

WHY STUDENT-ATHLETES COMMIT TO SPECIFIC UNIVERSITIES: MOTIVATIONAL
FACTORS INFLUENCING UNIVERSITY SELECTION OF NON-REVENUE
GENERATING SPORT STUDENT-ATHLETES

Abstract

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Intercollegiate athletics have commonly been referred to as a bridge linking academic institutions with the greater culture of society. Athletic programs serve as windows to the university; they offer a small representation of the entire institution to the outside world. There are numerous benefits as well as challenges intercollegiate athletics pose to the university system. However, there is a continued demand for collegiate athletic entertainment. The focus of sport success is substantial to athletic programs and very important to collegiate coaches. Coaches spend thousands of hours and dollars on recruiting star athletes to improve their team's performance. The solicitation of qualified, talented players is referred to as recruiting and in order to have a winning team or successful athletic programs, the process of recruiting is imperative.

The purpose of this research project was to uncover the influential factors recruited student-athletes of non-revenue sports use for university selection. Little research has been conducted on the influence of motivation and university factors for student-athletes of non-revenue sports. Consequently, continued research is required in this field to contribute to the

information available for coaches of non-revenue sports and the best way to recruit better athletes, ultimately improving team success. A qualitative research design was conducted to discover explanatory and in depth influential factors for recruited student-athletes of non-revenue sports which differs from previous research which used quantitative approaches and failed to provide descriptive language or encounters that can be associated with personal values and subsequently, motivations.

The influential factors discovered through this research were looked at through the Self-Determination Theory to determine if these influences stemmed from internal or external motivation. The findings of this research revealed how important and persuasive somewhat internal and internal factors are for potential student-athletes when making their decision to select a specific university for attendance. This research also reveals how critical the personal relationship is between potential student-athletes and the coaching staff in order to discover the interests of the recruit and do a better job at promoting athletic programs and sport teams.