

Factors that impact the successful recruitment of student-athletes in collegiate athletics:
A synthesis of the research literature

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Abstract

In the world of intercollegiate athletics, the successful recruitment of student-athletes is essential to the prosperity of athletic programs. Coaches and recruiters spend countless time and resources recruiting the student-athletes that best fit their program, which makes efficiency in their process paramount. Each student-athlete is looking for something different, and it's up to coaches to attempt to uncover what is important to each athlete they're recruiting so they can attempt to tailor their efforts to that student. The purpose of this synthesis was to determine the most important factors student-athletes consider when making their college choice.

The literature used for this synthesis was collected using a number of searches on the EBSCO academic search complete database. Each of the 10 articles selected for the critical mass were peer-reviewed, and answered at least one of the research questions. Once selected, the articles were described and synthesized.

There were a number of results that pointed to trends in the importance of certain factors during recruiting based on demographic information such as gender, ethnicity, and size of school. The factors that influence a student-athlete's college choice process almost always involve a combination of athletic and academic-related factors. Many of the studies, however, had contrasting results, signaling recruiting preferences may be largely unique to each individual athlete.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In order for collegiate coaches to develop successful athletic programs, they need to recruit talented student-athletes who have the ability to compete at a high level of competition. The recruitment process isn't easy for these coaches, as potential student-athletes are oftentimes pulled in multiple directions by coaches hoping to land their next big recruit. As a result, schools place a heavy emphasis on efficient and effective recruiting, and are willing to pay for it. Typical collegiate recruiting budgets vary greatly between levels of competition (i.e. Division I, II, III, NAIA), but can extend high into the six or seven figure range at the highest level of collegiate athletics (Brady, Kelly, Berkowitz, 2015). Universities see these expenditures as an investment, given that successful sports programs typically lead to drastic increases in media exposure, interest from local residents, alumni, legislation, and most importantly, additional prospective student-athletes (Judson, James, Aurand, 2004).

Examples of the increased exposure for a college or university due to athletic success has been a constant theme throughout the history of collegiate sports, but can be easily traced back to 1984 when marketing experts dubbed the correlation between athletic success and increased applications "The Flutie Effect" (Silverthorne, 2013). The phrase is in reference to former Boston College quarterback Doug Flutie, who in the 1984 football season threw a "Hail Mary" game-winning pass against the University of Miami to win the game for his team. In the two years following the game, applications at Boston College increased by a drastic 30%, leaving colleges unable to deny the obvious connection between athletic success and interest in the university. Although it's unlikely that was the first instance of athletic success driving

increased interest in a university, the drastic spike in applications drew the attention of college administrators, validating the financial value of successful athletic programs.

Although the success of an athletic program stems from a number of different factors (coaching, execution of game plans, physical training, etc.), recruiting high-quality players is undeniably one of the most important components of a successful team. Simply put, without good players, it's difficult to win games and be successful. Therefore, if colleges want successful athletic programs and the benefits that come along with that, they must be willing to invest in recruiting. Just like every investment however, in order to be successful, research and knowledge are extremely important. Blindly allotting money to coaches and allowing them to recruit in whatever way they see fit is the practice of many athletic departments across the country, but may not be the best or most cost-effective solution.

The purpose of this study is to determine the most important factors student-athletes consider when making a decision about where to play their sport at the collegiate level. If coaches are able to determine what the potential student-athletes are most concerned with, they may be able to more efficiently and effectively recruit these athletes by appealing to their interests. Of course, not every student-athlete is the same, so this synthesis will also aim to determine how successful recruitment is different between different groups, including 1) athletes and non-athletes, 2) males and females, 3) athletes of different sports, 4) athletes of different ethnicities, and 5) athletes looking to attend large colleges vs. small colleges.

Operational Definitions

1. Major sports – Sports that commonly generate revenue for an institution (football, men's and women's basketball).
2. Small colleges – Refers to the level of athletic competition at the college or university. NCAA Division II, III, and NAIA schools.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that participants in each study answered their surveys and interview questions honestly
2. It was assumed that the data collection instruments and methods used in each survey are reliable and trustworthy

Delimitations

1. Studies had to be published after the year 2000.
2. Only studies that included college-aged students were included.
3. Studies had to include information on the college decision making process, particularly for athletes although studies involving non-athletes were also utilized for some comparisons

Limitations

1. Only one study utilized participants from both large and small schools, thereby greatly limiting the comparisons in that regard.
2. Since in every case participants had already chosen their school, a natural bias exists in each study which caused participants to want to defend their choice of school.
3. The results of most studies are useful only to the level or sport that is focused on, making it difficult to generalize results to a greater population.
4. No study examined the differences between college athletes and non-athletes, forcing a comparison between the results of two different studies.

Chapter 2

Methods

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methods used to collect relevant research in regard to the successful recruitment of student-athletes, based on a number of defining factors. This chapter will discuss the data collection, data analysis, and data coding processes.

Data Collection

All of the articles in the final critical mass were found using the Drake Memorial Library databases, particularly the EBSCOhost Academic Complete database. The database yielded a plethora of helpful results, which allowed for greater focus on the single database in the assumption that the best information on the topic was all condensed in that database. To confirm that point, similar searches in other databases were conducted yielding the same articles that had already been discovered. Every search conducted was limited to the years 2000-current, and were from scholarly, peer-reviewed sources.

The first search terms used in this research were *Athletic Recruiting AND gender*, which yielded seven results after limiting the search criteria to scholarly sources only. The search was intended to find articles related to the recruiting differences between males and females, but ended up yielding results that also related to other research questions. Two articles from this initial search were added to the critical mass, but more importantly both of these articles also resulted in a number of new keywords (i-e. *decision making, student-athlete*), and alternate articles from the references section. Since both of the articles had information relating to more than one research question, the pertinent information from each source was entered into a word document in order to track the possible categories and research question they may fit.

The second search used the keywords *Recruiting AND College Athletics*, both of which were present as keywords in the first two articles. This search yielded 46 results, however only one of the 46 was selected for the critical mass. While most of the articles pertained to recruiting, they did not match the topic of this synthesis, but rather focused more on other areas of student-athlete recruitment such as misconduct and violations. Despite the lack of useful articles from these keywords however, the article that was used had keywords that ended up yielding the vast majority of the rest of the critical mass. The search terms *College Choice AND Athletics* yielded 91 results, four of which were admitted to the critical mass. A similar search, *College Choice AND Athletes* yielded 75 results (many of which were similar), and two of those were also used for the critical mass. The last source was found using a backwards search from the references section of one of the articles already in the critical mass. Ultimately, the following journals represented the critical mass of articles in this synthesis: Journal of Marketing For Higher Education, Journal of Sport Management, College Student Journal, ICHPER-SD Journal Of Research, and Sport Journal.

Data Analysis

Out of the 10 articles selected for the critical mass, nine of those articles were quantitative studies. Of those nine quantitative studies, all utilized the survey method of data collection, surveying student-athletes on various factors related to why they chose to attend the college that they did. Appropriately, in almost every case, the surveys were named a “college choice survey”, although the factors that were tested varied from study to study.

Quantitative. There were plenty of similarities between a majority of the quantitative studies, particularly in the timeframe of when student-athletes were interviewed. In most cases, student-athletes were interviewed in the timeframe between their graduation from high school

and the start of their collegiate career. This was most often done by surveying the student-athletes at their collegiate orientation. In some cases, however, such as the study from Schneder, & Messenger (2012), participant's ages ranged from freshman to senior year in college. Another study done by Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman (2001) had a mean participant age of 21.2, suggesting not all of the participants were freshman.

Those two were also some of the only cases of studies that involved only one sport, with Schneder, & Messenger (2012) focusing on Division I men's ice hockey players, and Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman (2001) keying in on Division I football players. Every other study, with the exception of Ryan, Groves, & Schneider (2007), which looked solely at basketball players, utilized participants from a number of different sports, allowing for comparisons to be made. Each of the nine quantitative studies in the critical mass focused on either large (Division I), or small (NAIA or Division III) schools, with none of the studies utilizing participants from different levels of collegiate competition.

As mentioned previously, surveys were given to the student-athletes assessing the importance of various factors on some sort of Likert-type scale. The scales for the studies ranged from three to seven points, and the factors that were assessed also varied slightly from study to study. Judson, James, & Aurand (2004) tested the significance of only 12 different decision making factors, either eliminating or grouping some of the standard college choice factors, while other studies like Goss, Jubenville, and Orejan (2006), along with Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, and Palmer (2003) weighed 25 variables.

In all cases, some sort of demographic questions were included, with each study varying the degree to which demographic information was broken up. Means were taken for the significance of each decision making factor as a whole, and then split and compared for each

demographic group. In some cases, such as Judson, James, & Aurand (2004), a paired sample T-test was utilized to check for significant differences between consecutively ranked attributes. In other cases however, such as Schneder, & Messenger (2012), the mean scores on the scale were the extent of statistical analysis in the study.

Qualitative. In the only qualitative study utilized, a laddering technique was utilized, meaning each participant was asked to state a factor that impacted their college choice process, and once that factor was determined, a series of laddering questions were asked to link that factor to a more abstract personal value. This technique was utilized by Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman (2001), and sought to utilize the means-end theory to discover what attributes, consequences, and personal values led to the decision making process for Division I football players.

