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Supports and Services to Improve Academic Success of High School Student Athletes

Samuel G. Nichols

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SUPPORTS AND SERVICES TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES

by

SAMUEL NICHOLS

Under the Direction of Patricia Holt

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether supports and services offered in various study hall programs (Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) at the high school level to help student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. Basketball programs were used for this study because it is a major sport in the school district in which the data were collected. Data were sought via questionnaires of chosen participants via convenience sampling from eight eligible high school athletic directors in one school district in Georgia. This study called for the use of a quantitative method. Data received through the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS.

The study was centered around three overarching research questions: What supports and services do high school athletic directors currently offer to student athletes in their buildings to help ensure student athletes' academic success; the second being: Is there a relationship between high school basketball student athletes' (BSAs) GPAs and type of study hall (Traditional, objective-based, or Objective Based with certain instructional strategies)?; and, the third one being: What percentage of high school basketball student athletes (BSAs) have a 2.0 or above GPA?

The questionnaire revealed the supports and services that are or are not offered to basketball student athletes (BSAs) have an impact on the student athletes' grade point average (GPA).

However, analysis of the data showed that every BSA that participated in some form of study

hall program had a GPA that was higher than a 2.0. The findings of the study revealed the more emphasis that was put on specific learning goals for student athletes resulted in higher mean GPA. All participants stated there should be some form of supports and services in place to support student athlete academic achievement.

This study impacts educational stakeholders by providing research that shows how beneficial supports and services can be not only to an athletic program but to an educational system.

Furthermore, this study can be beneficial to the GHSA and other athletic associations where guidelines can be implemented to provide students resources necessary for academic success.

INDEX WORDS: Student athletes, Student achievement, College choice, Student athlete Academic eligibility, Study hall, Academic supports and services

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people.

I would first like to thank all my guardian angels, Phyllis Nichols, Donna Nichols, Samuel Ford, Dr. Sam & Jerutha Ford. Grandma, if it wasn't for you providing a new opportunity for me in life then I would not be in the position to complete this journey. Mom and Pops, through numerous trials and tribulations, you showed me the value of continuing to work hard and never allowing my circumstances to deter me from my goal. Nonny and Poppy, thank you for providing me with unconditional love and by being great educators to the Broward County School System. I love and miss you all dearly.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Many high school students compete in athletics not just for the love of the sport but also as a means to a tertiary education. Unfortunately, many student athletes are not being held to the academic standards necessary to accumulate a Grade Point Average (GPA) sufficient to enter a college of their choice or even to a college or university at all. This leads one to wonder what academic supports and services are being offered at the secondary school level to ensure that student athletes are successful not only in their particular sport but also in the classroom. As Stegall (2012) has stated, “A big part of being a part of school athletics is academics...Student athletes must pass a certain amount of classes, have a certain GPA, and have good attendance” (p. 3). Unfortunately, it is not always the case.

Oftentimes students are not aware that athletic prowess is not enough to gain entry into the school of their choice. College choice can be dependent on numerous factors; however, academic success is one of the strongest factors (Grimit, 2014). As Gritmit (2014) stated, “many athletes aren’t allowed the opportunity to continue their athletic endeavors at the collegiate level” (p. 37) due to a number of factors, one of which is GPA. Issues associated with the problem of academic success include academic rigor, athletic policies, stakeholders, and/or support services. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of literature specific to the solution to this problem that puts a high school athlete’s college choice out of reach. Therefore, this study sought to explore the supports and services offered through study hall programs that were in place or could have been added to help high school basketball student athletes (BSAs) be better prepared academically to be accepted to one of the colleges of their choosing.

Background

In order to understand factors that impact a student athlete's ability to have a choice in which college, if any, to attend and to continue his/her athletic career, it is important to consider the literature surrounding these factors. Hossier and Gallagher's (1987) Theory of College Choice served as the theoretical framework to this study. There is a mismatch between high school requirements in terms of GPA and those of the National College Athletic Association ([NCAA], 2021), which oversees student athletes' eligibility to play sports in a particular college or university dependent on the institution's ranking. This mismatch presents a roadblock to those graduating student athletes in terms of their college choice. Colleges and universities have in place certain criteria for admission and academic rigor is one of them.

Unlike the requirements for collegiate athletes, there is no GPA requirement from the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) for student athletes to maintain in order to be eligible for sports while in high school. If GPAs are such a huge part of the NCAA requirements for college athlete admission and financial aid eligibility, it would make good sense for high schools to mirror those requirements in order to help ensure that student athletes do have college choice.

It is necessary for schools that offer athletics to consider what supports and services are needed for student athletes to succeed on a collegiate level so that those tools may be offered to their student athletes. Research has shown that there are a number of supports and services available through study halls that could possibly be used as resources. The review of the literature offered in Chapter Two presents an overview of those topics as they relate to high student athletes seeking college admission and the supports and services offered through study hall shown to be effective in helping them achieve a GPA suitable for college admissions.

Statement of the Problem

There are no stipulations from the GHSA on the secondary level for the GPA a student athlete must maintain; therefore, high school student athletes whose grades are not meeting collegiate expectations may still be allowed to participate in athletic games and activities while in secondary school. This means that a student who is performing academically at a GPA of 1.8 who would need academic assistance has little to no motivation to seek said assistance because he or she is still allowed to participate as a student athlete. The problem with this scenario is that the student athlete will not meet college admissions requirements forcing the student out of eligibility to be selected by collegiate coaches to play for their schools. When a student athlete's GPA is below a 2.0, their eligibility to play on a collegiate level is void. It would make sense to know what supports and services in terms of type of study hall, if any, are being offered to student athletes at the high school levels to assist them in becoming academically successful in terms of meeting the minimum GPA necessary in order that they can attend college and continue their athletics. Supports and services offered to student athletes generally come in the form of three types of study hall: Traditional, objective-based, and Objective Based plus. In addition, it would be beneficial to know what support and services could and should be offered to this student population via study hall type; this study seeks to determine both.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine whether supports and services offered in various study hall programs (Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) at the high school level helped basketball student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. Data were sought via questionnaires of high school athletic

directors in one district in southeast Georgia. The following overarching research questions guided the study:

1. What supports and services via study hall type do high school athletic directors currently offer to student athletes in their buildings to help ensure student athletes' academic success?
2. Is there a relationship between high school basketball student athletes' (BSAs) GPAs and type of study hall (Traditional, objective-based, or Objective Based with certain instructional strategies)?
3. What percentage of high school basketball student athletes (BSAs) have a 2.0 or above GPA?

Significance of the Study

Every year there are high school student athletes who are performing exceptionally well in varied athletics platforms, such as on the field, court, track, or mat. Often it is assumed that these students' athletic ability will give them admittance to any tertiary school of their choice; however, that is not necessarily the case, as colleges and universities often have selective admissions criteria that each student must meet. One of the primary admission criteria is academic ability as measured by GPA. Regardless of how athletically able the student is, if s/he does not have the GPA to qualify, there will be no admission and, therefore, no continuance of the sport at the college level. Knowing what supports and services offered during study hall need to be in place at the high school level in order to assist student athletes in achieving the requisite GPA in order to be admitted to the college of choice would be beneficial to all. However, little research existed.

On a more personal level, the study has significance to me in that over the course of the past nine years (2014-2023) I have witnessed many football and basketball high school student athletes who excelled in their sport of choice being denied the opportunity to pursue their dreams of participating in athletics at the collegiate level because of their academic standings. Thus, there is a mismatch in the system in which a student is qualified to play sports in high school but cannot get admitted to the college of their choice due to a poor GPA. High schools need to better prepare their students to meet collegiate-level expectations and requirements by mirroring those in secondary schools and providing support to those students who need academic assistance in order to attend college. It is assumed that coaches focus on growing their players into better human beings and athletes; however, it is not known if students' academic needs are being taken into consideration. The findings of this study will be useful in informing school systems and their leaders on what supports and services are being implemented in high schools or could be implemented via study halls to enable student athletes to be academically successful.

Procedures

This study called for the use of a quantitative method. Participants were chosen via convenience sampling from the eight eligible high school athletic directors in one school district in Georgia. A sample of six high school athletic directors was achieved through an email invitation. After digitally signing an Informed Consent, willing participants were sent and completed a researcher-developed questionnaire. Findings are presented as they serve to answer the overarching research questions.

