THE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY IN CANADA

by

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ABSTRACT

The field of sport and exercise psychology (SEP) appears to have two major branches: those in Kinesiology or Exercise Science programs (KES) and those from an Applied Psychology or Counselling background (PC; American Psychological Association Division 47, n.d.). The increasingly common incidence of social and mental health problems in athletes are beyond the scope of sport performance enhancement (Dean & Rowan, 2014; Barnard, 2013; Wippert & Wippert, 2008). Research has suggested that understanding the dynamics of the helping relationship should be emphasized in KES programs, and KES graduates identified a need for counselling skills within their consulting relationships (Portenga et al., 2011; Sharp, Hodge, & Danish 2015).

Conversely, there has been concern that PC graduates are not equipped with knowledge and background in the sport sciences (Gardner, 1991; Anshel, 1992). Training and competence in both sport sciences and psychological sciences has been suggested to bridge this gap (Silva, 1989). The current study examines the educational pathway for students interested in applied sport and exercise psychology in Canada.
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List of Symbols, Nomenclature or Abbreviations

AAASP – Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology

AASP – Association for Applied Sport Psychology

ABC’s Nightline – American Broadcasting Company’s late-night television’s news program

AIPS – Italian Association of Sport Psychology

APA – American Psychological Association

APA Division 47 – Society for Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology

APS – Australian Psychological Society

BASES – British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences

BPS – British Psychological Society

CCPA – Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association

CMPC® - Certified Mental Performance Consultant

CoSP – College of Sport Psychologists

CPA – Canadian Psychological Association

CSC – Canadian Sport Centre

CSI – Canadian Sport Institute

CSPA – Canadian Sport Psychology Association

ICAP – International Congress of Applied Psychology

IOC – International Olympic Committee

ISSP – International Society of Sport Psychology

JSSP – Japanese Society of Sport Psychology

KES – Kinesiology and Exercise Science
KSSP – Korean Society of Sport Psychology

MA – Master of Arts

MEd – Master of Education

MPC – Mental Performance Consultant

MSc – Master of Science

MScK – Master of Science Kinesiology

NBA – National Basketball Association

NCAA – National Collegiate Athletics Association

NSO – National Sport Organization

PC – Psychology and Counselling

PSSP – Portuguese Society of Sport Psychology

SAASP – South African Association for Applied Sport Psychology

SEP – Sport and Exercise Psychology

SFSP – French Society of Sport Psychology

Sport Psychology – This term is being used interchangeably with SEP as there was not a distinction made between the two in the literature examined. The literature examined used them interchangeably, so this study is following that example. While the ISSP believes the two should be closely allied, those working in the field may distinguish between the two and choose to focus only on exercise psychology or vice versa. This term is also being used to describe applied sport psychology. There is not enough consistent use of and distinction between research-based sport psychology and applied sport psychology in the literature. There are those interested in sport psychology from purely a research-based focus, however this study is focused on the applied focus.

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Introduction

There are two major branches in the field of sport and exercise psychology (SEP): those who study sports in Kinesiology and/or Exercise and Sport Sciences programs (KES), who wish to understand the thoughts and mental performance of athletes, and those in Psychology and/or Counselling (PC) who wish to work with athletes and coaches (American Psychological Association Division 47, n.d.). The curriculum in KES programs is focused on the sport and exercise sciences whereas PC learning is focused on the psychological sciences, making how either group would approach working with an athlete different. The holistic development of an athlete is not necessarily a shared objective in applied sport and exercise psychology. PC practitioners may not view athletes as a special population and think their education as psychologists or counsellors is enough without SEP-specific training. Conversely, KES consultants are focused on performance enhancement and may not see the need for training in therapy and mental health. Athletes, however, are just as vulnerable as non-athletes, if not more so, to problems such as anxiety, anger, depression, emotional abuse or sexual trauma and these problems can have substantial effects not only on their sport performance but also their well-being (Dean & Rowan, 2014; Nattiv, Puffer & Green, 1997; Ford, 2007; Wippert & Wippert, 2008). From an ethical viewpoint, Winter and Collins (2016) argued that practitioners working with athletes must be adequately trained to address both sport performance and mental health issues. However, those two foci are not mutually exclusive and research has suggested that, considering the role sport plays in our society and its importance for the development of identity and personal competence, improving
an athlete’s capabilities in the sporting context begins with and is facilitated by the
growth of an athlete as a human being (Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1993; Friesen & Orlick,
2010). The Canadian Sport Psychology Association (n.d.) defines applied sport and
exercise psychology as “facilitating the development of mental and emotional skills,
techniques, attitudes, perspectives, and processes that lead to performance enhancement
and positive personal development” (About: Who We Are, para. 1). A program which
offered training in both the sport sciences and psychological sciences would prepare
graduates to work in service of this holistic definition.

**Background**

Many KES-trained practitioners may see mental health issues and therapy as
being beyond the scope of their role or training as a SEP consultant. KES-trained SEP
consultants cannot use the term ‘sport psychologist’ as ‘psychologist’ is a protected term
reserved for those licensed as psychologists. Pepitas, Giges, and Danish (1999), however,
insisted that understanding the dynamics of the helping relationship should be
emphasized in SEP programs. Fifteen years later, Sharp, Hodge, and Danish (2015) still
found that experienced SEP consultants identified a need for counselling skills within
their consulting relationships, including listening to the athlete, providing comfort, and
focusing on the whole person and not just the athlete. Conversely, the focus of one's
practice as a psychologist (or psychotherapist) depends on personal preference, training,
expertise, and, of course, staying within one's realm of competence, which for many may
not be sport science (Winter & Collins, 2016). Research suggests that athletes prefer a
practitioner with a high level of sport-specific knowledge and that possessing an athletic
background positively affects athletes' responses (Woolway & Harwood, 2015). Athletes view these practitioners as better able to relate to their experiences and better understand the demands of the sporting environment (Lubker et al., 2012). Woolway and Harwood (2015) surveyed 229 athletes on preferences and found that “the most preferred practitioner was a [sport psychologist] who had high interpersonal skills, a high level of sport-specific knowledge and understanding, and previous experience in training and competing to at least a junior county/regional level” (p. 177). This suggests that athletes would prefer consulting with a practitioner with expertise and training in both the sport sciences and psychological sciences, however the number of athletes currently accessing or desiring to access these services is still unclear. Due to the remaining stigma against accessing these services, “many athletes, despite the access to relevant information and advice, do not seek help, as the disadvantages of doing so are perceived to outweigh the benefits” (Breslin, Shannon, Haughey, Donnelly, & Leavey, 2017). Athletes still appear to associate help seeking from a SEP consultant as admitting there is something wrong and, as will be discussed later, admitting to needing psychological assistance is perceived by some as a sign of weakness.

The American Psychological Association Division 47 (n.d.), the Exercise and Sport Psychology division of the American Psychological Association (APA), state that there have been “turf wars” and “bickering” between the two groups which could be ratified if practitioners were “appropriately trained to have competency in both sport science and psychology” (p. 4-5). Initiatives like these would help to turn sport psychology into a unified field, counter misconceptions about sport psychology, and serve to properly educate the public and clientele about the provided services. However,
until academic and regulatory institutions acknowledge and respond to this predicament, the field will not change.

Objectives

The holistic definition of SEP offered by CSPA speaks to APA Division 47’s vision for the future and a program which offered training in both the sport sciences and psychological sciences would prepare graduates to work in service of this. However, there has yet to be a quantitative analysis of Canadian university programs to determine where SEP programs and classes reside to determine whether this pathway is accessible for students. Therefore, using a document analysis of graduate-level psychology, counselling, and KES programs in Canadian universities and their course requirements, the current study is designed to empirically examine the educational pathways available to students interested in applied sport and exercise psychology in Canada. The purpose of this study is to answer the following two questions: 1) in what faculties or departments are sport and/or exercise psychology classes in Canadian universities located, and 2) do programs with sport and/or exercise psychology classes require clinical or counselling skills training?
LITERATURE REVIEW

The American Psychological Association (APA) Division 47 (Society for Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology) defines sport psychology as a “multidisciplinary field spanning psychology, sport science, and medicine” and recognizes it as a “postgraduate focus after a doctoral degree in one of the primary areas of psychology, and licensure as a psychologist” (APA Div. 47, 2018b). This definition, by the global leader in psychology regulation, is what led to the focus of this research study on graduate programs from multiple disciplines. The term ‘sport psychology’ implies education and training in psychology, but as will be discussed later, not everyone using those terms has training in the psychological sciences. Further explanation of the history of the field and how it relates to Canada and the world will also follow, as this is not the only definition of sport psychology and APA Division 47 is not the regulatory body for sport psychology practice in Canada. The question of ‘what is sport psychology?’ has yet to be definitively answered and without a clear and standardized understanding of what the practice of sport psychology entails, a standardized process of education, training, certification, and licensure of professionals in the field cannot be attained (APA Division 47 Practice Committee, n.d.). Researchers in the field have called attention to a growing number of individuals who are interested in pursuing applied practice and sport psychology’s acceptance as a viable academic discipline has only strengthened the need for a unified front in the definition, training, and practice of sport psychology (Williams, 2003). Therefore, a review of the literature on education, training, certification, and licensure in applied sport psychology follows. First, definitions and a brief history of the field will be provided to help define the context in which this research study fits.


A Brief History of Sport Psychology

In Defining the Practice of Sport and Performance Psychology, APA Division 47 begins with the question of ‘who is a sport psychologist?’ This is a question first posed by Dr. John Silva in 1986 at the first Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) conference, and one which, over 30 years later, has yet to be fully answered (APA Division 47 Practice Committee, n.d.). Silva sparked a debate that continues today without having reached a consensus on the question. Without consensus in the field on a clear definition, it is difficult to establish a clear educational pathway for those interested in pursuing the practice of sport psychology and subsequently there will not be a clear training model for the profession.