Coding of Data

The coding of useful data for this synthesis began with utilizing a document meant to place each research study into a preliminary category explaining which research questions they were useful in answering. Once each study was read through and determined to be a useful piece of research for this study, they were placed into an article grid which listed the author, title, source (cited in APA format), purpose, methods and procedures, analysis, findings, and discussion/recommendations. The commonalities/differences between studies was also noted in the final section of the article grid.

The subjects represented in this synthesis included a total of 3,814 participants from the ten studies. Five of the studies focused on large (Division I) schools, two looked solely at small (Division II, III, NAIA) schools, and three utilized a participant group from all three. Six studies

utilized participants from multiple sports, with four focusing only on athletes from one particular sport. Eight of the studies included both males and females, and compared the results between the two, while two of the studies included a participant group made up entirely of males. Nine of the ten articles had participants of different ethnicities, with only one made up entirely of African-Americans. Eight of the studies looked only at the recruitment of student-athletes, with the final two also looking at comparisons with non-athletes.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

This chapter will discuss each of the ten critical mass articles in relation to the methods used and the results within each study. Out of the nine quantitative and one qualitative study, results were found that suggest a number of different patterns in the recruitment of student-athletes based on demographic information. These results have been organized into three categories that present the information based on the most logical breakdown from the critical mass. The three categories used to organize this chapter were a) studies done using participants from large schools, b) studies done using participants from small schools, and c) studies done using participants from both large and small schools.

Studies with Participants from Large Schools

The first study in the critical mass was written by Judson, James, & Aurand (2004), and the purpose was to determine the priorities of student-athletes when selecting a college or university. The researchers also wanted to determine whether there were differences in those priorities based on the gender and ethnicity of the student-athlete, as well as the significance of those differences.

The 246 participants in this study were all incoming freshman set to play a sport at the Division I level. The participant group was limited to individuals who had not yet begun their collegiate career, in the hopes of avoiding any bias caused by on-campus experiences. As a result, the surveys were administered late in the summer, after the college decision making process was completed, but before the students became acclimated to the college environment. Two Division I institutions were utilized for this study; one from a top-tier athletic conference and the other from a “mid-major” athletic conference. The two universities were chosen so that

researchers could later compare the responses between the two levels of Division I athletics. In terms of the demographic breakdown of the participant group, 131 of the participants were male, with the remaining 115 being female. Seventy eight percent were white or Caucasian, 17% were African-American, and the other 4% were self-reported as other.

Each participant was asked to rank the effect of 12 different decision attributes on their college decision making process. Each attribute was ranked on a seven-point scale ranging from not important to very important. The attributes were developed based on conversations with Division I coaches, current student-athletes, recruits, and parents, and were then pre-tested and revised.

The findings in this particular study showed that in general, the number one attribute that impacts the school choice process for student-athletes is level of athletic competition. The overall academic reputation of the university's faculty, and desired major of the student-athlete also ranked high, indicating that student-athletes are looking at not only athletic but also academic factors when deciding on where to attend and play collegiate sports. The lowest rated factors included the ability to play right away, history of the sport's success at the university, and distance from permanent home.

When comparing between genders, the level of athletic competition was drastically more important to males than females, while overall academic reputation was more important to females. That trend remained true across all decision attributes, with females placing a greater emphasis on academic-related factors and males being impacted by athletic-related factors. The level of significance between different ethnicities was minimal, however there were a few categories that stood out. Ethnicities that were not white or African American placed the greatest

emphasis on distance from permanent home and ability to play right away, while African Americans put a premium on the level of athletic competition, and academic counseling support.

Although the timing of administering the surveys avoided the bias that could be created by involvement on campus, a different bias should realistically be considered based on the minimal amount of time between the college decision being made and the survey being administered. The lack of process time could cause these student-athletes to attempt to rationalize their decisions to attend their college, subconsciously altering their answers. Future research should also be done at other levels of competition (NCAA Division II, and III, NAIA), because despite the fact that little difference was found between high and low level Division I athletes, the results cannot be generalized to other levels of competition.

Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman (2001) conducted the only qualitative study that was used in this critical mass. The objective of their research was to examine the factors influencing the school choice decisions of collegiate student-athletes. They utilized the means-end theory, which attempts to uncover the more abstract elements associated with the decision making process such as consequences (benefits of a good education, potential to play professional sports, etc.), and personal values (sense of belonging, security, achievement, etc.).

The study was composed entirely of Division I football players, ranging in age to create a mean age of 21.2. 27 participants were included, 16 of which were Caucasian and 11 of which were African American. All 27 of the participants reported having been recruited by 20 or more schools. The laddering technique was used, which involved a one-on-one interview in which the interviewer first attempts to elicit the key attributes that play a role in the college choice decision (coaches, academic major, etc.). The interviewer then attempts to link that attribute to a more abstract personal value by asking the participant why it's important to them. If the participant

responds with a benefit, they're asked why that benefit is important to them, and the process continues until either the original attribute is linked to a personal value, or the participant no longer is able to answer the question. The process is then repeated for other college choice attributes. The results of the interview were coded and placed into a category of either an attribute, consequence, or personal value. Each individual element was then classified into categories representing college choice factors such as facilities, academics, coaches, etc. which were developed based on key words/phrases that were common during the interview process.

In general, the study was successful because some links were found between attribute and personal values for a number of college choice factors. The coach/coaching staff was one of the attributes commonly referred to, and it was found that there was a strong link between the coach/coaching staff and the athlete's ability to feel comfortable, as well as their level of fun and enjoyment. The coach/coaching staff along with facilities is also linked with an athlete's ability to improve themselves. Ability to improve, playing time, and chance to play on TV were all linked with the opportunity to play at the professional level, while academics were linked strongly with the student's ability to get a good job, and have a sense of security.

Although the results of this study are useful because they allow athletic recruiters to understand why their athletes are making the choices they do on a deeper level, the results should also be taken with a grain of salt. Because the laddering technique is such an abstract method of data collection that can result in a high variance in responses, the data that comes from those interviews should be used only for exploratory purposes.

Schneider, & Messenger (2012) took a slightly different approach from some of the previous studies, and looked specifically at the impact of athletic facilities on the recruitment of potential student-athletes. The study looked solely at Division I ice hockey players, and

compared the impact of facilities against a number of other factors in their school decision-making process.

Nineteen participants were chosen for this study, all of whom were Division I ice hockey players. Their class years ranged all the way from freshman to senior, and each had varying degrees of athletic scholarships. As a result, the data taken from the study was split and compared between scholarship and non-scholarship athletes. Data was collected from a college choice survey distributed to each of the participants which ranked 24 different college choice factors. Since the research had a focus on the impact of facilities, the general “facilities” category utilized in many previous surveys was split into different types of facilities such as weight training centers, game fields, and locker rooms.

The importance of each of the 24 factors was ranked on a five point scale, and the mean of each of those factors for each of the 19 participants was taken. Interestingly, none of the factors that involved athletic facilities ranked in the top five for this group of participants. Instead, the ability to play immediately, athletic-related financial aid, perceived future professional sports opportunities, school’s sport traditions, and location were the top five college choice factors after the mean was taken. The prospect of television exposure, residential facilities (dorms), schools win/loss record from the previous year, school colors, and college choice of high school friends were the top five least influential factors. In terms of the factors most closely related to the study, the participants ranked the weight training facilities as the sixth most important factor, and the home arena/ice rink 12th. There was very little variance between the top factors of scholarship and non-scholarship players, with the major difference being what would be expected, the financial aid packages. Scholarship players ranked financial aid received significantly higher than non-scholarship players.

The initial research question posed in this study was whether facilities played a major factor in the recruitment of Division I ice hockey players. Although the results of the survey show that it has a minimal impact, one of the limitations of the study may have impacted those results. While in most other studies involving the recruitment of college athletes facilities as a whole is one category, this study split up the general “facilities” factor into a number of separate categories. This could have influenced the impact that student-athletes placed on each of those facilities, placing less of an emphasis on each than they would of for the category “facilities” as a whole. Another major limitation to this study is that looks only at one sport, which disallows it from understanding the impact of facilities for the college choice of the general student-athlete. Not only will the impact of facilities be different between indoor and outdoor sports, each specific sport and level would also likely be different, so delimiting the participants to Division I ice hockey players provides only a narrow scope. Further research in this area should extend to not only other sports, but other levels as well.

Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, & Palmer (2003) conducted a study with the goal of determining whether the factors that influence college choice for high level student-athletes are different than research results based on non-athletes and the factors that influence them. The study was unique in that it underwent a new qualitative research study when examining the collegiate athletes, but used pre-existing data when comparing those results to non-athletes.

One hundred twenty six of 135 first year student-athletes at a major Division I institution were selected as participants for this study, and were asked to fill out the Intercollegiate Student-Athlete Questionnaire. The survey measured the degree to which 25 different factors impacted the college choice of these student-athletes. Demographic questions were also asked which gave researchers the ability to separate participants based on gender, ethnicity, state of high school

graduation, primary sport, and scholarship status. The breakdown of the participant group includes 57.1% males and 42.9% females, as well as 79.4% white athletes and 20.6% non-white. Sports were broken down based on revenue-generating vs. non-revenue generating, with football and basketball being the only sports classified in the revenue-generating category. A five-point scale was utilized in order to determine the influence of each factor, with one being the least significant and five being the most significant. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine frequencies, percentage means, and standard deviations between demographics.

