

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE PERFORMANCE DIAGNOSIS
MATRIX AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL AS A PREDICTOR OF
STUDENT-ATHLETE SUCCESS AS IDENTIFIED BY DIVISION IA
COACHES IN THE BIG 12 CONFERENCE**

A Dissertation

by

SHANE LEE HUDSON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2007

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,
Committee Members,

Head of Department,

Larry Dooley
Kim Dooley
Joe Townsend
Ben Welch
Jim Scheurich

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ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Study of the Performance Diagnosis Matrix at the Individual Level as a Predictor of Student-Athlete Success as Identified by Division I A Coaches in the Big 12 Conference. (May 2007)

Shane Lee Hudson, B.S., Oklahoma State University;

M.S., Oklahoma State University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Larry Dooley

The intent of this study was to determine if men's football and men's basketball coaches at the university or college level utilize an assessment instrument when recruiting and evaluating potential student-athletes. Specifically studied through interviews were the characteristics that these coaches look for in successful and unsuccessful student-athletes, how they currently collect information during the recruitment period and the importance of collecting data on student-athletes. Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix and Human Capital Theory framed the research. The population for this study consisted of current Division IA men's football and men's basketball coaches in the Big 12 Conference. Prior to contacting the Big 12 coaches a pilot study was conducted at two Division IA Universities and with a former head football coach at a Big 12 Conference University. These interviews were instrumental in the final development of the questions used to interview the Big 12 Conference coaches. The participants were sent a letter asking for their participation in the study and then were contacted by

phone to set up an interview. The interviews were conducted in the months of July, August, and September 2006 by phone. This study found that most coaches do not have or utilize an assessment instrument. Significant data showed coaches believe that the evaluation process of student-athletes is the most difficult and critical part of their job. Using emergent category designation I found seven themes (characteristics) of successful student-athletes, as indicated by the coaches; competitive, a hard worker, has a supportive family, is a leader, has good character, and is honest. I also found the themes (characteristics) of an unsuccessful student-athlete to be; undisciplined, lacks character, has an unstable family and is not competitive. The study helps to define through research and development an assessment instrument to more effectively define the needs of student-athletes prior to entering universities and coaches will have additional data for meeting the needs of student-athletes.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special feeling of gratitude goes to my loving wife Karen; without you this would not have been possible. I want to acknowledge my children Peyton and Hailey for their patience and understanding and my mother who is always a proud supporter of my endeavors.

I also want to thank my committee who has supported me through this process. I would like to thank Larry Dooley for his friendship and support through this process and Kim Dooley for all the hours she spent editing and encouraging me. I also want to thank Joe Townsend and Ben Welch for their words of encouragement and, more importantly, their time.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) philosophy, its history, and the new standards that are being implemented speak clearly to the fact that they still have not found the correct formula for the assessment of student-athletes. The new NCAA legislation speaks clearly to the standards the student-athlete and universities will be held to once the student-athlete arrives. Therefore, during the recruiting process the margin for error is small. The new Academic Progress Rate (APR) is the latest NCAA approach to hold universities accountable for the academic success of their student-athletes. According to *The NCAA News* (2005b),

The APR is the fulcrum upon which the entire academic-reform structure rests. Developed as a more real-time assessment of teams' academic performance than the six-year graduation-rate calculation provides, the APR awards two points each term to student-athletes who meet academic-eligibility standards and who remain with the institution. A team's APR is the total points earned by the team at a given time divided by the total points possible. (§ 1)

According to *The NCAA News* (2005a), the philosophy of the NCAA is that

The style and format of this dissertation follows the *Human Resource Development Quarterly*.

colleges and universities should educate and graduate the student-athletes they recruit to their campuses. In an article by Gary T. Brown (2005), he quotes a Division I A Board of Directors member, Walter Harrison, as stating, “We are asking presidents to take responsibility for the academic success of their student-athletes” (§ 30).

Unfortunately there has been more talk than research on predicting the success of student-athletes (Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992). Standardized tests such as the SAT or ACT have been shown to correlate fairly well with freshman grades for white students in general but have had lower correlations for non-white and nontraditional students (Sedlacek, 1987, 1989; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989; White & Sedlacek, 1986). Crouse and Trusheim (1988) argued that high-school grades are better than the SAT at predicting college performance and that, while the SAT improves prediction significantly over high-school grades alone, the improvement is too small to be worth the effort (Baron & Norman, 1992). Without the ability to predict or assess student-athletes through standardized test scores, high school or junior college grades, universities must find alternative methods that best predict success from a holistic perspective.

In 1965, the NCAA adopted the “1.600 Rule” which required college bound high school athletes to achieve a predicted first-year college grade point average of at least 1.66 (c-minus) before they could receive athletic scholarship assistance (Newman & Miller, 1994). A “2.0 Rule” was enacted by the NCAA in 1971 and was theoretically intended to be more stringent than the “1.600 Rule,” but in effect,

proved to be more permissive. The 2.00 Rule required an athlete to have graduated from high school with a C+ or 2.0 grade point average in a specified curriculum or group of core courses. Consequently, the “NCAA weakened rather than strengthened the academic standards of its athletes” because the admission of marginally prepared student-athletes was virtually unregulated (Newman & Miller, 1994, p. 8). Proposition 48 was seen as a “reaction to the fact that colleges had stepped out of bounds on the admissions of unqualified student athletes” (Newman & Miller, 1994, p. 8). The NCAA legislatively permitted a form of “open enrollment” for student-athletes from 1971 until the implementation of its Proposition 48 (College freshman eligibility requirements) in 1986. “Academic standards had eroded to the point where gaining admission to colleges and many of these scholarship athletes were ‘unqualified young men who had no chance, not in the classroom and not for a degree’” (Newman & Miller, 1994, p. 9).

According to *USA Today*, (March 29, 2002) efforts to boost graduation rates encounter strong NCAA defense. It goes on to state:

Let’s pretend momentarily that college for student-athletes is about learning and that schools had to meet a minimal standard, such as graduating 50% of their players, to make it into the NCAA basketball tournament. What a difference that would make in this weekend's Final Four roster. The University of Kansas would be the lone survivor -- the only contender for the national basketball championship to crack that 50% mark. Not so for Indiana University,

with a graduation rate of 43% for basketball, or the University of Maryland, at 19%. And the University of Oklahoma? None of the scholarship players who entered its basketball program from 1991 to 1994 earned a degree. This disgraceful accounting points to everything that is wrong, and everything that could so easily be improved, in big-time college athletics. Too many colleges open doors with an athletic scholarship only to let the doors slam shut without any real push to earn a degree. (p. 16a)

With the new legislation implemented by the NCAA, the expectations are for universities to do a better job of evaluating and recruiting student-athletes that have the ability to graduate and perform at their institution. Implementing a measure that assesses the student-athlete prior to enrollment would benefit the university academically, athletically, and financially. Looking at the student-athlete from the human capital theory perspective, their monetary values can at times, be as much as \$100,000 over a 5-year period. For example, in the fall of 2004 according to a Texas A&M University Grant In Aid Form, one year of full scholarship for any sport was valued at \$12,422.20 for a resident and \$19,666.20 for a non-resident. If a student-athlete is dismissed for violating team rules, felony crimes, or academic rules and regulations, then the APR is lowered, thereby placing the university at risk of penalties that could reduce the number of scholarships for the sport in question. Then the possibility of losing post-season involvement or the

privilege to compete in post season events comes into play, which can sometimes amount to millions of dollars in revenue.

Student-athletes are admitted to colleges and universities across the country based on NCAA guidelines that are well below the general admission standards of most institutions. This can put extreme pressure on student-athletes to compete in the classroom and for universities to retain these students. Consequently, the NCAA has recently implemented new eligibility and retention rules. The Academic Progress Rate (APR) “is the real-time snapshot of every team’s academic performance at a given time” (Brown, 2005, ¶ 5). The penalties for non-compliance will begin “with a warning once teams fall below a to-be-identified cut score, and progressing to recruiting/financial aid restrictions, post season bans and restricted membership status upon subsequent occasions” (Brown, 2005, ¶ 14).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Predictions of academic performance and persistence are crucial to both students and institutions. A poor institution-student fit could lead to the withdrawal of the student, either voluntarily or involuntarily, due to poor academic performance, an outcome which can have devastating consequences for the student (Cunningham, 1993, pp. 7-8).

The push for student-athletes to graduate college has never been greater. Student-athletes are under more pressure to not only complete their degree but, to do it in a

timely fashion that the NCAA deems adequate. The penalty for not completing 40% of your degree by the beginning of your third year simply means that you are ineligible and you could lose your scholarship. The APR puts the university and the student-athlete at risk. The NCAA has raised the stakes for recruiting student-athletes that are better prepared for collegiate life. Universities must take the proper measures to ensure that their investment in each student-athlete is well researched, therefore, time, commitment and resources are needed when recruiting student-athletes.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine critical factors or themes used to assess student-athletes success prior to entering a university setting as perceived by select Division I A coaches. I used Human Capital Theory and Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix which emphasizes the interplay of the individual (student-athlete), process (recruiting) and organization (university) in regard to performance to guide my study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are the professional and personal mission/goals of individuals congruent with the organizations?
2. Does the individual face obstacles that impede their job performance?
3. Does the individual have the mental, physical, and emotional capacity to perform?

4. Does the individual want to perform no matter what?
5. Does the individual have the knowledge, skills, and experience to perform?

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Procedure

Currently, there are 119 Division I A universities. This study will be limited to the Big 12 Conference which consists of 12 universities and the coaches that recruit the sports of men's football and men's basketball. Men's football and basketball were purposively selected due to historically low graduation rates and reoccurring behavioral problems that have occurred on college campuses. According to Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen (1993), purposive sampling is central to naturalistic inquiry. "Random or representative sampling is not preferred because the researcher's major concern is not to generalize the findings of the study to a broad population or universe but to maximize discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems that occur in the particular context under study" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 82). This allows me to target men's football and basketball programs which according to the latest NCAA graduation rates continue to hold the lowest percentage rates of student-athletes. Personal contacts in the Big 12 Conference and the individual universities websites were used to obtain names and contact information of coaches that are instrumental in recruiting for the sports of men's football and basketball. Once the names and contact information was obtained I contacted each coach by letter and then by phone to obtain the information needed for the research.

Data Sources

Due to the size and location of the sample, interviews were used to collect the information because it was not directly observable. The major advantage of interviews is their adaptability. Skilled interviewers can follow up a respondent's answers to obtain more information and clarify vague statements. They can also build trust and rapport with respondents, thus making it possible to obtain information that the individual probably would not reveal by any other data collection method (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Interviews were not recorded due to the sensitivity of college sports issues making it a more comfortable environment for the interview.

