

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DROPOUT OF STUDENTS FROM A
CRICKET AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AT A UNIVERSITY
IN THE WESTERN CAPE METROPOLE**

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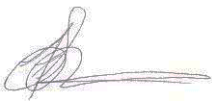
Dr. Anver Desai

March 2021

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that “Factors influencing the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme at a University in the Western Cape metropole” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any other degree in any other university, and that the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Faizel Simon

Signed: 

Date: 25 March 2021

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Confucius (551BC), once said, *“I hear, and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”* My life has been blessed with many teachers and guiding influences, who in their own ways, have contributed to the completion of this thesis.

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DEDICATION

For my daughter Ariana Simon

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CSA	Cricket South Africa
ICSSD	The Interdisciplinary Centre for Sports Science and Development
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
S4D	Sport for Development
SARM	Student Athlete Retention Model
SDP	Sport for Development and Peace

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cricket: Is a game played between two teams, generally of 11 players each. In essence, it is single combat, in which an individual batsman does battle against an individual bowler, who has helpers known as fielders (International Cricket Council, 2020).

Sports for Development and Peace: The intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development objectives in low- and middle-income countries and disadvantaged communities in high-income settings (Sanders & Raptis, 2017).

Student-athlete: A student who participates in competitive, organized, sports that are sponsored by the university they are enrolled in (Richardson, 2020).

University: An institution where students study for degrees and where academic research is undertaken. (Collins Dictionary, 2020).

University Dropout: The withdrawal of a student in the form of education in which he / she was enrolled before obtaining a diploma or qualification (Stăiculescu & Ramona, 2018).

ABSTRACT

University student-athlete dropout continues to be a concern for many universities and has been the focus of many researchers globally. This qualitative study explored the factors that influenced students to dropout of a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole. Seven former student-athletes and two current administrators participated in this study. This study was guided by the Student Athlete Retention Model by Rivera (2004). Data was collected using individual semi-structured interviews to address three sub questions that directed this study: 1) What are the factors student-athletes perceived to have influenced their decision to dropout of the programme? 2) What are the factors the programme management perceive to influence students to dropout of the programme? 3) Does the role of the coaches, teammates and sports administration departments influence students to dropout of the programme? Through deductive thematic analysis of the data, insight was provided into various factors that influenced students from dropping out of the programme. Subsequently, three major factors emerged: Academic integration; environmental pull factors; and balancing the roles of cricket and academic responsibilities. Findings from this study indicate the majority of students left the university because they did not perform well academically and struggled to balance their academic and cricket responsibilities. Furthermore, while some students left because of financial reasons and not registering for their first-choice degree, others felt they needed to pursue their dream of playing cricket professionally.

KEY WORDS: University, student-athlete, cricket, development, Student Athlete Retention model

CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

The phenomena of student-athlete dropout continues to be a concern for many university organisations and can have adverse effects both on society and economically, as well as on a personal level of student-athletes (Stăiculescu & Ramona, 2018). Before 1970, student dropout focused on the characteristics of the student but in the past 40 years, research on university student dropout has been influenced by the work of Spady, Tinto and Bean and their concepts on integration (Godor, 2017). More recently, universities globally and in South Africa have been looking for ways to increase academic success and reduce dropout of student-athletes (Brecht & Burnett, 2019).

Student-athletes choose a university with the intention to play for the university sports teams for the duration of their academic years, however, 40% of student-athletes who receive scholarships do not graduate within six years or dropout completely (Richards, Holden & Pugh, 2016). Furthermore, Rubin and Rosser (2014) found that student-athletes on scholarships, who did not dropout, took on average 9.34 semesters to graduate while non-scholarship student-athletes were able to graduate in under 8.95 semesters.

Stakeholders like government departments, support services and sport administrators at universities across the world and locally are continuously looking at unique ways to improve academic success and minimise student-athlete dropout (Brecht, 2019). In South Africa, with an increasing interest in university sport, tertiary institutions are using a wide range of marketing and recruitment strategies to attract potential student-athletes (Serra, Surujlal &

Redda, 2016). Sport at most universities in South Africa has become commercialised and attracts significant investments, with the hopes of attracting high quality student-athletes; for example, Varsity Sports in South Africa, where the challenge is to retain these student-athletes (Van den Berg & Surujlal, 2020). Many so called “cheque book universities” have been spending substantial amounts on the recruitment process and sports bursaries, housing and various other benefits for athletes to ensure the university environment is conducive to academic success (Burnett, 2010). Also, university branding is closely linked to the success of their sports teams and the recruitment, retention and dropout of their student-athletes.

As a result, many student dropout models have been adopted in an attempt to resolve the situation (Burke, 2019). Early student retention models borrowed their frameworks from Durkheim’s 1961 model of suicide. According to Durkheim’s model of suicide (1961), suicide and student dropout are similar as both are forms of removing oneself from society (Burke, 2019). The first theoretical model of student dropout was introduced by Spady in 1970, known as the Undergraduate Dropout Process model, followed by Tinto’s Institutional Departure Model in 1975, of which the foundation draws on studies of departure of employees in work organisations. In 1993, Bean presented a model of institutional departure that consisted of different factors that influence student dropout in higher education. However, challenges and difficulties persist, and dropout of student-athletes continue.

This study takes place at a cricket and development programme which is located at a university in the Western Cape metropole. The programme aims to develop students holistically, both on and off the cricket field. When students join the programme, the programme aims to support their continued academic development and retain them as students-athletes.

The primary objective of the programme is to give access to higher education for previously disadvantaged students. In South Africa, high dropout rates among minority groups have been well documented, and in 2013, it was reported that only five percent of black and coloured students graduated from university (Smith, 2013). Only five years ago, Neethling (2015) stated that in South Africa, coloured students had higher dropout rates than graduation rates, which was higher than Indian and white students, while black students had equal dropout and graduation rates. In South Africa, low retention rates specifically among black and coloured students who dropout from university is limited (Moodley & Singh, 2015). This is supported by Mcghie (2017) which states that South African universities are facing low retention rates with 50 percent of black students dropping out of university during their first year of study. This demands innovative approaches to address the issue of dropout at university, especially among previously disadvantaged populations.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem addressed in this study is the dropout of student-athletes from university and the factors that influence the dropout rates. The increase in dropout rates of university students presents a significant financial burden on university administrators with nearly 40% of student-athletes who receive scholarships either transferring to another university, dropping out completely or not graduating within the required time for an undergraduate degree (Williams, 2020). Although, the number of student-athletes at university is small compared to the rest of the student body, the significance of preventing student-athlete dropout is immense because universities have started to comprehend the importance of developing and maintaining a unique institutional image (Williams, 2020). High rates of dropout from educational sport and development programmes negatively affects the recruitment, budgets

and public perceptions of many programmes and universities. For university student cricketers to excel both on and off the field, they must have the correct support structures and environment to achieve their goals, which are essential if talented individuals are to fulfil their potential (Abbott & Collins, 2004).