Sport psychology existed quietly for approximately 70 years as an academic sub-discipline in physical education (within the KES academic department), but in the past 40 years sport psychology has become more applied as athletes, coaches, and sport organizations sought out professionals to help with the mental side of performance to achieve better competitive results (Nideffer, DuFresne, Nesvig, & Selder, 1980; Silva, 1989). It was with this shift in service delivery that psychologists began to step onto the scene (Petrie & Harmison, 2012). Media exposure afforded by the 1984 and 1988 Olympics focusing on sport psychology played a role in its exposure and growing interest, catapulted the emerging field into the public eye (Silva, 1989; Petrie & Harmison, 2012). Silva (1989) also noted that significant professional and consumer interest in sport psychology grew rapidly in the 80’s with the additional spotlight from articles in The New York Sunday Times on the psychology of the elite athlete (“Mental advantages,” 1981) and articles in popular outlets such as Psychology Today (Kiester,
1984), Sports Illustrated (Gilbert, 1988) and Sports Inc. (Deutsch, 1988). During this time, sport psychology also saw the establishment of two new professional bodies (The Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology [AAASP] and Division 47 of the American Psychological Association [APA Div. 47]), which truly demonstrated the significant interest in the field of sport psychology and an increased awareness of the field in academic, professional, and consumer domains (Silva, 1989; Petrie & Harmison, 2012). A major factor in the founding of the AAASP was the concern with the unstructured, rapid growth in the field which resulted in a widespread practice of sport psychology in a variety of sport and exercise settings with little or no guidance from professional organizations (Silva, 1987). The ethical issues involved in the provision of psychological services to athletes and coaches, questions about the types of services sport psychologists are offered, and the need to define the field began sparking debate among SEP consultants already practicing in the field (Nideffer et al., 1980). In addition, this growth resulted in controversy regarding the certification of consultants in sport psychology; the field needed to come together and answer whether services should be provided, what those services should include, and who is qualified to provide them (Zaichkowsky & Perna, 1992). Nideffer et al. (1980) recognized that it was critical to develop congenial relations between physical education and psychology because the “birth of a new field requires cooperation and support from both parents” (p.174).

Silva vs Gardner.

In 1989, Silva looked at the history of the field to that point and attempted to identify the organizational progress needed to develop a specialization in sport
psychology (Human Kinetics, n.d.). A major issue that Silva (1989) recognized was that, despite professionalization issues having been discussed in the literature for almost a decade, there was still a deficit in tangible organizational guidance in the areas of certification and program accreditation. One of the other issues he highlighted, which has spurred ongoing debate and continues to be addressed in this study, is the training of future sport psychologists which then effects the process and procedures required to develop and implement the certification of sport psychologists (Silva, 1989).

This study seeks to explore the educational climate of the field in Canada to determine what the current pathway for training looks like for aspiring sport psychology practitioners which may lead to discussions on an interdisciplinary sport psychology program. Silva (1989) argued that sport psychology is distinct, and one's training should reflect this uniqueness with expertise and training in both the sport sciences and the psychological sciences. An applied sport psychology program containing course requirements in both disciplines, KES and PC, and bridging the gap between the two main branches of sport psychology would be an excellent answer to the dilemma and “discontent, bickering, and turf wars over the years” (American Psychological Association Division 47, n.d., p. 5).

Despite Silva (1989) calling for mutual respect, understanding, and a true collaboration among practitioners of different educational backgrounds, Gardner (1991) replied that it was not given adequate attention and suggested that the literature placed greater attention on the issue of who is qualified to provide what service if practitioners of sport psychology are to truly enhance their own professionalism. Silva (1989) reported that sport psychology as a discipline had traditionally been fostered in physical education
departments, which has been vouched for in multiple accounts of the history of sport psychology (Simons & Andersen, 1995; Petrie & Harmison, 2012; Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwardowski, Cohen, & Statler, 2012). However, Gardner (1991) points out that Silva makes no mention of the fact that most current techniques used in applied sport psychology (such as goal setting, performance feedback, cognitive control methods, imagery training, biofeedback, relaxation training, psychological assessment, and behaviour modification) have come out of advances in psychological science (p.56). As such, Gardner (1991) argues that psychology’s contributions to the knowledge base of sport psychology must be respected and integrated. The developments in both theoretical and applied areas of psychology have profoundly influenced the field of sport psychology (Petrie & Harmison, 2012). Silva (1989), however, called attention to the fact that being a licensed psychologist is not in and of itself sufficient to label oneself a sport psychologist. Nideffer et al. (1980) cautioned that the APA has had little involvement in and knowledge of sport psychology but may attempt to control the field as its popularity grows. While the APA did create Division 47, Society for Sport, Exercise & Performance Psychology, and a Proficiency in Sport Psychology, which recognizes sport psychology as a postgraduate focus after a doctoral degree in one of the primary areas of psychology and licensure as a psychologist, they are not in control of the field exclusively. Silva (1989) discusses examples of psychologists who, with “no formal coursework or training experiences in sport psychology or the sport and exercise sciences, label themselves sport psychologists and work with athletes or professional teams” (p.271). The NCAA (2014) in ‘Mind, Body and Sport: The psychologist perspective’ note that many clinical/counseling psychology programs do not typically offer graduate coursework in
the domain of sport and performance psychology. Practicing outside your area of competency goes against the Ethical Principles of Psychologists (APA, 1981). Simons and Andersen (1995) interviewed consultants who were practicing in the field, these consultants speak retroactively about their work in the 80’s which leads to one participant confirming that Silva was right about PC practitioners with no KES training working with athletes and calling themselves a sport psychologist. These practitioners had a wide variety of backgrounds but all shared a love of sport, exercise, and human performance that spurred their interest in the field; however, psychiatrist Burt Giges did admit to working with athletes “without having had any formal training in sport psych” (Simons & Andersen, 1995, p. 453). On ABC’s Nightline (1988) former pro football coach, George Allen, recommended against using sport psychologists because he had negative experiences with psychologists who did not understand football and the interaction of psychology and sport. Years later Giges recalled his ability to help with focusing, visualization, and positive thinking despite his lack of SEP-specific training (Simons & Andersen, 1995); however damaging public statements, like those of George Allen on public forums like ABC’s Nightline, shaped public opinion of SEP services at the time and supported Silva’s (1989) argument for the respect and need for KES-specific knowledge of SEP.

Anshel vs Zaichkowsky and Perna.

The debate continued in 1992, between Mark H. Anshel, who argued against the certification of sport psychologists, and Leonard D. Zaichkowsky and Frank M. Perna, who offered a rebuttal in favour of the certification of SEP consultants and to support the
certification criteria and procedures developed by AAASP. Anshel (1992) was in the Department of Human Movement Science at the University of Wollongong in Australia at the time and felt that professionals in the field should rethink the preoccupation with using the clinical psychology model to gain respect and certification. Anshel’s main arguments were that individuals with related skills, such as the performance enhancement techniques used by KES-trained individuals not licensed as psychologists, could offer unique contributions to the profession whereas certification would favour professionals trained in psychology, inappropriately rely on clinical psychology as a model for the practice of sport psychology, and, subsequently, would diminish rather than promote the field (Zaichkowsky & Perna, 1992). Anshel felt that KES-trained practitioners had a unique perspective to offer the field that psychology alone could not offer and fought for SEP not to be subsumed by psychology. Anshel thought that AAASP certification procedures would allow persons with limited background and experience in sport and exercise science to be the primary practitioners of SEP. Anshel was also adamantly against ‘doing therapy with athletes’ but Zaichkowsky and Perna (1992) point out that the “requirement for training in counselling is not intended so that an AAASP consultant can provide therapy [rather,] skills taught and practiced in a counselling course and practicum are meant to be generalizable to situations in which the consultant is often therapeutic” (p. 294). Credentialing is a difficult process in an interdisciplinary field, which Zaichkowsky and Perna recognize. Zaichkowsky was affiliated with the Department of Counseling Psychology at Boston University and his co-author, Perna, was a member of the Sport Psychology Department of the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs (Zaichkowsky & Perna, 1992). They sought to speak in favour of certification for
consultants in sport psychology and disputed Anshel’s claims that the field of sport psychology lacked an adequate knowledge base, that certification would lead to fraudulent practice (practitioners who engage in practice without proper training), and that KES-trained SEP professionals were less likely to be accepted for a psychologist-run AAASP certification. Anshel (1992) wrongly thought that the AAASP certification process would allow psychologists with no sport and exercise science background or training to be eligible for this certification and give them the means to practice outside their competence. Zaichkowsky and Perna (1992) argue that this certification would actually minimize rather than promote this type of unethical practice. Anshel (1992) also wrongly assumed that some of the AAASP criteria were intended obstacles for non-psychologists who wished to practice SEP, thereby making KES-trained practitioners less likely to be accepted.

Anshel (1992) referred to a ‘phantom expert’ when arguing that few people possess the qualifications required; sport psychologists lack training in sport science and psychology due to most educational programs not providing both sport sciences and psychology. Coming from a KES background, Anshel (1992) appeared to be heavily biased against PC practitioners and claimed that the psychology profession had patronized the sport psychology field and placed significant obstacles to prevent KES graduates from securing membership in psychology organizations. Furthermore, Anshel (1992) stated that many individuals, particularly certified psychologists, did not perceive a need to obtain knowledge in the sport sciences. Anshel (1992) went on to say that the line between practicing psychology (e.g., dealing with clinical or psychopathology) and consulting with an athlete or exercise participant (e.g., recommending an intervention in
response to a psychological issue that affects the individual's performance) is thin. Anshel (1992) claimed that the need for possessing clinical skills in sport psychology consulting may be overstated because occasions for which athletes need to interact with licensed clinical psychologists (i.e., issues related to psychopathology), as opposed to situations calling for performance-enhancement techniques, which do not require certification in psychology, are relatively rare. Perhaps in 1992 it appeared that way; however, as you will see discussed later, that is not currently the case.