While interviewing the Big 12 Conference coach's notes were written into a spiral bound notebook. A database was used to compile the information from the interviews providing structure and format to the information. Numbers and letters or recording codes, were assigned to the various characteristics and logged into the spreadsheet. Emergent category designation was used when the interviews were completed, which allowed predictors of success for student-athletes to emerge.

Procedures

Evaluation plays a key role in educational research and development (R & D). Educational R&D is an industry-based development model in which the findings of research are used to design new products and procedures, which then are systematically field-tested, evaluated, and refined until they meet specified criteria

of effectiveness, quality, or similar standards (Gall et al., 1996). Therefore, the research conducted through interviews allowed for the development of a comprehensive assessment tool to determine successful student-athletes as it pertains to Division I A coaches in the Big 12 Conference. According to Denzin (1970) triangulation leads to credibility by using different or multiple sources of data (time, space, person), methods (observations, interviews, videotapes, photographs, documents), investigators (single or multiple), or theory (single versus multiple perspective of analysis) (Erlandson et al., 1993). To satisfy triangulation in this study I interviewed coaches at multiple institutions from several geographic areas. During the interview process I asked for further information or documents that pertain to how they evaluate or assess student-athletes. I will use content analysis to establish patterns in the interview transcripts. Patton cites content analysis as an example of analyzing text (interview transcripts, diaries, or documents) rather than observation-based field notes. Patton goes on to say that “content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton, 2002, p. 453).

Research was conducted in the summer and fall of 2006. I used my personal contacts in the Big 12 Conference and the individual universities websites to obtain names and contact information of coaches that are instrumental in recruiting for the sports of men’s football and basketball. Prior to contacting the Big 12 coaches a pilot study was conducted at two Division IA Universities and with a former head

football coach at a Big 12 Conference University. These interviews were instrumental in the final development of the questions used to interview the Big 12 Conference coaches. During the pilot interviews the researcher should be alert to communication problems, evidence of inadequate motivation on the part of respondents, and other clues that suggest the need for rephrasing questions or revising the procedure (Gall et al., 1996). Coaches were contacted by letter which specifically and carefully states the purposes for the research and how it can help each coach in the future. Each coach was contacted by phone to obtain the necessary data after they had received the detailed personal letter. Continual telephone calls were placed to those not responding.

Data Analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989) in *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry* as cited by Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993),

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationship among categories of data; it builds grounded theory. (p. 111)

Understanding that data analysis is a “messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process” I will use emergent category designation to

organize my data into themes and constructs that support my themes. I will take each theme and form constructs that will illustrate what the coaches feel are predictors of student-athlete success. Qualitative inquiry is especially powerful as a source of *grounded theory*, theory that is inductively generated from fieldwork, that is, theory that emerges from the researcher's observations and interviews out in the real world rather than a laboratory or the academy (Patton, 2002). It emphasizes steps and procedures for connecting induction and deduction through the constant comparative method, comparing research sites, doing theoretical sampling, and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork (Patton, 2002). Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain:

This constant comparison of the incidents very soon starts to generate theoretical properties of the category. The analyst starts thinking in terms of the full range of types or continua of the category, its dimensions, the conditions under which it is pronounced or minimized, its major consequences, its relation to other categories, and its other properties. (Erlandson et al., 1993, p.112)

During each interview a database will be utilized to store the data as it is collected from the interviews. After each interview, the field notes will be analyzed and stored immediately according to a specific category.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The study helps to define through research and development the predictors of success in student-athletes. An assessment instrument will be developed to more effectively define the needs of student-athletes prior to entering universities. I feel that the head coaches and assistant coaches working with Division I A men's football and basketball teams would be able to provide the most accurate data for me to collect and assess. By looking at Human Capital Theory and Swansons Performance Diagnosis Matrix, both of which are foundational in the field of Human Resource Development, I have explored an area of collegiate athletics. Through Educational Research and Development I designed an assessment tool for universities to utilize in the evaluation of predicting success in student-athletes.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Academic Success – NCAA compilations of graduation rates are determined by the raw percentage of student-athletes who entered a university and graduated within six years. Non-graduates include student athletes who transfer, join a professional organization or leave the university for various other reasons.

College Entrance Assessment Test – The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Assessment (ACT) are two of the primary entrance test.

Core GPA – 14 Required Core Courses: three years of English, two years of mathematics (algebra I or higher level); two years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school); two extra years of English, mathematics or natural/physical science; two years of social science; and three years of additional courses (from any category above, or foreign language, no doctrinal religion or philosophy).

Eligibility Standards – Academic requirements set by NCAA that either allows or dis-allows a student to compete in Division I-A athletics.

NCAA Academic Progress Rate – The APR is a real-time assessment of a team’s academic performance, which awards two points each term to scholarship student-athletes who meet academic-eligibility standards and who remain with the institution. A team’s APR is the total points earned by the team at a given time divided by the total points possible.

Predictor - Information that supports a probabilistic estimate of future events.

Division I A Coaches that Recruit Student-Athletes from the Big 12 Conference – Coaches and will be selected from the Big 12 Conference in the sports of Men’s Football and Men’s Basketball.

Student-Athlete – Division I A students that participate in varsity athletics and are full-time students.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. It is assumed that coaches interviewed will answer in a honest and straightforward manner.
2. Coaches that are responsible for recruiting student-athletes will take time to complete a phone interview.
3. The interpretation of the data will accurately reflect that which is intended.

LIMITATIONS

1. Data gathered represented the experience, expertise and opinions of respondents during a specific period of time.
2. Findings from this study may not be generalized beyond the schools participating in the study.
3. Only men’s football and basketball programs from the Big 12 Conference will be used.
4. It is impossible to identify all variables impacting the success of student-athletes.

5. The lack of non-verbal gestures during phone interviews.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To develop the theoretical framework there are three areas in which the literature review will focus. Throughout this chapter I will first explore Human Capital Theory, then Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix and finally go into the importance of success for student-athletes and NCAA guidelines and regulations.

HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY

Division I A universities recruit student-athletes to campuses all across the country each year. The universities are investing in young athletes by giving scholarships in return for their athletic services. These student-athletes are, in theory, human capital to a collegiate athletic program. Emphasizing the social and economic importance of human capital, Becker (1993) quotes the economist Alfred Marshall's dictum that "the most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings" (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 109). Becker's (1993) classic book, "Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special References to Education" illustrates this domain as he implores the reader,

I am going to talk about a different kind of capital. Schooling, a computer training course, expenditures on medical care, and lectures on the virtues of punctuality and honesty are capital too, in

the true sense that they improve health, raise earnings, or add to a person's appreciation of literature over a lifetime. (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 95)

Swanson and Holton (2001) suggest that there are 3 key relationships and assumptions of human capital theory:

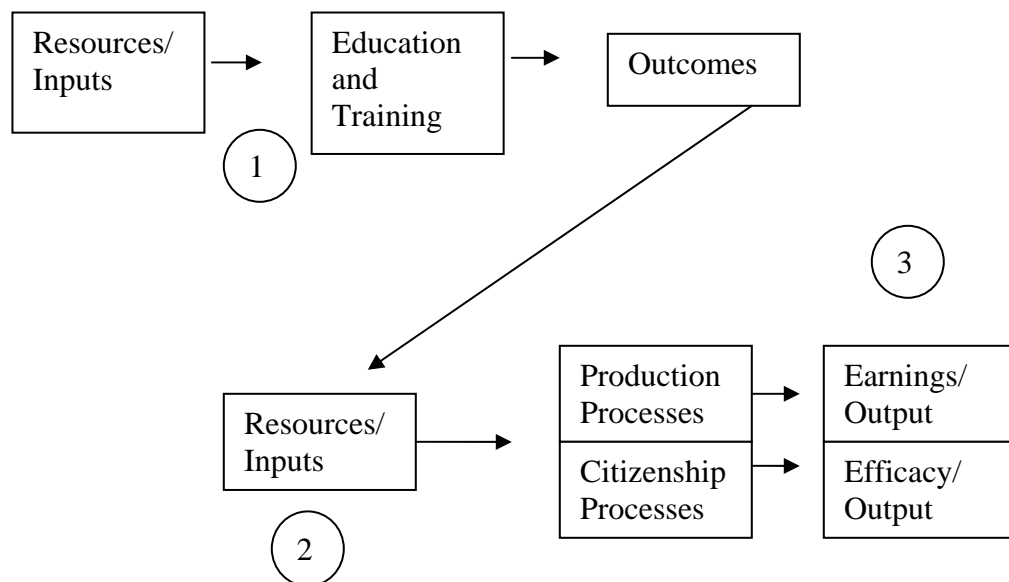
Relationship 1 represents the concept of production functions as applied to education and training. The key assumption underlying this relationship is that investments in education and training result in increased learning. Relationship 2 represents the human capital relationships between learning and increased productivity. The key assumptions underlying this relationship is that increased learning does, in fact, result in increased productivity. Relationship 3 represents the human capital relationship between increased productivity and increased wages and business earnings. The key assumption underlying this relationship is that greater productivity does, in fact, result in higher wages for individuals and earnings for business. An equally important human capital relationship represented by relationship 3 is that between the citizenship processes affected by education (e.g., community involvement, voting) and enhanced social efficacy. (p. 110)

However, as shown in Figure 1, predicting the resources/inputs for the Model of Human Capital Theory without a complete picture of the resources/inputs (in this

case human capital) going into the system (part 1) it is hard to predict what might come out of the system (part 3).

Figure 1

A Model of Human Capital Theory



Source: Adapted from Swanson & Holton, (2001).

Therefore, colleges, coaches and administrators need to look at the individual before investing in their success.

Human resource development is about adults functioning in systems, it is about “the resource that humans bring to the success equation – both personal success and organizational success” (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 3). Further it is

“a process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance” (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 4). Therefore, in human resource development human capital theory plays a vital role in that it posits that people (employees) who come to the table with more job-related investments such as education, training, and experience will benefit more. Human capital theory is also a perspective of economic theory which is foundational to human resource development. “Since HRD takes place in organizations that are economic entities, HRD must call upon economic theory at its core” (Swanson & Holton, 2001, pp. 95-96). Without system, economic and psychological theory, human resource development would be without its groundwork.

PERFORMANCE AND SWANSON’S PERFORMANCE DIAGNOSIS MATRIX

The theoretical paradigm of performance-based HRD literature is dominated by works from Elwood F. Holton III and Richard Swanson. While at the 2000 AHRD Conference, Holton (2000a) quoted Swanson and Gardous’ (1986), definition of performance as consisting “of the demonstration of specific behaviors designed to accomplish specific tasks and produce specific outcomes” (p. 17). Therefore it is the behaviors that determine whether tasks or goals are completed and desired outcomes are achieved. Holton, who has a strong foundation in Human Resource Development (HRD), has also identified three main views that

encompass the thinking in the performance paradigm. First, performance is a natural outcome of human activity:

In this view, performance as seen as a natural part of human existence. Human beings are seen as engaging in wide varieties of purposeful activities with performance as a natural outcome.