As a whole, the five most influential factors determined by the sample group were degree program options, head coach, academic support services, type of community the campus was located in, and the school's sports traditions. The least influential factors were college choice of high school friends, the prospect of television exposure, financial aid, school colors, and opinions of high school teammates. The findings in this study were, in many ways similar to findings in other studies involving college choice for the general student. Two of the top five factors were academic (degree programs and academic support services), while a third was also non-athletics related (type of community the campus is located in). This emphasis on aspects of the campus not directly related to athletics is aligned with research from non-athletes, who generally consider a school's academic reputation as one of the top factors in their college decision making process. Factors that are typically associated with major Division I college sports, such as television exposure, were ranked as some of the least important factors in this study, further aligning the influencing factors of athletes and non-athletes.

Since the research about non-athletes utilized in this study was not taken from the same institution as the student-athletes surveyed, a limitation exists. Student populations can change drastically based on the type, size, and location of an institution, making the preferences of those

students different as well. Since this study did not specify which institutions the research about general students were taken from, the comparisons, although logical, should be taken with a grain of salt. What this study did further demonstrate however, is that coaches should place an emphasis on displaying the institutions academic accomplishments and highlights along with the athletic counterparts. Much of the literature has echoed this point, but perhaps none more than this study which found that two of the top three factors for student-athletes were academic-related, even at the highest level of collegiate competition.

Vermillion (2012) built on previous research in this realm with a study that sought to determine the factors that affect Division I student-athletes who decide to attend urban campuses. The study utilizes previous literature that identified similar factors for Division I student-athletes at traditional campuses, but adds to that literature by specifically examining urban campuses, on which very little research already exists. It also looks at every sport within one campus setting rather than examining one specific sport.

The participant group included a group of 101 student-athletes from an urban campus located in the southern high plains of the United States. Surveys were administered to select student-athletes from the campus, and after blank or incomplete surveys were discarded, the group of 101 student-athletes was final. Demographic questions were asked to differentiate between academic year (23.2% freshman, 30.3% sophomores, 29.3% juniors, 17.2% seniors), ethnicity (64.6% white, 30.2% African-American), and gender (65% female, 35% male). Participants were then asked to rank 32 college choice factors on a one to five scale. The surveys were administered online with the assistance of coaches and athletic administrators, who encouraged the student-athletes to fill them out. Students were ensured that the surveys were not only confidential, but anonymous.

A descriptive analysis was utilized in order to describe and identify the college choice factors for this group of athletes. Means were taken for each of the 32 factors, and it was determined that 87% of responses were above the midpoint (3.0) of the scale. Additionally, nearly half (47%) of the factors had means over 4.0. The five highest rated college choice factors found in this study were coaching staff, amount of financial aid or scholarship offered, support services offered to student-athletes, availability of resources, and opportunity to win a conference or national championship. The three lowest rated factors, all of which fell under the mean, were amount of media coverage, high school coach, and team's website and social media.

The researchers found that strong correlations existed between the factors that influence student-athletes at urban institutions, and previous research conducted with student-athletes at traditional campuses. For example, a mix of academic and athletic factors as the most influential are present in both cases, along with an emphasis on relationships, especially with coaches. The primary limitation in this study is that the university that was utilized does not have a football team, which reduces the number of responses as well as the generalizability of the results to other schools that do possess football programs.

Studies with Participants from Small Schools

The next study, which was conducted by Goss, Jubenville, and Orejan (2006), also sought to determine the most important institutional selection factors for its group of participants. This study, however, wanted to expand the comparison to not only gender and ethnicity, but also revenue vs. non-revenue sports.

This study utilized a total of 229 participants, all of whom were incoming freshman at small colleges. Three NAIA, and three Division III institutions were used in this process, making

up the 229 incoming student-athletes (123 male, 106 female). The participants were asked to weigh the importance of 25 different variables based on how much those variables influenced their decision to attend their school of choice. The responses were measured on a five point scale, with one indicating no influence and five indicating substantial influence. The surveys were administered in person when the researchers were on campus, but conducted in designated areas away from athletic administrators. This was done in an attempt to eliminate any bias associated with taking the surveys in the presence of authority figures.

In this study, the most influential factor overall was the category “degree programs offered”, which is an academic factor. The opportunity to play right away was the second most important factor, while head coach and academic support services were also listed as important factors. When comparing genders, four of the top five choice factors were the same, however they were not ranked in the same order. Females were the most influenced by degree programs, while males’ top factor was head coach (which ranked fourth for females). Opportunity to play ranked very high for both genders, as did social climate and academic support services. Athletic training facilities were factor number six for males, but did not make the top ten for females. A majority of factors were ranked similarly between revenue and non-revenue sports, with the exception of athletic facilities, which ranked second for revenue sports (4.12 mean), and seventh for non-revenue sports (3.40 mean).

This study differed from much of the other research on this topic in that when determining the cutoff between revenue and non-revenue sports (major and minor sports), women’s basketball was not included as a revenue sport, whereas in most other studies it was. This delimitation could alter some of the comparisons between revenue and non-revenue sports, especially since it means there are no female revenue sports included. Another limitation to the

study is the timeframe in which the surveys were administered. Since the researchers administered them in person when they were on each campus, student-athletes at different schools had been on campus for varying periods of time when they took the surveys, creating possible bias.

The third study done by Johnson, Jubenville, and Goss (2009) once again sought to identify the important college choice factors for student-athletes, this time looking at student-athletes competing at small, private NAIA institutions. The goal of the research was to determine the common trends in the decision making process of these athletes in order to enable athletic recruiters/coaches to more efficiently attract their prospective student-athletes.

The participants in the study were the student-athletes of eight of the nine members of an NAIA conference, who each provided student-athletes from baseball, softball, women's volleyball, and men's and women's basketball, tennis, soccer, and track, all of whom were entering freshman. Two hundred forty seven participants in total were used, 117 of which were male and 130 female. Demographic questions were asked of the participants to determine major or minor sports (99 major, 148 minor), scholarship level (51 full, 152 partial, 44 none), residency status (140 in-state, 107 out-of-state), and ethnicity (169 white, 38 black, 40 other). The surveys ranked 23 college choice factors on a five point scale ranging from not important to very important.

As a whole, the opportunity to play right away and the relationship with the head coach were the two most important factors for the sample conference, both of which are athletic, rather than academic-related factors. However, when responses were broken down based on the independent variables (demographic information given), there were differences found in the most important factors between genders and athletes from different sports. In eight of the 23 factors

tested in this study, significant differences were found between the responses of males and females. The top three factors were males were all athletic factors (opportunity to play right away, relationship with the head coach, athletic facilities), while females were more concerned with academic factors, highlighted by the fact that degree programs was the top factor among all females. When comparing athletes from different sports, significant differences were also found in seven of the factors tested. The biggest difference was the head and assistant coach relationships, which were both in the top four factors for major sports, but were much less significant for minor sports. No major differences were found between athletes of different scholarship levels, between in-state and out-of-state athletes, or between athletes of different ethnicities. The only two factors between ethnicities that showed significant differences were opportunity to play professional sports, and school colors, both of which student-athletes that were not either white or black ranked higher.

A possible limitation in this study was that many of the student-athletes that ranked the opportunity to play professional sports highly were not only different ethnicities, but were foreign to the United States, which could have resulted in them not understanding the landscape of collegiate sports in the US as well as their native counterparts.

Studies with Participants from both Large and Small Schools

Braddock II, Hua, & Dawkins (2008) conducted a study with the purpose of determining the significance of college athletic reputation on the college choice of African American high school students. The study looked at a number of factors that affect the decision making process for these students, but focused primarily on the effect of athletic reputation. It also looked at the differences between athletes and non-athletes in terms of the effect of athletic reputation.

The data for this study was taken from the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS), which was conducted by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2002. The overall sample consisted of over 17,000 responses, but only the 2,027 responses from African American students were utilized in this study. The importance of 18 different college choice factors were measured on a 1-3 scale, and various demographic questions were also asked to track differences between genders, and athletes vs. non-athletes.

The mean scores for each of the factors was taken, and then split up and compared based on the demographic questions mentioned above. A logistic regression analysis was used to compare the importance of athletic reputation between genders, athletes vs. non-athletes, and a few other demographic factors. Although a majority of the participants did not indicate that athletic reputation was "very important" in their college selection process, 69% of the total African American population surveyed did indicate that it was either "somewhat important" or "very important". Only 30% of males surveyed indicated that it was "not important", while 55% of females did. Students who participated in high school sports were, not surprisingly, much more influenced by athletic reputation, in fact nearly three times more than non-athletes.

This study is beneficial for this research because it not only compares the college choice preferences between high school African American athletes vs. non-athletes, it also examined the impact of a school's athletic reputation on the decision making process of athletes vs. non-athletes, which no other study has done. In fact, since most of the other studies did not compare college choice factors between athletes and non-athletes, this study helps make strides toward answering that research question. However, because of the delimitations of the study, the results can only be associated with that demographic, limiting the use of this study slightly. Future

research could be done to determine the impact of athletic reputation on students of all ethnicities.

