African-American and White Scholar-Baller and Non Scholar-Ballers' Motivation and Identity

Janet Rasmussen, University of Central Florida
C. Keith Harrison, University of Central Florida

Research/statistical methodology
Abstract 2010-017
June 3, 2010 10:15 AM 25-minute oral presentation (Audubon F)

As less than 3% of student-athletes go on to play sport professionally, it is important that they are prepared for careers outside of athletics (Susanj & Stewart, 2005). However, many football student-athletes have low grade point averages and graduation rates (Gaston-Gayles, 2005; NCAA, 2009; Suggs, 2003). To help combat low academic performance, universities incorporate academic assistance programs. Yet, a research study of thirty-five Division I schools found that academic assistance programs, as they currently existed, did little or nothing to improve the grade point averages or graduation rates of student-athletes (Bell, 2005). In addition, there is a gap in academic assistance programs' effectiveness for African-American student-athletes; which is important in Division I football, as over half of all Division I football student-athletes are African American (Brand, 2007; Smith, Allen & Danley, 2007).

Current retention programs' lack of cultural interventions may be playing a part in student-athletes' academic performance (Berry, 2001; Clow, 2000; Gaston-Gayles, 2005). One unique program, Scholar-Baller, utilizes popular culture within its curriculum to bridge the gap between academics and athletics, intending to increase student-athletes' academic motivation. Motivation plays an important role in academic achievement (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Ironsmith, Marva, Harju, Eppler, 2003: Kingston, Horrock & Hanton, 2006; Hood, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000b; Sellers, 1992).

The current study will examine the differences between African-American and White Scholar-Baller and Non Scholar-Baller Division I football student-athletes' motivation (academic, athletic, intrinsic) and athletic identity, using expectancy-value theory and self-affirmation theory as a framework. Expectancy-value theory defines motivation as both the expectation of the student's belief about the final outcome of a task, and the values the student gives to the task. A student either has a positive, negative, or neutral expectation of the completed task's outcome (Williams, Anderson & Winett, 2005; Xiang, McBride & Bruene, 2006). This framework allows for exploration of student athletes' academic expectations and values. Self-affirmation theory explains that when students focus on important identities and values, they can become less defensive towards threatening information. Therefore, when receiving negative academic feedback, student-athletes using self-affirmation techniques may be more confident, open-minded and receptive towards the threatening information.

Three instruments will be used to collect data. The Student-athletes' Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSQAQ) will be used to assess academic and athletic motivation, while the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) will be used to assess intrinsic motivation towards academics. Lastly, the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) will be used to investigate athletic identity.

Four universities (two Scholar-Baller and two Non Scholar-Baller) will be chosen for their similar academic and athletic performance. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences: Graduate Pack 16 for Windows, a Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) will be run to determine if significant differences exist between African-American and White Scholar-Baller and Non Scholar-Baller football student-athletes' academic, athletic, intrinsic motivation and athletic identity.