Furthermore, the accomplishment of certain outcomes in these purposeful activities is a basic human need. That is, few people are content to go through life not engaging in any purposeful activity during which they achieve desired outcomes. Said differently, few people are content to not perform. (Holton, 2000b, p. 1)

This type of performance for student-athletes must occur on two fronts in order for success to occur. They are required to achieve and perform not only academically but athletically in a highly competitive environment. The order (academic or athletic) in which performance must be achieved can be debated. However, the student-athletes performance on the field of play is usually placed on higher ground as they must perform or they will lose their athletic scholarship. On the other hand if they do not perform well academically then they could run into problems with the NCAA which might make them ineligible to compete. For some student-athletes this balance can be very difficult due to the amount of time their collegiate life revolves around athletics and some are coupled with poor academic preparation for college level courses. With either area, academic or athletic, performance is driving them to succeed. Holton states that performance does not just drive people

to succeed in the work setting but also in leisure activities. “For example, a person may play softball for leisure, but be quite interested in winning games. Or, a person may be heavily involved in church activities such as membership drives or outreach programs and exert great effort to make them successful” (Holton, 2000b, p. 1). In each circumstance, the person wanted to perform and be a success in what they viewed was important and embraced performance as an important aspect of human existence. Collegiate athletics must embrace both of these variables in order for the student-athletes to achieve success in the classroom and on the field of play. Programs such as Life Skills and Mentoring must be in place at colleges and universities in order to ensure support and eventual success of each student-athlete.

It is this perspective that performance-based HRD advocates, though it has rarely been articulated as such. Performance-based HRD does not see a conflict between advancing performance and enhancing human potential. Rather, they are seen as perfectly complementary because of this ontological perspective. (Holton, 2000b, p. 1)

The second view Holton proposes is that performance is necessary for economic activity. “People may be an organization’s most important resource but their performance is absolutely critical to the organization’s survival and ultimate growth” (Peterson & Arnn, 2005, p. 5). “This perspective of performance is a more utilitarian view whereby performance is instrumental activity that enhances individuals and society because it supports economic gain” (Holton, 2000b, p.2). This aspect is especially pertinent when looking at student-athletes and the

economic gain a university can obtain if a team or individual performs at the highest level. Intercollegiate athletics has “become a major source of institutional revenue, with some institutions generating over \$30 million dollars per year in income” (Newman, Miller & Bartee, 2000, p.3). Holton goes on to state the “performance at the individual level leads to enhanced work and careers, while performance at the organization level leads to stronger economic entities capable of providing good jobs (2000b, p. 2). Therefore in the university athletic arena this statement by Holton ties into what Mixon, Trevino, and Minto (2004) state in their article entitled, “Touchdowns and test scores: exploring the relationship between athletics and academics”. They quote M. Allen (1999) when the University of Connecticut won that the school capitalized,

On the success of both the men’s and women’s teams, which culminated [in March 1999] with the Huskies’ victory in the national men’s final, university officials have since managed to secure \$1 billion from the legislature, lure prize professors and attract a surge of applications from prospective students.” (p. 421)

In connection with HRD, performance-based HRD came from the perspective that learning led to individual and organizational performance outcomes, which then led to the enhancement of the utility of learning (Holton, 2000b, p. 2). Holton states, “while this objective is worthy by itself, it lacks the intrinsic “goodness” of the first ontological perspective. As the performance paradigm has matured, it has evolved

into the first perspective” (Holton, 2000b, p. 2). Consequently in HRD the emphasis has now been placed more on performance than on learning.

The third and final view that Holton finds within the performance paradigm is that performance is an instrument of organizational oppression. “From this perspective, performance is seen as a means of control and dehumanization by organizations. Through performance organizations coerce and demand behaviors from individuals in return for compensation” (Holton, 2000b, p. 2). This applies to student-athletes who are recruited to play sports for colleges and universities. If the student-athlete is receiving a scholarship they must perform on the field of play or risk losing their scholarship to someone that is performing at a higher level. However, if the student-athlete concentrates on the field of play and neglects their academic pursuits they can find themselves below the NCAA or university academic standards. In this instance some view the demands of performance as abusive and hostile towards humans or in this case, student-athletes. “As such, it is largely a necessary evil that denies human potential” (Holton, 2000b, p. 1). The lack of performance is certainly a potential threat to student-athletes but for some this is the only option for a college education and the many opportunities that it brings with it.

Once the student-athlete has been selected and is in attendance at the university, there must be a system or program in place that allows that student to perform at a maximum at the university level. “The ideal program should include academic support, career counseling, and personal development for student

athletes” (Carodine et al., 2001, p. 31). At this stage performance is important on the field of play, in a social environment, and in the classroom. Currently the issue of performance in HRD, or organizations such as universities, has grown over the last decade. According to Rummler and Brache (1988), one reason for this is that most attempts to improve human performance in organizations are doomed to failure from the start (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Why is this so? Basically most methods of increasing performance focus on the person or people alone, not the whole system or organization. Consequently, that system has a great impact on how the individual performs on the job which therefore, can affect their motivation and the results the organization achieves (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Therefore, coaches and staff members that recruit at the university level should look at a multilevel performance model such as Swanson’s Performance Diagnosis Matrix, as shown in Figure 2. It focuses on the organization, the process, and the individual from an organizational standpoint serving as an assessment tool to determine the selection of student-athletes. “In order to achieve organization and individual performance, it is critical that all three performance levels are aligned” (Rummler, 1996a, p. 29). The individual level will represent the student-athlete and the organization level will represent the university.

Figure 2

Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix

<i>Performance Variables</i>	Organizational Level	Process Level	Individual Level
Mission/goal	Does the organization mission/ goal fit the reality of the economic, political, and cultural forces?	Do the process goals enable the organization to meet the organization and individual missions/goals?	Are the professional and personal mission/goals of individuals congruent with the organization's
System design	Does the organization system provide structure and policies supporting the desired performance?	Are processes designed in such a way to work as a system?	Does the individual face obstacles that impede their job performance?
Capacity	Does the organization have the leadership, capital, and infrastructure to achieve its mission/goals?	Does the process have the capacity to perform (quantity, quality, and timeliness)?	Does the individual have the mental, physical, and emotional capacity to perform?
Motivation	Do the policies, culture, and reward systems support the desired performance?	Does the process provide the information and human factors required to maintain it?	Does the individual want to perform no matter what?
Expertise	Does the organization establish and maintain selection and training policies and resources?	Does the process of developing expertise meet the changing of changing processes?	Does the individual have the knowledge, skills, and experience to perform?

Source: Adapted from Swanson & Holton (2001).

In this matrix one can see that performance is divided between different performance levels and performance variables. "These performance variables, matrixed with the levels of performance - organization, process, and/or individual - provide a powerful perspective in diagnosing performance" (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 194). The diagnosis of successful performance at each level can be determined by the answers to these questions, which therefore can be used by institutions who seek to develop and encourage a performance based program. In as much, "the questions presented in the performance variable matrix help the diagnostician sort out the performance overlaps and disconnects" (Swanson &

Holton, 2001, p. 194). For example, based on how a student-athlete answers these questions an organization can determine whether that particular student-athlete is the right fit for that institution, whether they can thrive and succeed, whether they have the drive to obtain a degree, and whether they have the motivation to succeed on the field. Therefore, “the overall performance of an organization (how well it meets the expectations of its customers) is the result of all three of these levels, and the performance variables therein, being aligned” (Rummler, 1996a, p. 30).

IMPORTANCE OF SUCCESS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES AND NCAA GUIDELINES

An ability to predict with some certainty the success of student-athletes while in the recruiting process is important for two main reasons, NCAA rules and regulations are tougher than ever and student-athletes are unlike other students in the fact that they have a lot weighing on their ability to compete athletically. In 1991 the NCAA membership passed legislation that required all higher education institutions to have a staff who works directly with student-athletes on monitoring eligibility and providing academic counseling services. The reason for this is that the regulations that are placed on student-athletes have become a full-time monitoring process. According to Carodine, Almond, and Gratto (2001) student-athletes are currently required to:

enroll in a full-time course load that is defined as a minimum of twelve credit hours per term (semester or quarter) in their designated

degree program, and maintain a cumulative GPA that is 90 percent of the minimum institution requirement for graduation entering their fourth year of enrollment and 95 percent of the required GPA if they are entering their fifth year of collegiate enrollment. (p. 27)

They are also required, according to Rule 14.4.3.2 of the NCAA Bylaws, to:

Have completed successfully at least 40 percent of the course requirements on the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fourth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 60 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fifth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 80 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. (Fulfillment of Percentage of Degree Requirements section, ¶ 1)

The 40/60/80 process defining the continuing eligibility at universities across the country is not difficult for good or average students to satisfy. From a hypothetical standpoint, a good student-athlete as a sophomore might want to change his/her major. When a student changes majors, in most cases, they lose hours and in some cases can lose up to a full academic year. Student-athletes in some cases will not have the luxury of changing majors which can alter their life goals from a career standpoint. The importance of continuing eligibility is well documented. Athletes typically in the sports of men's football and men's basketball are not making

progress towards their degree while also not staying in school long enough to turn professional. The 40/60/80 is a one size fits all approach that unfortunately penalizes good student-athletes allowing little flexibility in their degree plans from the time they enroll as freshman.