Ryan, Groves, & Schneider (2007) conducted a study with the purpose of examining the college decision-making process of student-athletes looking to play basketball at the collegiate level. The researchers sought to understand why and how decisions are being made. The study utilized research that had previously been conducted identifying influences on student-athletes in their college decision process, but took it a step further by attempting to understand the process of forming the decision through the use of decision making paths. Decision making paths are, in this case, groups of factors that influence the decision-making process of student-athletes based not on their own perspective, but by an already established framework more generalizable to the typical student-athlete.

Although this study does not utilize its own unique group of participants, it does utilize data from dozens of different studies that have looked at the college decision-making processes of basketball players, specifically players who have the potential to earn income by playing basketball at the professional level at some point in their life. A two-step method was utilized wherein the researchers first conducted a meta-analysis of the previous studies in this area in order to develop a group of factors that influence the decision making process for student-athletes. Content experts with knowledge of basketball, recruiting, and experience in the college setting as an athlete or coach were recruited to develop this group of factors. The second phase of the study involved the use of both a word association methodology as well as a non-linear word program to establish decision making paths among the factors and themes that were developed in phase I. The results of both of these methods of establishing decision paths were then compared to verify the results based on similarities.

Phase I yielded a total of six themes, each of which consisted of 4-5 sub-categories. The themes included academic influences, coach influences, basketball program influences, personal influences, geographical influences, and financial influences. During phase II, the word association methodology utilized by the content experts yielded nine decision paths that each included components from personal influences, as well as future considerations. The non-linear word association program yielded six decision paths, which emphasized both past influences such as parents or high school coaches as well as future concerns like financial stability and academic success. When the two methods of creating decision paths were compared, the common theme derived was that the paths all included a starting point for the decision such as parents or high school coaches, an intermediate point to get to the eventual goal such as the coach or basketball program, along with future considerations. Specifically, the three verified paths that were the strongest included:

Path 1: a) glitz and attraction of the campus, b) coaching style, c) basketball as a dominant sport, and d) recognition status

Path 2: a) closeness to home, b) parents, c) maturity of the athlete, and d) quality of life after graduation

Path 3: a) parents, b) high school basketball coach, c) quality of education, and d) non-professional basketball job opportunities

This study was helpful in its ability to look deeper into not only the factors that influence the college decision making process for athletes, but it helped provide a rationale behind those factors and possible decision paths. Delimiting the study to basketball players only was a good way to ensure accurate and specific results, but creates a limitation in the generalizability of

those results to other sports. Future research could be done in other sports, along with comparing the decision paths of student-athletes between genders, ethnicities, etc.

Pauline (2010) conducted a study which looked at the factors that affect the college selection process for collegiate lacrosse players at the NCAA Division I, II, and III levels. The sport-specific study examines both men's and women's lacrosse, while also differentiating the results based on level of competition.

Seven hundred ninety two participants were chosen for the study, all of whom played on collegiate lacrosse teams in either the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States. Fifty four percent of the participants were female, with the remaining 45.3% being male. Other demographic questions found that 36.9% of participants attended Division I institutions, 30.6% attended Division II, and 32.6% Division III. 94.2% of the participants were Caucasian, with 1.8% being African-American, 1.5% Hispanic, and the remaining 1.3% Asian or other. The average age of the participant group was 19.7 years old, and they had played lacrosse for an average of 8.34 years. The participants ranged across different class years within their institutions, with 32.6% being freshman, 31.1% sophomore, 20.4% junior, and 15.9% senior.

The participants were asked to measure the importance of 53 different factors from a revised "Influential Factors Survey for Student-Athletes" on a scale ranging from one to five. The 53 factors were placed into five categories, which included athletic factors, academic factors, social atmosphere, coaching staff, and financial aid. Surveys were administered by the coaches who were originally contacted by the researcher. Coaches were asked to not only remind their athletes that the surveys were confidential, but also to not be present while the surveys were completed. After the surveys were submitted, means and frequencies were calculated for each

survey question and then broken down into the five major categories. MANOVA analysis was utilized to compare males vs. females, and across divisions for each of the five categories.

For the participant group as a whole, the five most influential factors were career opportunities after graduation, academic reputation of the university, availability of academic program or major, and reputation of academic major or program. The least five influential factors were knowing athletes at the university, ethnic/gender ratio at the school, media coverage of the team, knowing someone on the lacrosse team, and number of alumni in professional lacrosse. As can be clearly displayed by the amount of academic factors in the top five, the academic category had the highest mean, and was followed by coaching staff, social atmosphere, financial aid, and athletic factors, which surprisingly had the lowest mean among the categories. When comparing genders, male athletes placed a greater emphasis on the factors related to athletics and coaching staff, while females were more influenced by financial aid. Across divisions, three of the five categories showed significant differences between the three NCAA divisions tested. Divisions II and III players were more influenced by academics than Division I, and Division II players also placed a greater emphasis on both coaching staff and financial aid than did the other two divisions.

Limitations existed in this study in the method through which the surveys were administered. Although coaches were instructed to inform their players that surveys were confidential, not having the researcher present while the surveys were administered poses the possibility of inaccurate or inconsistent procedures. The results could have leaned heavily toward academic factors because a bias existed where student-athletes filled out the surveys with answers they thought their coach would approve of. However, the results of this study, as they

stand, reinforce the point once again that academic factors play a huge role in the recruitment of student-athletes.

Chapter 4

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main conclusions found in relation to recruiting in college athletics and the similarities/differences in factors between the areas addressed in the research questions. Despite the occurrence of some common trends in the student-athlete decision making process, the overall analysis of this study, which will become apparent, is that the school choice process is largely unpredictable, and depends primarily on the individual.

R.Q. #1: How Successful Recruitment is Different between Athletes and Non-Athletes?

When comparing the college choice factors between athletes vs. non-athletes, two of the studies in the critical mass directly compared the two, while several others were useful in displaying the correlation between the two. The study done by Letawsky, et. al (2003) found that three of the top five influential factors for Division I student-athletes were non-athletic related factors that align with research on college choice factors of non-athletes. Degree program options was the driving factor, just as it was in the study done by Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan (2006). Academic support services, and type of community the campus is located in were also three of the top four factors in the Letawsky study, demonstrating that non-athletic factors are often the driving forces behind athletes' decision-making process.

That point was further established in the Pauline (2010) study, which found that the top five college choice factors for collegiate lacrosse players were non-athletic related factors. Degree programs offered (re-named academic program or major for this study) was among the top five factors once again, as were career opportunities after graduation, academic reputation of the university, overall reputation of the university, and reputation of the academic major. In fact,

this study found that of the five categories formed from the 53 factors tested, athletic-related factors had the least influence on this group of participants. This is significant because research involving non-athletes cannot involve athletic-related factors aside from traditions and schools athletic success. The issue, however, is that although this study incorporated both males and females, only one sport was looked at. Furthermore, nearly 95% of the participants were of the same ethnicity, limiting the generalizability of the study greatly.

Other studies related to this question found that athletic-related factors were the driving forces behind the college choice process for student-athletes, such as the study by Judson, James, & Aurand (2004) which found that level of athletic competition was the top influencer. Johnson, Jubenville, & Goss (2009) discovered that the opportunity to play right away was the top factor for NAIA student-athletes, and Schneider, & Messenger (2012) corroborated that point by finding the same with their sample of Division I ice hockey players. Studies such as these that find athletic factors as the driving force behind decision making directly contrast the research preceding it that would suggest the similarities between athletes and non-athletes outweigh the differences. Since non-athletes would not logically take factors such as playing time or athletic competition into account when making a college choice, differences therefore must exist between the two groups.

The other study that directly compared athletes and non-athletes was done by Braddock II, Hua, & Dawkins (2008), and looked at the impact of athletic reputation on the college choice process. Somewhat predictably, the study found that athletes place a greater emphasis on the school's athletic reputation, however 69% of the entire participant group indicated that athletic reputation was either "very important" or "somewhat important" in their decision making process.

Overall, the studies that either directly or indirectly compared the college choice process of athletes and non-athletes had conflicting results. While some found that the driving factors such as academics or community/location coincided, others discovered that athletes are more concerned with athletic-related factors. This contradiction between research is the first indicator that the college choice product is unique to the individual, and the grouping of important factors based on demographic information can only go so far.

R.Q. #2: How Successful Recruitment is Different between Males and Females?

The comparisons between male and female athletes is the only demographic comparison that saw every study in the critical mass come to a general consensus about the driving forces between college choice. Judson, James, & Aurand (2004) found that level of athletic competition was significantly more important to males than females, while overall academic and desired major being offered were more important to females. Johnson, Jubenville, & Goss (2009) also found that males were more concerned with athletic-related factors, specifically the opportunity to play right away, the relationship with the coach, and the athletic facilities. On the other hand, females were once again most concerned with degree programs.

Interestingly, many of the studies related to this research question indicated that the highest ranking factors for males and females were somewhat similar, involving both academic and athletic factors, however the differences came in the order of those factors. This point is demonstrated in the study by Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan (2006) which found that four of the top five factors were the same for males and females, but while males ranked head coach relationship as the top factor, females ranked that fourth, and were most influenced once again by degree programs.