In their rebuttal, Zaichkowsky and Perna (1992) claimed that Anshel presented a narrow depiction of SEP consultants as being only concerned with performance enhancement. Training in counselling is beneficial to sport psychology practitioners because the skills taught and practiced in counselling courses and practica are generalizable to situations in which the practitioner often is therapeutic (Zaichkowsky & Perna, 1992). Anshel (1993) came back to argue that “the arsenal of esoteric criteria in AAASP's certification program goes far beyond what is necessary to ensure high quality, ethical, and professional practice [and therefore,] the exhaustive list of qualifications for certification, equaled only by a similarly exhaustive list of individuals certified through the grandparenting clause, gives the appearance of a process that is self-serving, overly restrictive, self-promoting, and arrogant” (p. 344). This certification, however, did not give those accepted to use the protected term of ‘psychologist’, that remained reserved for licensed psychologists. The certification was meant to ensure a standard of education and training in both the sport sciences and psychological sciences. The educational pathway required to meet these standards is cumbersome and can be problematic.

Williams (2003) found that master’s graduates reported 37% of athletes coming to them
for non-sport issues and doctoral graduates reported 44% of athletes coming to them for
non-sport issues during their practicum training. Williams (2003) further reported that
personal counselling is occurring, yet only 77% of master’s graduates had received any
counselling training and 28% of the kinesiology-trained graduates had no training in
counselling. Jim Loehr, a world-renowned performance psychologist with more than 30
years of experience and applied research in the field of SEP (trained in psychology and
began practice in 1974) recognized the need for a holistic approach with education in
both psychology and sport sciences because things are “much more integrated, as kind of
a mental, physical, and emotional whole” (Simons & Andersen, 1995, p.455).
Zaichkowsky and Perna (1992) agreed with Anshel on the need for AAASP’s
commitment to future recommendations of establishing guidelines for successful practice,
establishing required knowledge and educational experience, knowing when to refer,
providing flexible graduate programs, providing continued education, educating the
public, and developing a code of ethical standards of practice. However, a decade later,
Williams (2003) wrote that AAASP has only “begun to address some of these training
concerns” but that more effort is clearly needed to better train future graduates who have
set consulting with athletes as a career goal; access to coursework being one of the main
concerns (p. 350).
Zaichkowsky and Perna (1992) argued in favour of AAASP certification. In
response to Anshel’s claim that certification favours those trained in psychology,
Zaichkowsky and Perna (1992) presented the application/rejection rates to AAASP
certification in the prior year. In 1991 there were 72 applicants and of the 72 applicants,
32 had received their doctorates in psychology or medicine and of those only 11 received
their certification versus the 40 applicants with doctorates in the sport sciences of which 31 achieved certification (Zaichkowsky & Perna, 1992). The AAASP certification was interdisciplinary and at the time was the only recognized measure of training competence in the field. Williams (2003) used the AAASP certification criteria when surveying graduates of degrees related to sport psychology from 1994 to 1999 and found that the majority of graduate programs available for those interested in pursuing applied sport psychology “do not offer the necessary courses for students interested in pursuing AAASP certification” (p. 350). Anshel (1993) did respond to Zaichkowsky and Perna with agreement that the goal of many graduate students who enter sport psychology programs, and professionals who practice applied sport psychology, is “to counsel athletes [however,] these individuals are usually not trained clinicians [whose] educational degrees tend to be from physical education or sport and exercise science programs rather than from psychology programs [thus] most are ineligible to be licensed psychologists and are not legally able to meet their professional goal of psychological counseling in sport” (p. 350).

Silva has continued his work to advocate for an accredited training path, a specialized training program, that emphasizes both counselling/clinical psychology skills and a kinesiology/sport science based foundation for knowledge in an attempt to prepare all sport and exercise professionals for the realities of work with athletes and exercisers (Silva, Metzler, & Lerner, 2011). Vosloo and Quartiroli (2014) reported that this action has resulted in the creation of a “Coalition on Graduate Training” that is developing a proposal for this specialized training path in Sport and Exercise Psychology in the United States that will “distinguish between a research focused path and a practical/applied
focused path, with a final outcome of a doctoral degree that would allow students to sit for licensure as a psychologist as the final outcome” (p. 186). As this work continues, so does the debate regarding best training practices, certification, licensing options, title use, and professional ethics (Vosloo & Quartiroli, 2014).

**AASP and APA Division 47.**

The AAASP certification of which Anshel, and Zaichkowsky and Perna, and Williams speak was first developed in 1989 and was intended to demonstrate that “individuals seeking certification must have obtained a required level of training and experience to provide professional services in applied sport psychology” (AASP, n.d.). AAASP is now the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) and has grown to be an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization with over 2,500 members in 55 countries worldwide, with backgrounds in a variety of areas including sport science, social work, counselling and clinical psychology (n.d.). The certification, as a ‘Certified Mental Performance Consultant’ (CMPC®; AASP, n.d.) demonstrates to “clients, employers, colleagues, and the public at large that an individual has met the highest standards of professional practice, including completing a combination of educational and work requirements, successfully passing a certification exam, agreeing to adhere to ethical principles and standards, and committing to ongoing professional development” (n.d.). This certification has members from clinical psychology, educational psychology and clinical mental health counselling, social work, industrial-organizational psychology, and sport psychology from a sport science basis (AASP, n.d.). Despite these statistics, Vosloo and Quartiroli (2014) credit a lack of program accreditation and institutional
support as the key reasons this certification “has not grown widely enough” (p. 186). To combat this, Silva and colleagues (2011) proposed a more official accreditation process to ensure a uniform training path in line with AASP certified consultant criteria, as an accredited program would allow students to pursue a streamlined training pathway to meet CMPC® certification requirements. In 2003, over a decade after AASP certification was established, APA approved ‘Proficiency in Sport Psychology’ as an area of expertise within psychology which made the field more visible to psychologists and set standards for practice (Burke, Sach, & Smisson, 2004). The other aim of the proficiency was to protect and inform the public with regard to appropriate services and skills offered by those describing themselves as ‘sport psychologists;’ however, as will be discussed in the next section, this may be a term reserved for those legally licensed as psychologists despite informal use of the term by the public and practitioners alike (APA Div.47, n.d.).

Currently, AASP is the largest sport and exercise psychology professional association in North America and offers certification to its members under the designation CMPC®. These practitioners use a combination of individual and group consulting or counselling (depending on the style of the professional conducting the intervention and the needs of the client) in the practice of applied sport and exercise psychology (AASP, n.d.). According to AASP, applied sport and exercise psychology utilizes many strategies (e.g., goal setting, concentration, motivation, relaxation, imagery) with the general goal of teaching the mental skills necessary to perform consistently in training and competition, to increase adherence to exercise programs, and to help individuals realize their athletic and competitive potential (n.d.). This differs from, and is in direct competition with, the Proficiency in Sport Psychology which APA claims brings
together psychologists, as well as exercise and sport scientists, interested in research, teaching and service in this area (APA, 2019). Differing from CMPC®, the APA proficiency recognizes sport psychology as a postgraduate focus after a doctoral degree in one of the primary areas of psychology and licensure as a psychologist (APA Div. 47, n.d.). AASP certification, despite requiring some psychology background, does not require licensure as a psychologist. APA Div. 47 (n.d.) promotes the development and use of psychological skills directed at the optimal performance of athletes, the well-being of athletes, the systemic issues associated with sports settings and organizations and in developmental and social aspects of sports participation. These two organizations, and their subsequent certifications, appear to be in competition with each other and we have yet to reach a consensual answer to Silva’s question of ‘who is a sport psychologist?’.

Vasloo and Quartiroli (2014) credit this divide as perpetuating the continued turmoil in the Sport and Exercise Psychology profession in North America. Students interested in a career in sport and exercise psychology are unsure of what path to take to achieve their desired career outcomes because “there is presently a lack of understanding about the educational training paths undertaken by [sport and exercise psychology] professionals and the professional practice concerns or credentialing issues” that the field is currently experiencing (Vasloo & Quartiroli, 2014, p.187).

The APA Division 47 Practice Committee (n.d.) wrote about the major issues still facing the field of sport psychology, the first being that a large number of people (including licensed psychologists with little to no training in sport psychology) are defining sport psychology based “solely on working with an athletic population” (p. 5) which contributes to the misunderstanding regarding the scope of practice because
“defining the field based on who the clientele is disregards the unique interventions, techniques, and professional literature that make sport psychology a distinct field requiring specific training and competency” (Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010, p. 254). The second major issue facing the field is that, while athlete performance remains a cornerstone of sport psychology, it’s only a slice of what sport psychologists are now doing to support athletes. Their “expanding roles include helping athletes navigate interpersonal issues and addressing mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and eating disorders [and only] licensed clinical and counseling psychologists can describe themselves as ‘sport psychologists’” (Weir, 2018, p. 50). Williams (2003) found that graduates from 1994 to 1999 who had athlete practicum experience reported 37% of the athletes they saw having “non-sport issues” and concluded that, “quite a bit of personal counselling is taking place in master’s practica [despite] only 77% of those who wanted to consult with athletes [having] received any training in counselling” (p. 341). If “even superstar athletes are susceptible to the same mental health issues as nonathletes, [and sometimes even] face unique struggles, including the psychological pressure to perform at an elite level, or dealing with a culture in which eating disorders are common” than it is becoming even more apparent that “mental skills coaches” are not going to cut it and the need for clinical and counselling psychology is real (Weir, 2018, p. 50).

Despite having all of this knowledge and a plethora of academic writing on the issues facing the field, the demonstrated precedent of “discontent, bickering, and turf wars” over the years between practitioners with degrees in kinesiology or exercise and sport science (KES) and those with degrees in psychology or counselling (PC) continue to this day (APA Division 47 Practice Committee, n.d., p. 5). Yet, if every practitioner
were appropriately trained to have competency in both sport science and psychology then
sport psychology would be a unified field, able to counter misperceptions and
appropriately educate those who access our services. In the next section education,
training, certification, and licensure will be further examined in regard to the current
research. It will be demonstrated through the literature what current practices are in North
American sport and exercise psychology; this study is designed to examine whether the
educational pathway currently in place in Canada is appropriately designed to best
prepare graduates in the field for the current problems facing practitioners in sport
psychology.