Another reason why looking at predictors of success in student-athletes is of importance is that they are a unique and diverse set of students. According to Carodine et al. (2001):

As students they are responsible for fulfilling their academic responsibilities (attending classes, studying, and passing exams). In addition, they must achieve and maintain NCAA eligibility standards. Failure to complete academic tasks could jeopardize the student-athlete's eligibility to compete, receive scholarship aid, and graduate from the institution. (p. 19)

Student-athletes are expected to be able to manage academic demands and have a high level of commitment, athletically, they are also expected to be able to earn a degree. In some instances this expectation and rigorous time frame can create a student's disconnection to the university, which can result in a negative experience for the student-athlete (Carodine et al., 2001, p. 20). "Loneliness affects academic and athletic performance, poor athletic performance affects academic performance, and so on" (Hurley & Cunningham, 1984, p. 55). However, student-athletes today have many support programs at their disposal at most Division IA universities when it comes to their academic work. Academic advising staffs coordinate everything

from tutoring, study halls, and life skills, and they advise athletes on NCAA rules and regulations. Academic centers for student-athletes range from the very modest to massive structures which house 100 station computer labs, career centers, multiple academic counselors and room for individual tutoring. In some cases the budget for all of this can be over a million dollars per year. Even in the more modest settings there are quality tutors and educated advisors to counsel and mentors student-athletes. The support is there to the point where some people argue that student-athletes are enabled in the academic process, losing connection with the campus life and activities. This means that student-athletes tend to have their own variety of support programs and rarely participate in university wide programs that are open to all students, not just student-athletes. “To alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness, Fields (1999) recommends that assistance programs for student athletes collaborate with programs already available for the mainstream (non athlete) student population” (Carodine et al., 2001, p. 21). Therefore, assessing student-athletes prior to enrollment is one way to ensure that better prepared, more motivated, high character student-athletes are entering colleges and universities throughout the country.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Literature tells us that in qualitative research, designs are not intended to prove something, but to allow theories to emerge once the data is gathered (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). Therefore, most often, the initial framework changes as the study continues or progresses. It also states that qualitative researchers are “interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). In as much, according to Michael Patton’s (2002) book entitled *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*:

Qualitative inquiry is particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery and inductive logic. Inductive analysis begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerge from open-ended observations as the inquirer comes to understand patterns that exist in the phenomenon being investigated. (pp. 55-56).

Qualitative research also allows the researcher to become a part of the study, rather than being just an outsider looking in, the researcher is a participant and immersed in the data.

In this chapter I will focus on how this study’s framework follows the concepts of the qualitative research paradigm. I frequently referred to two books,

Patton's (2002) *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* and Erlandson et al.'s *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry* (1993), which helped in my understanding the breadth and depth of qualitative research.

SAMPLE

Purposive sampling was used to collect potential participants. According to Erlandson et al. (1993) there are two decisions a researcher needs to make when they choose to use purposive sampling. First they must select who and what will help answer the basic research questions or the assist in the purpose of the study (Erlandson et al., 1993). They then must also “choose who and what not to investigate; that is, there must be a process of elimination in order to narrow the pool of possible sources” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 83). For that reason, I decided to focus on a portion of the university men's football and basketball teams in the nation. The reason I focused on those two particular sports is they have a record for carrying the low graduation rates and have historically been the behavioral problems on most college campuses. In the introduction of the online combined reports of the Knight Foundation Commission Report on Intercollegiate Athletics (2001) they found that:

- Nearly a third of present and former professional football players responding to a survey near the end of the decade said they accepted illicit payments while in college, and more than half said they saw nothing wrong with the practice.

- Another survey showed that among 100 big-time schools, 35 had graduation rates under 20 percent for their basketball players and 14 had the same low rate for their football players. (p. 4)

I then narrowed my sample to the Division IA Conference as that is where most of my personal and professional contacts exist. Currently there are 119 Division IA universities. I will focus my study and sample on the Big 12 Conference which consists of 12 men's football programs and 12 men's basketball programs. I followed the gathering data method in qualitative inquiry that focuses more on in depth and relatively small samples that are selected purposefully (Patton, 2002). Erlandson et al. (1993) goes on to state that in qualitative research it is more about quality than quantity and more focused on information richness than volume.

DATA COLLECTION

My goal in the data collection was to conduct unstructured interviews with the head coaches of each of the Big 12 teams to find out what they feel are predictors of success in student-athletes by asking the performance variable questions in Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix. Then, along with using Human Capital Theory, I will see if there is a sound, current method of predicting success or if one needs to be developed, that addresses the criteria the coaches listed of importance in my interviews. Because the information is not directly observable I decided to use interviews to collect my data. As Patton (2002) point out, "open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences,

perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. Data consist of verbatim quotations with sufficient context to be interpretable” (p. 4). I also followed Erlandson et al.’s (1993) suggestion that some of the best tools in interviewing and recording the data are a legal pad and a pen. They also suggest using or having a common vocabulary so that data is clearly understood and not misinterpreted. As I have been a collegiate student-athlete and worked in Division IA collegiate athletics for over 10 years, I feel I understood and was able to clearly see the coach’s responses as they were presented. The questions are open-ended so as to create a conversation like interview and allow for myself to enter into the coach’s perspective. I began with a pilot study to help work out any possible problems with questions as well as method. I focused at this time on contacting three coaches, not head coaches, mainly people I knew personally. The pilot study helped me gain helpful insight on what was to come on the following interviews. Each conveyed to me the importance of the research and stated they were anxious to hear the results. After conducting the pilot study in the month of July 2006 I began to search online for the names and addresses for each head coach in Division IA men’s football and basketball. I combined this list with my personal contacts in the Big 12 Conference and came up with a quality list to send letters and place phone calls to when needed. To satisfy triangulation, a procedure used to establish the fact that validity is present, I interviewed coaches at multiple institutions from several geographic areas throughout all times of the day. During the interview process I also asked for further information or documents that pertain to how they evaluate or assess student-

athletes. This allowed me to perform document analysis when evaluating the data. Triangulation “is both possible and necessary because research is a process of discovery in which the genuine meaning residing within an action or event can be best uncovered by viewing it from different vantage points” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 256).

As a condition of entry I decided upon a letter of introduction to be sent prior to my asking for an interview (see sample letter in Appendix B). In as much, one of my pilot study coaches also suggested that I develop such a letter that expresses my interest in an interview for research purposes. He told me to use him as a reference and asked that the coaches call him if they had any questions regarding myself or the research. I made sure that the letter I created was simple, understandable and most importantly let them know that there was something “in it for them.” Just as Erlandson et al. (1993) stated, “the accomplishment of successful entry also partially revolves around the field researcher’s ability to explain his interests in terms that make sense to the members of the setting” (p. 72). Therefore, the letter stated who I was, that I was in search for data on predicting success in student-athletes, that data would remain confidential, that results would be provided to them, and that I would like to call them to set up an interview which at maximum would only take up fifteen minutes of their time. The letter also had a former Division IA head football coach from my pilot study who endorsed the study and left his contact information if anyone felt the need to contact him. The letters were mailed to each head coaches’ office on July 25th 2006.

My research was exempt from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review on July 27, 2006. The approval form stated, “The Institutional Review Board has determined that the referenced protocol application meets the criteria for exemption and not further review is required”. I used a telephone script (see Appendix C) and the protocol was explained. Participants were instructed to contact the IRB Program Coordinator, Office of Research Compliance, if they had questions regarding the research (see Appendix D). In as much, I chose to code all of my respondents as R 1-9. The R is coded for “respondent” and each one received a number in the order in which they were interviewed. Therefore, the first coach interviewed is coded R1 while the last coach interviewed is coded R9.

Out of the 24 letters that were mailed, two responses were logged the following week. During the next month I averaged two responses per week with my total sample response ending up at 9. The phone interviews ranged from July 14th to September 18th and lasted anywhere from twelve minutes to thirty five minutes in length. I was referred on most occasions to assistant coaches whom the head coach trusted to provide me with information therefore I only interviewed one head coach and the other participants were assistant coaches. The genders of the coaches interviewed were all male. Each interview took an extraordinary amount of time to coordinate due to the busy occupations of Division I A coaches. The data collection was started in early fall when Division IA football have two-a-day camps in preparation for the upcoming football season. Basketball was out of season and at first glance should have made contact less time consuming on their part. Rarely did

the head coaches call me personally; that happened only twice during the data collection process. The first head coach had his secretary contact me and setup an appointment 2 weeks in advance. I put it on my calendar as I continued my attempt at collecting data on the other twenty-three Big 12 schools. I missed one interview and after calling with sincere regrets further correspondence ceased with that coach and he did not make the list of nine coaches that I interviewed. I interviewed one particular coach at 8:45 at night after he called me while eating at a restaurant with my family. This was probably one of my most informative and best interviews as we had a lot in common and shared passion for the research that I was conducting.

The foundational questions that I asked came straight from Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix at the individual level (1994):

1. Are the professional and personal mission/goals of individuals congruent with the organizations?
2. Does the individual face obstacles that impede their job performance?
3. Does the individual have the mental, physical, and emotional capacity to perform?
4. Does the individual want to perform no matter what?
5. Does the individual have the knowledge, skills, and experience to perform?

However, each interview was more like a conversation and I allowed it to move freely from concept to concept. Field notes from phone interviews were documented and handwritten into a spiral notebook. Prior to interviewing each

participant I discussed with them the IRB guidelines that were required for research with human subjects.

DATA ANALYSIS

Understanding that data analysis is a “messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process” I will use emergent category designation to organize my data into categories of ideas. I will take these ideas and form them into frequencies that will illustrate what the coaches feel are predictors of student-athlete success. According to Erlandson et al. (1993), emergent category designation requires five steps: (1) read the first unit of data, (2) read the second unit of data, (3) proceed until all the units have been assigned to a category, (4) create category titles and/or descriptive sentences that make the category unique, and then (5) start over. The starting over process allows the researcher to not be confined to the original categories and to see if there are some categories that are emerging. Consequently, I developed a database where I moved topics, categories and statements around throughout the entire process.

Qualitative inquiry is especially powerful as a source of *grounded theory*, theory that is inductively generated from fieldwork, that is, theory that emerges from the researcher’s observations and interviews out in the real world rather than a laboratory or the academy (Patton, 2002). It emphasizes steps and procedures for connecting induction and deduction through the constant comparative method, comparing research sites, doing theoretical sampling, and testing emergent

concepts with additional fieldwork (Patton, 2002). The ability to use thematic analysis appears to involve a number of underlying abilities, or competencies. One competency can be called *pattern recognition*. It is the ability to see patterns in seemingly random information (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Patton cites content analysis as an example of analyzing text (interview transcripts, diaries, or documents) rather than observation-based field notes. Patton goes on to say that “content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton, 2002, p. 453). In as much, I used content analysis to establish patterns in the interview transcripts.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to the literature in qualitative research, trustworthiness is defined as that quality of an investigation that “made it noteworthy to audiences” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 258). There are several methods that researchers use to establish this validity for their work. The criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are four main standards that are usually used to establish such trustworthiness. To establish credibility I used the naturalistic technique of peer debriefing. Peer debriefing was used as I allowed a professor outside my field, on several occasions, to analyze materials and field notes, and listen to my progress and frustrations. As for the criteria of dependability and confirmability I used the audit trail (see Appendix E) to provide detailed raw data,

peer debriefing notes and suggestions, a database that used the emergent category designation and related materials that were received from the coaches. Merriam discusses that “qualitative research assumes that meaning is embedded in people’s experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigator’s own perceptions (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Therefore, it is integral that quality criteria is established and maintained throughout the entire qualitative research process.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter will reconstruct the interviews of the nine Big 12 Conference coaches based upon the Swanson Performance Diagnosis Matrix. This engaging experience was rather difficult at times as I wanted to ensure my unitizing of data was done accurately to ensure the emergent category designation. Therefore, I needed to do this several times to make sure the emerging themes were correctly identified. My data analysis was grounded in the words of Lincoln and Guba (1985) who stated, “data analysis involves taking constructions gathered from the context and reconstructing them into meaningful wholes” (p.333). Consequently, as each interview was completed and data entered, I found emerging themes in the research.