When attempting to uncover why this trend exists, an assumption could be made that males are more interested in athletic factors because of the prospect of moving on to professional sports after college. The literature is very much split on this theory; in some cases such as in the study by Schneider, & Messenger (2012), the data shows that the prospect of playing professional sports is one of the most influential factors in the college choice process. Other studies such as Pauline (2010) directly negate that point, however, displaying that same factor as one of the least influential. Additionally, both the research involving small and large schools indicates the pattern that males are concerned with athletic-factors while females are concerned with academics. Since the vast majority of student-athletes attending small (Division II, III, & NAIA) schools typically do not have plans to continue their sport at the professional level, that would indicate there could be another reason for this trend.

Overall, there are clear trends that exist between the college choice factors of male vs. female student-athletes. Although recruiters should still approach generalizing student-athletes with caution, the amount of correlation between each of these studies provides enough verification to allow coaches and recruiters to tailor their recruiting efforts slightly based on which gender they're recruiting.

R.Q. #3: How is Successful Recruitment Different between Athletes of Different Sports?

As discussed in the operational definitions section of this research, major sports refer to sports that commonly generate revenue for an institution, which is why they're also often labeled as "revenue" sports. A number of articles compared the differences in school choice factors between major and minor sports, with studies once again reporting conflicting findings.

Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan (2006) found some differences between athletes of revenue and non-revenue sports, particularly surrounding factors involving athletic facilities. While facilities were the second ranked factor for revenue sports (4.12 mean out of 5), they ranked seventh (3.40 mean) for the non-revenue sports. On the other hand, however, the researchers found that degree programs were the top factor for both major and minor sports. The opportunity to play, head coach, and academic support services were also ranked similarly between the two. Other research has found significant differences between the major and minor sports when looking at the relationship with the head coach (Johnson, Jubenville, & Goss, 2009). While these two studies both examined small colleges, and even had crossover between the researchers conducting the studies, they found differences in results between the categories tested.

Further strides can be taken in this section by comparing the data between studies that focused only on a singular sport. For example, the study by Pauline (2010) focused on lacrosse players, which would constitute a minor sport, and found that academic factors were the primary influencers of the participant group. On the other hand, the Schneider, & Messenger study addressing the college choice decisions of Division I men's ice hockey players (a major sport) discovered that four of the top five factors were directly related to athletics. Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman (2001) examined another revenue-generating sport, and also found a number of athletic-related factors to be important driving forces in the college decision-making process.

Overall, some variance does exist between the college choice preferences of major and minor sports. While athletes coming to school to attend major sports may focus more on athletic-related factors such as facilities and coaches, minor sport athletes are more concerned with the academics, and look at athletic factors as a secondary measure when making their school choice. As with much of the research in this realm however, this assumption should not be generalized to

every student-athlete, as the importance of school choice factors truly does differ from athlete to athlete.

R.Q. #4: How is Successful Recruitment Different between Athletes of Different Ethnicities?

Much of the research in the overall critical mass included comparisons between the importance of college choice factors of different ethnicities. Judson, James, & Aurand (2004) found very little variance between different ethnicities in a majority of the factors tested. African-American's placed the greatest emphasis on level of athletic competition and academic counseling support, but not by a significant margin. Additionally, since athletic competition and academic support incorporate both athletic and academic influences, that variance does not necessarily indicate a pattern. That pattern is mirrored in the study by Johnson, Jubenville, and Goss (2009), which found that 21 of the 23 factors tested saw no significant differences between ethnicities. The only two factors ranked different between ethnicities were opportunity to play pro sports, and school colors, both of which were ranked higher by African-Americans, but neither of which was ranked high in comparison to other factors tested.

The Braddock II, Hua, & Dawkins (2008) study was useful in answering this research question because it looked specifically at the college choice preferences of African-American students. The finding that 69% of the African American student population finds athletic reputation as either "very important" or "somewhat important" can be compared with the Pauline (2010) study, which had a rate of over 94% of respondents who were white. This study found that athletic-related factors were the least influential. However, comparisons between these two studies are extremely limited, especially since the Braddock study incorporates both athletes and non-athletes, while the Pauline research only includes athletes from one particular sport.

Overall, there is very little variance between the college choice preferences of different ethnicities, which means that recruiters should not approach the recruitment of different ethnicities with different strategies. The few differences that were found were between factors that ranked in the lower tier of the decision-making process to start, and would likely not make a significant impact in landing a student-athlete for coaches.

R.Q. #5: How is Successful Recruitment Different between Athletes looking to Attend Large vs. Small Colleges?

For the most part, potential student-athletes are either recruited to small (Division II, III, or NAIA) colleges OR large (Division I) universities based on their athletic talent level. Some exceptions exist with student-athletes who are talented enough to play at the smaller Division I institutions, but could also excel at the top-tier Division II and III programs. However, coaches at each level can get a general sense of what the types of student-athletes they're looking for are most interested in.

Only one of the studies in this critical mass directly compares the college choice preferences of student-athletes across divisions within a singular study. Pauline (2010) found significant differences in three of the five categories tested. Perhaps not surprisingly, student-athletes from smaller schools place a greater emphasis on academic-related factors than athletes from larger schools. Additionally, higher level athletes are more concerned with financial aid, especially related to athletics.

Most of the other articles in the critical mass focus solely on one level of competition, however comparisons can be made across studies in one case. Vermillion (2012) discovered that the top factor influencing student-athletes who decide to attend urban Division I schools (major

institutions) was coaching staff, following by amount of financial aid / scholarship. Schneider, & Messenger (2012) also had athletic-related financial aid as a top-three factor, along with perceived future sporting opportunities for the Division I ice hockey sample group. On the other side, Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan, which looked at student-athletes from small schools, found degree programs offered followed by opportunity to play right away as the two major factors.

Relationships with the head coach was typically ranked in the top five regardless of whether the school in question was large or small, but a majority of the other categories were quite different. Financial aid as it relates to athletics was far more prevalent in the studies done at larger, Division I institutions, likely because many smaller institutions either do not have as many scholarships to give away, or are not able to offer athletic scholarships at all. Overall, the primary differences between large and small schools and the preferences of the athletes that attend them were both the financial factors associated with athletics, and the higher emphasis on athletic-related factors for larger institutions.

Chapter 5

Conclusions/Future Research

This chapter will discuss the conclusions derived from the critical mass articles, as well as the recommendations for future research and solutions in regard to the successful recruitment of college student-athletes based on gender, sport played, ethnicity, large vs. small schools, and the differences from non-athletes.

Conclusion

After analyzing the data and synthesizing the results of the articles in the critical mass, there are a few ideas that can be agreed upon based on similarities throughout all of the articles. The first is that the factors that influence a student-athlete's college choice process almost always involve a combination of athletic and academic-related factors. Oftentimes, coaches and recruiters focus solely on displaying the athletic accomplishments of their school because that is where their expertise lies, but successful recruiters should be able to also display the academic accomplishments and offerings of a college or university.

In fact, not only were academic factors just as important as their athletic counterparts, in many cases the student-athletes suggested that they were more important. Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan (2006) found that the types of degree programs offered were the number one factor influencing school choice for their participant group, which was also the case for the study done by Letawsky, et. al (2003). Others like Schneider & Messenger (2012) and Judson, James, & Aurand (2004) found athletic-related factors such as level of athletic competition or ability to play immediately as the top factors impacting school choice, although those studies also included academic factors somewhere in the top five. Overall, each of the studies that focused on ranking factors saw at least one academic and athletic-related factor somewhere above the mean.

The other major theme that can be drawn from this research is that although different studies were able to find trends when comparing recruiting across different demographics, in most cases the results did not match up between different studies. The lack of consistency indicates just that; a lack of consistency between what different athletes are looking for when making their choice regarding where to attend college. Each athlete is different, so making generalizations based on demographic information is not the best practice.

Studies like the one conducted by Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman (2001) can help overcome the lack of useful information about targeting athletes based on demographic information by taking a deeper look into how personal values influence the college choice factors. The ability to link the most important factors for student-athletes to personal values from their upbringing could be extremely useful to coaches, who could be able to reverse the research done and target athletes based on personal values.

Future Research

Future studies should be completed using the laddering technique and means-end theory utilized by Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman (2001). This study made strides in gaining a deeper understanding of how personal values influence decision-making factors for college athletes, but was extremely limited in its sample population, using only Division I football players. Examining athletes in different sports, genders, ethnicities, and levels and comparing whether the trends in the ladders are similar would be an important area to continue researching.

Further research should also be done comparing the college choice factors between athletes that play indoor vs. outdoor sports. Much of the research that compares different sports focuses on the revenue vs. non-revenue generating distinction, but factors such as facilities,

location of the school (due to weather), etc. could be significantly different to student-athletes based on whether their sport is played indoor or outdoor.

Lastly, future research should be done about the impact of social media on the recruitment of the new generation of student-athletes. Much of the current research is from the timeline of the millennial generation, and does not place much (if any) emphasis on the impacts of social media on the recruitment of student-athletes. As the social media landscape continues to evolve, researchers should at least consider the impact of social media on the college choice of student-athletes who have now grown up in the social media age.