**Education, Training, Certification, and Licensure**

In the United States, ‘sport psychologists’ traditionally have been educated and
trained in physical education departments in specialized graduate programs (Silva, 1989).
Williams (2003) documented the training and careers of graduates from advanced degree
programs with some emphasis on sport psychology from 1994 to 1999 and found that, of
the 814 graduates contacted from 87 institutions, 685 (84.15%) were from kinesiology,
106 (13.02%) were from psychology, and 23 (2.83%) were listed as other. Of the
master’s graduates surveyed, Williams (2003) found that 73% had done their graduate
degrees in kinesiology (psychology/counselling 26%; 1% other departments) and only
5% had double majors in psychology and kinesiology at the undergraduate level (p. 338).
Furthermore, of the doctoral graduates surveyed, Williams (2003) found that 88% had
done their graduate degrees in kinesiology (11% psychology/counselling; 1% other
departments), 79% had obtained their master’s degrees from kinesiology (12%
psychology/counselling; 9% other departments e.g. education), and only 2% reported having undergraduate degrees in both psychology and kinesiology (p. 343). These figures reflect the tradition of housing sport psychology as a major emphasis within kinesiology as compared to psychology departments however it is important to examine the coursework and curriculum of these graduates as well which is the purpose of this study. There does not appear to be any accredited sport psychology training programs in Canada (Morris et al., 2003).

Certification, Registration, Licensure, and Accreditation.

Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) discuss credentialing, a generic term which is generally defined as “a process of giving a title or claim of competence” which can include statutory designations (enacted by legislative bodies and protected by law) and non-statutory designations (such as those recognized by organizations as registries) and includes four categories: certification, registration, licensure, and accreditation (p. 396). Certification is described by Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) as a non-statutory designation which typically does not have legal standing and is operated by an association or organization. Certification begins with the premise that the professional must have credentials to practice legally and generally serves the purposes of telling consumers that the provider of service has demonstrated a certain standard of knowledge and competence and that the practitioner has met state or nationally accepted criteria for professional practice (Anshel, 1992). Requirements for certification are generally established by academic or professional organizations who attempt to identify the academic/practical background and set of competencies required for one to be deemed
‘an experienced professional in the field’ (Burke, Sachs, & Smisson, 2004). An example of this would be the CMPC® certification by AASP. Registration or registry is described by Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) as another non-statutory designation which indicates that a person meets the qualifications specified by an organization, making the individual eligible to formal listing. An example of this would be registration with the CSPA, which is a publicly available listing however does not include certification (Canadian Sport Psychology Association, n.d.). According to Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996), the statutory process is licensure, which indicates that within a state or province there is a legal process of regulation of professional conduct within a particular field. Licensure as a psychologist is governed by provincial law in Canada (and in all 50 states in the USA) and, therefore, use of the terms psychologist, psychology, and psychological are restricted by those laws, thus making the designation ‘sport psychologist’ an issue concerning provincial psychology licensing boards (Burke, Sachs, & Smisson, 2004; Gardner 1991). Technically, then, persons calling themselves sport psychologists, without legal credentials are liable to prosecution (Zaichkowsky, 2006). This has created some confusion from the public and other titles, such as mental performance consultant (MPC), have begun to appear in use as an alternative. These designations, however, are non-statutory terms often used by those who are registered with an organization such as CSPA or who have the certification of CMPC® from AASP. The reality is that practitioners of sport psychology currently emerge from both physical education/sport science (KES) and psychology (PC) and that the title of psychologist is protected in all 50 states; however, as was stated, licensure differs from certification (Gardner, 1991; Anshel, 1992; Zaichkowsky & Perna, 1996). Finally, Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) define
accreditation as a non-statutory process of recognition that a program of education or training has met a set of standards that has been determined by a professional organization in the field. Accreditation typically bears no formal relationship to registration or licensure, although regulatory bodies often include accredited educational qualifications among the criteria for licensure (Morris, Alfermann, Lintunen, & Hall, 2003).

The Sport Psychology Proficiency examination offered by the APA is a certification that distinguishes itself as differing from the doctoral degree area of sport psychology, which has a long tradition within KES departments (APA Div. 47, 2018a). Despite the Sport Psychology Proficiency encompassing training in the “development and use of psychological skills for optimal performance of athletes, in the well-being of athletes, in the systemic issues associated with sports settings and organizations, and in developmental and social aspects of sports participation,” (APA Div. 47, 2018a) this designation somehow differs from and does not include “doing therapy with a person who happens to be an athlete” (Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010, p. 254). They do, however, recognize that “being able to provide therapeutic services may be an important part of a sport psychologist’s job responsibilities” (APA Division 47 Practice Committee, n.d.). In their document Defining the Practice of Sport and Performance Psychology, the APA Division 47 Practice Committee (n.d.) admitted that there is still confusion in the field as to what the practice of sport psychology entails but they attempt to define it as a sub-field of performance psychology.
The Canadian Counterparts.

The APA’s Sport Psychology Proficiency, a combination of an examination and supervision by a licensed psychologist in an athletic context with athlete-clients, currently has no Canadian counterpart as the Sport and Exercise Psychology Section of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) makes no such distinction between performance enhancement and therapeutic services; rather they promote and encourage multi-disciplinary perspectives in research and practice (CPA, 2018). In their most recent newsletter, Perseverance Issue 4 – Fall/Winter 2017, the Sport and Exercise Psychology Section offered a workshop at the 2018 annual convention entitled “Inter-professional collaboration in Sport Psychology: achieving synergy between clinical psychologists and mental performance consultants” (CPA, 2017, p. 4). This newsletter also drew attention to these two seemingly divergent pathways of pursuing sport psychology, but instead of drawing a line in the sand they made a plea for sanctioned sport psychology training in Psychology departments. In the ‘Perspectives’ article, Stewart (2017) argues that athletes have unique needs and vulnerabilities that warrant a certain expertise, training both the sport sciences and psychological sciences, to be tended to and that neither educational pathway, KES or PC (those focused on performance excellence versus those focused on therapy and mental health), comes complete in preparing practitioners to work with this unique population (CPA, 2017, p. 21-22). The workshop CPA offered at the International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP) in 2018 aimed to “identify how the mental performance consultant’s work and the clinical psychologist’s work can complement each other to enhance sport performance and well-being” and the Perspectives article aimed to challenge academic and regulatory institutions to bridge this gap (CPA, 2017, p.
These actions are clearly demonstrating that Canada is beginning to recognize that the two predominant branches of sport psychology service delivery need to work collaboratively and even merge in the coming years to respond to the need for a holistic approach. However, this work may only be reaching one of the two branches. Williams (2003) interviewed master’s and doctoral graduates who received degrees from 1994 to 1999 with some type of emphasis in sport psychology. Participants were asked about their educational background, what work they were currently doing, and what recommendations they had to future students interested in sport psychology. Multiple participants recommended broad-based training which included training in counselling, to anyone interested in beginning study in sport/exercise psychology and one participant even stated, “Learning how to do therapy in general – not specific to sports – was most helpful” (Williams, 2003, p.351). The number of individuals in the field of sport and exercise psychology who are making these connections and are recommending training in both branches is growing; however, as Harrison and Feltz (1979) warned, “many individuals who hold positions of prestige and responsibility in sport and exercise psychology would not meet these minimum standards themselves” so change has been slow (p. 188). The stagnation of training pathways has also been considerably slowed by the fact that “many graduate programs would have to be substantially retailored, both academically and administratively” to meet the proposed needs and all reports of the current climate for education appear to be conjecture and personal accounts; thus the purpose for this study (Harrison & Feltz, 1979, p. 188). Petrie and Watkins (1994) found that, in the United States, 93.8% of psychology programs did not offer a sport psychology course at the undergraduate level and 92.2% did not provide a course in sport psychology.
at the graduate level. Gayman and Crossman (2006) subsequently reported their findings that “few practicing sport psychology consultants have graduated with doctoral degrees from counseling/clinical psychology programs in which skills such as counseling/psychotherapy, psychopathology and psychological assessment are developed” (p. 48).

The Canadian Sport Psychology Association (CSPA) is the Canadian counterpart to AASP. It is a Canadian organization devoted to applied sport psychology that has its own code of ethics, makes liability insurance available to members, and where members do not need to be a licensed psychologist (Canadian Sport Psychology Association, n.d.). The CSPA defines applied sport psychology as “facilitating the development of mental and emotional skills, techniques, attitudes, perspectives, and processes that lead to performance enhancement and positive personal development” (CSPA, n.d.). The CSPA currently offers no counterpart to AASP’s CMPC®, however members can register with the organization as ‘Professional Members’ and be listed on the publicly accessible database of consultants under the title of ‘Mental Performance Consultant’. The CSPA and CPA Sport and Exercise Psychology chapter do not appear to have the same type of relationship that AASP and APA Div. 47 have, although this could just be due to the lack of published material from a Canadian perspective. The most paramount finding in the literature thus far has been “the fact that anyone can claim to be a sport psychology consultant” (Gayman & Crossman, 2006, p. 48). Following is an overview of SEP practices worldwide. The global perspective has been briefly summarized, by region, with an emphasis on the education and training pathways.
A Global Perspective

So far much of the literature in this review has been focused on the United States and Canada. While the North American perspective is important and especially pertinent to the research being collected on Canadian universities in this thesis, it is also of note to compare practices and education in other countries as well. In every country, scholars with training in physical education, sports science, or psychology have studied sport from a psychological perspective over the last 40 years and the culture and traditions of each country and region have influenced it differently (Morris et al., 2003). The Managing Council of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) believes it has the responsibility to examine “the development of sport and exercise psychology around the world and to state its position with regard to the way sport psychologists are trained and selected to work in service provision in a range of contexts” (Morris et al., 2003, p.139; ISSP Managing Council, 2018). Morris et al. (2003) report on the findings of a review conducted by ISSP which focuses on sport psychology training and selection processes around the world divided among regions. Following are the results of this report with added information from other authors from the specified regions.