Student-athletes have been and will continue to be a unique group in higher education. There are many issues surrounding university sport and its role in the dropout process in higher education, particularly debates regarding the professional and commercialisation of university sport (Hewitt, 2002). Globally, student dropout is a challenge faced by many universities (Moodley & Singh, 2015). Examples of this include dropout rates in Victoria University in Australia at around 25 percent for the period between 1994–2003, University of Leeds was 8,6 percent; and the University of Edinburgh 22.0 percent (Moodley & Singh, 2015). This challenge demands a more strategic and innovative approach to address the problem of dropout, especially amongst previously disadvantaged groups (Moodley & Singh, 2015).

The programme being investigated in this study adopts a person-centred holistic programme and allows students to be part of the decision-making process in setting academic and cricketing goals for the season. The programme has been in existence for 20 years, yet dropout from the programme persists, despite there being structured support for students to complete their studies. Since the inception of the programme, 27 percent of students who registered to study have dropped out of the university (Morrell, 2018). That translates into more than one in four students-athletes having dropped out of the programme and not completing their degree.

1.3 Significance of the problem

This study is significant as it will broaden the knowledge base of practitioners by expanding the literature and contributing to the field of knowledge of student-athlete dropout in a South African context. Neethling (2015) stated that university dropout in South Africa is largely driven by the inequalities in education, a challenge that has not been completely addressed since democracy in 1994. The programme, the university, together with the investors and stakeholders could all benefit from this study as it will contribute new knowledge in the area, which may assist the programme and university to minimise and prevent student dropout in the future. Furthermore, in the context of South Africa, many studies looking at student dropout at universities have focused on the general population of students and have not been specific to student-athletes, let alone cricket student-athletes. It is for these reasons that there is a relative scarcity of studies addressing factors that influence the dropout of student-athletes in higher education through sport (in particular cricket) in South Africa which is another motivating factor for the need for this study.

In summary, this study will provide further insight into factors that influence the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme at the university, so that universities and sport programme administrators can better understand the role these factors play with regards to dropout rates of student-athletes.

1.4 Research questions

The research question that guided this study was: What are the factors that influenced students to dropout of a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole?

The following sub-questions were established:

1. What are the factors that student-athletes perceive to have influenced their decision to dropout from the programme?
2. What are the factors the programme management perceive to influence student-athletes to dropout from the programme?
3. Did the roles of the coaches, teammates and sports administration departments contribute to student -athlete dropout from the programme?

1.5 Aims and objectives of the study

1.5.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to explore the factors that influenced the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To explore the factors that cricket student-athletes perceived to have contributed to their dropout from both the programme and the university.
2. To explore the factors that the Director and Head of Recruitment of the programme perceived to have contributed to the dropout of student-athletes.
3. To explore the role of the coach's contribution, teammates and sports administration departments to the dropout of student-athletes from the programme.

1.6 Summary

Chapter 1 provides the background for this study and offers a strong underpinning for the need for this study. The gap in the literature was targeted and information regarding student-athlete dropout, especially of cricket student-athletes within a South African higher education context. The problem statement, significance of the study and research questions all provide the direction of this study. Finally, the chapter concludes with the aims and objectives of the study. Chapter 2 of reviews the literature relevant to the research topic and provides a background on student-athlete dropout. It also stresses the importance of theory giving reference to many student dropout models. The methodology used to perform this research is described in Chapter 3. For this study, qualitative data were collected using an exploratory research approach. Chapter 4 presents a report of the results related to the research aims and objectives of this study. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the results and provides recommendations as well as concepts for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a synthesis of previous research findings, theoretical perspectives, and writings related to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. An overview of literature relating to sport for development programmes, student-athlete dropout, the factors associated with student-athlete dropout and student dropout models will be provided. Specific attention will be given to the student-athlete population within higher education.

2.2 Sport for development

The constructs of sport for development consist of two interconnected concepts: Sport and development and how effectively the combination can be used as a tool to enhance social and human development (Nhamo & Magonde, 2014). Therefore, the concept of sport for development requires a thorough understanding of the two concepts.

2.2.1 Definition of sport for development

Many scholars have defined sport for development as the use of sport, physical activity and play to achieve and contribute to social development, community development and prevention of disease in disadvantaged communities (Didier, 2019). Wheaton, Roy and Olive (2017, p.1), further defined sport for development as “the use of sport, physical activity and movement cultures as having the capacity to build social, political and personal good and have the powerful influence on communities to bring positive change.”

Sport for development and peace (SDP) refers to the use of sport to promote varied outcomes beyond the playing field and is defined by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDPIWG) as “the intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development objectives in low- and middle-income countries and disadvantaged communities in high-income settings” (Sanders & Raptis, 2017 p.1). Spaajj, Schulenkorf, Jeanes and Oxford (2018) suggested that, from a S4D perspective, sport is a conduit to achieving wider development outcomes for marginalised and disadvantaged communities and their individual members and has at its centre the ambition to alter existing systems and structures of inequality.

2.2.2 Sport for development programmes

Didier (2019) indicated that, over the past decade, sport has been used to attract different governmental and international organisations to maximise the positive values that sport can fulfil to achieve developmental goals of resolving different complex situations and bring hope to the beneficiaries from disadvantaged communities. In the context of sport for development, sport can contribute to the development of individuals and communities in diverse ways. Since the early 2000s, sport was introduced into development philosophy, and has since become an official instrument in addressing some of the world’s most pressing economic, security and health concerns (Collison, Darnell, Guilianotti & David, 2016). According to Whitley, Farrell, Wolff and Hillyer (2019), there are over 950 organisations listed on the international platform for sport and development and estimated that 10 new organisations register each month.

The potential of sport for development programmes to achieve social development outcomes and encourage progressive change have been the topic of examination for many years (Spaajj, et al., 2018). In other contexts, sport is used to reach out to the needy, including impoverished,

people with disabilities and victims of conflict. Motlhaolwa, (2016) described sport as a tool that can contribute positively to health and well-being, addressing social issues and instilling core values such as discipline and respect. The benefits of sport support historical long-standing assumptions that sport can provide social benefits beyond the immediate experience of participation. Sport provides a positive impact on holistic development, socialization of people and, more importantly, the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups and for the economic development of communities (Didier, 2019).