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Appendix A: Article Grid

Author	Title	Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities /Differences
Kimberly M. Judson, Jeffrey D. James, Timothy W. Aurand	Marketing the University to Student Athletes : Understanding University Selection Criteria	Judson, K. M., James, J. D., & Aurand, T. W. (2004). Marketing the university to student-athletes: Understanding university selection criteria. Journal Of Marketing For Higher Education, 14(1), 23-40. doi:10.1300/J050v14n01_02	The purpose of this study was to determine the priorities of prospective student-athletes when selecting a college or university to attend, and whether or not there are differences in these priorities based on gender and ethnicity	Participants: 246 student-athletes of incoming classes at two Division I institutions (one from a top-level athletic conference and one from a mid-major athletic conference (used only incoming student athletes so that their perceptions would not be altered by on-campus experiences). Tests were administered in late summer at the beginning of the student-athletes first academic year. 78% of the respondents were white or	Analysis of variance testing was utilized to test for significant differences across decision attributes. A paired sample T-test was also used to check for significant differences between consecutively ranked attributes. The significance of the attributes was then broken up to demonstrate the differences between male and female, and white, African American,	The study found that in general, the number one attribute that impacts the school choice process for student-athletes was level of athletic competition, followed by overall academic reputation of the university's faculty, and desired major of the student-athlete. Academic reputation of the department of desired major, relationship developed with coaches prior to decision, quality of athletic facilities, academic counseling support, and relationship developed with	Limitations: Timing of administering the survey. Surveying the student-athletes directly before making their decision could be considered a violation of NCAA rules, but waiting until after they had already made their decision could cause them to rationalize their decision, therefore altering their answers. Recommendations: -In general, student-athletes place the greatest emphasis on level of competition, which administrators

				<p>Caucasian, 17% were African American, and 4% were something other than white or African American. There were 131 males and 115 females.</p> <p>Data Collection: Participants were given surveys in which they were asked to rate the importance of twelve decision attributes that may have influences their decision on where to attend school. The decision attributes were determined by speaking to Division I coaches, current student-athletes, recruits, and parents, and then were pre-</p>	<p>and other.</p>	<p>team members prior to decision also ranked very high (over 5 out of 7). Opportunity to play right away, history of sports success at the university, distance from permanent home, and friend/relative is an alum ranked the lowest.</p> <p>Level of athletic competition was drastically more important to males than females, while overall academic reputation and desired major being offered were far more important to females. History of sports success was more important to males, though it was not importantly to either gender compared with other factors. When comparing the attributes</p>	<p>should consider when developing schedules and/or deciding whether to join a particular conference.</p> <p>-Focusing recruiting efforts (brochures, official visits, etc.) on the attributes most important will not only reduce recruiting costs but increase effectiveness</p> <p>-Future research intends to expand the search to Division II and III institutions, but since there was very little variance between athletes in a top-level athletic conference and mid-major athletic</p>
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				<p>tested and revised. Surveys were administered in-person with the researcher present to address any questions the student-athletes may have. Answers were on a seven-point scale ranging from not important to very important.</p>		<p>between ethnicities, there was very little variance in most of the categories, particularly the relationships developed with both the coach and the team. Ethnicities that were not white or African American placed a far greater emphasis on distance from permanent home and the opportunity to play right away, while African americans placed the greatest emphasis on level of athletic competition, and academic counseling support</p>	<p>conference, it leads me to believe that there may be little variance between levels of competition in intercollegiate athletics.</p>
Benjamin D. Goss, Colby B. Jubenville, Jaime Orejan	An Examination of Influences and Factors on the Institutional Selection	Goss, B. D., Jubenville, C. B., & Orejan, J. (2006). An examination of influences and factors on the institutional selection processes of	This study looked at which institutional selection factors are important in the school selection process of small-college	Participants: 229 incoming freshman student-athletes (123 male, 106 female) from six institutions (three NAIA, three Division III) were	The mean scores for each of the 25 categories were looked at, and then the top 10 most significant factors were then	The most influential factor was “degree programs offered”, which is an academic factor. It was followed by opportunity to play (athletic	*One of the delimitations was that used was the women’s basketball was not considered a revenue sport – only football and men’s

<p>Processes of Freshman Student-Athletes at Small Colleges and Universities</p>	<p>freshmen student-athletes at small colleges and universities. Journal Of Marketing For Higher Education, 16(2), 105-134. doi:10.1300/J050v16n02_05</p>	<p>student-athletes, including the differences between males and females, revenue vs. non-revenue sports, as well as looking specifically at different factors including degree programs, location, reputation, communication methods, and benefits (academic programs, size, religious affiliation, etc.)</p>	<p>selected as participants.</p> <p>Data Collection: Participants were asked to weigh the importance of 25 different variables based on how much they influenced their decision to attend the given college. The responses were measured on a five point scale, with 1 indicating no influence and 5 indicating a great deal of influence. Surveys were randomly administered to student-athletes during researchers' visits to each campus. Student-athletes completed the surveys in areas away from both the researchers and athletic administrators.</p>	<p>examined further to determine the differences between groups (primarily the differences between gender)</p>	<p>factor), and then head coach and academic support services.</p> <p>When comparing between genders, four of the top five choice factors were the same, however they were not ranked in the same order. Females were most influenced by degree programs, while males top factor was head coach (which ranked fourth for females). Opportunity to play ranked very high for both genders, as did social climate and academic support services. Athletic training facilities were factor number six for males, but did not make it to the top ten of the females list.</p>	<p>basketball</p> <p>-The major factors involve a combination of academic and athletic factors, as the top four overall factors involve two of each.</p> <p>-Similar to other studies, female student-athletes tend to place a greater emphasis on academic factors instead of athletic factors.</p> <p>-The differences between revenue and non-revenue sports were very minor, with nearly all of the top five factor categories being equal.</p>
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						<p>Degree programs were the top factor for both revenue and non-revenue sports, but while athletic facilities were No.2 for revenue sports (4.12 mean), they were seventh for non-revenue sports (3.40). Opportunity to play, head coach, and academic support services ranked similarly between revenue and non-revenue sports.</p>	
<p>Gary R. Johnson, Colby Jubenville, Benjamin Goss</p>	<p>Using Institutional Selection Factors to Develop Recruiting Profiles: Marketing Small, Private Colleges and</p>	<p>Johnson, G. R., Jubenville, C., & Goss, B. (2009). Using institutional selection factors to develop recruiting profiles: Marketing small, private colleges and universities to prospective</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to identify the important college choice factors for student-athletes at small, private NAIA institutions. It sought to determine the common trends in the decision-</p>	<p>Participants: Eight of the nine members of an NAIA conference provided participating student athletes from baseball, softball, women’s volleyball, and men’s and women’s basketball, tennis, soccer,</p>	<p>The Student-Athlete college choice profile was utilized, and demographic questions were added. Mean and standard deviation were determined for each of 23 college choice</p>	<p>As a whole, the opportunity to play right away, and relationship with the head coach were the two most important factors for the sample conference as a whole. However, when responses were broken down based on demographic</p>	<p>-Many of the respondents that ranked the opportunity to play sports highly were not only of different ethnicities, but were foreign to the United States, begging the question of whether or not they understand</p>

<p>Universities to Prospective Student Athletes</p>	<p>student athletes. Journal Of Marketing For Higher Education, 19(1), 1-25. doi:10.1080/08841240902904513</p>	<p>making process of these athletes in order to enable athletic recruiters to more efficiently attract prospective student-athletes</p>	<p>and track, making up the total of 247 student-athletes, all of whom were entering freshman. The responses were then split up between major sports (men's/women's basketball, baseball, Softball), and minor sports (men's/women's tennis, golf, volleyball, men's/women's soccer, men's/women's track), and also between gender, scholarship level (full, partial, none), residency status (in-state or out of state), and ethnicity.</p>	<p>factors to determine the significant differences between groups. It was then broken up the same way between the different groups mentioned in the participant section.</p>	<p>information, there were differences in importance factors between genders, and athletes from different sports, indicating the significance of those variables in this study. Gender. In eight of the 23 factors tested, there were significant differences between the responses of males and females. The top three factors for males were the opportunity to play right away, the relationship with the head coach, and the athletic facilities, while females were primarily concerned with more academic-based factors, with degree programs offered being the top factor amongst females surveyed. Between</p>	<p>the collegiate and professional landscape in the US as well as their US counterparts. Especially since the level of division tested in this study is rarely a level that yields professional athletes. -This study created a general profile for student-athletes are the sample conference, making it useful to each institution given the fact that member schools of a conference typically share similar athletic and academic profiles, however it was recommended that each member school tweak the results of the study to better target the exact</p>
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				<p>survey. The number of participants was verified by the athletic directors.</p>		<p>Sports. Significant differences were also found between major and minor sports, with seven of the 23 factors showing significant differences. The biggest difference was the head and assistant coach relationships, which were both in the top four factors for major sports, but were much less significant for minor sports. Other. No major differences occurred between athletes of different scholarship levels, between in-state and out of state athletes, and between athletes of different genders. The only two categories that students of different</p>	<p>student-athletes that fit their specific target market.</p>
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						ethnicities ranked significantly differently were the opportunity to play pro sports, and school colors.	
David B. Klenosky, Thomas J. Templin, Josh A. Troutman	Recruiting Student Athletes : A Means-End Investigation of School-Choice Decision Making	Klenosky, D.B., & Troutman, J.A. (2001). Recruiting student athletes: A means-end investigation of school-choice decision making. <i>Journal Of Sport Management</i> , 15(2), 95.	The purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing the school choice decisions of collegiate student-athletes using the means-end theory. The study goes a step further than most of the literature on school choice selection for athletes, and examines more abstract elements such as consequences (benefits of a good education, potential to play professional sports), and personal values (sense	-The study was composed entirely of Division I football players. 27 subjects participated, 16 of which were Caucasian and 11 of which were African-American. The mean age of the participants was 21.2, and each reported having been recruited by more than 20 schools. -The laddering technique was used, which involves a one-on-one interview in which the interviewer first elicited the key attributes that played a key	The interview process resulted in an average of 3.5 ladders per-subject, which were then coded and placed into a category of either attribute, consequence, or personal value. Each element was then classified into facilities, academics, coaches, etc. which were developed based on key words/phrases that were common during the interview process. After the data was coded, an	Some links were found connecting factors/attributes influencing college choice for these athletes and the consequences and values. The coach/coaching staff was one of the attributes commonly referred to, and through the laddering technique it was found that the coaching staff helps athletes feel comfortable, and increases their fun and enjoyment. The coach/coaching staff, along with facilities also linked with an athletes ability to improve themselves. Ability to improve, playing time,	-This study differed from many of the other studies, because it sought not only to determine which factors are important, but used qualitative methods to attempt to uncover why they are important using a means-end theory approach -Since the sampling and analytical procedures used had limitation, the study is exploratory in nature and should be used only as an introduction to the means-end theory in student