African region.

Firstly, the African region, where sport psychology is deemed to be in its infancy. Despite ISSP assistance to establish the African Association of Sport Psychology, Africa as a whole appears to offer the least in terms of education and training compared to other regions of the world (Morris et al., 2003). However, the mean number of years of university training necessary to practice applied sport psychology in Africa is reported as
South Africa has developed the most in terms of sport psychology training and the South African Association for Applied Sport Psychology (SAASP) has a substantial membership (Morris et al., 2003). Sport psychology in South Africa is offered as part of undergraduate physical education and sport science programs at many universities and post-graduate study is also available at select universities (Morris et al., 2003). As most sport psychology training is done outside psychology departments, it is not accredited; psychologists must have statutory licensing in South Africa (Morris et al., 2003).

Asia and South Pacific region.

The history of sport psychology in the Asia and South Pacific region reflects a broad range of types of national development in sport psychology where “Japan, Korea, and Australia, can report long traditions of organization of the field in terms of professional associations” (Morris et al., 2003, p.144). In most of the countries in this region there is a well-established educational pathway for psychologists with typically little to no recognition of a sport psychology specialization beyond undergraduate-level training in physical education (Morris et al., 2003). The mean number of years of university training necessary to practice applied sport psychology in Asia was reported to be 6.2 (Vosloo & Quartiroli, 2014). In many countries in this region there is no formal training that qualifies an individual to practice sport psychology; therefore, there is no certification, accreditation, or licensure for sport psychology in these countries and individuals often seek sport psychology doctoral qualifications in other countries (Morris et al., 2003). Practitioners in Asia report spending 10 or more hours per week in research.
(Vosloo & Quartiroli, 2014). The Japanese Society of Sport Psychology (JSSP) is one of the largest in the world with around 500 members and training is “almost exclusively conducted in physical education programs, at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels” (Morris et al., 2003, p. 145). The Korean Society of Sport Psychology (KSSP) has a similar membership to the JSSP and sport psychology training is similarly conducted in university physical education departments; however, there are no specialist postgraduate training programs in sport psychology and no certification process (Morris et al., 2003). According to Morris et al. (2003), in Australia individuals have studied and practiced sport psychology for several decades. Gross (1986) wrote, similarly to Silva in North America, about formalized training for sport psychologists integrating both psychology and exercise science. The Australian Psychological Society (APS) established the College of Sport Psychologists (CoSP) which became the national body in sport psychology and developed a training route that met APS guidelines (Morris et al., 2003). This pathway comprises a four-year undergraduate in psychology, in programs formally accredited by APS, followed by a two-year master’s program (there are four APS accredited master’s programs in Australia), predominantly involving coursework and 1000 hours of practical experience with a thesis on an applied issue, and finally 100 hours of supervised practice (Morris et al., 2003). This is in line with reports that the mean number of years of university training necessary to practice applied sport psychology in Australia is 5.4 years. Therefore, it appears as though the ASP has responded to Gross’s call to action differently than the regulatory bodies in North America responded to Silva’s. However, despite the Australian system being very clear and straightforward, Morris et al. (2003) report that people who do not possess the required qualifications or
registration do still provide services in Australia due to “the lack of education and information of many sport organizations” (p.146). Practitioners in Australia also report spending 10 or more hours per week in research (Vosloo & Quartiroli, 2014). In India, the majority of the population views the term ‘psychology’ to connote issues related to mental health and psychopathology, which is often a barrier for sport and exercise psychology where it is often the individual’s responsibility to be accountable for their education and training as licensing procedures are limited (Acharya, 2010). Acharya (2010) reports that the professional training of the next generation of sport psychologists is the biggest challenge in India especially when “university departments have a long history of territory protection rather than collaboration and professional organizations tend to be discipline specific” (p. i54).

**European region.**

In Europe, educational programs that include sport and exercise psychology and act as a foundation for practice exist mainly in sport and exercise science, human movement, or physical education programs (Morris et al., 2003). Two professional organizations in the United Kingdom, the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) and the British Psychology Society (BPS), offer structured training routes and resultant certification (Devonport & Lane, 2014). The current UK system also distinguishes between researchers and service providers, but members must hold undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in sport sciences, psychology, or related disciplines whereby BPS accreditation is achieved through completion of “competencies in four key roles relating to nationals occupational standards in psychology” and the
BASES training route is undertaken in applied sport and exercise sciences (Devonport & Lane, 2014, p. 235; Morris et al., 2003). Westbury (2006) makes a distinction between core psychology versus sport and exercise psychology and emphasizes a lack of supervisors for sport and exercise psychology students in the UK due to a lack of formal training for supervisors. In the German-speaking countries of Europe, there is no accreditation of sport psychologists within general psychology and sport psychology is not included in the licensure process for psychologists (Morris et al., 2003). Woolway and Harwood (2015) contend that degree-holding psychologists, individuals with mental skills training, and individuals without any credentials appear to coexist within the current system. This observation was previously made in research conducted by Sanchez, Godin, and Zanet (2005) who found that practitioners stressed the need to develop specific training programs in sport psychology and informing the world of sport about applied sport psychology to combat this dilemma. They found that the majority of the individuals “consulting within the world of sport for psychological or mental matters” are considered to be delivering sport psychology services illegitimately (Sanchez, Godin, & Zanet, 2005, p. 82-84). In the Franco-Latin countries of Europe, there is a regulatory licensing system in place for psychologists but sport psychology is not a part of it; however, most of the countries do have well-established national sport psychology associations such as the Portuguese Society of Sport Psychology (PSSP), the Italian Association of Sport Psychology (AIPS), and the French Society of Sport Psychology (SFSP) all exceeding 100 members (Morris et al., 2003). Similarly, in the Scandinavian countries, the term ‘psychologist’ is protected under law and individuals must be licensed to call themselves psychologists (Morris et al., 2003). To claim the title of ‘sport
psychologist’ in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden one must have met both the
general psychology licensing criteria and have special training in sport and exercise
science (Morris et al., 2003; Johnson, 2006). In interviewing sport psychology students in
Sweden, Johnson (2006) found that participants called for collaboration between
universities and sport federations and hoped that in the future academic certification of
sport psychologists would be established and that new and advanced courses in applied
sport psychology based on theory driven practice would be implemented. The typical
educational pathway in the Scandinavian countries includes a “three-year undergraduate
training in sport and exercise sciences [and] is followed by a two-year master’s degree in
sport science” (Morris et al., 2003, p. 147). In Russia, however, psychology and physical
education departments are involved in the education of sport psychologists (Morris et al.,
2003). The mean number of years of university training necessary to practice applied
sport psychology in Europe is 5.6 and practitioners reported spending 10 or more hours
per week doing research (Vosloo & Quartiroli, 2014). Very little information is available
in the Baltic countries, but in Lithuania and Estonia the term ‘psychologist’ is strictly
reserved for those who have graduated from psychology training programs and education
in sport and exercise psychology only exists within sport and exercise science programs
(Morris et al., 2003). The Eastern European countries have traditionally followed the
Soviet model for training with Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, and Poland receiving
certification from the state recognizing the education from sports academy training rather
than general psychology (Morris et al., 2003). In some cases, individuals trained in
psychology have made their way into sport psychology, but those cases are few and far
between (Morris et al., 2003).
South American region.

In South America, there has been resistance to sport psychology from general psychology, so university courses are rarely offered in psychology departments (Morris et al., 2003). Serra de Queiroz, Lima Fogaça, Hanrahan, and Zizzi (2016) identified problems in the educational system, at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, that have a negative effect on applied practice where standards of service delivery cannot be ensured, and the accreditation process has been hindered. Despite this, Vosloo and Quartiroli (2014) found that South American practitioners reported more time per week spent doing applied work than in other global regions. In Brazil, the national associations do not provide guidelines regarding educational pathways for specialization in sport psychology and young professionals must pursue unstructured opportunities which do not assure good standard of practice (Serra de Queiroz et al., 2014). The mean number of years of university training necessary to practice applied sport psychology in South America is 4.5 (Vosloo & Quartiroli, 2014). In Brazil these years of training consist of psychology degrees with a strong focus on applied work and a multitude of available internship experiences; however, postgraduate degree options are limited and often psychology graduates lack specific knowledge in the sport and exercise area (Serra de Queiroz et al., 2014).

Global conclusions.

Vosloo and Quartiroli (2014) interviewed practicing sport psychology professionals from 29 different countries spanning 6 continents and found that there were at least 16 different designations used with 11 of them involving some specific emphasis
on sport, mental skills, or performance. Furthermore, they reported that the granting organizations included university-specific certifications, Olympic committees, psychology organizations, sport science organizations, and government units (Vosloo & Quartiroli, 2014). Morris and colleagues (2003) identified that it has been difficult for sport psychology to develop as a profession in any country. The training paths reported in Vosloo and Quartiroli’s (2014) worldwide sample echo the results from North American studies and there appear to be consistent patterns in the training of sport and exercise psychology professionals globally. Education in sport psychology has “predominately been developed in physical education departments in universities [and] it is most common for the psychology departments of universities and national professional organizations in general psychology to ignore or even actively shun sport psychology (Morris et al., 2003, p. 151). Morris and colleagues (2003) report that most certification programs across the globe have been established by professional sport psychology associations that have a physical education or sport science base. Devonport and Lane (2014) recognized that psychology has been established for much longer and the idea that people give athletes and exercisers advice on psychological factors in sport is “no different to any other area of application” such as clinical, developmental, or educational psychology (p. 234). An amalgamation was proposed by Swedish students whereby applied sport psychology would incorporate the APA Code of Ethics into their thinking, assessments, and interventions “in order to serve athletes both holistically and ethically” (Johnson, 2006, p. 66).
Athlete Mental Health