Despite the growing nature of sport and development programmes, attempts have been made to address concerns relating to these programmes including the loose, unorganised and isolated nature of programmes (Whitley et al., 2019). Wheaton et al. (2017) stated that scholars are increasingly debating whether sport has a fundamental positive essence and whether sport creates positive changes to those who participate in it. Burnett (2015) also highlighted that tensions often exist between donors who seek proof of successful social change and with programmes that see problems aligned with hegemonic practices and neoliberal agendas.

2.2.3 Sport for development in South Africa

Sport and development programmes introduced in South Africa are based on the premise that sport can be used to address social issues and contribute to individual development, gender equality, social integration and the development of social capital (Motlhaolwa, 2016). Nhamo and Magonde (2014) believed that the impact of sport is used by many organisations from government, educational institutions, to private entities, in order to develop skills as well as promote peace building.

A study conducted by Svensson and Woods (2017), found that out of 944 registered sport for development programmes worldwide, South Africa, Kenya and Uganda were over represented with 218 programmes, with the primary focus on education. They further concluded that this could be the result of the diverse context across the continent. Svensson and Woods (2017) further state that the common objectives for most sport for development programmes in South Africa focuses on teaching life skills and suggest a more balanced approach for addressing a deeper understanding of sport for development programmes in different contexts.

2.2.4 University cricket programmes in South Africa

A key focus for university cricket administrator's post-apartheid was to fast track the development of players across all ethnic groups (Dove, 2018). Bursaries were offered to disadvantaged students to attend the best universities where access to state of the art facilities and coaching were accessible. In contrast, Desai and Vahed (2010) argued that bursaries and financial support is not enough to produce quality student-athletes because of the socio-economic conditions of previously disadvantaged communities.

Dove (2018) stated that university cricket provides development opportunities and pathways both on and off the field and can create a pathway for provincial and national representation. University cricket in South Africa offers a strong competitive cricket while simultaneously acquiring an academic qualification. Cricket South Africa (CSA) acknowledges that universities play a key role in the CSA high performance pathway to provide aspiring young talent the best chance of elite success (Dove, 2018).

2.3 University dropout

2.3.1 Defining university dropout

One of the first definitions of a dropout was provided in 1982 by Tinto, who said, “a student voluntary dropout is anyone who withdraws from the institution without completing the academic programme in which the student was enrolled” (as cited in Arce, Crespo & Míguez-Álvarez, 2015, p.248). According to Casanova, Fernández-Castañón, Núñez Pérez, Almeida and Gutiérrez (2018) the most common definition of student dropout is the consideration of transferring to a different course and/or university, or alternatively definitively dropping out of university.

Conceptualising university dropout is complex and is most commonly referred to as a student who leaves their university studies before completion and without obtaining a degree and can be voluntary or involuntary (Kehm, Larsen & Sommerse, 2019). This is supported by Staiculescu and Ramona (2018) who described university dropout as the withdrawal of a student in education in which the person was enrolled before obtaining a qualification and in some instances can be seen as an extreme form of education failure.

2.3.2 University dropout in South Africa

University dropout in South Africa is largely driven by the inequalities in education that has been a challenge to address since democracy (Neethling, 2015). In 2011, a study conducted by the Council on Higher Education revealed that nationally, 45 percent of students studying towards a degree from 2006 had dropped out of university after being in the system for seven years, while 55 percent had graduated in the same period. Letseka and Meile (2008) reported that South Africa’s overall graduation rate was the lowest in the world at 15 percent across all

universities in the country, while financial reasons and a gap between secondary and higher education were the main causes of dropout.

In South Africa it was reported that 5% of black and coloured students graduate from university, which implies the need for pioneering approaches to address the issue of dropout at university, especially among previously disadvantaged populations (Smith, 2013). The Department of Higher Education and Training reported that, during 2017, 47.9% of all university students in South Africa had not completed their degrees. Although there is significant growth in the number of students registered, more needs to be done to assist students to complete their studies.

2.4 Factors influencing the dropout of student-athletes in higher education

The Council on Higher Education 2013 report stated that only one in four students were able to graduate in the proposed minimum amount of time for their degree from contact-based universities. A total of 58 percent of students required an extra two years to complete a three-year degree, while this figure increased to 91 percent for distance learning universities. It was also found that the success rate of white students was 50 percent higher than that of black and coloured students.

In South Africa, university sport includes the overall experience of the student-athlete, and universities are required to create an environment for student-athletes to thrive. Development both on and off the sports field and the success of such an environment is viewed on how well universities retain student-athletes (van den Berg & Surujlal, 2020).

2.4.1 Academic integration factors

According to Bean (1980) and Tinto (1993) student dropout is primarily related to a student's poor academic performance and graduating is often seen as the ultimate reward at university. Successful university sports programmes provide student-athletes with effective academic support structures because the dropout of student-athletes establishes a primary component of the success of the university (Brecht, 2019). According to Brecht and Burnett (2019) student-athletes who have unsatisfactory academic backgrounds including poor study habits and distractions often become frustrated which contributes to poor academic performance and ultimately a contributor to dropout. Furthermore, students need to acquire the necessary study skills, time management skills, exam preparation skills and communication skills in order to meet the academic requirements of university. As stated by Bernardo, Esteban, Fernández, Cervero, Tuero and Solano (2016), poor study habits and techniques can be linked to poor academic performance and student dropout, however it must be noted that this is dependent on the students learning style and the technique needed for the completion of the degree, hence early detection is important, and the necessary remedial action taken.

Positive student faculty interactions act as a barrier in reducing student-athlete dropout at university (Kim & Kim, 2018) and when students interact with faculty who are genuinely concerned about their wellbeing and development, students will display positive attitudes towards school and be more confident about their role as students. Coggins and Raunig (2018) stated that the most important advancement that university faculties can make regarding support for student-athletes, is to provide authentic support in terms of extended office support or virtual office support especially during competition time and create a risk-free learning environment for student-athletes. The reality behind student-athlete dropout is

the meaningful positive contact and interaction with faculty which can influence overall academic satisfaction of student-athletes (Rankin et al., 2016).

Another factor influencing successful integration and reduction in dropout are vocational issues. According to Vries, León, Romero and Hernández (2011), vocational issues are determining factors for student-athlete dropout. Students who enrol in their first-choice university degree may have positive awareness of efficiency and will positively overcome academic difficulties than student-athletes who have not registered for their first choice of degree. If student-athletes fail to find entry to their first choice of degree, they will have less commitment to academic activities and this results in academic failure and dropout (Casanova et al., 2018). Bernado et al. (2016), mentioned the importance of the link between degree choice and dropout and stated that although student-athletes may wish to enrol in a certain degree, their academic history and limited space offered sometimes prevent them from registering for their first choice of degree. Bernado et al. (2016), further stated that as a result 80 percent of students who dropout of university had not taken up their first choice of degree.