Definition of Key Terms

Academic Success – Academic success refers to “academic achievement; more specifically, operationalized as grades and/or GPA” (York et al., 2015, p. 9). For the purposes of this study, academic success will be defined as a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

Athletic Directors – The job of athletic directors is “relating the school to the public including activities like dealing with conference regulations and the state high school athletic association, and marketing and promoting the high school athletic program” (Judge & Judge, 2009, p. 38).

College Choice Theory – College Choice Theory is a three-stage model that looks at different characteristics that can inform how a student will choose which postsecondary education institution they would like to attend (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

Objective Based Study Hall – Student athletes sit down each week, individually, with an academic advisor or learning specialist to plan specific goals or objectives – readings, assignments, and/or studying for their courses without weekly academic success strategy instruction (Schwartz, 2018). Examples of supports and services offered in Objective-based study hall include: Academic reports

Objective Based+ Study Hall – Student athletes sit down each week, individually, with an academic advisor or learning specialist to plan specific goals or objectives – readings, assignments, and/or studying for their courses with weekly academic success strategy instruction (Schwartz, 2018). Examples of supports and services offered in Objective-based+ study hall include: Peer tutors.

Predisposition – This stage of College Choice Theory is associated with many factors that can influence the decision-making process of a student because he or she is still being molded by the people who they encounter daily (Copridge, 2016).

Student Athlete - Used in By-Laws, the term *student athlete* refers either to a boy or girl participant in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading, or literary activities (GHSA, 2021).

Traditional Study Hall – Students sit in a room for an assigned period of time (e.g., 8 or 10 hours per week, 2 hours per day/night) and are required to do – or at least appear to be doing – academic work (Schwartz, 2018). During this time, students will work independently or will receive assistance from a teacher or adult, but will not plan specific goals or objectives.

Chapter Summary

Previous researchers, Chen (2022) and Bennett & Fuqua (2019) have established the need for students to be given academic support. However, there was scant research relative to the services and supports currently offered and those that need to be offered to student athletes in high school. Academic support may provide student athletes with the necessary resources to be academically successful not only during high school but when they make it to the college of their choice.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether supports and services offered in various study hall programs (None, Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) at the high school level help student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. Data were sought via questionnaires of high school athletic directors in one district in southeast Georgia; findings are presented in response to the three questions that guided the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

To understand factors that impact a student athlete's ability to have a choice in which college, if any, to attend and to continue his/her athletic career, it is important to consider the literature surrounding these factors. This background presents the Theory of College Choice, introduced in 1987 by Hossler and Gallagher, which will serve as the theoretical framework to guide this study. There is a mismatch between high school requirements in terms of academic rigor and those of the NCAA, which oversees student athletes' eligibility to play sports in a particular college or university dependent on the institution's ranking. This mismatch presents a roadblock to those graduating as high school student athletes in terms of their college choice. However, research has shown that there are several people who influence a student and could possibly be used as resources. Those groups include parents, peers, teachers, and coaches. In addition, there are supports and services often offered in the form of study hall that also can affect student athletes GPA. The following presents an overview of the topics previously discussed as they relate to high student athletes seeking college admission.

Search

This literature review was created by examining peer-reviewed scholarly articles published within the last five plus years, as well as seminal/landmark research relevant to the topics under study. The search terms included: student athlete, academic success/performance, high school athletics, College Choice Theory, athletic director, academic supports/services for student athletes, college admission requirements, NCAA eligibility, and extracurricular

activities. The researcher researched articles from the following search engines: ERIC, EBSCOhost, Galileo, and textbooks/journals/websites.

Theoretical Framework: College Choice

Each year as it gets closer to graduation, high school students try to narrow down their college decisions with some having made their decisions early and others still trying to determine what is best for them. Unfortunately, not all students have a choice when it comes to which college they will attend or even if they will get accepted to any college. This is especially difficult for the college athlete who may be looking for an athletic scholarship and/or a chance to become a professional athlete. According to Nixon et al. (2021), scholars have been attempting to understand the factors that influence school selection regarding student athlete college choice. Nixon et al. found that student athletes' college choice is influenced by a wide range of factors. These factors allow the student to be interested in attending the school, but to do so they must meet specific requirements. A student athletes' lack of academic success can most assuredly alter the decision of where or if a student is able to go to school.

As previously stated, this study will be informed by the theory of college choice, which Hossler and Gallagher (1987) introduced as an interactive three-phase model that is based on other models but is intended to focus on higher education options and organizational factors at the pre-college and college level. The three phases of college choice are *predisposition*, *search*, and *choice* (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). For the purposes of this study, all three phases directly correlate with a student's decision in deciding a college destination; therefore, the researcher will examine each to understand how they relate to that decision regarding student athletes.

The predisposition stage is the preplanning or development stage in which the student decides whether to continue his/her education beyond the secondary level. Copridge (2016) and

Schaeperkoetter et al. (2015) described the predisposition stage as being associated with key variables, such as student aspirations, academic achievement, and the support and encouragement a student receives from significant others such as parents, high school counselors, and teachers. However, Copridge added the important role that factors such as socioeconomic status and extracurricular activities play in this stage of College Choice Theory.

The second phase of College Choice Theory, the search stage, entails students searching for a college to attend as well as the college searching for reasonable candidates. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) stated how student and college/university search activities can lead them to either looking at the college values or creating a choice set. Copridge (2016) described this stage as a data collection phase in which students are gaining as much information as possible on the potential landing spots for them to further their education. Students, including student athletes, must search for schools that meet with their athletic as well as academic goals. At the same time, colleges/universities are engaging in the same process. In the case of student athletes, this may take the form of a coach searching for student athletes that not only fit their systems or schemes but also those who have the academic prowess to be accepted into the school and maintain eligibility.

The final phase of College Choice Theory, choice, is the phase in which the student finishes the process of deciding which college(s) he/she wants to attend. In this phase, the student narrows down their choice set and sends off applications to these institutions (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). As a student athlete, deciding on the college or university you decide is a very important decision.

Using this framework provided the necessary tools to delve deeper into literature and see what supports or services are needed at the high school level to help student athletes become

more successful in their academic achievement. It provided insight on what support and services are necessary for student athletes to be academically successful and, thus, have a better chance at access to the tertiary institution of their choice.

Importance of a College Degree

The importance of a college degree is highly individualistic. A college degree can provide many opportunities in terms of access to a career. In addition, a student athlete can use the college experience as an opportunity to be recognized as an athlete worthy of a professional career in the sport of his/her choosing. Unfortunately, college is expensive experience and not everyone is afforded the chance to attend because of financial obligations. Sometimes the only way a student can obtain a college degree is through scholarship opportunities (Ryan, 2021), either athletic or academic.

In addition, there is an undeniable and direct relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and academic achievement (Ryan, 2021). In other words, the lower the SES, the lower the academic achievement. Therefore, the opportunities for a student from a low SES family to garner an academic scholarship may be unlikely. The district in which the study took place is a low SES district with all public high schools reporting a 97% Free and Reduced Lunch student body. Since there seems to be no correlation between SES and athletic ability, the doorway to college admission may be open to a student athlete regardless of SES via an athletic scholarship. While not all student athletes will obtain scholarship monies, their ability to play a particular sport for a college may greatly enhance opportunities for admissions.

According to Hawke (2022), the chances of “going pro” are not in the favor of high-level athletes when only 1% of the top 1% are able to achieve this goal. The probability of a high school student athlete being hired to play professional sports is already slim so the need to secure

a college degree to earn a living is very important. Students make the choice to go to college based on their abilities and resources (Capelli, 2020). If a student comes from a low-income family, then they have to rely on whatever abilities they have academically and/or athletically because resources are very limited in terms of funding for a college education. The student athlete who comes from a low-income household must show that their athletic talent is good enough to earn an athletic scholarship or grades high enough to earn an academic scholarship in order to pay for college. This ability leads to other outcomes in their future. It is important for student athletes to show certain attributes to colleges and college coaches when applying to a college as well as trying to receive a scholarship from that college. The majority of institutions want to make sure the student athlete has the academic ability to complete a program and obtain a degree.

Undoubtedly, “there is a return to individuals from having a college degree” (Cappelli, 2020, p. 30), as there is a wide range of benefits to individuals with a college education (Lawrence, 2017). According to Cappelli:

That payoff could well include the benefits associated with being able to make a better life and financial decisions, but it is most commonly seen in terms of the higher wages or other forms of income that individuals earn as a result of having that degree... as a degree signifies to an employer than the applicant has perseverance and other aspects. (p. 32).

Those long-term effects of a degree can change the lifestyle of not just one person but that of a whole family. For student athletes, the return that a college degree can provide might be beneficial for generational wealth.