Grounded theory and the constant comparative method also played an important role in my data collection and analysis. In grounded theory the research or qualitative data analysis is about trying to find relationships in categories of data which will then build grounded theory. I also developed my own categories as opposed to using those of previous researchers. I categorized a concept as well as defined it, gave it a label and determined guidelines for understanding why each instance was placed in that category. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), they state:

You will need to study your data carefully in order to identify significant phenomena, and then determine which phenomena share

sufficient similarities that they can be considered instances of the same concept. This concept becomes a category in your category system. You will need to define the category, give it a label, and specify guidelines that you and others can use to determine whether each segment in the database is or is not an instance of the category.

(p. 564)

As the study unfolded and as data developed into categories I found myself totally immersed in my research. I did find that the coaches I interviewed have different methods for assessment however many of them shared commonalities as to what characteristics student-athletes must have to be a successful. The next sections in this chapter will focus on my interview questions and the responses I received. Using thick description, I will begin to interpret my findings by recording the circumstances, meanings and motivations that characterized each interview (Schwandt, 2001, p. 255). Those interview questions that I focused on were:

1. What are the characteristics of a successful student-athlete (On and off the playing field)?
2. What are the characteristics of an unsuccessful student-athlete (On and off the playing field)?
3. How do you collect information regarding student-athletes prior to the student-athletes enrollment? Describe your current process?
4. Discuss the current issues involved in assessing student-athletes prior to college enrollment?

With each question, themes were recognized and constructs were identified.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 1

What are the characteristics of a successful student-athlete

(On and off the playing field)?

“Driven to succeed in all areas. The best ones have a presence and are self motivated” (R8). Coaches, like student-athletes, are competitive and my research found that this specific characteristic, competitiveness, emerged from the data as most sought after by the coaches. Therefore, the first theme was identified as **competitiveness**. The constructs that support this theme were recognized as **presence, self-motivation** and **determination**. When this particular coach talked about success in all areas, he was referring to a student-athletes athletic ability, academic work, social life, and his character. When he talks about presence this refers to the student-athletes leadership abilities and how he handles himself on and off the field of play. Self-motivated athletes take care of business in the classroom, on the field and in the weight room. “Competitiveness drives them to do academic work better than they would if they weren’t in athletics” (R7). In the competitive world of Division I college athletics, coaches are just as concerned about academics as they are about athletics. This particular coach felt that the student-athletes competitive nature gives him the extra determination and resolve he needs to achieve his academic and athletic goals. Other coaches clearly made a statement

regarding the athletic realm by stating “We are looking for a guy who wants to win championships and comes from a good program” (R3). This coach doesn’t appear to be as worried about how competitive this student is in the classroom and this aspect, academics, was not brought up during this part of the interview. Another respondent stated that he was looking for a young man who “hated to loose and loved to win” (R7). Again this was a direct reference to sports and being competitive. The competitive nature that student-athletes bring to their universities is for the most part a trait that is admired by their peers. Competitiveness is a quality that people look for in student-athletes and in people that are hired for jobs in almost every aspect of the highly competitive world in which we live. It is something that can be observed and has emerged as the most important aspect of success in student-athletes by the coaches contacted in the interview.

The next theme that emerged was that of **hard worker**. This doesn’t seem too far removed from competitive but it emerged as a major theme under this research question. Furthermore, this theme is supported by the constructs of **commitment, motivation** and **good work habits**. This aspect seemed to be brought up regarding the student-athletes commitment to sport and everyday life. According to one respondent “players need to be motivated to work hard, and to play in the NBA is motivation” (R7). In order for athletic programs to be successful you need a “motivated athlete” (R2) and athletes with “good work habits” (R9). Without these essential elements coaches will likely struggle in the win and loss column and run the risk of being fired from their jobs before the student-athlete matriculates from a

freshman to a senior. Research on the student-athlete begins in high school and the coaches are looking at every aspect of the meaning of work ethic. “We call the high school counselors and ask them if the student-athlete is in school everyday” (R6). From the coaches perspective if a student-athlete can not get out of bed and go to school everyday, this directly relates to their motivation to succeed both academically and on the field or court.

The theme of **family** was important to the coaches interviewed and emerged from the research. It encompassed several constructs such as **caring, having parents who are active in their lives, a good support system, stability, ability to adjust to adversity** and **having both a mother and father at home**. This theme appeared to be a characteristic of successful student-athletes that some of the respondents were very passionate about. You could hear the tone of their voice raise and the sincerity in which the words were spoken. According to one respondent they are looking for “good guys that care about family and people. One or two parents with a solid household and are the parents active in the learning process” (R3)? When the parents have been active in the learning process the coaches feel that they will adjust easier to the pressures of making the grade academically at a major Division I A university. During the interviews the coaches made note of not only a strong presence of family but having both a mother and father at home. “We are looking for guys that have a support system in place with two parents” (R9). “Family is big. With mother and father, there is more emphasis on grades” (R6). Stability at home leads to students who adjust to adverse situations like the

combination of academic rigor and intercollegiate athletics. It is up to the coaches to observe that environment when they visit the potential student-athletes home and when the student-athlete comes to campus for an official visit. Unfortunately, there is not enough time to observe the family in depth. The NCAA allows for limited contact with student-athletes during the recruiting process.

The theme of **leadership** is an important element and the coaches interviewed recognized that this intangible is very important to the success of their student-athlete. During the interview process the coaches did not go into detail of what leadership meant to them. However, I did identify the constructs of **politeness**, **good citizenship** and **social ability** as supportive of this theme. One respondent simply stated that “leadership was important” (R1). Another respondent stated that he wanted his student-athletes to be “polite and good citizens” (R3). “Poor social aspects and poor leadership” (R3) are under the microscope during the recruiting process and serve as an indicator for non-selection.

The **academic** aspect of a student-athlete was the next theme that emerged. Students who **want to graduate** and are **responsible** and who are a **good fit with the university** are the constructs that support this theme of academics. According to one respondent the student-athlete must be a “good fit with the university” (R1). This can encompass many variables and each coach will evaluate this differently at their institution. The academic fit would need to be a high priority. Another respondent stated that he is looking for student-athletes who “want to graduate and that it’s not just about football” (R3). This construct is in correlation with the

previous construct of being a hard worker. There is a correlation to being a hard worker on the field and in academics. He went on to say that “this is something that coaches talk about all the time” (R3). Most coaches want the best of both worlds. Great athletes and great students in the sports of men’s football and men’s basketball exist but with, for example, 119 Division I university’s recruiting them, the competition to get these student-athletes on their campus is rigorous.

Character rounded out the information that emerged from this question and was recognized as a theme with the constructs of **commitment, character, trustworthiness, no substance abuse** and **stays out of trouble**. I had anticipated that the construct of “character” would be the number one topic that emerged due to the word character in the question that was asked to the coaches. One school in particular covered a lot on character and it was apparent during our conversation that the coach and their program were deeply committed to this one aspect. When he spoke his voice raised and he went into detail so quick and furiously that it was difficult to cover it all. According to this respondent, “character comes first (R6). They want to know every detail about a student-athlete before they bring him to their school. When looking at document analysis I found that they (R6) have a questionnaire and ask questions such as:

- Has he been suspended from school?
- Has he ever used drugs?
- Has he given a reason not to trust him?
- Would you worry if you allowed him to babysit your children?

If the answer is yes to 3 out of 4 questions then that is sufficient and they would not recruit or take him.

Other respondents simply wanted to know if the student-athlete was “an honest person” (R2). According to this respondent the coaching staff had a mental checklist that they used during the recruitment of a student-athlete. A formal process or checklist of what the coaches are looking for in regard to this question only existed with two out of the nine coaching staff interviewed. The rest simply went off their instincts or a mental checklist they developed after spending years in the field evaluating talent. (See Table 1)

Table 1***What are the characteristics of a successful student-athlete?***

Theme	Respondent Code	Respondent Code % (N=9)
Competitiveness	R3, R4, R7, R8	44.4%
Hard Worker	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9	77.7%
Family	R1, R3, R6, R9	44.4%
Leadership	R1, R3	22.2%
Academic	R1, R2, R3	33.3%
Character	R6	11.1%
Honesty	R2	11.1%

INTERVIEW QUESTION 2

What are the characteristics of an unsuccessful student-athlete

(On and off the playing field)?

According to (R3) “coaches are not looking for underachievers in the classroom, and personal life.” This can only mean one thing if you look at the NCAA graduation rates for men’s football and men’s basketball. Coaches are not looking for underachievers in the classroom but student-athletes who underachieve

are attending college and are struggling. Therefore the five themes that developed with this question were; **undisciplined, lack of character, no competitive nature, and unstable family**. In the **undisciplined** theme, coaches found that student-athletes who were undisciplined in behavior at home or within their family were also that way when they came to college. During the recruiting process coaches will visit the home on a “home visit” of the student-athlete. “If there is lack of discipline in the family” (R1) that is observable to coaches during this visit and the student-athlete can hurt his chances of attending that school. The manner in which a student-athlete treats his mother or father is a measure of how he will respond to authority figures on campus. Consequently, the constructs which support the theme of undisciplined is **lack of family, respect for authority and following rules and guidelines**, along with **poor attendance at school or class, and laziness**. In as much, (R2) stated that he looked for student-athletes that were not “lazy.” This may seem easy to detect but he felt that one must spend a substantial time recruiting a student-athlete to clarify if this characteristic is factual. Coaches stated that they periodically talk to counselors and administrators regarding behavior in school. One respondent was concerned with “how they interact with their family and coach” (R6). Overall behavior and in some cases “not responding to authority” (R5) are factors during recruiting. Student-athletes often fail to realize how important their behavior is in the class room. A respondent defined undisciplined as “he doesn’t go to school” (R5) and went on to say that without high school you can’t go on to college. Life has parameters and boundaries and before a student-athlete enters a

Division I institution coaches try to measure how well they have succeeded “following rules and guidelines” (R5). “Undisciplined student-athletes” (R2) often make it on to college campuses but many will not graduate due to the rigor and discipline required to complete a four year degree.