Finally, absenteeism is an additional factor that prevents students from academically integrating into the university system. Absenteeism from increased attendance at competitions and travelling are connected to a lack of classroom attendance as some student-athletes may miss important conceptual and factual knowledge domains and find it hard to submit assignments and write exams on time (Coggins & Raunig, 2018). According to Bernardo et al. (2016), regular absenteeism from class makes it difficult for student-athletes to adapt and develop their skills to meet the requirements of their particular study program and promoting a good academic progress. Furthermore, regular class attendance facilitates

social contacts, helping to forge links between faculty, and other university staff. These relationships not only foster students' social and academic integration but also help retain students in the degree program (Bernardo et al., 2016). Williams (2000) further state that absent students are missing valuable teacher-student interactions as well as clarification of concepts that cannot be retaught.

2.4.2 Environmental pull factors

Bradley and Renzulli (2011) stated that students-athletes' decision to dropout of university is determined by push and pull factors. Rouse (2019) described push factors as when the primary determiner is the university and how it functions discourages student-athletes from staying in university including limited access to resources and institutional discrimination. Pull factors are the factors that the individual considers when dropping out as important when assessing the losses and gains of their current circumstances and the decision to dropout of university is based on factors that are unique to the individual such as financial reasons or professional sport (Rumberger, 2015).

When student-athletes are at the crossroad of the need, expectation and demands of sport and academics, the decision to dropout could be influenced by external factors beyond the control of the student-athlete and university (Kerstajn, Lupo & Capranica, 2018). In particular, for highly talented athletes, the temptation of professional sport and the available money is often too good to pass up, and often student-athlete has a direct link to their intention to abandon their academic goals (Rivara, 2004). In an American study by Gaston-Gayles (2003), he found that the aspirations of playing professional sports, however remote the possibility of actually succeeding, have been linked to academic failure in American football and male basketball student-athletes. Nichols, Lough and Corkill (2019) further stated that external

pressures from professional organisations to strengthen student-athletes sport commitments and emphasising that student-athletes have more to gain from sport influences student-athlete dropout.

Tekavc, Wylleman and Erpic (2015), stated that the psychological domain (how student-athletes balance sport and academics and eventually dropout is interlinked with the athletic, psychosocial and financial domains. As described by Richards, et al. (2016) student-athletes choose a university with the intention to play for the university sports teams for the duration of their academic years and their academic tuition fees covered, however 40 percent of student-athletes who receive scholarships do not graduate within six years or dropout completely. Bernardo et.al, (2016) further stated that finances is a constant factor to dropout. He states that students' financial circumstances and the cost of studying play a role in student-athlete dropout because students who depend on their own lean resources at university and especially those who are required to work during their studies are the ones who are likeliest to dropout.

2.4.3 Balancing sport and academic responsibilities

Today, student-athletes arguably face the greatest challenges to achieve both academic and sports success. Research suggests that student-athletes have greater stresses in the academic domain than traditional students. Factors contributing to these stresses include demands from coaches, the university and the requirements to train, perform and travel (Woods, 2013). Comeaux, Speer, Taustine and Harrison (2011), stated that unlike regular students, student-athletes face stresses that substantially impacts their academic commitments, and they must continuously balance the roles of student and athlete. Van den Berg and Surujlal (2020) stated that in a university environment student-athletes face conflict demands with sport and

academic commitments, therefore it is important to create a positive supportive environment for student-athletes to fulfil both obligations otherwise they may eventually dropout.

In a study conducted by Coggins and Raunig (2018) where 250 student-athletes were sampled across two universities in the United States, students-athletes indicated that finding the time to uphold and manage sport and academic commitments was the most challenging which included practice, competitions and travelling together with classes, study sessions and homework. Managing time is important for both academic and sport success of student-athletes at university (Coggins & Raunig, 2018). According to Hendricks and Johnson (2016), the challenge for student-athletes is meeting academic requirements of university while balancing their sport and academic responsibilities. In addition to attending classes, workshops and submitting assignments, student-athletes spend a maximum of 20 hours on the sports field each week. Hence, student-athletes are more likely to identify themselves as athletes rather than students and focusing more on sport performance than academic success (Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2006).

2.4.4 Role of the coach, teammates and sports departments on student-athlete dropout

Historically student-athletes received advice from their coaches and administrators in the sports departments. Stereotypically, their guidance was in a way aimed to kept student-athletes eligible to compete and not necessary for academic reasons (Woods, 2013). Van den Berg and Surujlal (2020) stated that sports coaches play a pivotal role in the long-term development of university student-athletes and coaches' guidance, goal settings and feedback positively influences student-athletes long term development focus.

Coggins and Raunig (2018) argued that coaches make the greatest impact on student-athletes academic success, for example, if the coach does not renew the student-athletes scholarship, coaches are making it clear that the student-athlete is not part of the greater plans of the coach. Coggins and Raunig (2018) further stated that student-athletes tend to seek guidance from their coaches for a variety of areas, such as school, family and academics, because coaches are seen as role models and are often considered to be the parents away from home. Coaches can help their students prioritise academic responsibilities that may enable them to achieve their educational goals. Coaches can achieve these goals through continuous emphasis of the importance of academic commitments and periodic goal reviews (Rivera, 2004). Van Puyenbroeck, Stouten and Vande Broek (2018) argued that, if coaches attend to individual needs and display supportive behaviour, it is motivational to the athlete and will influence self-belief and positivity. On the other hand, if coaches have a significantly negative and/or poor relationship with student-athletes, this may negatively affect the student-athletes' long term development and contribute to poor sport and academic performance (Van den Berg & Surujlal, 2020). Van den Berg & Surujlal (2020) further stated that coaches' lack of support discourages student-athlete motivation, and it is evident that these coaches need to go for training and development to understand how to enhance the university environment for student-athletes.

Raabe, Zakrajsek, and Readdy (2016) indicated that, while coaches are seen as highly influential, student-athletes compete in a team environment and typically spend most of their time around their teammates, which can be a major influence on student-athlete dropout. Similarly, teammate's interaction can play a key role in determining the outcomes related to student-athletes' goals (Evans, Eys & Wolf, 2013). Furthermore, student-athletes who perceived their teammates as providing a positive motivational climate that emphasizes

learning and improvement, had greater levels of competence compared to student-athletes who perceived the climate focused on sport and winning (Raabe et al., 2016).

