 Story Street First Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Jones, M. I., Dunn, J. G. H., Holt, N. L., Sullivan, P. J., & Bloom, G. A. (2011). Exploring the '5Cs' of positive youth development in sport. Journal of Sport Behavior, 34(3), 250-267.

Kennett, C. (2005). Sport, immigration and multiculturality: A conceptual analysis. The Centre d'Estudis Olímpics, 1-12.

Komives, S., Longerbeam, S. D., Owen, J. E., Mainella, F. C., & Osteen, L. (2006). A leadership identity development model: Applications from a grounded theory. Journal of College Student Development, 47(4), 401-418.

Komives, S., Owen, J. E., Longerbeam, S. D., Mainella, F. C., & Osteen, L. (2005). Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory. Journal of College Student Development, 46(6), 593-611.

Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., . . . Ma, L. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents

findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of Positive Youth Development. The Journal of Early Adolescence, 25(1), 17-71.

Martinek, T., & Hellison, D. (2009a). Youth development, sport, and youth leadership. In Youth Leadership in Sport and Physical Education (pp. 15-26): Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Martinek, T., & Hellison, D. (2009b). Youth leadership in sport and physical education: Palgrave Macmillan. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Martinek, T., & Lee, O. (2012). From community gyms to classrooms: a framework for values-transfer in schools: teaching values is one thing. Getting students to apply them outside of class is another. JOPERD--The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, 83(1), 33.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM). (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press

Nesbitt, G. M., & Grant, A. (2015). Applying the Multi-Institutional study of leadership findings to collegiate recreation and athletics. New Directions for Student Leadership, 2015(147), 19-31.

Newman, T. J., Kim, M., Tucker, A. R., & Alvarez, M. A. G. (2018). Learning through the adventure of youth sport. Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 23(3), 280-293.

Northouse, P. G. (2010). Leadership: Theory and practice. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Olliff, L. (2008). Playing for the future: The role of sport and recreation in supporting refugee young people to'settle well in Australia. Youth Studies Australia, 27(1), 52-60.

Petitpas, A. J., Cornelius, A., & Van Raalte, J. (2008). Youth development through sport: It's all about relationships. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), Positive youth development through sport (pp. 61-70). New York, NY: Routledge.

Renn, K. A., & Bilodeau, B. L. (2005). Leadership identity development among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender student leaders. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 42(3), 604-629.

Saldana, J. (2015). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. London: Sage.

Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Stodolska, M., & Alexandris, K. (2004). The role of recreational sport in the adaptation of first generation immigrants in the United States. Journal of Leisure Research, 36(3), 379-413.

Walden, J., & Sienkiewicz, H. (2019). Immigrant and Refugee Health in North Carolina. North Carolina Medical Journal, 80(2), 84-88.