Butt (1987), LeUnes and Nation (1989), and Nideffer (1981) have contended that sport psychologists need various clinical skills such as administering and interpreting psychological profiles, treating substance abuse, handling legal claims, and dealing with behaviours and feeling that are unrelated to sport or exercise performance. That was recognized as early as the 80’s; however, it was also documented that there has been a previously high failure rate of professionally licensed and certified clinicians to gain entry and respect among athletes and coaches, specifically because “if the clinician is always searching for or only dealing with psychopathology, the probability of acceptance by the team is very low” (Anshel, 1992, p. 273). In fact, Anshel (1992) was also so bold as to inquire into whether a sport psychology consultant or educator is any less “competent” than a clinical psychologist whose familiarity with the sport psychology literature, and exercise science in general, is often relatively minimal. This is not to say that every athlete is experiencing psychopathology that requires counselling/clinical intervention, but this is what the current climate on athlete mental health looks like. We have taken major strides in the recognition and de-stigmatization of athlete mental health issues and this is what some of the literature says about it regarding the need for mental health training in sport psychology practitioners.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (2019) estimates that mental illness directly impacts 20% of people in Canada and costs $42 billion annually. Over two decades of research challenges the perception that athletes are free from social and mental health problems, stating that the pressure to perform puts them at higher risk for distress, hiding pain and injuries, and disorders such as bulimia and substance abuse than
their non-athletic peers (i.e. Dean & Rowan, 2014; Barnard, 2013; Wippert & Wippert, 2008; Ford, 2007; Nattiv, Puffer, & Green, 1997). Stigma is the main reason why elite athletes with mental health issues don't seek the help they need, fearing that acknowledging these issues will be disclosing weakness, but researchers found that mental illness affects up to one in three elite athletes every year (Castaldelli-Maia, et al., 2019). Another study found that 68% of athletes met criteria for a major depressive episode before competition and the incidence of depression doubled among the elite top 25% of athletes, which suggests that the prevalence of depression among elite athletes is higher than what has been previously thought or reported (Hammond, Gialloreto, Kubas, & Davis, 2013). Professional athletes have begun speaking out about their own mental health struggles, such as Kevin Love, an NBA player on the Cleveland Cavaliers, who opened up about the pressures of playing sport at the top level, which led him to have panic attacks on court (Ingles, 2019). Research on European football players found that 37% had symptoms of anxiety or depression at some point over a 12-month period, and it was estimated that each team in the league could expect at least three of their players to experience symptoms of mental illness during a single season (Gouttebarge, Aoki, Verhagen, & Kerkhoffs, 2017). Ingles (2019) describes elite sport as brutal, where failure is common, career development uncertain, and injuries, overtraining and concussions can also affect mental health. An additional factor that exacerbates the experience of elite sports could be social media. Ingles (2019) describes the scrutiny and attention athletes receive as unrelenting, a “24-hour barrage of bile on social media”, especially when every phone doubles as a video camera and every fan has a hotline into players’ brains via Twitter. Castaldelli-Maia and colleagues (2019) call attention to the need for more
effective strategies to overcome the stigma that surrounds mental illness, increase mental health literacy in the athlete and coach community, and address athlete-specific barriers to seeking treatment for mental illness. Last year the National Basketball Players Association launched a mental health and wellness program “with experts available to allow players to talk about their issues without alerting their teams, who might possibly take a dim view of their problems” (Ingles, 2019, para. 15). Ferraro (2004) writes that there has been precedent of denial and minimization because “the most highly visible sport psychologists are working with successful [athletes, who are] by definition high functioning” (p. 14). While Weir (2018) acknowledges that “sport psychologists are best known for helping athletes overcome mental roadblocks and improve their performance”, their role is expanding to include “helping athletes navigate interpersonal issues and addressing mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and eating disorders” (p.50). While performance enhancement remains a cornerstone of sport psychology practice, it has also helped the field “pretend that clients who are anxious enough to find a sport psychologist are simply healthy individuals who happen to be looking for a better golf swing” when the reality is that “patients are not coming to us because they are so thrilled with their success but because they are failing miserably for reasons that are mental more than physical” (Ferraro, 2004, p. 11-14). Ferraro (2004) went on to say that athletes are like any other person, “they have their neurosis, their anxieties, their depression and their personality problems [and] it’s high time we learn to respect these problems and give them the treatment they need and deserve” (p. 15).

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) stated that they hope “all involved in sport will increasingly recognize that mental health symptoms and disorders should be
viewed in a similar light as other medical or surgical illnesses or injuries; all can be severe and disabling, and nearly all can be managed properly by well-informed medical providers, coaches and other stakeholders” (Castaldelli-Maia et al., 2019, p. 12). Weir (2018) stated that “fortunately, athletic organizations are getting the message that mental health and mindset are as important as an athlete’s physical condition [because] even superstar athletes are susceptible to the same mental health issues as nonathletes” (p. 50). Olympic champion Jordyn Wieber spoke about her own and more than 150 female gymnastics athletes’ experiences with sexual abuse by their National Sport Organization’s (NSO’s) doctor, saying that this has “revealed a lot of bad truths about our sport and sports in general” but has opened peoples’ eyes to the abuse athletes suffer behind closed doors (Merrill, 2018, para. 17). Gayman and Crossman (2006) state that we cannot ignore or “disregard the possibility that clinical issues may arise during the course of consultation with athletes [but] the field has not progressed to the point where sport psychology consultants must be trained to make diagnoses and incorporate psychodynamic interventions into their treatment repertoire” (p. 49). Multiple researchers have also discussed the ethical issues that may arise in the sport psychology context (Brown & Cogan, 2006; Loughran & Etzel, 2008; Gayman & Crossman, 2006). Brown and Cogan (2006) wrote that the ethical issues faced by sport psychology practitioners even differ from those who practice a more tradition form of psychology due to the novelty of the field. Loughran and Etzel (2008) contended that it is “incumbent upon these professionals to anticipate potential dilemmas and to be proactive in seeking optimal resolutions” (p. 10). However, Gayman and Crossman (2006) found that 38.9% of sport psychology consultants interviewed did not refer athletes to other mental health
professionals despite the “incidence of psychopathology in athletic populations”, recognizing and calling attention to the idea that the boundary between performance enhancement and clinical issues may not be clearly delineated (p.55). Loughran and Etzel (2008) recognized that ethical challenges and dilemmas “are facts of life in any helping profession and sport psychology is certainly no exception” but ethical decision making in sport psychology, in particular, is more challenging due to “the varied background of practitioners in this area (psychology vs. kinesiology/movement science)” (p. 2). Gayman and Crossman (2006) state that “because the majority of sport psychology consultants do not have extensive training in clinical psychology and are not licensed by a regulatory body, they need to be well versed and practiced in outside referral [but] this does not seem to be the case” (p. 56). Andersen, Van Raalt, and Brewer (2000) also drew attention to the fact that “many sport psychology consultants do not have the extensive personal counseling or therapy histories as counseling and clinical psychologists do” which may present another ethical issue of practitioner impairment which can potentially do harm to athlete-clients (p. 143). Again, training in the psychological sciences for sport psychology consultants would help to remedy this and would be an effective way to ensure that athlete mental health issues could receive the attention and treatment they deserve.

**Purpose**

The problems have been identified and a solution has been proposed, but the question remains if an educational pathway exists that supports the means to become competent in both sport sciences and psychological science in Canada. Morris et al. (2003) recognized that there was not a great deal of documentary information to examine
on the training of sport psychologists because only “a small number of well-established organizations have produced substantial written material about their procedures, including training” (p. 142). Silva (1989) credited sport and exercise psychology’s struggle to be recognized as an autonomous profession is due to a lack of professional identity, lack of uniformity and guidelines in training, and no practicum or poorly controlled practicum experiences. Silva (1989) recommended that in order to continue “enhancing and formalizing the training of sport psychologists, graduate programs need guidance from professional sport psychology organizations” (p. 267). Unfortunately, his follow-up statement that there should be “little discussion in 10 years concerning issues such as from what department a sport psychology student has received his or her degree” is still a discussion and part of the reason for this study (Silva, 1989, p. 267). The purpose of this study is to aid in guiding graduate programs toward a curriculum that emphasizes training in both the psychological sciences and sport and exercises sciences by examining the current educational climate in Canadian universities. This will be achieved by determining what programs sport and/or exercise psychology classes in Canadian universities are in and whether these programs, with sport and/or exercise psychology classes, also require clinical/counselling skills training. It is important to understand what educational pathways currently exist; therefore, this quantitative review is necessary in the discussion of what formal education is available in the training of applied sport and exercise psychology practitioners and mental performance consultants. As I was unable to find such a review in existence for Canadian Universities, this research will help fill a gap in the literature and provide academic and regulatory institutions with data on the educational climate in Canada, which may be pivotal in developing a curriculum that
better aligns with the holistic vision for the future of the field mentioned by APA Division 47.

**Hypotheses**

Based on the review of literature, which demonstrated a history of sport and exercise psychology education and training of sport and exercise psychology practitioners being housed within KES departments, I hypothesize that this has not changed. Therefore, I hypothesize that 1) most of the sport and exercise psychology classes will still be offered in KES programs and 2) of the programs that offer sport and exercise psychology classes, mandatory clinical/counselling skills classes will not be required.
METHOD

Design

A document analysis of graduate-level programs in psychology, counselling, and kinesiology/exercise science at Canadian universities and their course offerings and requirements, combined with chi-square analyses of independence was used to empirically examine the educational pathway for students interested in applied sport and exercise psychology in Canada. Data was collected on the faculty/department of the program, a yes/no on the program offering coursework in sport and/or exercise psychology, and a yes/no on whether the program required mandatory clinical and/or counselling skills. This design is appropriate because the variables are categorical and a Pearson’s chi-square test is intended to see whether there is a relationship between two categorical variables. Chi-square analyses of independence were used to examine the relationship between faculty/department of the program and whether they offer sport and/or exercise psychology classes to answer the first research question and determine what faculty/department sport and/or exercise psychology classes are primarily offered in. Next, a second chi-square analysis examining the relationship between whether the programs offering sport and/or exercise psychology classes also require mandatory clinical and/or counselling skills training was performed to answer the second research question.