Ishaq and Bass (2019) stressed the important role sports administration staff play in creating academic direction for student-athletes. In their study they indicate that sport administrators working closely with student-athletes may understand their cultural backgrounds and needs on campus and can identify factors that would assist their learning development. As student-athletes develop on campus, sport administration staff members are viewed as family and are often the first step in solving any issues on campus facing student-athletes. Sports administration staff are in a unique position to assist student-athletes in creating positive learning environments and strengthening relationships with academic faculty members which student-athletes can utilise (Rubin & Moses, 2017).

2.5 Major student dropout models

University dropout has always been a serious issue since the establishment of higher education institutions, however the frameworks in which they are studied are relatively new (Aljohani, 2016). Pre 1970, various attempts were made to study the student dropout phenomena, however this research only focused on the characteristics of the student and not the role of the university environment itself (Aljohani, 2016).

Spady's (1970) Undergraduate Dropout Process Model is considered to be one of the earliest theoretical models of university student dropout and integrates its framework on Durkheim's theory of suicide, because both suicide and university dropout are considered ways of removing someone from society (Burke, 2019). This was the first model that established an inter-disciplinary approach to understanding student dropout. As described by Burke (2019),

Spady's model assumes that student dropout is best explained by an inter-disciplinary approach that involves the student and the environment of the university. In linking Durkheim's suicide theory with student dropout, the Undergraduate Dropout Process model attempts to develop a sociological model of the dropout process and focuses on the interactions between students and the demands from a variety of variables within the university environment including courses, faculty and friends (Godor, 2017).

Spady's model emphasized that student integration into university determines the student's commitment to the university and ultimately their decision to dropout (Alvarez, Callejas & Griol, 2020). It was only after the work of Spady (1970) that student interaction was considered as a factor in the student dropout process at university but it's also important to remember that the Undergraduate Dropout Process model is over 50 years old and the environment at universities have since changed dramatically (Aljohani, 2016).

After Spady's work, the Model of Student Integration, also known as the Institutional Departure Model, was developed by Tinto (1975) and has been widely used in researching student drop at university (Durso & Cunha, 2018). Over the years this model has gone through a number of examinations and reviews by Tinto and many other researchers, resulting in the final modified version of the Model of Student Integration of Tinto (1993), which is mainly based on Spady's views that student dropout is a result of the academic and social interaction of the university (Aljohani, 2016).

Tinto argued that the process of student dropout is dependent on the success or failure of the student incorporating into the university community and detaching themselves from previous communities like high school or family, which have different norms and values from the university community (Aljohani, 2016). Manyanga, Sithole and Hanson (2017) suggested that

a good relationship between the student and the university is crucial in both formal and informal interactions and experiences. Alvarez et al. (2020) conceived that the decision to dropout of university is the consequence of academic and social interactions that the students have during their academic life. Tinto further implies that student dropout is voluntary and is the result of insufficient integration, resulting in the student abandoning the social and academic environment of the university (Alvarez et al., 2020).

One of the major contributions of the Model of Student Integration relates to the cost and benefits theory, which implies that a student will leave their studies if an alternate activity, such as a job, become more cost effective than continuing to study (Durso & Cunha, 2018). Walsh and Kurpius (2016) explain this by stating that the closer a student gets to completing a university degree, the higher the cost of dropping out, which explains why dropout rates are higher in the initial stages of university. Another contribution of Tinto's theoretical model is the description of the departure process "within an institution of higher education" and not the departure from the higher education system, therefore, the students who fail to create meaningful relationships with peers and instructors in the classroom might have difficulties in their academic progress (Khuong, 2014).

A decade later a new model was proposed by Bean (1980) called the Model of Student Attrition. In contrast to Spady's and Tinto's model, Bean argued that the relationship between suicidal behaviour and the process of student dropout was not present. Instead, there were merely correlations between the demographic variables of the student and their institution (Aljohani, 2016). Bean's (1980) theoretical model of student attrition drew on studies of turnover in work organisations, such as the research of Price (1977), to explain student departure in higher education. It also includes subjective measures, such as the perceived

practical value of education and the quality of the institution, which influenced students' satisfaction and commitment to the institution (Khuong, 2014). Bean (1980) argued that student dropout from university is similar to organisational turnover in the work environment and both students and employees leave for similar reasons, stating that student and employee dissatisfaction subsequently leads to their dropout, and is affected by organisational factors (Aljohani, 2016). Bean acknowledged two interacting variables that contribute to student dropout, namely satisfaction and institutional commitment. Bean further considered that objective variables like academic performance and practical values influences the satisfaction of students towards the university (Durso & Cunha, 2018). Durso and Cunha (2018) further added that student satisfaction levels influence their level of commitment to the university, which in turn contributes to whether the student stays or drops out of university.

In 1985, Bean further improved the model by including the environmental factors that directly influence student dropout. Bean (1985) stressed that the environmental factors are important for commuter students who spend limited time on campus and have fewer opportunities for developing interpersonal relationships on campus than residential students (Khuong, 2014). Background variables, indicated by Bean (1985), interact with the higher education environment. The interactions between the student and the institution can be measured in their marks, campus organisations, and value of the education. These interactions affect student satisfaction, which in turn affects institutional commitment. Ultimately, a student with higher levels of commitment would be less likely to dropout (Brecht, 2014).

Bean made it clear that the model developed by him and previous researchers does not cover all possibilities of the manifestation of the problem of student dropout and at no time does the author propose to explain 100 percent of factors that influence student drop at university

(Durso & Cunha, 2018). Bean's model is not exclusive to a single theoretical foundation and may be adapted in different contexts and different institutions (Aljohani, 2016). However, Tinto (1975) and Bean's (1980) work gave rise to new research on student dropout and included new student populations like minority students and travelling students (Manyanga et al., 2017).

2.6 Theoretical framework

In qualitative research, a theoretical framework is the blueprint upon which the researcher builds his/her research enquiry and is the foundation upon which the research is conducted (Adom et al., 2016). The theory chosen to guide this study is the Student-athlete Retention Model (SARM) by Rivera (2004). It best supports this research because it incorporates the unique issues of student-athletes and the dropout process. This includes the significance of the coach, player and team relationship, the student-athlete's ability to effectively balance the roles of student and athlete, the academic integration, and other sport issues that influence the quality of the athletic experience.

Developed in 2004, Rivera built her theory on the work of Spady (1970), Pascellara (1980) and Tinto (1993) and student integration into the university. The SARM attempts to provide a dynamic understanding of the issues that today's student-athletes face when making their decisions to stay in school, however caution should be exercised when making generalizations to other student groups or even to the entire student-athlete population. This model of student dropout evolved as a need to identify key factors that student-athletes perceived to find important in the dropout process at a large, west coast university in the United States.