Factors Affecting Athletes' College Choice

There are many factors that affect college choice for any student; however, for the purposes of this study the discussion was limited to factors relative to student athletes. In addition to athletic prowess, many factors affect a student athlete's ability to have access to the college of their choosing. Two such factors include regulations regarding athletics for each institution and academic success.

Academic Standards for NCAA

There are various obstacles that student athletes can possibly face in school whether it is the lack of academic resources, lack of academic rigor, certain policies in place, or from the stakeholders with whom these student athletes encounter on a daily basis. However, any number of these obstacles can and will affect their eligibility to be admitted to the college of their choice. Colleges and universities have in place certain criteria for admission, and academic success is one of them.

Tertiary institutions that offer athletic programs are responsible for reporting to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA, 2021), which has strict guidelines. The expectation of a student to be successful in his/her academics varies between secondary and college level education.

For nearly 20 years, NCAA members have made decisions about eligibility of student athletes based on research, with the goal of strengthening the academic success of student athletes.... much of the research in the area of academics was driven by the question of freshmen eligibility. (Hosick & Sproull, 2012, p. 31)

If there is a question of freshmen eligibility, then there must be a foundational deficient that these student athletes are not gaining while in high school. In addition, expectations change depending on which one of the three divisions to which the college/university belongs depending

on enrollment, athletic budget, number of academic programs, and number of athletic scholarships awarded (NCAA, 2021).

The expectation of a student to be successful in their academics varies between secondary and college level education. For a student to be eligible for participation in college athletics, they must have a minimum of a 2.3 core content GPA in high school. Now that the SAT/ACT test scores are not used for acceptance into all colleges, it puts more emphasis on a student's GPA. "Systematic reviews and a meta-analysis show that physical activity is positively related to academic achievement..." (Dyer et al., 2017, p. 179). If physical activity is positively related to academic achievement, but all student athletes are not achieving academic success, then there must be other factors associated with the low academic achievement of students coming out of high school.

NCAA Supports for Student Athletes

The support for student athletes on the college level differs from those at the high school level. In October 2016, the NCAA announced that, starting in 2019, it would distribute millions of dollars to tertiary institutions with student athletes who met goals for graduation rates and academic progress (Hosick & Sproull, 2012). This meant that to receive this funding, a process had to be in place to make sure that student athletes were being proficient in their studies. Undoubtedly, stakeholders at institutions across the United States are continuously looking for ways to improve the academic success and retention of students (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). The improvement of academic success of student athletes then leads to funding that not only helps the institution but also helps the athletic program in which that student athlete participates.

There are numerous supports required by the NCAA that are provided to student athletes at the college level that can help with all areas of the individual. For example, student athletes

must attend classes, complete homework assignments, and attend scheduled tutoring and study hall sessions, while also completing a maximum of 20 hours of athletic-related activities (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). Even though student athletes are at institutions to participate in athletics, the NCAA wants to make sure that they are able to focus on their studies as well as their respective sports.

Considerable evidence shows that college student athletes are benefiting from the academic support (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). The support provided to student athletes can come from the institution or the athletic department. Hazzaa et al. (2018) discussed how academic advising is an integral part of the college experience for student athletes to the point that many athletic departments are hiring full-time academic advisors to work one-on-one with student athletes. Academic advisors work on behalf of the student athlete as well as the coaches because they are there to provide support for the athlete, which in turn allows them to be eligible to play for the coach. Coaches will require academic advisors to schedule classes that do not interfere with practice schedules (Hazzaa et al., 2018). Outside of academic advisors, sometimes student athletes will also have peer tutors because it is easier to fit those sessions in their schedules. Peer tutoring has become common at many universities for students seeking extra instruction in a particular content area and academic centers for student athletes are beginning to hire students specifically for helping students manage their coursework (Hazzaa et al., 2018).

High School Athletics

Athletics is a big part of the culture of schools, especially in the high school level. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1991-2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data (2020), about 57% of high school students played on at least one school or community sports team in 2019. Over half of the population of a high school is student

athletes and that percentage depends on the number of sports that are offered at the institution. According to Zayas (2018), “the reasons for participation in high school sports are as diverse as the students who play them” (p. 21). Sports offer students different resources and outlets to delve into. According to Zayas, “Sports provide the opportunity to foster close relationships with teammates; these friendships are important for emotional and mental health” (p. 21). Extra-Curricular activities also play a fundamental role in the maturation of all student athletes (Shrout et al., 2016).

History of School Athletics

The late 1700s saw the rise of interscholastic school sports in the US; however, these leagues were largely confined to private boarding schools of the East (Pruter, 2013). Once compulsory education was enacted in the contiguous states, sports became an integral part of public schooling as it was believed to build character and provide opportunities for students to learn and grow. Throughout the history of the country, athletics has occupied a prominent space in the lives of American adolescents (O’Hanlon, 1980). By 1903, the Public Schools Athletic League for Boys was created in New York City and formal competition between schools began. However, it was not until the golden age of sports in the 1920s, that educators sought institutional control over school leagues (Pruter, 2013).

Benefits of Participating in School Sports

While many students and their parents assume that involvement in high school athletics will lead to a college scholarship or an invitation to play professional sports (Meador, 2020), that is not always the case. Nonetheless, according to Chen (2022), there are many benefits to a student’s involvement in school athletics. Research on the subject has illuminated both cognitive

and non-cognitive benefits. One aspect of participation in athletics is the effect it can have on academic achievement.

Participation in formal sporting activities is associated with higher grades among students. The analysis reinforces the idea that apart from their health benefits for practitioners, sporting activities lead to the attainment of the performance goals to which higher education institutions aspire. (Munoz-Bullon et al., 2017, p. 365)

Most tertiary institutions look at a student's high school GPA and SAT/ACT scores for admittance. Robst and Keil (2010) discussed how "[college] student athletes have higher GPAs than non-athletes, while transfer student athletes have grades similar to non-athletes. Graduation rates are higher for athletes. Thus, athletic participation does not impair students' academic performance" (p. 547). On the contrary, supporting data shows that students who participate in extracurricular activities have greater academic achievement than those who do not participate (Bradley & Conway, 2016; Otto et al., 2019).

Participation in high school athletics provides student athletes with increased concentration and better grades as well as less discipline issues (Zayas, 2018). Increasing grades and lower discipline can help with the school culture because student athletes are usually looked at as leaders. In other words, extracurricular activities help in ways that are beneficial to more than just the student athletes. Rubican (2018) found that participation in extracurricular activities, in general, appears to minimize the risk of dropping out of school and participating in high school sports. Slone (2018) found that "other factors involved in sports team participation, beyond the benefits of physical activity, play a role in academic outcomes" (p. 6). Undoubtedly, there are cognitive and non-cognitive benefits that come from participation in sports.

Cognitive Benefits

The cognitive benefits that come from student athletes participating in athletics are directly related to student achievement. In his study examining the link between school sports participation and academic achievement utilizing a sample of 3,186 sixth to ninth grade students in North Carolina, Wretman (2017) found that participation in interscholastic sports was significantly related to academic achievement. This participation is important in helping shape young people's minds. Research shows that physical activity promotes classroom performance and should be emphasized in schools. Improvement in classroom performance can only come when there is an impact on the way that a student thinks and acts in the classroom. As Straub (2016) posits, "student participation on school sports teams has been associated with improvements in students' grades" (p. 1).

Non-cognitive Benefits

Research (e.g., Bradley & Conway, 2016; Straub, 2016; Wretman, 2017) has suggested that several non-cognitive benefits are derived from participation in school sports. Those benefits include the following: community representation; fitness; improved academics; persistence, patience, and practice; teamwork and competition; positive mentors; social relationships; leadership skills; time management and, a success mindset to include creative problem solving, development of focus and concentration, handling pressure, and taking responsibility. Additionally, the personal enjoyment a student experiences when playing a sport should not be discounted. Factors that contribute to enjoyment include among other things personal accomplishment, excitement of the sport, and improving one's sport skills (Chen, 2022).

According to Bradley and Conway (2016), extracurricular activities can increase non-cognitive skills such as motivation, conscientiousness, openness-to-experience, and self-efficacy, which results in increased student achievement. All these non-cognitive skills can lead to

improving the student as well as the school. “Sports participation can help athletes with personal development of character and build relationships with coaches and teammates” (Manago, 2020, p. iii). Manago (2020) further discussed how through sports, character can be developed as a learned behavior and value, and values are very important in the development of student athletes. “Increasing youth physical activity is an identified priority in the school environment to promote positive child development” (Wretman, 2017, p. 399). The many values that can lead to positive child development include but are not limited to effort, determination, self-discipline, teamwork, and team management (Meador, 2020). Values learned by student athletes can allow them to overcome obstacles with which they might normally struggle.