Emerging as the next theme was a lack of character. The constructs that support this theme of lacking in character are **running with the wrong crowd, lack of trust**, and **inconsistencies or gaps in academics or character**. For most of the coaches who I interviewed felt that in the recruiting of student-athletes, poor character was important in the decision to bring this student to campus. (R1) stated that character was important and “running with the wrong crowd was a sign of poor character” (R1). Trust was another major issue in any form and one respondent stated that recruiters want to know “can he be trusted” (R3)? “Has the kid been in trouble” (R3) is another routine question coaches ask when recruiting student-athletes. “Is there a gap (academic or character) wise” (R3)? This same respondent went on to say that “gaps get exposed in college” and recruiters can not afford to make many mistakes of this nature.

No competitive nature emerged from the interviews as the next theme, with constructs such as **apathy**, and **intimidation**. Overall the coaches made it apparent that student-athletes in the sport of men’s football and basketball need to be competitive due to the competitive nature of the sports. Under no circumstance can student-athletes be “intimidated by competition on and off the field or lacking

in competitive nature” (R4). Therefore, “apathy” (R2) is not a trait desired in the highly competitive nature of these sports.

An **unstable family** theme emerged as being a characteristic of an unsuccessful student-athlete. Coaches believe in a “good support system at home” (R4), thus providing an extra support system for coaches and administrators when the student-athlete arrives to campus. Therefore, the constructs in this theme were **lack of role models** and **no foundation at home**. Many factors play a role in the success of a student-athlete including a “foundation, with church as a factor and coaches as role models” (R6). This respondent stressed another particular aspect that was stressed is the “lack of role models in their lives” (R6). In as much, (R9) stated that they paid “close attention to how the student interacts with their family and coaches.” (See Table 2)

Table 2***What are the characteristics of an unsuccessful student-athlete?***

Theme	Respondent Code	Respondent Code % (N=9)
Undisciplined	R1, R2, R5, R6, R9	55.5%
Lack of Character	R1, R3, R8	33.3%
No Competitive Nature	R2, R4	22.2%
Unstable Family	R4, R6, R9	33.3%

INTERVIEW QUESTION 3

How do you collect information regarding student-athletes prior to the student-athletes enrollment? Describe your current process?

I felt that I needed a background in current methods of assessment or data collection before I created my own assessment tool. Therefore, the theme with this question focused on **how the coaches currently collect data** on recruits. What I found is that data is collected through **discussions and talking, observing** and using **a questionnaire or form**. Talking or discussing the student-athlete with “as many people as you can” (R2) came up quite often. The most valuable people to discuss an athletes’ potential for a program were coaches and high school

counselors. Some respondents also liked to talk to anyone associated with the athlete to get a “random snapshot.” Therefore the constructs that support this aspect of data collection were **talking to coaches, counselors at their high school** and **others such as family and friends**. It was also found that talking to student-athletes was very hard and difficult to do. A respondent stated that he always “talked to the high school coach first” but that it can be tough seeing that there are “1200 high school football players in the state alone” (R1). Another one also stated that he focused on “talking to the high school coach” (R7). Others went on to state that it “goes beyond the high school coach, recruiters need to talk to people walking in the hall of the school” (R8). A coach stated that he has to “talk to as many people as he can” to learn about the student (R2). In essence, (R2) felt that really hearing from multiple sources about a student was a good thing. The next construct was the counselor. Several coaches mentioned the fact that “they have a regular line of questions for them” and they usually prove to be valuable sources (R5, R9). One coach said “they gather athletic information after the students’ sophomore year and try to get the students on campus as a junior” (R8). Due to NCAA rules, (R4) stated that they were limited in the amount of phone calls they can make to each student. According to one respondent, he felt that there was just not enough time and contact with the student-athletes and that he feels “we never really get to know them” (R5). He also went on to state that this process is so difficult because sometimes this student could be a “fifty, sixty, or seventy thousand dollar investment” (R5). This

aspect correlates with the final construct of this process being difficult to do as student-athletes are being recruited earlier and earlier in their high school careers.

The next construct for assessing student-athletes was student-athletes can be observed at camps, while at practice and on the playing field. I also noted that several of the coaches stated that one criterion they were observing was character. According to (R8), the camps “created a great avenue for athletic evaluation”. It was also a place that he stated the coach could look at participation and “gain new leads” to learn about that particular student-athlete. Another respondent stated that observation is “the way coaches stay informed, by watching a player for up to three years” at practices and even “AAU games” (R7). He went on to state that “he wanted to see how that student reacts to certain situations” (R7). The character of the student-athlete was mentioned throughout the answers of the coaches as it had been brought up as well in the prior questions. When asked how they collect information, two coaches referred to fact that they sometimes focus on character. “Character is so important. We look at drug issues and so forth” (R5). Another respondent stated that “character is extremely important as part of the process” (R8). (See Table 3)

Table 3

How do you collect information regarding student-athletes prior to the student-athletes enrollment?

Theme	Respondent Code	Respondent Code % (N=9)
Talking (Discussions)	R1, R2, R4, R5, R7, R8, R9	77.7%
Observing	R5, R7, R8,	33.3%
Sending Questionnaire	R6, R9	22.2%

INTERVIEW QUESTION 4

Discuss the current issues involved in assessing student-athletes prior to college enrollment?

With this question four issues emerged from the interviews with many categories to support them. The issues of **effects of the Academic Progress Rate (APR), it being a tough job, early commitment factors** and **character** emerged. With the issue of APR the categories that developed from the data were **increased pressure, having to be more selective and academics**, or in other words, can this student make it academically? “The APR is a real-time assessment of a team’s academic performance, which awards two points each term to scholarship student-

athletes who meet academic-eligibility standards and who remain with the institution. A team's APR is the total points earned by the team at a given time divided by the total points possible" (Brown, 2005, ¶ 5). One coach stated that "APR is putting more pressure on everyone" (R5). During the recruiting process coaches are asking "can we keep him in school?" This of course makes recruiting student-athletes much more difficult in that they do not want to make a mistake during recruiting. He also went on to say that he would never compromise the program because of APR (R5). An example would be a student who makes the program suffer but the team keeps him so as not to lose points in the new APR system" (R5). One coach stated that "APR has no effect at this point" (R7).

The issue of assessing student-athletes as being a **tough job** emerged as the next category with constructs such as **everything tying into it, it is difficult to do, one bad player affects everyone on the team, reflection of you, and product**. Coaches spoke very passionately regarding this question and several felt it was the toughest job they have because of the consequences that at the very least could cost them their job. One coach described the process by stating that "it is difficult to assess a high school student who is 17 or 18 years old. The NFL, National Football League, misses on this all the time" (R9). His advice regarding the current process was to "take advantage of every phone call" (R9). Another coach felt that it was the "toughest job they have" and went on to say that "you just don't know the product you are getting" (R1). Continuing the same discussion (R1) stated that he felt that "there is no science to it. Three hundred and fifty kids in the state of Texas sign as

Division I student-athletes.” “The most important part is the total evaluation of the player” (R1). During the conversations about this the coaches’ voices would raise and then abruptly lower back to normal. One respondent pointed out that it was “extremely important and everything ties into it” (R8). When he spoke further he also commented that “it is the life line” in coaching (R8).

Early commitment emerged as the next issue within this question. The constructs that support this theme were that of **increased pressure, a need to start earlier, and maturity**. “The problem with early commitments is that maturity is an issue. Physical development is big” (R7). Coaches have adapted to early commitments but many feel that “they are forced to make snap decisions” (R1). Student-athletes are growing mentally and physically during the recruiting process. In many cases it can be hard to predict the future and coaches are only permitted to have contact with student-athletes for short periods of time therefore making an assessment very difficult. According to one respondent, he felt that “more contact was good” (R4). This early commitment pressure on student-athletes does not help much and the fact is that student-athletes “feel the pressure to commit early” (R3). He went on to say that they will not offer until they get to know the kid, coach, and family. “Even though they commit early, coaches still evaluate” (R6). Coaches have adapted to this process by “getting to know student-athletes in the 9th and 10th grade” (R4). Another coach said that “they started tracking student-athletes in the 11th grade” (R6).

The final issue that developed with this question was the coaches' responses on the student-athletes **character**. They mentioned areas such as **work ethic, academics, personality test** and **commitment**. Character is an issue that has emerged throughout and this category remains consistent. One respondent felt that "academics, athletics, and character were important" (R1). Another felt that "character and work ethic were important and went on to say that he felt a personality test might have some merit. The question to the coaches would be, are they (the student-athletes) real" (R2)? Commitment is important and (R5) made the comment "don't bring people in that don't have the commitment." When it comes to assessing character issues two schools mentioned they had a formalized process. A respondent commented,

We have four keys to success. Kids are rated and are given stars for how well they rate. They put all of this on a recruiting board, green is good, yellow is hold on, and red is stop. Character and ability are big as well as interest in the school (R3). (See Table 4)

Table 4

Discuss the current issues involved in assessing student-athletes prior to college enrollment?

Issues	Respondent Code	Respondent Code % (N=9)
Effects of APR	R3, R5, R7, R8	44.4%
Tough Job	R1, R8, R9	33.3%
Early Commitment	R1, R3, R4, R6, R7	55.5%
Character	R1, R2, R3, R5, R6	55.5%

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to research college coaches and to develop an assessment instrument which they can use in identifying student-athletes who will succeed. First I wanted to determine if men's football and men's basketball coaches at the university level utilized an assessment instrument when recruiting and evaluating potential student-athletes. Second, if an assessment instrument was not being used by the coaches then I wanted to create one by using Research and Development. While doing the research I found that the majority of coaches do not have an assessment instrument. Therefore, I looked into the characteristics that coaches look for in successful and unsuccessful student-athletes as well as the importance of assessment and current assessment procedures. In as much the research posed four questions in an effort to achieve the purpose of the study:

1. What are the characteristics of a successful student-athlete (On and off the playing field)?
2. What are the characteristics of an unsuccessful student-athlete (On and off the playing field)?
3. How do you collect information regarding student-athletes prior to the student-athletes enrollment? Describe your current process?
4. Discuss the current issues involved in assessing student-athletes prior to college enrollment?

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Currently, coaches are under great pressure to recruit not only stellar athletes but good students as well. “Not surprisingly, success within an athletic department can positively impact the institution’s overall reputation and ultimately lead to higher numbers and caliber of undergraduate applications” (Letawsky, Schneider, Pederson, & Palmer, 2003, p. 604). In addition to, the new legislation implemented by the NCAA, the expectations are for universities to do a better job of evaluating and recruiting student-athletes that have the ability to graduate and perform at their institution. Therefore the problem lies in how to predict student-athletes who will succeed both on and off the field! According to Cunningham (1993),

Predictions of academic performance and persistence are crucial to both students and institutions. A poor institution-student fit could lead to the withdrawal of the student, either voluntarily or involuntarily, due to poor academic performance, an outcome which can have devastating consequences for the student. (pp. 7-8)

The push for student-athletes to graduate from college has never been greater. Student-athletes are under more pressure to not only complete their degree but to do it in a timely fashion (that the NCAA deems adequate). Therefore, the NCAA, institutions, coaches, and students realize the importance of recruiting student-athletes who will be successful. However, the problem is how to assess a potential

student-athlete who is only a sophomore or junior in high school for success in college?