Similar to other retention models, background, social, academic, institutional and environmental factors are included in the SARM and are effectively unchanged. While the flow of the model describing student-athlete dropout is similar to other models, the inclusion of a sports domain that the student-athlete must interact with is seen as a significant addition. This speaks directly to the quality of the sport experience including the role of the coach and teammates, balancing sport and academics and support from the sports departments. While other models of student retention capture many of the elements covered in the SARM, what makes this model so valuable is that it specifically addresses the issues confronting student-athletes.

Figure 2.1 depicts the SARM and gives a dynamic understanding of factors student-athletes face when deciding to dropout of university. It shows the major interacting factors and highlights the sports factor included by Rivera (2004) that contributes to the student-athletes perception about themselves and university and eventually their intention to dropout.

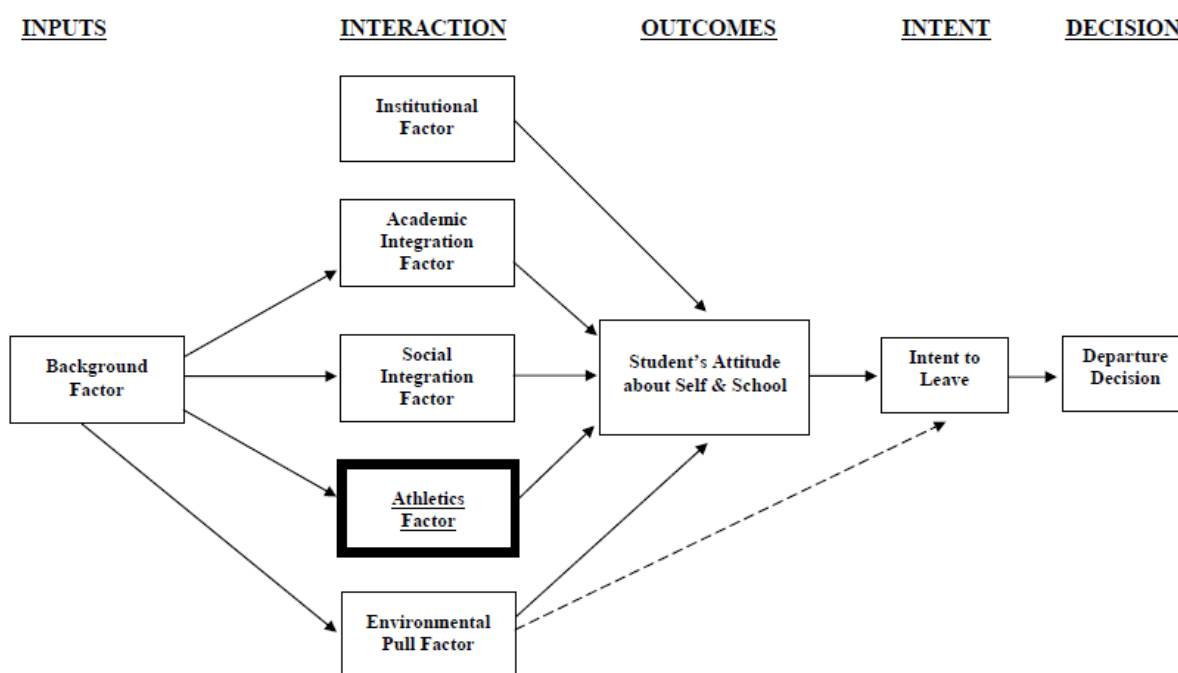


Figure 2.1 Student-athlete Retention Model (Rivera, 2004)

Figure 2.2 explains this model further by depicting the variables and specific elements within the major factors highlighted in Figure 2.1, which may contribute to student-athlete dropout. As can be seen, these have been divided into background, environmental pull, academic integration, social integration, attitudinal and institutional factors, as well as intent to leave.

Background Factor

- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Religion
- Socio-economic status
- Educational level of parents
- Full time/part time status
- College Class rank
- High school grade point average
- High school class rank
- Standardized test scores
- Number of college preparatory courses
- Initial intentions regarding college attendance and academic goals

Environment Pull Factor

- Financial realities
- Significant other elsewhere
- Opportunity to transfer
- Work demands
- Family responsibility and approval
- Military Status
- Socio Political Movements
- Economic Cycles
- Health issues

Academic Integration Factor

- Academic performance
- Study skills and habits
- Formal student-faculty interactions
- Major certainty
- Absenteeism

Social Integration Factor

- Friendship support
- Informal student-faculty interactions
- Involvement in special interest groups
- Involvement in extracurricular activities
- Shared values

Attitudinal Factor

- Sense of satisfaction
- Sense of self-development
- Sense of self-confidence
- Sense that education has practical value for employment
- Institutional fit
- Loyalty

Institutional Factor

- Rules and regulations
- Timings and variety of course offerings
- Curriculum
- Student support services
- Financial aid

Intention

- Intent to leave

Figure 2.2: Student-athlete retention factors (Rivera, 2004)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 Introduction

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are techniques for collecting data and are frequently used in academic research. Qualitative research aims to collect in-depth details on a specific phenomenon whereas the quantitative method is a scientific method focusing on numerical data collection from larger populations and excludes individual participants' feelings and emotions (Rahi, 2017). Qualitative research is used to share individuals' stories and to hear their voices, through which the researcher can truly understand the experience and how and why such behaviours took place (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The current study utilised a qualitative approach designed to explore students' and managements' perceptions about the factors that influenced student-athlete dropout from the programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole. The focus of this chapter is to provide an outline of the methods and procedures that were employed to explore the factors that influenced the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole.

3.2 Research design

There are three basic types of qualitative research designs: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory designs (Rahi, 2017). Exploratory research aims to find out what is happening and seeks new insights, while descriptive research refers to obtaining information on current

issues, on the other hand, explanatory research is used to identify key variables and issues to a research problem and is more suited to quantitative research (Rahi, 2017).

This study takes on an exploratory qualitative research design, which allows for a problem, that is clearly defined, to be investigated. As described by Swedberg (2018), exploratory research, at its core, attempts to discover something new and interesting by working one's way through the topic of research. Exploratory research does not to give us conclusive evidence but helps us to understand the problem more efficiently, however, the researcher will be taking the findings and making recommendations to the programme. This approach was therefore used to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influenced student-athletes to dropout of a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole.

3.3 Research setting

The setting of this study was at a university in the Western Cape metropole. The interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon location that was convenient for both the researcher and participants. Most interviews were face to face, while a few were conducted telephonically. Interviews lasted approximately 20–40 minutes and took place at participant's homes, university coffee shops, cricket clubhouses and places of work.