			of belonging, security, achievement, etc.)	role in the college choice decision, and asks the participant why that factor is important to them? If the participant responds with a benefit, they're then asked why that is important to them, and the questions continue in that way until the original factor that was elicited can be linked to a more abstract personal value.	implication matrix was created to determine the linkages between attributes, consequences, and values.	and chance to play on TV were all linked with the opportunity to play at the pro level. Academics were also mentioned frequently, and corresponded with the students ability to get a good job, and a sense of security.	athlete college choice process -The study should be able to help college coaches, giving them a deeper understanding of why different factors effect student-athletes college choice, allowing them to provide information linking the attributes, desired benefits, and personal values to potential student-athletes -Future studies can collect more data from athletes across different divisions, different schools, and different sports
Ray Schneider, Steve Messen	The Impact of Athletic Facilities	Schneider, R., & Messenger, S. (2012). The impact	The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of	19 Division I men's ice hockey players were selected to be	The importance of each factor was ranked on a	The top five most influential factors for college choice in this study	AREA FOR FUTURE STUDY: The impact that facilities

<p>ger</p>	<p>s on the Recruitment of Potential Student-Athletes</p>	<p>of athletic facilities on the recruitment of potential student-athletes. <i>College Student Journal</i>, 46(4), 805-811.</p>	<p>athletic facilities, as well as other college choice factors on the decision making process of Division I ice hockey players. The study compares the impact of facilities against a number of other factors.</p>	<p>participants, and each completed a college choice survey ranking 24 college choice factors. The sample group represented players from each class year (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), and had varying degrees of athletic scholarships. The results were then split and looked at between scholarship vs. non-scholarship players, and the differences between responses were examined. Since the study was focused on facilities, different types of facilities were examined, including weight training centers, game fields, and</p>	<p>1-5 scale, and the mean of each factor between the 19 participants was taken.</p>	<p>were ability to play immediately, athletic-related financial aid, perceived future professional sporting opportunities, school's sport traditions, and location. The five least influential factors were prospect of television exposure, residential facilities (dorms), schools win/loss record from the previous year, school colors, and college choice of high school friends. In regards to facilities, weight training facilities finished as the sixth most important factor, while home arena/rink finished at the 12th. There was little difference</p>	<p>and/or climate have on athletes who play indoor vs. outdoor sports -This study focused on only one division, sport, and gender, and did not categorize the results based on any demographic information except for amount of athletic financial aid given. -The results of the study are useful in that they eliminate the assumption that facilities play a large role in the decision making process of potential collegiate athletes, although the study should not be associated with any athlete aside</p>
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				locker rooms.		<p>between the top factors between scholarship and non-scholarship players, with the major difference being that athletic financial aid ranked at the top of the scholarship players.</p> <p>The initial question sought to find out what type of impact athletic facilities had on the recruiting of Division I men’s ice hockey players, and based on this study it was determined that facilities have a minimal impact.</p>	<p>from Division I hockey, since previous studies have proved that the factors effecting student-athletes decision making process often differ between demographics.</p> <p>-Since the facilities sections were split up, student-athletes may have placed less of an emphasis on each than they would have if the category was all grouped into one.</p>
Jomills Henry Braddock II, Lv Hua, Marvin P. Dawkins	College Athletic Reputation and College Choice Among African American High School Seniors: Evidence from	Braddock II, J.H., Hua, L., & Dawkins, M.P. (2008). College athletic reputation and college choice among African American high school seniors:	This study aims to determine the significance of college athletic reputation for African American high school students deciding which college to attend.	The date for the study was taken from the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS), which was conducted by the US Department of Education’s National Center for Education	The mean scores were taken for each of the factors tested, and were then split up between males and females. A logistic regression analysis is	Although a majority of the participants did not indicate that athletic reputation was “very important” in their college selection process, 69% of the total African American population	-This study is beneficial for this research because it not only compares the college choice preferences between high school African American athletes vs. non-athletes, it also

<p>the Educational Longitudinal Study</p>	<p>Evidence from the educational longitudinal study</p>	<p>Although the study also identified other factors that effect the college choice process for African Americans, it was primarily examining the effect of athletic reputation.</p>	<p>Statistics (NCES) in 2002. The overall sample consisted of over 17,000 responses split between different ethnicities, but only the 2,027 responses from African Americans were utilized in this study.</p>	<p>then conducted to compare the importance of athletic reputation between genders, SES, standardized achievement score, and athletes vs. non-athletes.</p>	<p>surveyed did indicate that it was either “somewhat important” or “very important”. Only 30% of males surveyed ranked athletic reputation as “not important”, while 55 % of females did.</p>	<p>examined the impact of a schools athletic reputation on the decision making process of athletes vs. non-athletes, which no other studies had done.</p>
			<p>-The importance of 18 different college choice factors were measured on a 1-3 likert-type scale. Demographic questions were also asked to track differences in responses between genders, standardized test scores, athletes vs. non-athletes, and school urbanicity. For the purposed of my research, I focused on the section</p>		<p>African American seniors who participated in high school sports were not surprisingly much more influence by athletic reputation: nearly three times more than non-athletes.</p>	<p>-Since very few factors that have strong effects on student-athletes (facilities, coaches, etc.) can be compared to their non-athlete counterparts, examining athletic reputation and comparing athletes vs. non-athletes helped make strides in answering that research question.</p>
						<p>-The results of this study show that there is differences in the</p>

				<p>comparing athletes vs. non-athletes, as well as the general results of impact of athletic success on the African American high school population as a whole.</p>			<p>importance of college choice factors between athletes and non-athletes, however the study cannot be extended to demographics outside of African Americans. Therefore, similar studies can be done which encompass more demographics</p>
<p>Nicole R. Letawsky, Raymond G. Schneider, Paul M. Pedersen, Carolyn J. Palmer</p>	<p>Factors Influencing the College Selection Process of Student-Athletes: Are Their Factors Similar to Non-Athletes?</p>	<p>Letawsky, N.R., Schneider, R.G., Pedersen, P.M., & Palmer, C.J. (2003). Factors influencing the college selection process of student-athletes: Are their factors similar to non-athletes?. <i>College Student Journal</i>, 37(4), 604-610.</p>	<p>The purpose of the study is to determine whether the factors that influence college choice for high level student-athletes are different than research results focused on non-athletes and the factors that influence them.</p>	<p>126 (of 135) first year student-athletes at a major Division I institution were selected as participants in the study. The Intercollegiate Student-Athlete Questionnaire was utilized, which sought to explore the degree to which 25 different factors impacted the college choice of these</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine frequencies, percentage, means, and standard deviations between demographics. Ethnicities were broken between groups of white and non-white, and state of high school were split based on whether the school was in the same</p>	<p>The five most influential factors determined by the sample group as a whole were degree program options, head coach, academic support services, type of community the campus was located in, and the schools sports traditions. The least influential factors were college choice of high school friends, the</p>	<p>-Multiple studies have now found that the chance of playing televised games are not an important factor for student-athletes, so although it's important for the colleges to get high-quality athletes to generate revenue from televised games, it's not a factor that they should</p>