Participants

English- and French-speaking master’s and doctoral programs offered in psychology, counselling, and kinesiology/exercise sciences at Canadian universities in all
provinces and territories were identified using Universities Canada’s online database. This database was chosen as the inclusion criteria as Universities Canada represents 97 public and private not-for-profit Canadian Universities and University Colleges and has been ‘the voice of Canada’s universities’ since 1911 (Universities Canada, 2019). The inclusion of both Anglophone and Francophone programs from across Canada will ensure a comprehensive and large sample size and will be representative of the major educational options for students looking to pursue graduate studies in the area of sport and exercise psychology. Identified programs were compiled and their respective university websites were used to access public course calendars for course offerings and course requirements for degree completion.

**Procedures**

The first variable being examined is faculty/department of each program identified. This variable is broken down into three categories: psychology, education, and KES (kinesiology/exercise science). Each identified program was located on its respective university’s website. In many cases each faculty/department had a separate webpage link accessible from the university’s main page listing available programs offered at their institution. Psychology was defined as programs housed in the School of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Department of or Faculty of Human Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. Education was defined as programs housed in the School of Education, Department of or Faculty of Education or Educational Sciences. Departments and Faculties of Psychoéducation were condensed into the education category of the faculty/department variable as consultation with a
Francophone PhD student revealed that Psychoéducation fit better into that category than it did the psychology category; many of the Educational Psychology programs were also found in Education and Educational Sciences faculties/departments. Finally, KES was defined as programs housed in the School of Kinesiology, Faculties of Kinesiology and/or Exercise Science, Kinesiology and/or Exercise Science Departments, and Faculty/Departments of Human Sciences or Health Sciences.

The second variable being examined is a yes or no on the presence of sport and/or exercise psychology classes offered within the faculty/department of the identified program. Inclusion of the terms ‘sport psychology’, ‘exercise psychology’, ‘psychology of sport’, ‘psychological aspects of sport’ and a combination of those terms in either the title of the course or in the course description were considered a yes. The inclusion of both sport and exercise psychology courses was based on the recommendation of ISSP that “the field of sport psychology should be closely allied with the area of exercise psychology” (Morris et al., 2003). Consider the following example from the University of Ottawa which does not contain the inclusion terms in the title of the course, but it does use them in the course description:

APA 5109: Mental Training and Quality Living I - Presentation of current material in applied sport psychology, mental training consulting, and performance and life enhancement. Discussion of mental skills used at developmental and high-performance levels. Application of mental skills related to personal excellence.

This then constitutes a yes for the variable of sport and/or exercise psychology classes. Specific interventions commonly used in sport and/or exercise psychology were not
considered to meet the requirement for a yes. Specifically, if they did not contain any of
the specified terms, despite being related to the practice of sport and exercise psychology,
constituted a no if the course description did not mention sport and/or exercise as well.
Consider the following example from the University of Toronto which offers a course in
imagery. While imagery is recognized as being a common intervention used with athletes
for performance enhancement, the following course description does not indicate that
there is any connection with sport, exercise, or the psychology of sport and exercise:

APD1269H: Use of Guided Imagery in Counselling and Psychotherapy -
This course has both an assessment and intervention focus. Students will learn
how to complement their existing assessment skills by accessing clients’ images.
Students will also learn how to work with images as they spontaneously occur in
therapy. In addition, specific interventions that are based on imagery will be
examed. These include various forms of relaxation, desensitization, stress
inoculation, and imaginal exposure. The class is a combination of didactic
material, role plays and experiential exercises. The application to different client
groups will be discussed.

The third variable being examined is a yes or no on counselling and/or clinical
skills courses being mandatory in the course requirements of the identified programs.
There is a deliberate use of ‘mandatory’ and ‘required’ in the criteria for this variable.
Counselling programs all require their graduates to have completed counselling skills
coursework to meet licensure requirements from the CCPA. Similarly, to become a
licenced psychologist, graduates of clinical psychology programs must complete clinical
coursework to meet licensure requirements from CPA. It is important for programs with
sport and/or exercise psychology classes to require a similar standard if their graduates are to be working in the applied setting with athletes for the reasons already discussed in the literature review. An example of a ‘no’ for this variable can be demonstrated by the University of Ottawa’s Master of Arts in Human Kinetics. This degree offers the following class in counselling theories and skills; however, it is not a program requirement for students to graduate:

APA 5107: Counselling Theories and Skills - Critical examination of counselling approaches and theories. Discussion and application of fundamental counselling skills in the contexts of sport, physical activity, and health.

While the inclusion of this course as an option for KES students is a great resource, it is not required of them to take it.

Data was recorded and stored in a Microsoft Excel file on a USB stick. As the data is all public record and available online from university websites there was no need for the data to be encrypted. As the ‘participants’ are not human subjects but rather course offerings and descriptions, no further security actions were required for confidentiality.

Analysis

The primary statistical analysis procedure is Pearson’s chi-square test. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between the first variable, faculty/department of the program, and the second variable, sport and/or exercise psychology classes yes/no. This analysis determined what faculty/department the presence of sport and/or exercise psychology classes in Canada are associated with. A
second chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the association between the second variable, programs that offer sport and/or exercise psychology classes, and the third variable, programs that require mandatory clinical and/or counselling skills classes. This determined if there was an association between the programs offering sport and/or exercise psychology classes and programs with mandatory clinical and/or counselling skills classes. Assumptions made for Pearson’s chi-square test are that the two variables should be measured at an ordinal or nominal level (i.e., categorical data) and that the variables should consist of two or more categorical, independent groups. These assumptions were both met for both analyses. There were no missing data in the dataset, so no steps were taken to modify or “clean-up” the data. Descriptive statistics were also performed to examine the number of Anglophone versus Francophone programs offered, a breakdown of programs offered per province, the number of programs in each of the three categories of variable one, as well as a breakdown on variables two and three.
RESULTS

There were a total of 331 programs identified and analyzed. Of the 331 programs, 73 (22.05%) were offered in French and the remaining 258 (77.95%) were English-speaking programs. There were 148 (44.71%) programs in Psychology faculties or departments, 93 (28.10%) programs in Education, and 90 (27.19%) programs in KES. Of the French-speaking programs, 50 (68.49%) were offered in Quebec, 16 (21.92%) offered in Ontario, 5 (6.85%) in New Brunswick, and 2 (2.74%) in Manitoba. There were no French graduate programs in “conseils” (counselling) offered in Quebec, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba and there were no French graduate programs in “kinésiologie” (kinesiology) or “sciences de l’activité” (exercise science) offered in New Brunswick and Manitoba. There were no French-speaking graduate level programs in psychology, counselling, or kinesiology/exercise science identified in the remaining provinces and territories according to Universities Canada. There were no English-speaking graduate level programs in psychology, counselling, or kinesiology/exercise science offered in Prince Edward Island, Yukon, Northwest Territories, or Nunavut as identified by Universities Canada. The number of all identified programs offering classes in sport and/or exercise psychology was 56 (16.92%). Programs requiring mandatory clinical/counselling skills training were 141 (42.6%). There was a total of 56 different institutions that housed those 331 identified programs. For a breakdown of number of graduate programs offered at each institution see Table 1. Number of Graduate Programs in Canadian Institutions in the Appendix.
Question 1

In what programs are sport and/or exercise psychology classes in Canadian universities located? A cross tabulation was performed to examine the relation between faculty/department of program and sport/exercise psychology classes. Results revealed a significant association between these variables, $X^2 (2, N = 331) = 147.11, p < .001$. Specifically, the presence of sport and/or exercise psychology classes was significantly associated with KES programs. In fact, 92.86% of the programs offering sport and/or exercise psychology classes were programs housed in KES faculties/departments. This compared with only 4 (7.14%) programs in Psychology faculties/departments offering sport and/or exercise psychology classes, and no sport and/or exercise psychology classes were offered in counselling or counselling psychology programs housed in Education faculties/departments.

Question 2

Do programs with sport and/or exercise psychology classes require clinical/counselling skills training? A cross tabulation was performed to examine the association between programs that offer sport and/or exercise psychology classes and programs that require mandatory clinical/counselling skills classes. Results revealed a significant association between these variables, $X^2 (1, N = 331) = 41.99, p < .001$. Specifically, the presence of sport and/or exercise psychology classes was significantly associated with no mandatory clinical/counselling skills courses. In fact, 329 programs (96.43%) did not offer sport and/or exercise psychology classes and require mandatory clinical/counselling skills courses. Only 2 (0.6%) programs offer sport and/or exercise
psychology classes and require mandatory clinical/counselling skills training. Those programs offering sport and/or exercise psychology classes and requiring mandatory clinical/counselling skills were the MA in Clinical Psychology and PhD in Clinical Psychology offered at the University of Regina whose students have the option of enrolling in PSYC 890AT – Research in Sport Neuropsychology.
DISCUSSION

With the final goal of furthering understanding of the educational pathway for aspiring sport and exercise psychology graduates, this study aimed to examine what faculty or department sport and/or exercise psychology classes in Canadian universities are in and whether these programs also require clinical and/or counselling skills training. The results of this study demonstrated that sport and/or exercise psychology classes in Canadian graduate programs are located, for the vast majority (92.86%), in KES programs versus a small number (7.14%) offered in PC programs. These results also demonstrated that the majority of programs with sport and/exercise psychology classes do not have mandatory clinical/counselling skills courses (96.43%). In other words, these results suggest that Canadian graduate programs are not currently designed to equip graduates with expertise and training in both the sport sciences and the psychological sciences with currently less than 1% of graduate programs in psychology, counselling, and KES across English- and French-speaking Canadian universities offering both. This finding illustrates the lack of dedicated training pathways for PC students who wish to apply, with an athlete population, what they are trained for in the context of sport psychology and conversely for KES students, who wish to gain clinical or counselling skills training, to equip them with mental health training to address the growing concern for athlete mental health treatment.