3.4 Selection of participants

The sampling method used in this study was purposeful sampling which is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are

especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). It also allows the researcher to sample from a conveniently available pool of respondents, is inexpensive and a reliable method that assists to overcome many of the limitations associated with research (Taherdoost, 2016). Therefore, purposeful sampling was used in this study as participants were purposefully selected based on the characteristics of the population and the objectives of this study.

A written application, together with a telephonic request was made to the Head of Recruitment of the programme for the contact details of students-athletes who have dropped out of the programme between 2014-2019. The researcher specifically focused on this period as the implementation of Varsity Sports cricket finally made its debut after years of planning in 2015. Varsity Sports cricket has since become an influential drawcard for universities to recruit talented student-athletes. Permission was granted by the head of recruitment and the contact details were made available to the researcher. Of a total of 12 student-athletes who dropped out the programme between the years 2014-2019, seven male students agreed to participate in the study. The students were all registered students at the university and were part of the programme during 2014-2019. All student participants had dropped out of the programme and had not completed their studies. Also interviewed was the Programme Director and the Head of Recruitment for the programme. Both had been part of the programme since its inception in 1999, so had in depth knowledge of the programme and the challenges that cricket student-athletes face.

3.5 Delimitations

3.5.1 Exclusion criteria

The following exclusion criteria applied to this study:

- The cricket coaches in the programme.
- Other universities in the Western Cape metro.
- Other sports codes at the university in the Western Cape metro.
- Students-athletes who were currently bona fide registered students and part of the programme.
- Students-athletes who dropped out the programme prior to 2014.
- Any student-athlete not providing written informed consent.

3.5.2 Inclusion criteria

The following inclusion criteria applied to this study:

- Student-athletes who dropped out of the programme during the period of 2014 – 2019.
- The Managing Director of the programme.
- The Head of Recruitment for the programme.
- Only focused on the cricket programme at the university in the Western Cape metropole.

3.6 Research instruments

Paradis et al. (2016) stated the importance of how information is collected and what descriptions it can generate is determined by the approach of the researcher. Similarly, Adhabi and Anozie (2017) stated that the benefit of qualitative research is the quality of data collected,

which is reliant on the mode of collection. For this study, interviews were chosen as the mode for data collection.

There are three common types of interviews used in qualitative research; structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are completely controlled by the researcher and give the participant less flexibility and can create an uncomfortable environment. Here, researchers develop and use a structured interview guide which contains set questions that all participants asked in the same manner and in the same order. There is no opportunity for clarification or expansion, or additional input and background from participants that was not included in the interview guide (Stuckey, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are similar to structured interviews but have no rigid adherence to the pre-determined interview guide and are dependent on the responses of the participants to the questions being asked by the researcher. Although, there are guiding questions, the researcher has the flexibility to ask enhanced questions other than the predetermined ones (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Unstructured interviews are controlled conversations that are manipulated towards the interested of the researcher where no pre-planned questions were developed beforehand. Unstructured interviews should only be conducted by experienced researchers as they require high level of skill to conduct, and the data collected can be difficult to thematically interpret if the researcher is inexperienced (Jamshed, 2014).

In this study individual, semi-structured interviews with an interview guide were used to collect the data. This model provided the researcher with flexibility by using predetermined questions which were based in the SARM and which allowed participants to freely express themselves. The semi-structured interview guide (Appendices A1 & A2) provided a clear set

of standardised interview questions for the interviewer and provided reliable, comparable qualitative data.

3.7 Data collection procedures

The researcher received the contact details and telephone numbers of the potential participants from the head of recruitment of the programme. The researcher then contacted each participant electronically, via WhatsApp, telephone and/or email, explaining the research project verbally and in writing (Appendix B). Each participant was given an opportunity to ask questions, which were answered by the researcher. For participants who were unable to meet physically due to logistical reasons, telephonic interviews were conducted. Only participants who provided written consent (Appendix C) to participate in this study were interviewed.

Initially, the interviewer read a brief introduction to the research project and explained the background and purpose of the study. The interviewer then proceeded with conducting the interview using the semi-structured interview schedule. Interviews varied in time from 20-40 minutes. The data from the participants were collected using a digital voice recorder that allowed for the interviews to be transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Lemon and Hayes (2020) stated that, to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research, four strategies need to be followed; credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability and these strategies are co-dependent on each other. According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011) credibility means that the researcher needs to demonstrate and ensure that the participants in the study were accurately identified and described. To ensure credibility of

this study, the researcher made use of convenience sampling, because the participants had first-hand experience and insight into factors that influenced dropout. Lemon and Hayes (2020) say transferability emphasises the extent to which the findings from a study can be applied to other situations and settings. Transferability was achieved by using verbatim transcripts and descriptions in the data analysis process. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), conformability is concerned with neutrality, the interpretation of results should not be based on the researchers own preference but in the process of data analysis. Conformability was achieved by having an audit trail of all processes and ensuring that the views and thoughts of participants were transcribed verbatim and to ensure the voices of the participants were represented.

3.9 Bias

The researcher is a former student and graduate of the programme who obtained his undergraduate degree at a university in the Western Cape metropole, however, the completion of his studies at university through the programme marks him as dissimilar from the study's participants. The researcher experienced first-hand certain challenges and obstacles during his time in the programme. The first potential bias emerged from the researcher's previous experiences in the programme being studied. It was possible that the researcher's own experiences could have biased the interpretation of the findings. Another potential bias was the researcher's training and knowledge both as a student in the programme under study and as a sports manager at another university. This could also have influenced the participants in this study, so the researcher attempted to control these biases by using triangulation where the researcher called upon a person other than his supervisor, who was not involved in this research project to review and validate the findings. This was reduced by confirming with participants that the recorded data was accurate and reflects their own experiences.

3.10 Deductive thematic analysis

A deductive thematic analysis process includes becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes in the coded data, reviewing the themes, identifying themes relevant to the research questions, and finally writing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following this thematic analysis framework assisted with the implications of credibility of the research process. To address the research question, deductive thematic analysis was used in this study with existing themes relating to the SARM being used to analyse the data, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Firstly, the audio recordings from the interviews, were transcribed verbatim from audio to text using online AmberScript transcribing software. Transcripts were read and re-read for the researcher to become familiar with the data and to gain an overall understanding of the contents of the data. Each interview was carefully analysed and categorised into predetermined themes guided by the SARM of Rivera (2004). The responses of the participants that the researcher identified, that conveyed significant meanings relating to the themes, were coded using different colours. In the next step, codes were reviewed to ensure they aligned with the predetermined themes of SARM. Finally, the researcher produced a report relating the themes back to the research questions while providing select citations and examples from the interviews.