Challenges to Participating in School Sports

Being a student athlete can be very demanding no matter the level of participation. Student athletes have the added challenge of balancing athletic and academic demands along with the similar challenges most students experience during their teens (Gayles & Baker, 2015). These students must focus on their studies while also honing their athletic abilities. In addition, Murphy et al. (2021) discussed how participation in high school athletics can cause negative behaviors, such as gambling and drinking, which distract students from succeeding academically.

While high schools may not be required to provide resources to student athletes with academic support to ensure academic success (Love, 2019), if there is no support being provided to the student athletes, then one cannot expect the students to be successful in their academic studies. The National Federation of High School Sports (as cited in Zayas, 2018) posits that extracurricular activities contribute to only a very small portion of a school’s overall budget, which can be anywhere from 1% to 3%. If there is not adequate funding being provided to support athletics, then that may take away from the amount of supports and services being put

into student athletes by the schools or coaches. Manago (2020) discussed how the problem is that there is no clear understanding of how coaches shape character or other characteristics that need to be developed in their athletes. The lack of funding could provide a reason for this occurrence as well as lack of motivation from the coaching staff. It is hard to maintain student athletes' focus after their athletic season has ended, which sometimes results in a drop in academic achievement (Ryan, 2021), which will not improve if a coach is disinterested in the student athletes.

Academic Standards for School Athletes

According to Georgia High School Association (2019), in order for a student to be eligible to participate in a schools' sporting programs, they must meet only the following criteria: in their freshman year, they must be a first-year freshmen; their sophomore year, they need five credits based on the previous school year; their junior year, they need 11 credits based on the previous school years; and, their senior year, they need 17 credits based on the previous school years. Unlike the requirements for collegiate athletes, there is no GPA requirement for student athletes to maintain to be eligible for sports while in high school. If GPAs are such a huge proponent of the NCAA requirements for college athlete admission and financial aid eligibility, it would make good sense for high schools to mirror those requirements to help ensure that student athletes do have college choice. It is necessary for high schools to consider what tools are needed for student athletes to succeed on a collegiate level so that those tools may be offered.

School Athletes' Supports and Services

With the expanding nature of athletics in the world, it is imperative that there is insight to support and services that are/can be provided to student athletes at the high school levels to help with their academic success. "Systematic reviews and a meta-analysis show that physical activity

is positively related to academic achievement” (Dyer et al., 2017, p. 179). However, if physical activity is positively related to academic achievement, but all student athletes are not achieving academic success, then there must be other factors associated with the low academic achievement of student athletes coming out of high school.

If the initiative is not taken to determine how to academically help these student athletes who excel in their respective sport, then their future dreams of going to college might not become a reality. “The structure of academic support for student athletes is varied” (Bennett & Fuqua, 2019, p. 22). The factors that play a part in a student athlete's academic success go above and beyond the stakeholders that are involved in the process. By developing a framework of support and services that provides students with both academic and behavioral care, students should be able to maintain eligibility and increase the number of options that they have (Kittleman et al., 2018; Noltemeyer et al., 2019). “A collaborative approach is needed to implement various academic supports to support academic performance” (Love, 2019).

Collaboration comes from several entities—people and programs—who serve to assist student athletes in their quest for college admission, such as athletic directors and/or coaches, tutors, counselors, and academic advisors. “An increase in the minimum eligibility requirements, consistent monitoring and required intervention for poor grades combined with in-season educational support for student athletes should result in the increase of average GPA of student athletes in the district” (Callahan, 2020, p.1). These are all tasks that must be closely monitored by stakeholders regarding a student-athlete. Academic and behavioral supports are key components that need to be identified to help student athletes be successful (Ryan, 2021). Regarding academics, it is a must that student athletes get the necessary support and services that will help them with classwork as well as exams to maintain eligibility. The behavioral aspect of

support will be in the form of character building. These two aspects must be considered by stakeholders before a plan is implemented. Several stakeholder groups play a large role in providing support and services to the student athlete; these groups consist of the following: athletic directors/coaches, counselors, stakeholders, and, tutors/study hall.

Athletic Director/Coach

Many high school students compete in athletics not just for the love of sport but also as a steppingstone to a tertiary education (Gayles & Baker, 2015) . There are numerous avenues that athletic directors must maneuver through to make sure their student athletes are in the best position possible to be successful. “Coaches spend a majority of time directly with student athletes who are under their supervision which is more time than they spend with their parents” (Stout, 2018, p. 39). During this time of supervision, it is the coaches/athletic directors’ job to make the student-athlete the best possible version of him/herself. According to Stout (2018), “Coaches must have a plan in place to develop the student-athlete as a whole person, and not just their athletic ability” (p. 39). Regarding the whole person, it can come in many versions depending on the individual. Stout discussed how coaches should develop their student athletes physically, mentally, and emotionally. This cognitive and non-cognitive development of a student-athlete will improve their success in the future.

Ryan (2021) supported the idea of the role of a coach by stating the job is to make sure that supports and services are in place such as constant grade checks, weekly study halls, teacher contact as well as letting each stakeholder understand their role in supporting a student athlete. “Athletic coaches have been identified by most as an important, inspirational figure, role model, and/or mentor in the life of the student-athlete” (Manago, 2020, p. 2). As a supervisor of any student, whether a coach or athletic director, it is important to build and maintain positive relationships with student athletes that will allow them to grow not just as an athlete but as a

person as well. It is important to improve student athletes' character development so that they can become self-sufficient citizens once they finish with their education.

Counselors

School counselors need to work closely with athletic directors/coaches in order to best assist student athletes with application and admission to the college for which the student is best suited academically, athletically, financially, and emotionally. The counselor's job is to help identify colleges that fit every student's criterion in terms of academics, size, location, etc. It is important for the counselor to emphasize the importance of academic performance, and perhaps most importantly for the student athlete, to work closely with the athletic director/coach (Slone, 2018)

Stakeholders

Students are highly influenced by individuals that they encounter. Through these encounters, there can be positive and negative effects in regard to student athletes' development and character building. One stakeholder group that a student encounters daily is their parents/guardians. McNeely et al. (2002) suggests the primary development needs of high school students include caring and support from adults. Supportive parents are a resource that student athletes can use for motivation to improve in not only athletics but also in academics. According to Jacobsen and Volker (1997), "A child who has experienced supportive parents is likely to develop an internal representation of others as helpful and responsive, as well as a model of the self as worthy of respect and care" (p. 703). This ability to see others as positive role models allows for more stakeholders to be used as positive resources to student athletes.

In addition to parents/guardians, the other individuals that student athletes encounter on a daily basis are their peers. McNeely et al. (2002) posits that being accepted by peers is a

developmental milestone for many high school students. Schlessner (2004) supported this, stating, “during their adolescent years, students’ peer acceptance is valued the most” (p. 6). Students are very impressionable during their youth years, whether by parents/guardians, peers, or authority figures, such as teachers or coaches. This impressionability is why students need positive interactions with these authority figures in order that there are clear guidelines regarding athletics and education.

Study Halls

The academic support and services that can be provided to student athletes can be made available in a variety of forms. Comeaux and Crandall (2019), as part of their review of current support systems for student-athletes, cited varied and significant criticism of support services and the need to engage in innovative approaches to improve many aspects of the student-athlete experience. Some universities, colleges, and high schools focus on the immediate academic needs of the student through targeted academic tutoring (Schultz, 2016). Through analyzing student academic needs, academic advisors can place students in specialized tutoring or with peer tutors that can help with those specific needs. Tutors can then provide student athletes with a schedule of study hall hours in which they can determine an exact amount of time to provide academic assistance.

In secondary schools, most supports and services are made available to students and student athletes through study halls. “Holding study halls for athletes is a necessity in order to ensure their academic success and assist in maintaining the student’s eligibility” (Ryan, 2021, p. 36). Study halls can be formed based on the needs of one student athlete or that of a group. There are three basic types of study hall: Traditional, Objective Based, and Objective Based+ study hall. The type of study hall that is implemented is determined by the coach of that

individual sport or the athletic director if there are building wide study hall required for all athletics.