Only 2 (0.6%) of the 331 identified programs that require mandatory clinical/counselling skills training provide the opportunity to complete an elective research course in sport neuropsychology (PSYC 890AT – Research in Sport Neuropsychology), the MA in Clinical Psychology and PhD in Clinical Psychology
offered at the University of Regina (University of Regina, 2018). The Directed Reading courses are offered on a variable schedule based on several factors that include faculty availability and scheduling, and the course is not listed for the upcoming 2019-20 academic year (University of Regina, 2018). With this being the case, it would be safe to state that graduate students in Canada, entering their first year of study in the upcoming 2019-20 academic year, will not have access to any programs offering both sport and/or exercise psychology classes and requiring mandatory clinical/counselling skills training.

Silva (1989) stated that a certification document will facilitate the structuring of graduate programs and will be a logical first step to the accreditation process at an institutional level; however, the results of this study suggest that this goal has not been achieved as the literature had suggested it be. Decades of literature (Silva, 1989; Gardner, 1991; Silva, 2011) have argued for the amalgamation of, and expertise and training in, both the sport sciences and the psychological sciences, yet the results of this study clearly demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of sport psychology courses are taught within KES programs, most of which do not include mandatory standalone PC skills or mental health training. The concern here is that this gap in education could present a danger to athlete clients with mental health issues. Discussing from an ethical viewpoint what practitioners are qualified to adequately prevent or resolve the social and mental health issues in today’s athletes, Winter and Collins (2016) narrow down the issue to having different organizations responsible for training individuals in the field of applied sport psychology – those focused on sport performance excellence versus those focused on mental health outcomes.
Zaichkowsky (2006) speaks of the dramatic increase in “clinical” cases at all levels of competitive sport and says that, “It is no longer the case that an athlete comes to me seeking ‘mental and emotional strategies’ to be a better athlete, rather, I am seeing many clients with significant clinical issues such as: substance abuse problems, eating disorders, and depression” (p. 43). There has been a prevailing bias in sport psychology against anything that suggests neurosis and rather than trending toward superficial work out of fear of turning off athletes, training ought to include the implementation of psychological skills as well as counselling techniques (Ferraro, 2004; Naylor & Gardner, 2000). Aoyagi et al. (2012) credit the lack of change in the field of sport psychology to the state of graduate training, particularly the lack of interdisciplinary programs, which was demonstrated in the results of this study. The need for interdisciplinary professional preparation has been identified in the literature; however, it is exceptionally rare to find a program that prepares graduates along all necessary dimensions. Thus, for students to acquire competency in both kinesiology-based training and psychology-based training requires degrees from both fields, which “presents an unnecessarily cumbersome path” (Aoyagi et al., 2012, p. 34). The goal for these findings serves to help clarify and potentially change the pathway for sport psychology education in Canada and use the results as leverage to impact universities and regulatory associations. Zaichkowsky (2006) urges graduate training programs in sport psychology throughout the world to “formalize interdisciplinary training that involves counseling psychology, sport science, education, and research” (p. 44). An applied sport psychology program containing course requirements in both disciplines, KES and PC, and bridging the gap between the two main branches of sport psychology would be an excellent answer to this dilemma. This
recommendation has been made in the literature (Silva, 1989; Silva, Meltzer, & Lerner, 2011; Stewart, 2017) and perhaps the difficulty in the creation of such a program lies in the amount of restructuring that would be necessary to create such a program. An overhaul of the current structure may be asking too much of university administrators, and rather, it might be more feasible to offer an interdisciplinary degree where students could have access to both KES and PC classes. Rather than changing where the courses are housed, an interdisciplinary program would require mandatory coursework in both KES and PC classes and allow its students entry to both faculties/departments.

**Directions for Future Research**

The current study focused on graduate programs, but further research could be conducted at an undergraduate level as it is speculated that there may be a larger number of sport psychology classes offered at that degree level. From there comparisons could be made between Bachelor, Masters, and PhD programs. Comparisons between each degree level would broaden our understanding of the entire university educational pathway available to young students looking to enter the field.

The current study was quantitative and focused on the classes and programs available in Canadian institutions, but it would be useful to do a qualitative examination of members of both CPA and CSPA’s educational pathways which prepared them for practice in applied sport and exercise psychology. Knowing what educational pathway was taken for those currently working in the field would give students a model to follow. It would also be useful to identify what programs and classes were accessible to them and evaluate what their recommendations are for the “ideal pathway” for those who wish to
seek education and subsequent practice in the field. This would also be valuable so as to
draw comparisons between the degrees and classes taken by Mental Performance
Consultants and Registered Psychologists.

It would also be useful to examine what students are currently doing to prepare
for their future practice and what their ideas are for what training should include. For
example, the research has suggested that obtaining degrees in both KES and PC is a
cumbersome path and that restructuring programs to accommodate both KES and PC
training would require substantial work. It was noted that some classes were restricted to
students of that faculty, but it would be useful to do further research on how many of the
clinical/counselling skills courses at institutions were closed and restricted to only PC
students and conversely how many sport and/or exercise psychology classes are closed
and restricted to only KES students. Data on the accessibility rather than the requirement,
as in this study, would be of further use to students wishing to pursue a career in the field.
For example, counselling skills courses at the University of New Brunswick are restricted
to MEd Counselling students and the sport psychology graduate course is offered through
the Faculty of Kinesiology. It would be useful for students in the MEd Counselling
program interested in sport psychology to be allowed to take the sport psychology course
offered in the MSc in Kinesiology and conversely for the MSc Kinesiology students
interested in sport psychology to be allowed to take the counselling skills courses.
However, as previously mentioned, this study did not examine whether courses are closed
to individuals within the faculty for all of the 331 programs examined, and the option to
be given special permission would have to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis making it
difficult to collect data on.
The current research was focused on the educational pathway for sport psychology practitioners and athlete mental health was brought up in the literature review as justification for consultants needing PC skills. Athlete mental health is a growing area of research and more could be done to broaden our understanding of this area. Research has just begun to scratch the surface on the prevalence of mental health issues in athletes now that the stigma is being reduced and more athletes are coming forward to discuss their mental health. More research could be done on athletes’ access to sport psychology services and expectations for practitioners. Knowing how many Canadian athletes currently access services from a sport psychology practitioner, what aspects of those services (performance enhancement or mental health services) they view as valuable, and what current athletes view as their services needs would help in understanding the education needs of practitioners and how they might best serve current client needs. This research area could be further expanded to examine athletes at different ages and competitive levels (provincial, national, or international) to draw comparisons between groups.

**Implications**

The current findings seek to aid in guiding graduate programs toward a curriculum that emphasizes training in both the psychological sciences and sport and exercises sciences by examining the current educational climate in Canadian universities. Counsellors interested in pursuing sport psychology practice would have to seek classes and training outside their faculties/departments and whether those classes are closed and restricted to KES students has not been examined. Lent (1993) wrote that counselling
psychologists are faced with an unprecedented number of practice options and that counselling psychology’s psychoeducational orientation can be brought to bear on the concerns of athletes. Counselling students interested in sport psychology should seek out education in sport and/or exercise psychology and practicum experiences in sport with the athletic population.

Those who are currently practicing in the field may have to audit their educational background and competencies. Silva (1989) spoke about already practicing consultants having to set their ego aside to admit that both KES and PC education are required in the field and to make the necessary changes. This may require some practitioners to obtain further education. Some practitioners have spoken about seeing these gaps in education and training after practicing in the field, which prompted them to return to school for further education (Williams, 2003). Practitioners who already have education in both KES and PC need to give back to the field as supervisors. The availability of supervised training opportunities for graduate students in a sport and/or exercise psychology context was not examined, however these training opportunities may be limited by the number of practitioners who are educated in both areas.

The results of this study imply that educational institutions need to do some amount of program restructuring to accommodate student interest in KES and PC coursework. The level of restructuring needed will depend on the institution. For example, some universities may be able to create an interdisciplinary program which allows students to enroll in both the KES sport and/or exercise psychology classes and the PC clinical/counselling skills classes. Other universities, such as Memorial University in Newfoundland, may be able to add a clinical/counselling skills course to the
curriculum requirements in their already existing MScK in Psychology of Sport, Exercise & Recreation program. While the onus appears to be on the individual to ensure that their education meets the certification requirements outlined by CSPA and AASP, universities could make this pathway more accessible for students by making these changes based on reviewing certification requirements.

Finally, for the athlete population, it is important to understand the difference between a registered psychologist and a mental performance consultant and to seek out a practitioner who meets their individual needs. Each practitioner brings a different educational background, set of skills, and area of expertise and it is the athlete’s (or guardian of the athlete’s) responsibility to vet the practitioner they are planning to consult with. If an athlete is experiencing mental health issues it is important for them to seek out a practitioner with adequate education, training, and experience in that area. It is also important for athletes to speak up and be educated on the services available to them. As an athlete, they should be asking does my NSO have someone on staff who fills this role? What is this individual’s title and area of competence? Do I have access to someone through the Canadian Sport Institute (CSI) or Centre (CSC) that works in this area and what are their title and credentials? Athletes could speak to these organizations about their needs and advocate for access to services that meet these needs.
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Exercise Psychology, 1, 139-154.


## Appendix

### Table 1

*Number of Graduate Programs in Canadian Institutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Psychology</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>KES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Acadia University</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Note. KES = Kinesiology/Exercise Science
Curriculum Vitae

Candidate’s full name: Samantha Leigh Stewart


2013/9 - 2014/5 Bachelor’s Honours, Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, University of New Brunswick, Thesis Title: Anxiety through the lens of the varsity athlete.

2009/9 - 2013/5 Bachelor's, Bachelor of Recreation and Sport Studies, Disciplinary - Minor Psychology, University of New Brunswick.


Romantic Relationships and Gender as Predictors of Occupational Self-efficacy, printed poster, presented at CPA’s 76th Annual National Convention, Ottawa, O.N., Canada June 4 - 6, 2015.