In looking at the theory of Human Capital, the research states “that individuals and society derive economic benefits from investments in people” (Sweetland, 1996, p. 341). Literature also states that “the theory of human capital as applied to education has paralleled a powerful paradigm created by the general public: Pursuit of education leads to individual and national economic growth” (Sweetland, 1996, p. 356). A Model of Human Capital Theory (Swanson & Holton, 2001) guided this study. It posits that there are three key relationships: (1) investments in education and learning and increased learning; (2) increased learning comes greater productivity; (3) greater productivity comes a return on that initial investment, whether in earnings or higher wages. This literature ties in directly to the area of athletics and recruiting at the collegiate level where the universities are investing in a student-athlete with hopes that if they teach them academically and train them athletically then they will be both successful in academics and in their sport. Other proponents of Human Capital Theory, such as Gary Becker (1993), agree with Swanson and Holton’s three relationships in that it focuses on the fact that “a specific type of human capital investment - education – provides economic benefits” (Sweetland, 1996, p. 351). Becker also states that “education and training are the most important investments in human capital” (Becker, 1993, p. 17).

As part of the theoretical framework for this study the area of performance and more specifically Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix also guided the study. The literature on the performance paradigm of Human Resource Development shows that it has not been formally defined (Holton, 2002). However, Elwood Holton (2002) proposes a definition that states,

the performance paradigm of HRD holds that the purpose of HRD is to advance the mission of the performance system that sponsors the HRD efforts by improving the capabilities of individuals working in the system and improving the systems in which they perform their work. (p.201)

This definition correlates with Human Capital Theory and with collegiate athletics in that performance is the underlying goal. Not only do universities invest in the human capital of student-athletes based on their, the student-athletes, potential performance, but an HRD department invests in the human capital of its employees based on their potential to perform on the job. The definition also shows that performance is not the sole responsibility of the individual but of the entire system, organization or university and the process in which they decide to use to get to that level of performance. Therefore, in the systems view of performance, there are three levels; the organizational level, the process level and the individual level (Rummler & Brache, 1988). Along with that the outcome of performance for the entire organization or university is dependent upon the result of all three of these levels and the performance variables within being aligned (Rummler, 1996). In as much

Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix takes all three levels of performance and identifies five specific performance variables that occur at each of the different performance levels. Thus to get at the performance variables, Swanson (1995) created the enabling questions that he feels "helps to diagnose performance issues" (p.209). "The questions presented in the performance variable matrix help the diagnostician sort out the performance overlaps and disconnects" (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 194). Therefore the matrix is a method of first diagnosing performance at all three levels in an organization to then allowing the system to look at performance disconnects.

SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

In the exploration of predicting success in student-athletes and collegiate athletics I maintained the structure of qualitative research. I allowed themes to develop as I did my research, and became very interested in the meanings behind what each of the interviewers said. I established credibility by ensuring trustworthiness and utilized methods for which qualitative inquiry is known. At the outset, I utilized purposive sampling to collect my possible participants. I chose the sports of men's basketball and men's football as my areas of exploration as the data and literature points to their historical behavioral problems and records showing their low graduation rates. "The most recent NCAA graduation rate report reveals that 48 percent of Division I-A football players and 34 percent of men's basketball players at Division I-A institutions earned degrees" (Knight Foundation

Commission Report on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2001, p. 15). This same report states that the most glaring problems are concentrated in these two sports (Knight Foundation Commission Report on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2001). In my sample I decided to concentrate on Division I A only as well as the Big 12 Conference. Out of the 119 Division I A universities my sample includes the 12 men's basketball teams in the Big 12 Conference as well as the 12 men's football teams in the Big 12 Conference. Therefore, I went along with choosing a more purposeful sample, small, so as to focus more in depth on the respondents that agree to participate.

The data collection began with meeting one-on-one with a former Big 12 head football coach. From the information at this meeting I developed a pilot study to test out the questions and method of inquiry. I also developed a letter to send to each of the 24 coaches so as to help with the condition of entry. In the pilot study I interviewed I interviewed three coaches who expressed excitement about the research and gave me some insight into the process of predicting success. In July 2006 I then began to collect my contact information and mail my initial contact, the letter of introduction, which allowed me to express my interest in an interview for research purposes. After my research was approved by my University's Institutional Review Board I created the letter and sent it out to all 24 coaches on July 25th, 2006. Then I scheduled interviews from those coaches who contacted me and I continued to call those who did not contact me. In all I received nine interviews from the sample.

Specifically studied through phone interviews were the characteristics that these coaches look for in successful and unsuccessful student-athletes, how they currently collect information during the recruitment period and current issues involved in collecting data on student-athletes. The interviews were conducted in the months of July, August, and September 2006 by phone. The interviews were extremely open ended and were more like a conversation between two individuals. I took field notes while we talked so as to keep track of themes and emerging data. As for the data analysis I used emergent category designation as my process for inquiry. According to Erlandson et al. (1993),

Emergent category designation involves taking all of the units of data and sorting them into categories of ideas. This allows categories of thought characteristics of a particular setting to emerge intuitively as the researcher's own background and latent theory interact with these data. (p.118)

This process of analyzing was in depth as categories were changed and new themes emerged over and over again. Utilizing the constant comparative method and more specifically, pattern recognition and content analysis, there were definite themes that emerged from the data. Within each question I developed themes and then within each theme I developed categories. Once again, I went through this process over and over again as I reviewed my field notes, looked through documents received from some coaches and recalled the transcripts of the interview.

I was able to establish trustworthiness through peer debriefing and the creation and utilization of an audit trail. I spent several hours with professors outside of my field allowing them to review the research and give suggestions. They also listened to me vent my frustrations and also my excitement. Erlandson et al. state,

Peer debriefing helps build credibility by allowing a peer who is a professional outside the context and who has some general understanding of the study to analyze materials, test working hypotheses and emerging designs, and listen to the researcher's ideas and concerns. (p. 140)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

After conducting the phone interviews I began to use emergent category designation to construct themes and categories that emerged. Using grounded theory and the constant comparative method I started with each research question and designed tables to explain the data. Overall from analyzing the data the research found that the **coaches utilize different methods of assessing successful student-athletes**, most of which are not formalized, and that this is **the toughest part and most important** aspects of their jobs. The coaches tend to just go with a feeling or with their experience as to what would indicate success. Every respondent made a statement or comment about one of these overall findings. One respondent stated that "there was no specific process" (R7) while another stated "no

process is used” (R2). Others said that they “try to collect data but it is very difficult to do” (R4) and another said that all they have is a “regular line of questions” (R5) that they ask. According to (R1), he stated that trying to find successful students “is the toughest job that they have”. Another respondent said “it is difficult to assess a high school student who is only 17 or 18 years old” (R9) while another coach stated that this process “is extremely important, everything ties into it” (R8). A coach said that they “will not offer until they get to know the kid, coach and family” (R3) while another coach said they “use a questionnaire to assess” student-athletes (R6). Therefore from the data analysis the research indicated a need for an assessment instrument with which coaches could utilize in assessing successful student-athletes. However, first, a detailed description and comparison of the findings from each interview question follows.

The first interview question asked, “What are the characteristics of a successful student-athlete (On and off the playing field)?” From this question the data revealed that successful student-athletes, according to the nine respondents, are competitive, hard working, have some sort of family support, are leaders, take academics seriously, have character and are honest. The characteristic that more coaches discussed or mentioned was that of being a hard worker. The constructs that support these characteristics or themes of a successful student-athlete (see Table 5) are descriptive. The findings in the table show that there are several predictors that the coaches are looking for in prospective student-athletes. When the coaches were asked the second question of “What are the characteristics of an

unsuccessful student-athlete (On and off the playing field)?” they responded in much the same manner as in the previous question. What was found in looking at the data through several methods is that there are particular characteristics that the coaches are looking for. In this question the research found several themes and constructs (see Table 6) that are the opposite of what was stated in the previous question.

Table 5

Themes and constructs of successful student-athletes

Themes	Constructs
Competitive	Has a presence
Hard Worker	Is self-motivated
Family Support	Determined
Leadership	Has good work habits
Support Academics	Exhibits commitment
Good Character	Motivated
Honesty	Caring
	Has a good support system
	Has stability
	Has the ability to adjust to adversity
	Has parents who are active in their lives
	Has both parents at home
	Is a good fit with university
	Is responsible
	Wants to graduate
	Is social
	Is polite
	A good citizen
	Is trustworthy
	Stays out of trouble
	No substance abuse

Table 6***Theme and constructs of unsuccessful student-athletes***

Themes	Constructs
Undisciplined	Lack of family structure
Lack of Character	Lack of respect for authority
No Competitive Nature	Poor attendance at school or class
Unstable Family	Lazy
	Not following rules and guidelines
	Running with the wrong crowd
	Lack of trust
	Inconsistent or a lack of character
	Apathy
	Intimidation
	Lack of role models
	No foundation at home

When looking at the themes that were created between the two one can see that they are the opposites of each other (see Table 7). Out of the data given as characteristics of a successful student-athlete the themes that developed were ones of that student-athlete being competitive, having a supportive family structure and good character. While the themes that developed out of the data on characteristics of unsuccessful student-athletes were that of that student-athlete being undisciplined, lacking in character and having an unstable family. The other themes of a successful student-athlete; a hard worker, a leader, being honest, and supportive of academics, are also the opposite of the other theme of unsuccessful student-athletes, undisciplined.

Table 7***Comparison of themes for characteristics of successful and unsuccessful student-athletes***

Successful Characteristics	Unsuccessful Characteristics
Competitive Hard Worker Family Support Leadership Support Academics Good Character Honesty	Undisciplined Lack of Character No Competitive Nature Unstable Family

Therefore the data from the first two questions show that coaches are looking for student-athletes that are competitive, have a strong family support, have good character and are disciplined or hard workers.

In the third question, “how do you collect information regarding student-athletes prior to the student-athletes enrollment and what is your current process?” it was found that most of the coaches did not have a formal process. The coaches identified three main methods of collecting information; talking with people, observing the student-athlete, and sending a questionnaire. As stated earlier in this chapter, most of the respondents stated that this was the hardest part of their jobs and that there was not a specific process used. Most of the coaches indicated they used their instincts to determine whether a student-athlete would be successful at their institution. In as much, most of the coaches indicated their method of gaining information on prospective student-athletes was through talking to people.