Traditional

In Traditional study halls, students sit in rooms for an assigned period of time where a required amount of work is expected (Schwartz, 2018). Student athletes are required to stay in their location where the amount of work and time is more important than the kind and the quality of work that is being completed. Schwartz (2018) states, traditional study hall allocates time in student athletes schedules for completing their homework, assignments, and studying, which supports their development of time management skills. This is beneficial to completing assignments, but it does not go into a deeper understanding of the coursework. Schwartz (2018) states, traditional study hall does not focus on the quality of the work completed or on their learning for which the student athletes have little idea of what they need to focus on for their classes or do not want to put in the effort necessary to get their work completed. This opens up the thought to what kind of study hall will allow for student athletes to gain the necessary knowledge needed to be successful with academics.

Objective Based

Schwartz (2018) stated that Objective Based study hall is a viable alternative to Traditional study hall as it is an incentive-based method instead of simply focusing on time requirements. Objective Based study hall meets the needs of the student through individualized support. Through the objective-based study hall the student athlete can “meet individually with an academic advisor or learning specialist to plan specific goals” (Schwartz, 2018, p. 2). This focused instruction is individualized and allows for student athletes to improve their academic performance in specific areas of concern through goal setting. In the Objective Based study halls,

student athletes sit down each week, individually, with an academic advisor or learning specialist to plan specific goals or objectives related to readings, assignments, and/or studying for their courses for each day of study hall. Objective based study hall programs are designed to help student-athletes plan when and where to do their academic work, which includes studying, completing assignments, and obtaining assistance from their academic mentor and tutors.

Objective Based +

The third type of study hall is the Objective Based + study hall, which differs from Objective Based study in the fact that through this study hall method, weekly academic success strategy instruction is provided to the participant. The weekly academics success strategy instruction is designed based on the needs of each student. “Weekly meetings with their academic advisor or learning specialist by reviewing a different academic success strategy” (Schwartz, 2018, p. 22). The academic success strategy is based on what the student athlete would have to focus on through an instrument determined by the Objective Based + study hall coordinator or other designee. Nonetheless, study halls can only be effective if they are regulated properly and implemented to fulfill the needs of the individual.

Chapter Summary

There is an apparent mismatch between what colleges require academically for admission of student athletes and what secondary schools require to play sports and to graduate. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of literature specific to the solution to this problem that puts a high school athlete’s college choice out of reach. Study halls in which students are provided with a variety of supports and service may be the solution. Therefore, this necessitates further exploration of what supports and services within study hall are being or should be implemented within the schools and districts to ensure that these demands are being met and maintained

throughout the academic school year and the duration of the students' time spent on their secondary education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

There is a mismatch in the requirements for student athletes to play in high school sports and eventually graduate from high school versus what is required for college/university admissions. Therefore, the researcher sought to determine the effectiveness of supports and services currently in place that are offered through study halls and those that are needed to assist with academic success as determined by high school athletic directors. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a quantitative survey research provides a numerical description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population. The current chapter discusses the research design as well as the participants of the study, methods used to collect data, including instrument development and interview procedures, and analysis of data. The chapter concludes with a review of the limitations, delimitations, and assumptions inherent to the study.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine whether supports and services offered in various study hall programs (Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) at the high school level to help student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. The following equally weighted overarching research questions guided this study:

1. What supports and services do high school athletic directors currently offer to student athletes in their buildings to help ensure student athletes' academic success?
2. Is there a relationship between high school basketball student athletes' (BSAs) GPAs and type of study hall (Traditional, Objective-Based, or Objective Based + with certain instructional strategies)?

3. What percentage of high school basketball student athletes (BSAs) have a 2.0 or above GPA?

Research Design

This study calls for the use of a quantitative method because the researcher sought to explore if a relationship exists between supports and services in terms of the type of study hall and GPA for basketball students in one district. Correlational research design is a popular strategy to use when the research is focused on a phenomenon within a real-life context and when the researcher is not interested in controlling events (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was bounded by context and participants making it ideal for application of the research design.

The means by which the phenomena were explored in this study was through a questionnaire. Data for Questions 1 and 3 were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics; data for Question 2 involved the use of a one way analysis of variance with post hoc follow up testing. The independent variables were types of study hall and the dependent variable was GPA.

Population, Sample, and Sampling

For this study, a convenience sample of high school athletic directors who oversee multiple sports in one district in southeast Georgia were utilized. Athletic directors were chosen because they are best qualified to answer research questions, as they are the direct supervisors over all athletic activities in their buildings and should have information regarding all athletic programs as well as student athletes. It was the researcher's belief that they would be willing to participate in the study because it would allow them to discuss the support and services that are/are not provided to their student athletes to improve academic success.

There are 22 athletic directors in the chosen school district for this study; 11 middle school athletics directors and 11 high school athletic directors. For the purposes of this study, only eight of the high school athletic directors qualified for the study as the other three did not have basketball programs. Once Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission to conduct the study was granted (see Appendix A), the researcher obtained a list of high school athletic directors from the county athletic director who provided a Letter of Cooperation for the researcher to conduct the study. All eight eligible high school athletic directors received an email invitation to participate in the study. Six of the eight contacted the researcher within two weeks to indicate their willingness to participate. While studies can involve any number of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the researcher wanted to have the participation of as many eligible athletic directors as possible. The researcher followed-up with a telephone call or email to the designated participants regarding questionnaire completion.

Instrumentation

While there are several means by which one can collect quantitative data, surveying is one of the more common methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To illicit the necessary information, researchers often rely on a questionnaire using a structured set of questions to guide the study. For this study, the instrument was a structured questionnaire in the form of a survey (See Appendix B). The researcher-created questions were based on the review of the literature and were designed to illicit data to answer the overarching research questions. In other words, the questions were used to gain information on the supports and services that are offered currently or should be offered to student athletes on the high school level via study hall. The researcher pilot-tested the instrument with an athletic director from a school district that was not

involved; feedback determined that there was no need to modify the instrument as questions were clear and direct.

Data Collection

Due to convenience and time, the questionnaire was sent out via email. Once participants contacted the researcher and confirmed the willingness to be a part of the study, the researcher emailed to each participant a copy of the Informed Consent Form for signature and return to the researcher prior to questionnaire being sent out as a link in an email. It should be noted that specified questions in the survey were constructed to elicit information regarding the type, if any, study hall that was offered in each of the participating athletic director's school.

Data Analysis

As Creswell and Creswell (2018) have explained, the purpose of data analysis in a quantitative study is to provide a numerical description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population. Thus, all data were entered in SPSS for analysis. Demographic data regarding the athletic directors that were included in the study were analyzed using descriptive analysis as was the information regarding the percentage of high school basketball student athletes (BSAs) having a 2.0 or above GPA. Descriptive analysis was used to answer the first and third research question, while a one-way analysis of variance with post-hoc follow up testing was used to answer the second research question

Reporting the Data

As recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018), findings of the research, once analyzed, are presented as they serve to answer the three overarching research questions that guided this study. Findings are presented in tables where appropriate followed by a narrative description.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

As with all studies, this study has certain limitations, delimitations, and assumptions. A limitation that is present in this study is the small sample size. The purposive sample of athletic directors one school district in southeast Georgia is intentional as it is the researcher's expectation that they will provide rich data. In addition, this is an applied research study and is not intended for generalization to the entire population; rather, it seeks to solve a problem in a specified school district of student athletes not being academically eligible for college acceptance. Therefore, a small sample size is acceptable. In addition, while data were collected in order to identify type of study hall and GPA of boy student athletes and girl student athletes separately, data were not separated by sex for the purpose of analysis. Lastly, the researcher assumes that athletic directors were forthcoming in their responses.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the supports and services that are in place or need to be in place to aid student athletes' academic success as determined by six high school athletic directors. In addition, this study sought to determine which type of study hall (Traditional, Objective Based, or Objective Based +) were associated with student athletes having a GPA of 2.0 or above. Data were collected via survey using a researcher-created structured questionnaire; data were analyzed using descriptive and quantitative analysis. Through this study, additional information can be added to existing literature to bridge the gap for high school student athletes needing to meet the academic requirements for tertiary school.

CHAPTER FOUR
REPORT OF THE DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine whether supports and services offered in various study hall programs (Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) at the high school level to help student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. This study sought to determine if student athlete participation in one or several study hall programs would show students had higher GPAs than those student athletes that did not participate in study hall programs. To determine if there was a relationship between participation in a study hall program and student athletes' GPAs, a questionnaire was made available to athletic directors in which they were to input data regarding their basketball programs. In this chapter, the results of the survey data collected are presented along with key findings of the study.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine whether supports and services offered in various study hall programs (Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) at the high school level to help student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. Data were sought via questionnaires of high school athletic directors in one district in southeast Georgia. The following equally weighted overarching research questions guided the study:

1. What supports and services in the form of study hall type do high school athletic directors currently offer to student athletes in their building in helping to ensure student athletes' academic success?