				<p>student-athletes. Demographic questions were asked that gave researchers the ability to separate participants based on gender, ethnicity, state of high school graduation, primary sport, and scholarship status. A 5-point scale was utilized to determine the influence of each factor.</p> <p>The sample was 57.1% male, and 42.9% female. 79.4% of respondents were white, with 20.6% being non-white.</p>	<p>state as the college attended or not. Sports were also separated based on whether or not it was revenue-generating, leaving only football and basketball in the revenue-generating category.</p>	<p>prospect of television exposure, financial aid, school colors, and opinions of high school teammates.</p>	<p>focus on in recruiting</p> <p>-While most coaches focus on highlighting athletic accomplishments to recruits, more focus should be placed on also highlighting academic accomplishments and services</p>
<p>Cory J. Ryan, David Groves, Raymond Schneider</p>	<p>A Study of Factors that Influence High School Athletes to</p>	<p>Ryan, C.J., Groves, D., & Schneider, R. (2007). A study of factors that influence high school athletes to</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to examine the decision-making process of student-athletes</p>	<p>Although this study does not utilize its own unique group of participants, it does utilize data from dozens of different</p>	<p>Phase I yielded a total of six themes, each of which consisted of 4-5 sub-categories. The themes</p>	<p>When the results of both processes for developing decision paths are compared, the paths that are verified show a common</p>	<p>-This study was helpful in that it dove deeper into other studies that had been conducted in establishing a rationale for</p>

<p>Choose a College or University, and a Model for the Development of Player Decisions</p>	<p>choose a college or university, and a model for the development of decisions. <i>College Student Journal</i>, 41(3), 539-539.</p>	<p>looking to play basketball at the collegiate level, and establish relationships among decision paths in order to help understand how and why the decisions are being made. The research conducted utilizes research that had previously been conducted which identify influences for student-athletes in their college decision making process, but takes it a step further by attempting to understand the process of forming the decision through the use of decision making paths.</p>	<p>studies that have looked at the college decision making processes of basketball players. Specifically, the type of players being considered are those that have the potential to earn income by playing basketball at the professional level. This study utilized a two-step method, where the researchers first conducted a meta-analysis of previous studies in order to develop a group of factors that influence athletes college decision making processes. Content experts were utilized to</p>	<p>includes academic influences, coaches influences, basketball program influences, person influences, geographical influences, and financial influences. During phase II, the word association methodology utilized by the content experts yielded nine decision paths that each included components from personal influences, as well as future considerations such as potential money that can be made both in professional basketball and in other careers based on academic</p>	<p>theme of beginning with a starting point such as parents or a coach, intermediate factors that are used to achieve the long term goal such as the coach or basketball program, and then future considerations such long-term academic success or financial considerations. For example, the three verified paths that were the strongest were: Path A – 1) Glitz and attraction of the campus, 2) coaching style, 3) basketball as a dominant sport, and 4) recognition status. Path B – 1) Closeness to home, 2) Parents, 3) Maturity of the Athlete, and 4) Quality of life after graduation. Path C –</p>	<p>not only the factors that impact the decision making process for student-athletes, but also the rationale behind those factors and possible decision paths associated with them. This study could be extremely useful to recruiters in situations where they've discovered one of the influencing factors, and can make educated assumptions about other factors that likely effect that type of athlete and personality.</p> <p>-Delimiting the study to basketball players only was a good way to ensure accurate</p>
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				<p>develop this group of factors based on their expertise and knowledge of basketball, recruiting, and the college experience as an athlete. The second phase of the study was the use of both a word association methodology and a non-linear word program to establish decision paths amongst the factors and themes that were developed in phase I. The results of both decision path methods were later compared to verify the results based on similarities in both methods.</p>	<p>success. The non-linear word association program yielded six decision paths, which also emphasized both past influences such as parents or high school coaches as well as future concerns.</p>	<p>1)Parents, 2) high school basketball coach, 3) quality of education, and 4) non-professional basketball job opportunities</p>	<p>results in this study, but similar research could be done in other sports along with comparing the decision paths between genders, ethnicities, etc.</p>
<p>Jeffrey Pauline</p>	<p>Factors Influencing College Selection by</p>	<p>Pauline, J. (2010). Factors influencing college selection by</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence the</p>	<p>792 participants were chosen for this study, all of whom played on</p>	<p>After the surveys were submitted, means and frequencies were</p>	<p>For the participant group as a whole, the five most influential factors of the 53</p>	<p>-The results of this study were extremely surprising in that athletic</p>

NCAA Division I, II, and III Lacrosse Players	NCAA division I, II, and III lacrosse players. <i>ICHP ER-SD Journal Of Research, 5(2), 62-69.</i>	college selection process for NCAA Division I, II, and III lacrosse players. The sport-specific study examines both men's and women's lacrosse, while also differentiating results based on level of competition, and other demographic factors.	collegiate lacrosse teams in either the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic regions of the US. 54.7% of the participants were female, with the remaining 45.3% being male. Other demographic questions were also asked, which found that 36.9% of participants attended Division I institutions, 30.6% attended Division II, and 32.6% Division III. 94.2% of the participants were Caucasian, with 1.8% being African-American, 1.5% Hispanic, and 1.3% Asian or other. The average age of the participant group was 19.7 years old, and they had	calculated for each survey question and then broken down into the five major categories. MANOVA analysis was utilized to compare males vs. females, and across divisions for each of the five categories.	tested were career opportunities after graduation, academic reputation of the university, overall reputation of the university, availability of academic program or major, and reputation of academic major or program. The least five influential factors were knowing athletes at the university, ethnic/gender ration at the school, media coverage of the team, knowing someone on the lacrosse team, and number of alumni in professional lacrosse. As can be clearly displayed by the amount of academic factors in the top five, the academic category had the highest	factors were the lowest ranked category amongst the five for student-athletes surveyed. Other studies have found that academic factors are important, but certainly none more than this study which had four of the top five factors in the academic category. -I believe there could be a few reasons that academic factors outweighed athletic factors so much in this survey. The first being a possible flaw in the administration of the surveys. Since the coaches, who are authority figures to the athletes, were the ones trusted to
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			<p>played lacrosse for an average of 8.34 years. The participants also ranged across different class years, with 32.6% being freshman, 31.1% sophomore, 20.4% junior, and 15.9% senior.</p> <p>Participants were asked to measure the importance of 53 different factors from a revised Influential Factors Survey for Student-Athletes on a scale ranging from one to five. The 53 factors were all placed into five categories, which were athletics, academic, social atmosphere, coaching staff, and financial aid. Surveys were administered</p>		<p>mean, and was followed by coaching staff, social atmosphere, financial aid, and athletic factors, which surprisingly had the lowest mean amongst the categories.</p> <p>When comparing between genders, male athletes placed a greater emphasis on the factors related to athletics and coaching staff, while females were more influenced by financial aid.</p> <p>There were also some differences across divisions, as three of the five categories showed significant differences between the three NCAA divisions tested. Division II and III players were more influenced</p>	<p>administer the survey, it's possible that some athletes may have answered the questions based on how they thought the coach would want them to respond, placing an emphasis on academic factors. The second possibility is that since lacrosse is a relatively niche sport, which primarily features middle to upper class northeast student-athletes, the values of this group of student-athletes likely do not represent the typical breakdown of a college athletics department.</p>
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				by the coaches, but coaches were asked to not only ensure their athletes that their responses were confidential, but also not to be present while the surveys were completed.		by academics than Division I, and Division II players placed a greater emphasis on both coaching staff and financial aid than did the other two divisions.	
Mark Vermillion	College Choice Factors for Division I Athletes at an Urban University	Vermillion, M. (2012). College choice factors for division I athletes at an urban university. <i>Sport Journal</i> , 151.	The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that affect Division I student-athletes who decide to attend urban campuses. This study uses previous research that identified similar factors for Division I student-athletes at traditional campuses, but adds to the literature by specifically examining urban campuses, of which very little research	The participant group came from an urban Division I campus in the southern high plains of the United States. Surveys were administered to student-athletes from the campus via an online process, and once surveys that were not complete or left blank were discarded, a group consisting of 101 participants was used. Demographic questions were asked to differentiate	A descriptive analysis was utilized in order to describe and identify the college choice factors for this group of athletes. Means were taken for each of the 32 factors, and it was determined that 87% of responses were above the midpoint (3.0) of the scale. Additionally, nearly half (47%) of the factors had means over 4.0.	The five highest rated college choice factors found in this study were coaching staff, amount of financial aid or scholarship offered, support services offered to student-athletes, availability of resources, and opportunity to win a conference or national championship. The three lowest rated factors, which all fell under the mean, were amount of media coverage, high school coach,	-Limitation: The university that was utilized for the study does not have a football team, which reduces the number of responses as well as the generalizability of the results to other schools that do possess a football team.

		<p>already exists. It also looks at every sport within one athletic department, whereas much of the previous literature at this level examined only one sport.</p>	<p>between academic year (23.2% freshman, 30.3% sophomores, 29.3% juniors, 17.2% seniors), ethnicity (64.6% white, 30.2% African-American), and gender (65% female, 35% male). Participants were then asked to rank 32 of college choice factors on a one to five scale. Athletes were asked by coaches and/or athletic administrators to fill out the survey, which were not only confidential, but anonymous.</p>		<p>and team's website and social media. The researchers found that strong correlations exist between the factors that influence student-athletes at urban institutions and previous research conducted with student-athletes at traditional campuses. For example, a mix of academic and athletic factors as the most influential are present in both scenarios, along with the importance of relationships, especially with coaches.</p>	
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