LIFE AFTER SPORT: NCAA Student-Athlete Career Perceptions and Involvement

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Agenda

- The Research Study
- What Historical Research Says
- Study Results
- Implications for Higher Education and Recruitment
The Research Study
The purpose of this study is to understand the career aspirations of NCAA student athletes and their engagement with campus career development resources. The results of this study will be used to understand how university administrators can better prepare their athletes for employment after leaving the university.
Research Questions

1. Do student athlete perceptions of career readiness skills differ based on:
   - Gender
   - Academic Standing
   - Number of years as an NCAA Athlete
   - Race

2. Do student athletes who have participated in a career field experience perceive their participation in collegiate sports as positive preparation for their future career at a higher rate than student athletes that have not participated in a career field experience?

3. Does student athlete actual or planned engagement in university career center events and services differ based on:
   - Gender
   - Academic Standing
   - Number of years as an NCAA Athlete
   - Race
Methods

• Quantitative, Non-Experimental Study
• Survey Design
  • 64 Questions
  • 4-point Likert Scale
  • Administered over a 60 Day Period (Early 2020)
• Survey Components
  • Career resource usage and trust
  • Career preparation through sport participation
  • Engagement with career field experiences
  • Engagement with University Career Center (UCC) resources
  • Post-college career plans
Methods

• Participants
  • NCAA Division 1 Student-Athletes
  • NCAA Recognized and Regulated Sport

• Setting
  • Medium Sized Institution in the Southeastern United States
Research Team

• Stefanie Swanger, Doctoral Candidate
  Mercer University, Tift College of Education

• Dr. Carol Isaac, Associate Professor of Research
  Mercer University, Tift College of Education

• Kaitlyn Cresencia, Assistant Coach and Recruiting Coordinator
  Mercer University, Athletics/Women’s Basketball Team

• Dr. Barbara Lee, Research Consultant & Methodologist
  Keiser University & University of Florida
What Historical Research Says
Career Aspirations

- Less than 2% of football players, men’s basketball players, and men’s soccer players move from the NCAA to the professional arena (NCAA, 2020)

- Women’s sports face an even smaller percentage, with less than 1% of women’s basketball players moving on to play in the Women’s National Basketball Association (NCAA, 2020)

- Up to 43% of student-athletes expect to have a career related to sports after graduation (NCAA, 2016)
Career Preparation

• Athletes commonly exhibit
  • Strong athletic identity (Beamon, 2012; Brewer et al., 1993; Grove et al., 1997; Moiseichik et al., 2019)
  • Lack of career maturity (Kennedy & Dimick, 1987; Lau et al., 2013; Linnemeyer & Brown, 2010; Murphy et al., 1996)
  • Strict time restraints due to busy schedules (Carodine et al., 2001; Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Lally & Kerr, 2005)
  • Academic major clustering to alleviate eligibility concerns (Fountain & Finely, 2009; Navarro, 2014, 2015; Sanders & Hildenbrand, 2010)
University Response

• Communication and application of transferable skills to world of work  
  (Harrison & Lawrence, 2003; National Association of College and Employers, 2021; Navarro, 2014; Van Raalte et al., 2017)

• Integration of career programming with athletic department  

• Networking and role model by past athletes  (Harrison & Lawrence, 2003; Navarro, 2014; Weatherly & Chen, 2019)

• Connect interest and strengths with career opportunities through assessment and career field experiences  (Carodine et al., 2001; Payne & Driska, 2020; Riffee & Alexander, 1991)
Career Readiness

• Overall, white students perceive higher career readiness than their minority peers (t=2.080, p=.044)

• NACE Competencies
  • White students exhibited significantly higher levels of self-perceived career readiness over their minority peers in
    • *Oral and Written Communication* (t=-2.058, p=.044)
    • *Professionalism and Work Ethic* (t=-2.148, p=.039)
  • No statistically significant results based on Gender, Years as an NCAA, Athlete or Academic Standing

• Overwhelmingly students believe that sport has prepared them for the career and work environment, including communicating their skills orally and in writing

• 27% of respondents mentioned aspirations to go pro

Note: Career Readiness measured using the 2017 NACE Career Readiness Competencies
Career Field Experience and Career Readiness

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<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Have already participated in</th>
<th>Plan to participate in</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<td>Practicum</td>
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<td>Faculty-Led Research</td>
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<td>Medical Shadowing</td>
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<td>Student Teaching</td>
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<td>Clinical Rotations</td>
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<td>Study Abroad/Service Learning</td>
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1/3 did not feel that their athletic schedule permitted time to participate in a career field experience.
Career Resource Engagement

• Women were more likely to have previously engaged a personal appointment with a university career staff member (t=2.445, p=.018)

• Upper-class athletes (juniors, seniors, and graduate students) were more likely to participate in an appointment with career center staff (t=-2.291, p=.026)

• Student-athletes in their 3rd or more season were significantly more like to participate in a
  • university career center hosted career fair (t=-2.195, p=.033)
  • class presentation (t=-2.195, p=.033)
  • appointment with career center staff (t=-1.604, p=.005)

• 28.6% of survey respondents had not previously engaged with the resources, events, nor staff at their institution’s career center
Planned Career Resource Engagement

• Minority athletes plan to interact with the university career center through
  • attending a career fair (t=2.112, p=.039)
  • seek networking guidance (t=2.824, p=.007)
  • seek career decision making (t=2.052, p=.045)

• Student-athletes in their 3\textsuperscript{rd} or more season were significantly more likely to express a future desire to seek advice from the university career center on
  • salary negotiation (t=2.952, p=.005)
  • career decision making (t=2.339, p=.023)
Implications for Higher Education and Recruitment
• Connect student-athletes with career development resources, preferably starting on day one (Brown & Bohac, 1997; Carodine et al., 2001; Martens & Lee, 1998; Payne & Driska, 2020; Petitpas & Champagne, 1988; Van Raalte et al., 2017)

• Collaborate with Athletic Department to avoid isolation of athletes in “athlete-only” services (Riffee & Alexander, 1991)

• Understand that busy athletic schedules can prevent or deter engagement in the student activities like career development workshops, programs, and field experiences (Carodine et al., 2001; Lally & Kerr, 2005)

• Need for creativity in exposing students to non-sport opportunities and managing career field experiences (Carodine et al., 2001; Payne & Driska, 2020; Riffee & Alexander, 1991)

• Help athletes to identify their transferable skills; connect to the skills that employers want (Harrison & Lawrence, 2003; National Association of College and Employers, 2021; Navarro, 2014; Van Raalte et al., 2017)
References


Carodine, K., Almond, K. F., & Gratto, K. K. (2001). College student athlete success both in and out of the classroom. *New Directions for Student Services*, 93, 19-33


References


Questions and Contact Information

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