2. Are there differences in high school basketball student athletes' (BSAs) GPAs depending on whether their study hall is Traditional, Objective Based, or Objective Based+ with certain instructional strategies?
3. What percentage of high school basketball student athletes (BSAs) have a 2.0 or above GPA?

Research Design

This study calls for the use of a quantitative method because the researcher seeks to obtain descriptive information and to determine if a relationship exists between type of study hall and GPA of high school student athletes. The means by which the phenomena were collected in this study was through a questionnaire. Descriptive analysis was used to answer the first and third research question, while a one-way analysis of variance with post-hoc follow up testing was used to answer the second research question.

Study participants consisted of high school athletic directors in a particular school system. This school system follows the academic eligibility guidelines administered by the bylaws of GHSA. Recruitment emails were sent out to all athletic directors in the school system. Once six of the eight eligible high school athletic directors agreed to participate and signed an informed consent, they were sent a link to complete the questionnaire that gathered demographic information, asked a variety of yes/no questions regarding academic supports and services for student athletes, and requested the input of both boy and girl basketball student athletes' (BSAs) GPAs. All communications and collection regarding participation in this study were handled by the researcher.

Findings

Questionnaire participants were asked to answer questions based on work experience and characteristics of their athletic programs. These items included years of experience, sports coaching, yes/no questions regarding supports and services of their athletic programs, as well as providing GPAs of BSA.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Participants were asked to disclose their years of experience, how many school settings they have worked in, and if they were actively coaching a sport at the time of the study.

Descriptive data for the participants are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Participants Representation

Participant	Years of Experience	AD in Multiple settings	Currently Coaching
AD 1	3	No	Yes
AD 2	5	Yes	Yes
AD 3	1	No	No
AD 4	6	No	Yes
AD 5	2.5	No	Yes
AD 6	4	No	No
<i>n</i> = 6			

From participation in the survey (Table 4.1), it was determined that 67% of athletic directors had 3 or more years of experience in their position with a mean experience of 3.6 years. Also, 83.3% of the athletic directors had only been in that position in the school system in which they are currently employed. Descriptive data also shows that 67% of athletic directors also coach at least one sport in addition to holding the title of athletic director for their given school

building. This gives the athletic directors experience in having knowledge of effectiveness or lack thereof regarding study hall implementation in an athletic program.

Response to Research Questions

The first overarching research question this study sought to examine was the support and services athletic directors currently have offered to student athletes in their building helping to ensure student athletes' academic success. Six of the six (100%) of participants indicated that their school determines eligibility for student athletes based on GHSA guidelines, have mechanisms in place to make sure that the student athletes are performing well academically, check the academic standing of the student athletes in their building, think the support and services offered by basketball programs to student athletes promote academic success, and faculty/staff help with providing academic support to student athletes. Five of the six (83.3%) of participants indicated that their school implements mechanisms to help student athletes who fall behind in academics catch up, and basketball programs offer academic report checks. Four of the six (66.6%) of participants indicated that their school defines academic success based on GPA, has a set of specific guidelines for coaches to utilize to promote academic success for student athletes, and would implement additional academic support for student athletes. Three of the six (50%) of participants indicated that their school expects student athletes to adhere to a certain GPA to be eligible and offer study hall. Two of the six (33.3%) participants indicated that at their school, academics is the greatest hindering factor to student athlete future success, while their basketball program are ones that offer peer tutors.

There were mixed results by the athletic directors based on academic eligibility requirements and study hall participation. The following questions were used in the questionnaire to determine which kind of study hall was used without explicitly asking. For

Traditional study hall, does your basketball program offer study hall? For Objective Based study hall, Does your basketball program offer academic report checks? For Objective Based + study hall; Does your basketball program offer peer tutors? This study suggests any kind of study hall will be effective for student athletes. Descriptive statistics for participant responses are found on Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Responses to Survey Questions

Questions:	Responses:	Yes = 1	No = 2
1. Does your school define academic success based on GPA?		4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)
2. Are student athletes expected to adhere to a certain GPA to be eligible?		3 (50.0%)	3 (50.0%)
3. Is academics the greatest hindering factor to student athlete future success?		2 (33.3%)	4 (66.6%)
4. Does your school determine eligibility for student athletes based on GHSA guidelines?		6 (100%)	0 (0.00%)
5. Are mechanisms in place to make sure that the student athletes are performing well academically?		6 (100%)	0.00 (0%)
6. If student athletes fall behind in academics, are mechanisms in place to help them catch up?		5 (83.3%)	1 (16.6%)
7. Is there a set of specific guidelines for coaches to utilize to promote academic success for student athletes?		4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)
8. Do your basketball programs offer study hall?		3 (50.0%)	3 (50.0%)
9. Do your basketball programs offer academic report checks?		5 (83.3%)	1 (16.6%)
10. Does your basketball program offer peer tutors		2 (33.3%)	4 (66.6%)
11. Do you check the academic standing of the student athletes in your building?		6 (100%)	0 (0.00%)
12. Do you think the support and services offered by basketball programs to student athletes promote academic success?		6 (100%)	0 (0.00%)
13. Do the school faculty/staff help with providing academic support to student athletes?		6 (100%)	0 (0.00%)
14. Would you implement additional academic support for student athletes?		4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)

n = 6

The results illustrate that even though there are differences between the athletic directors in which supports and services are offered, there was overall understanding that supports and services offered to student athletes would be beneficial to their academic success.

The second overarching research question of this study was focused on determining the differences in BSAs GPAs depending on whether their study hall is Traditional, Objective-Based, or Objective Based + with certain instructional strategies. Data were submitted to A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post hoc follow up testing to determine if there were differences in BSAs GPAs based on participation in no study hall program, Traditional, Objective Based, or Objective Based + study hall programs. An ANOVA test is used to determine to what degree independent variables influence dependent variables. In this study, the type of study hall (none, Traditional, Objective-Based, or Objective Based +) are the independent variables; GPA is the dependent variable. Findings are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Descriptive statistics of Dependent Variables (No Study Hall, Study Hall, Objective Based, Objective Based +)

Variable	Student GPAs		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	N
No Study Hall	2.4073	.35690	56
Study Hall	3.2251	.22092	43
Objective Based	3.4914	.25006	27
Objective Based +	3.9489	.16866	36

Note. M represents mean and SD represents Standard Deviation

While all independent variable groups showed a mean higher than 2.0, the results indicate that there was an overall increase in GPA based on the type of study hall program that a student athlete participated in. Objective Based + study hall program had the highest mean GPA, while no study hall program had the lowest mean GPA. The Zero-Order Correlation (Table 4.4)

indicates the correlation of the four variables. These results reveal that there was a statistically significant and negative correlation with variables (No Study Hall) and (Traditional Study Hall), (Objective Based), and (Objective Based +). These results also indicate a statistically significant and negative correlation with variables (Traditional Study Hall) and (Objective Based) and (Objective Based +). These results also indicate a statistically significant and negative correlation with variables (Objective Based) and (Objective Based +). The findings of the variables being statistically significant with a negative correlation means that two variables have a relationship in which this case it being GPAs and study hall types. The negative correlation means that as one of these variables increases/decreases the other variable is going through a change. These results are represented through an anova analysis with post hoc follow up testing in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5.

Table 4.4

ANOVA Summary Table

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Study Hall	57.260	3	19.087	258.260	.000	.831
Error	11.677	158	.074			
Total	1672.970	162				

Table 4.5

Dependent Variable: GPAs Bonferroni

(I) technique	(J) technique	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
0	1	-.8179*	.05512	.000	-.9652	-.6706
	2	-1.0841*	.06369	.000	-1.2543	-.9139
	3	-1.5417*	.05807	.000	-1.6968	-1.3865
1	0	-.8179*	.05512	.000	.6706	.9652
	2	-.2662*	.06675	.000	-.4446	-.0879
	3	-.7238*	.06141	.000	-.8879	-.5597
2	0	1.0841*	.06369	.000	.9139	1.2543
	1	.2662*	.06675	.000	.0879	.4446
	3	-.4576*	.06921	.000	-.6425	-.2727
3	0	1.5417*	.05807	.000	1.3865	1.6968
	1	.7238*	.06141	.000	.5597	.8879
	2	.4576*	.06921	.000	.2727	.6425

The third overarching research question this study sought to identify is what percentage of basketball student athletes have a 2.0 or above GPA in each variable group. 50 of 56(89%) of student athletes who did not participate in study hall had a GPA over a 2.0 while 100% of the student athletes who participated in a Traditional, Objective Based, or Objective Based + study hall had GPAs higher than a 2.0. The finding suggests that student athlete participation in study

hall programs improve student academic success with 100 % of students who participated in a study hall program had a GPA higher than 2.0.