In the fourth question, “discuss the current issues involved in assessing student-athletes prior to college enrollment?” the coaches identified once again that this was a tough part of their job. “This is the toughest job that they have” stated (R1). Several coaches also stated that the ability for student-athletes to commit to universities so early was making it harder for them to assess them at such a young age and that the new Academic Progress Rate rules by the NCAA were creating some increased pressure to get successful student-athletes in their programs. One respondent stated, “The problem with early commitments is that maturity is an issue. Physical development is big” (R7). Also, another coach said, “APR is putting more pressure on everyone” (R5). Finally the issue of assessing character as being so important and crucial was mentioned by the coaches.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What was identified through this research was that there are characteristics that coaches are looking for when recruiting student-athletes to their campuses. It was found that most coaches do not utilize a formal method or assessment tool when evaluating prospective student-athletes. However, with increased pressure on the institutional level for the sports of men’s basketball and men’s football to succeed and with increased pressure from the NCAA to have student athletes succeed academically, it is important for coaches to look at who they are recruiting. Recruiting successful student-athletes will not only benefit the organization or university but also have positive results for the team and the student-athlete

themselves. That is where a correlation to this study and Swanson's Performance Diagnosis Matrix and Human Capital Theory exist. Swanson informs us of the relationship between an individual and organization as well as the process that is chosen that predicts or produces positive performance. As Rummler & Brache (1988) state, an individual "is part of a human performance system. At issue is whether the job outputs have been correctly identified as the ones needed to support the process and whether the performance system will support the employee's efforts to achieve those outputs" (p. 49). Just as in this study, student-athletes are part of a system, the university. In addition, does the student-athlete have the characteristics, what will be outputs once they get on campus, to succeed? In as much, does the university have what it needs, the process, to help that student succeed once they get on campus?

As in Human Capital Theory, this study focuses on the capital of the student-athlete to a university or college. Therefore the more investments a university might put into a student-athlete the greater the return for the organization. In as much the same applies to the student-athlete, the more investments he makes on his education, athleticism, and character, the more positive the outcome will be. "Human capital theory suggests that individuals and society derive economic benefits from investments in people" (Sweetland, 1996, p. 341). In collegiate athletics this is very apparent. "Football success can greatly affect the overall welfare of a university" (Mandel, 2003, p. 5). Mandel goes on to quote the Kansas

State president, Jon Wefald, who inherited the Division I A's losingest program and turned it into a top-ten contender;

When I got here, there was a sense of futility...If the old administration had stayed on here for three more years, I think football would have been dropped. We would have no marching band, and we'd be at about 12,000 students today. (p. 5)

“Instead, since 1986 Kansas State's enrollment has increased from about 13,000 to 23,000, its fundraising has gone from \$7 million a year... to \$83 million ... and the city of Manhattan's economy has grown exponentially” (Mandel, 2003, p. 5).

Consequently, one can see the value of human capital society and the university can gain from the investment in these student-athletes. In as much you can see the detriment or consequences of a team who recruits individuals who do not measure up or even cause “bad publicity” for a university. Therefore, the ability to predict success in student-athletes is integral.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. As for my recommendations for further research I suggest that my assessment instrument be field tested at select universities where coaches gather data during recruiting.
2. This study should be replicated in a different conference using the same criteria to determine if results are similar.
3. Further research should include all NCAA sponsored sports.

4. Further research should be conducted on the information gathered from coaches in the areas of (character, family, discipline, and leadership).

Through this research I have been able to identify the characteristics that nine Division I A men's basketball and men's football coaches are looking for in predicting the success in these young men. I have taken all the data and created an assessment tool for coaches to utilize in the recruiting process.

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APPENDIX A

HUDSON STUDENT-ATHLETE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

HUDSON STUDENT-ATHLETE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Name of Student-Athlete: _____
 High School or Junior College: _____
 Hometown: _____
 Position: _____
 Recruiting Coach: _____
 Information source(s): _____

Rate the student-athlete on the following characteristics by circling the appropriate number. The scale uses 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

1. Does the student-athlete have strong academic skills?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

2. Is graduation important to the student-athlete?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

3. Is the student-athlete a leader?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

4. Is the student-athlete respectful?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

5. Is the student-athlete a hard worker?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

6. Is the student-athlete committed to the university?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

7. Does the student-athlete have strong family support?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

8. Does the student-athlete have the desire to be the best?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

9. Is he honest?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

10. Is the student-athlete behaviorally disciplined?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

11. Is the student-athlete able to adjust to adversity?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

12. Is the student-athlete competitive?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

13. Is the student-athlete self-motivated?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

14. Does the student-athlete have respect for authority?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

15. Is the student-athlete punctual?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

16. Has the student-athlete ever used drugs?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

17. Is the student-athlete a good fit for the university?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

18. Would you let this student-athlete baby sit your children?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

19. Has the student-athlete been suspended from school?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

Do coaches, counselors, and others have positive information regarding the student-athlete?

APPENDIX B
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

July 25, 2006

Dear Coach (fill in name):

My name is Shane Hudson and I am a graduate student in Educational Human Resource Development at Texas A&M University. My dissertation research is centered/concentrated on Division I coaches in the Big 12 Conference major revenue sports such as football and basketball (mens) and the opinions of those coaches as to what characteristics that a student-athlete must have in order to be successful.

Data will be collected from selected Big 12 Conference coaches through telephone interviews. These interviews would not require more than 15 minutes of your time. The data will then be categorized into predictors and will be used to suggest some testing instruments that may be able to assist coaches in recruiting student-athletes. All information regarding data will remain anonymous and the results and recommendations will be provided to each participating coach/school for their use.

In preparation for this research, I interviewed XXXXXX, whom most of you know, and he believes that this type of research is worthwhile and would be of use to all coaches. If anyone would feel the need to contact XXXX concerning this project, he has agreed to speak to you if you have questions. He may be contacted at XXXXXXXXXXXX.

I would like to contact your office to arrange a convenient time for the interview. As I have previously stated, the interview should take no more than 15 minutes. These interviews will be anonymous and will not be recorded.

I would like to thank you in advance for any consideration in this research and hope that you find it worthy of your time.

Sincerely,

Shane L. Hudson
Ph.D. Candidate
(979) 845-8832 Office
(979) 845-0155 Fax
shudson@hlkn.tamu.edu

APPENDIX C
PHONE TRANSCRIPT

Telephone Script

Hello.

This is Shane Hudson calling from Texas A&M University. May I speak with coach Smith? I am conducting phone interviews to determine if there is a pre-existing assessment instrument or if one needs to be developed that can be used in assessing which student-athletes will be successful prior to entering a university setting as perceived by select Division I A coaches that recruit student-athletes.

You are invited to consider voluntary participation in the project. If you choose to participate, you have the right to withdraw at anytime without penalty. The telephone interview will be will be maintained by the researcher and presented in aggregate form. If you have questions about any aspect of your participation in this study you may call the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Melissa McIlhaney, IRB Program Coordinator, Office of Research Compliance, (979) 458-4067, mcilhaney@tamu.edu.

You may refuse to answer any individual question and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time. The information collected from you during the survey interview is unlikely to cause stress or embarrassment. It has been our experience that any reactions to the questions are unlikely to be riskier than reactions to everyday occurrences. There will be no identifying link between participants and data.

It is possible that you will gain satisfaction from the fact that your participation in this program will help to improve the knowledge that you and your colleagues will receive on student-athlete prior to entering college.

Interview Questions

1. **What are the top 3 characteristics of a successful student-athlete (On and off the playing field)**
2. **What are the top 3 characteristics of a student-athlete that is unsuccessful? (On and off the playing field)**
3. **How do you collect information regarding student-athletes prior to the student-athletes enrollment? What is your current process?**
4. **Discuss the importance of assessing student-athletes prior to college enrollment. What are the current issues involved in assessing these students?**

APPENDIX D
INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

Your participation in this phone interview will assist in determining if there is a pre-existing assessment instrument or if one needs to be developed that can be used in assessing which student-athletes will be successful prior to entering a university setting as perceived by select Division I A coaches that recruit student-athletes. As a Graduate Student at Texas A&M University, I am conducting this research to help students.

Participation will require about 20 minutes to answer the interview questions. You may refuse to answer any question on the survey and if it makes you feel uncomfortable. All data will be dealt with confidentially and no individual taking part in the study will be identified. The questions I will be asking in the phone interview are attached to this cover letter. There are no risks associated with answering the questions in the phone interview, further, your participation your participation will contribute to the ultimate success of the study.

The research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research related problem or questions regarding subjects rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Angelia Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at (979) 847-9362 (araines@vprmail.tamu.edu).

Hopefully you will find time in your busy schedule to participate in this important study. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact me at the information listed below. Thank you for your time and participation.

Shane Hudson
Graduate Student
Texas A&M University
TAMU 4243
College Station, TX 77843-4243
Phone: (979) 845-8832
Fax: (979) 845-0155
E-mail: shudson@hlkn.tamu.edu

APPENDIX E

AUDIT TRAIL

**Audit Trail
In Chronological Order of Interview**

1. Pilot Study 1, July 14th, 2006, 11:30-12:15
2. Pilot Study 2, July 20th, 2006, 1:30-1:47
3. Pilot Study 3, July 21st, 2006, 1:15- 1:30

1. R1, August 3, 2006, 12:15-12:35
2. R2, August 7, 2006, 1:10-1:26
3. R3, August 9, 2006, 12:20-12:40
4. R4, August 15, 2006, 12:30-12:40
5. R5, August 22, 2006, 2:30-2:33
6. R6, August 24, 2006, 8:30p.m.-9:05p.m.
7. R7, August 27, 2006, 11:15-11:32
8. R8, September 8, 2006, 12:20-12:32
9. R9, September 18, 2006, 10:15-10:35

VITA

Name: Shane Lee Hudson

Address: 204B G. Rollie White, TAMU, College Station, TX, 77843

Email Address: shudson@hlkn.tamu.edu

Education: B.S., Physical Education, Oklahoma State University, 1994
M.S., Education Curriculum & Instruction, Oklahoma State University, 1995
Ph.D., Human Resource Development, Texas A&M University, 2007

Experience: Administrative Coordinator, Sport Management
Department of Health and Kinesiology
Texas A&M University
June 2005 to Present

Academic Advisor
Department of Health and Kinesiology
Texas A&M University
September 2004 to June 2005

Associate Director, Center for Athletic Academic Services
Texas A&M University, Athletic Department
June 1996 to September 2004