Six of the eight eligible high school athletic directors from one district in Georgia with a mean experience of 3.6 years participated in this study. Most participants in this study agreed that a form of academic support is needed for high school student athletes. Through data analysis, the results indicated that regardless of the study hall type that a student athlete participated in they finished with a GPA higher than a 2.0. The results did yield statistical and significant differences among types of study halls regarding GPAs. Overall, 100% of participants indicated that academic support and services are necessary to improve academic success of student athletes. It is important to note that the results of this study could be due to a variety of other factors and not simply to supports and services.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

There exists a disconnect between student athletes' eligibility in terms of GPA to play high school sports and the GPA eligibility to play college sports. Hence, student athletes are often hindered from attending the college of their choice due to poor academic standing. Academic support may provide student athletes with the necessary resources to be academically successful not only during high school but when they make it to the college of their choice. A viable means by which academic support and services can be made available is through study hall. Current literature suggests that three forms of study hall exist: Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +. However, scant research was available as to the relationship of each of these study hall models to student athlete GPA; no research was available in the specified school district in Georgia.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether student involvement in various study hall programs (Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) were being offered at the high school level to help student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. In addition, the study explored what supports and services were in place in six high schools in one district in Georgia that have been found to be associated with student athletes' academic success. Lastly, the study examined the percentage of high school basketball student athletes (BSAs) that have a 2.0 or above GPA. Thus, this study called for the use of a quantitative method because the researcher sought to explore if a relationship exists between the independent variables (type of study hall) and the dependent variable (GPA). The means by which the data were collected was through a survey in the form of

a researcher-created questionnaire; data were analyzed via descriptive analysis that was used to answer the first and third research question, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post-hoc follow up testing was used to answer the second research question.

Analysis of Research Findings

This study focused on three overarching research questions. Questionnaire data collected from high school athletic directors were analyzed to determine if supports and services implemented by basketball programs improved academic success of student athletes. The following discussion illuminates the major findings as they serve to answer each research question.

The first overarching research question dealt with the supports and services athletic directors currently offer to student athletes in their building in helping to ensure student athletes' academic success. During this study it was determined that 56 out of the 162 (35%) basketball student athletes did not receive any kind of study hall. This group had the lowest overall GPA out of all the variable groups of study hall. All athletic directors indicated in the questionnaire that they would implement some sort of study hall in the athletic programs in their buildings.

The second question being: Are there differences in BSAs' GPAs depending on whether their study hall is Traditional, Objective Based, or Objective Based + with certain instructional strategies? Findings indicated that there is a difference in BSAs GPAs with the mean of each study hall type being slightly different.

The third and final research question explored the percentage of basketball student athletes having a 2.0 or above GPA in each variable group. Findings indicated that all student athletes regardless of participation in a particular study hall program maintained a minimum GPA of 2.0. However, some students in the no study hall group had GPAs higher than a 2.0 but

not as many as the students that had some form of study hall as well as the Objective Based + study hall yielded the highest GPAs.

Discussion of Research Findings

The first important finding in this study addresses athletic director demographics regarding experience. According to Stout (2018), “Coaches must have a plan in place to develop the student-athlete as a whole person, and not just their athletic ability” (p. 39). As a result, coaches are able to understand what is needed academically for their student athletes and approximately 67% of the athletic directors who participated in this study were also coaches in their respective building (refer to Table 4.1). Stakeholders at institutions across the United States are continuously looking for ways to improve the academic success and retention of students (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). The findings of this study are consistent with the findings from studies by Kittleman et al. (2018) and Noltemeyer et al. (2019) that, by developing a framework of support that provides students with both academic and behavioral care, student athletes should be able to maintain eligibility and increase the number of options that they have.

RQ1: Supports and Services in the Form of Study Hall Type

The first research question that guided this study was: What supports and services in the form of study hall type do high school athletic directors currently offer to student athletes in their building in helping to ensure student athletes’ academic success? The Love (2019) study suggests that a collaborative approach is needed to implement various academic supports to support academic performance. The participants indicated through the questionnaire that all schools have academic support from faculty/staff for student athletes in their athletic programs. Additionally, the Ryan (2021) and Stout (2018) studies found that academic supports are key to helping student athletes be successful as long as coaches have a plan in place to improve more

than just their athletic abilities. The findings from the current study were consistent with these studies in that participants indicated 83% offer some sort of academic support to their student athletes.

Supports and services that can be provided to student athletes come in the form of study hall programs, academic check sheets, tutoring from staff and peers, as well as any other strategies that can help improve a student's academic performance. Through the findings of the research all coaches who completed the survey agreed that supports and services are necessary; however, the kind of supports and services depends on the type of academic enhancement the program or individual student would need.

RQ2: Differences in High School BSAs' GPAs Depending on Study Hall Type

The second question that guided this study asked: Are there differences in high school basketball student athletes' (BSAs) GPAs depending on whether their study hall is Traditional, Objective Based, or Objective Based + with certain instructional strategies? Considerable evidence shows that student athletes are benefiting from the academic support (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). This is shown in the findings of this study in that all BSAs GPAs who participated in some form of study hall program had a GPA higher than a 2.0. According to Bennett and Fuqua (2019), "The structure of academic support for student athletes is varied" (p. 22), and that was true of the findings in this study. All 6 of the athletic directors who participated in the study stated that supports and services are necessary for student athletes to be successful.

The varied supports and services are based on student need or program need. This study focused on the different kinds of study hall in basketball programs at the high school level. Traditional study halls sit students in rooms for an assigned period of time where a required amount of work is expected (Schwartz, 2018). The findings of this study demonstrated that this

type of study hall was effective in the fact that all BSAs who participated in a Study Hall had a GPA higher than 2.0. (Ryan, 2021, p. 36) reiterates the importance by stating “Holding study halls for athletes is a necessity in order to ensure their academic success and assist in maintaining the student’s eligibility”.

Furthermore, with Traditional Study Hall being effective, it still had a lower mean GPA than Objective Based and Objective Based + study halls. Objective Based study halls showed a higher mean GPA for BSAs than Traditional but lower than Objective Based. Schwartz (2018) states that Objective Based study hall is an alternative to Traditional study hall for its incentive-based method instead of focusing on time requirements. The incentive comes from the outcome that the study will receive from a particular content or subject that the student is focused on. Through the objective-based study hall the student athlete can “meet individually with an academic advisor or learning specialist to plan specific goals” (Schwartz, 2018, p.2).

Student athletes must attend classes, complete homework assignments, and attend scheduled tutoring and study hall sessions, while also completing a maximum of 20 hours of athletic-related activities (Brecht & Burnett, 2019). This form of support shows how Objective Based + study hall can be implemented to support academic success. Peer tutoring has become common for many students seeking extra instruction in a particular content area and academic centers for student athletes are beginning to hire students specifically for helping students manage their coursework (Hazzaa et al., 2018).

RQ3: BSAs With 2.0 or Above GPA

The third research question examined the percentage of basketball student athletes holding a GPA of 2.0 or over. The findings from this study indicated that all BSAs who participated in as Study Hall held a GPA of 2.0 or better regardless of whether or not study hall was offered and, if

offered, the type of study hall. A GPA of 2.0 is important because this is the requirement to play sports in many college programs (NCAA, 2021). This could be explained by the findings of Dyer et al (2017) that, “Systematic reviews and a meta-analysis show that physical activity is positively related to academic achievement” (p. 179). This thought was also reflected by Munoz-Bullon et al. (2017) who stated the following:

Participation in formal sporting activities is associated with higher grades among students. The analysis reinforces the idea that apart from their health benefits for practitioners, sporting activities lead to the attainment of the performance goals to which higher education institutions aspire. (p. 10)

The participation of the student athletes allowed them to be subjected to a particular study hall model. Robst and Keil (2010), Zayas (2018), and Rubican (2018) all discussed how student athletes GPAs are higher than students who do not participate in sports particularly through increased concentration and less discipline issues which in turn allow for higher graduation rates. In order for GPAs to be at the required level, supports and services must be in place in which study hall is a ideal support and service to be provided to student athletes. “An increase in the minimum eligibility requirements, consistent monitoring and required intervention for poor grades combined with in-season educational support for student athletes result in the increase of average GPA of student athletes in the district” (Callahan, 2020). The findings of this study showed an increase of average GPA based on type of study hall.

This addresses the College Choice Theory upon which this study is based. Through participation in athletics, a student is able to decide if being a student athlete is something that they want to pursue. In the search phase, students do research based on schools that they feel comfortable with and are academically eligible to attend. The findings of this study allow for

students to know what schools they are able to search for based on their GPAs. A student would not search for a school to which they will not be accepted. Finally, the choice stage of College Choice Theory is tied to the study with the students who are academically and athletically able to choose a particular school for their future academic and athletic needs. The results of this study suggest that academic services and supports are beneficial to improve student athlete academic success through study hall programs that will allow for more opportunities if athletic ability is suitable for certain colleges/universities and possible policy change for high school athletics.

Conclusions

As a stakeholder it is imperative to understand the importance of supports and services offered via study hall types to the academic success of student athletes. There are very few universal supports and services that are mandated for high school student athletes. The administration, athletic directors, and coaches usually are the ones who have the authority to implement such supports and services; however, it's normally falling to the shoulders of the coaches. The lack of support and services for student athletes has resulted in student athletes not being able to experience the opportunity of playing sports on the college. The findings from this study suggest that more study hall opportunities need to be emphasized in high school athletic programs with all study hall programs in this study having BSAs with GPAs higher than a 2.0.

The results of this study are not only valuable to the school district in which the participants are a part of but also school districts around the country because it allows for them to understand how beneficial the supports and services of study hall can be for their student athletes. A study hall program that can yield results of higher GPAs for student athletes allows for them to flourish. Additionally, these results should be viewed by stakeholders to understand how supports and services towards education is as important as the other intangibles that come

along with student athletes' participation in a sporting event. This study provides evidence (i.e. all participants answering the question stating that supports and services are needed for high school student athletes) that suggests that universal implementation of supports and services for student athletes could result in improving academic achievement.

Implications

The findings from this quantitative study have numerous implications. First, all athletic directors answered the questionnaire stating that supports and services should be in place to help improve academic success of student athletes. The fact that 100% of the athletic directors believe that supports and services could make a difference in academic success should show school districts how imperative it is to implement such.

Secondly, the methodology used to determine the correlation between study hall type and mean student athlete GPA allows educational and academic leaders an insight on their effectiveness. This can then allow other stakeholders to understand the importance of implementation and participation.

Impact Statement

There are numerous student athletes that are not able to participate in athletics after their high school athletic careers are over because of their academics. As a school system and athletic program, the focus should be on putting all students, including student athletes in position to be successful once they have graduated in any pathway they want to take. This study demonstrated how the effects of a study hall program can affect student athletes' academic success. A study hall program for student athletes comes from the implementation of a coach or athletic director.

This study allowed for athletic directors to give input on study hall programs that are implemented in the basketball programs at their buildings. The findings from this study

determined that all student athletes that participated in a study hall program had a GPA that would allow them to participate in athletics at the college level. Finally, as GPA increased based on increased involvement in study hall type this can contribute to literature on the effects of supports and services such as study hall effects on student athletes' academic achievement.

Recommendations

This study consisted of six participants out of population of eight, which resulted in data being collected in reference to 162 students. Future studies of a similar sort may want to research deeper into study hall programs and increase the population. Additionally, a case study in which a group of high school student athletes are provided different supports and services and followed academically could provide deeper insight into the correlation between different study hall programs and academic achievement.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether student involvement in various study hall programs (Traditional, Objective Based, and/or Objective Based +) that were being offered at the high school level helped student athletes be academically successful in terms of achieving a minimum GPA of 2.0 or above. There was research that supported this study; however, a review of literature indicated that there are numerous other topics that should be considered in future research such as:

- Research effectiveness of study hall programs of public school vs private school student athletes.
- Research the support and services for student athletes in different school systems in Georgia or in other states.
- Research support and services for middle school student athletes.

- Research support and services for student athletes' perspective from the parents/guardians.
- Research student athlete academic requirements from other school systems or states.

Dissemination

The major findings and recommendations of this study may be an interesting topic to numerous groups of individuals. The first group that will find this study the most interesting is the school district and its county athletic director this study focused on. The finding from this study may have an impact on the school system creating a district-wide supports and services system for their student athletes. Another group that that will be interested in the findings of this study is the Georgia High School Association (GHSA), the governing body for all athletics and student athletes in Georgia for participating schools. This could allow them to implement policy for member schools to follow to ensure the student athletes at these participating schools are as academically successful as possible. The data from this study will be shared with both the GHSA as well as the school district through a presentation in the fall.

Concluding Thoughts

The researcher has had experience interacting with numerous student athletes. The number of student athletes who cannot follow their dreams to play sports on the next level is higher than many might think. It is up to not just the coaches but school systems to ensure that supports and services are in place for student athletes to achieve academic success. The literature regarding academic achievement and athletic involvement shows mixed results but research aligned with supports and services indicate an effectiveness on academic achievement.

As an educational leader in a Georgia school system, it is noticeable that students' opportunities to play sports on the next level are very slim. This study revealed it is imperative to

implement a form of a study hall program for student athletes regardless of which one is decided upon to help improve academic success.

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APPENDIX A

IRB PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



Institutional Review Board (IRB)
 PO Box 8005 • STATESBORO, GA 30460
 Phone: 912-478-5465
 Fax: 912-478-0719
 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

To: Nichols, Samuel
From: Georgia Southern Institutional Review Board
Approval Date: March 29, 2023
Subject: Institutional Review Board Exemption Determination - Limited Review

The following protocol involves activities that do not require full approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) according to federal guidelines.

Protocol #: H23281
Title: Supports and Services to Improve Academic Success of Middle and High School Student Athletes

According to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46, your research protocol is determined to be exempt from full review under the following exemption category(s):

Review Type: E2
 Exemption 2 Research involving only the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, if: Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to them. Please visit our FAQ's for more information on anonymous survey platforms; Any disclosure of the human participant's responses outside the research could not reasonably place the participant at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participant's financial standing, employability or reputation; Survey or interview research does not involve children; The research project does not include any form of intervention.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research **with the understanding that you will abide by the following conditions:**

No COVID Safety Plan No in person procedures were included in this protocol.
Incentives: No monetary incentives are approved for this protocol.

Special Conditions: You are approved to conduct research at the following locations/counties/schools/businesses for which you have obtained letters of cooperation:
 - Richmond County School System
 Additional counties/schools/businesses/locations may be added to this study by submitting additional letters of cooperation.

Any alteration in the terms or conditions of your involvement may alter this approval. Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research, as submitted, is exempt from IRB Review. No further action or IRB oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. If you alter the project, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB and acquire a new determination of exemption. Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, this project does not require an expiration date.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographics:

- How long have you been an athletic director?
- Is this the only school setting in which you worked? If not, in how many other school settings have you worked?
- Do you coach a sport even though you are an athletic director? If so, what sports do you coach?

Questions:

1. Does your school define academic success based on GPA?
2. Are student athletes expected to adhere to a certain GPA to be eligible?
3. Is academics the greatest hindering factor to student athlete future success?
4. Does your school determine eligibility for student athletes based on GHSA guidelines?
5. Are mechanisms in place to make sure that the student athletes are performing well academically?
6. If student athletes fall behind in academics, are mechanisms in place to help them catch up?
7. Is there a set of specific guidelines for coaches to utilize to promote academic success for student athletes?
8. Do your basketball programs offer study hall?
9. Do your basketball programs offer academic report checks?
10. Do your basketball programs offer peer tutors?
11. Do you check the academic standing of the student athletes in your building?
12. Do you think the supports and services offered by basketball programs to student athletes promotes academic a success?
13. Do the school faculty/staff help with providing academic support to student athletes?
14. Would you implement additional academic support for student athletes?
15. Fill in the following table:

Boy Student Athlete (SA)	GPA
SA 1	
SA 2	
SA 3	
SA 4	
SA 5	
SA 6	
SA 7	
SA 8	
SA 9	
SA 10	
SA 11	
SA 12	
SA 13	
SA 14	
SA 15	
SA 16	
SA 17	
SA 18	
SA 19	

15. Fill in the following table:

Girl Student Athlete (SA)	GPA
SA 1	
SA 2	
SA 3	
SA 4	
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