3.11 Ethics considerations

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) (Research Ethics Clearance Number: HS19/9/27) at the university where this study was conducted, thereafter permission from the Registrar of the university and the Programme Director of the programme using the letter requesting

permission contained in Appendix E. The study adhered to ethics requirements of obtaining informed consent explaining the benefits, rights and responsibilities of the participants prior to their participation in this study (Appendix B). Signed voluntary consent was obtained prior to any data having been collected (Appendix C).

The participation in this research was completely voluntary and it was emphasised that participants could withdraw at any time, without penalty for any reason. The researcher then proceeded by asking the pre-set questions from the interview schedule (Appendix A1 & A2). This took about 20-40 minutes with the researcher present to ask the questions and to clarify any queries.

To ensure anonymity, numeric codes were used in place of the name of the participant, and only the researcher and co-supervisor had access to the identity of participants. Further, if the study is to be published, anonymity will be protected. To maintain confidentiality, all information gathered was stored on a password-protected computer and a hard copy was stored in a locked filing cabinet at the university. Only the researcher and co-supervisor had access to these records, which, according to university policy, will be stored for five years, after which all data will be destroyed.

There may have been some risks from participating in this research study. Some of the known risks that could result from participating in the research included psychological, social and emotional distress. If participants were embarrassed, fatigued or uncomfortable with answering questions, they were informed that they could withdraw from the study or refuse to answer those questions. Participants were informed that, if they experienced any discomfort, psychological or otherwise, during the process of participation in this study, the

researcher would promptly assist and if necessary, an appropriate referral would be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of the qualitative data. The aim of this study was to explore the factors influencing the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme, specifically using Rivera's (2004) Student Athlete Retention Model (SARM), which focuses on the interactions involved in the dropout process. Rivera's model assumes that retention and dropout is the joint responsibility of the student-athlete and the institution or academic programme.

Rivera's (2004) SARM, incorporates the unique issues of student-athletes and the dropout process. This includes academic integration, the student-athlete's ability to effectively balance the roles of student and athlete, the significance of the coach, player and team relationship, the role of the Sports Administration Department as well as environmental pull factors including financial realities and the opportunity to play professional sport.

The research questions that guided this study were: 1) What are the factors student-athletes perceived to have influenced their decision to dropout of the programme? 2) What are the factors the programme management perceive to influence students to dropout of the programme? 3) Does the role of the coaches, teammates and the sports administration department influence students to dropout of the programme? To answer these questions the researcher conducted nine interviews with former student-athletes, the Programme Director and head of recruitment.

Through analysis of the data and the SARM as the theoretical framework, several themes emerged. Insight provided by the participants allowed for focus on factors influencing these student-athletes to dropout of the programme. This chapter provides a brief overview and outlines the participant's perceptions of factors that influenced their dropout. The following results are organised by the research questions relating to the themes and guided by the SARM by Rivera (2004).

4.2 Student-athlete perceived factors:

Academic performance

All participants in this study indicated that they felt they had not performed well academically before dropping out of the programme. One participant expressed, "*honestly, I literally tried as hard as I could to ensure that I passed everything, And I just battled, especially my first semester. I really did battle. So, yeah. I just wish I did better academically.*" When asked if they performed well academically, one participant responded by saying, "*not amazingly if I'm honest with you, I did fail a couple of modules...I really struggled with financial accounting, mainly that and maths.*"

Incorrect degree choice

One of the most prominent factors that influenced students to dropout of the programme was participants expressing that they were not able to register for their first-choice degree, course or modules. "*I didn't perform well academically actually but I think most of that got to do with the fact that I had to study my second option...So I think that played a big role in me like not completing my studies (Participant 1).*"

Another participant affirmed, *“It just felt like the course wasn’t for me man, it was the wrong choice...I wanted to do Sports Science! So, the bridging course didn’t help me, I didn’t wanna do that...but that’s life, sometimes we make bad decisions sometimes”*.

Student-faculty interactions

A related factor to student-athlete dropout was the limited or lack of interaction with lecturers and staff at the university. Participant 2 expressed that not completing his studies was due to perceived lack of support by the institution, *“You know no-one needs to be babied anymore, but I just think, being a bit more informed on how things work...Cos I have to run around and find my lecturers and the fact that I’ve never been to UWC and don’t know where everything was.”* Another participant affirmed this, *“Another participant felt, “It’s really tough to get accommodated as a sportsman because I don’t think the university really allows you...the university wasn’t really accommodating. If there were maybe structures in place that allows us to maybe miss deadlines, not be there for tests but write it or do it when we can.”*

Absenteeism

Two participants expressed that being absent or away from campus for long periods of time due to cricket commitments contributed to their poor academic performance which eventually led to them dropping out of the programme. Participant 5 stressed, *“With BCom there’s a lotta tuts you need to attend and that where I was falling short, the one or two marks that I needed...I would say that’s a big downside of being away all the time, you miss a lot of important work and you miss out on the extra things where it’s tough to really get accommodated as a sportsman. And then I would be away for my entire exam period, I wasn’t able to even write exams!”*

Another participant perceived being away from university as a contributing factor to poor academic performance, *“My cricket was taking off quite nicely and I had a good season and was selected for the National Academy which I would have been away for, I think I was away for four months in Pretoria, so that was difficult to manage, the full-time classes.”*

Financial realities

The financial aspects of acquiring a university degree can be a challenging task for most student-athletes and most student-athletes are on scholarships (Coggins & Raunig, 2018). Many student-athletes decide to study knowing that the financial aspect is taken care of and are discouraged by the cost of paying for a university education. Participant 2 asserted, *“I just wish I knew that I would actually have to pay a certain amount, cos at the end of the year to just have a lump sum of 25 or 26k, it’s difficult to say “Mom, do you have money for my fees?”, Honestly if I knew this was the case I probably would not have come down and would go work... And I was like look at the end of the day, I’m a full-time student now and I’m not working, and I can’t afford to pay it off right now, so it looks like I have to leave to programme and finish paying off my studies. What it meant for me is I’m not gonna study, I was studying the whole last year, just trying to accumulate funds to pay off my studies.”* Participant 6 asserted that, *“Financially, the backing was not there anymore because I was a bit you know past my peak (as a cricketer). So, it was very difficult, I was needed to bring a bit of money in. It wasn’t easy being a full-time student anymore. I had approached him about why my studies weren’t paid, and it was then you know not doing well academically and this and that left me in quite a tough space because I was left with a lota debt. So now I have a lot of debt that I need to settle.”*

Opportunity to play professional cricket

A recurring factor amongst the participants was the opportunity to play professional cricket, many participants expressed that the potential to play professional cricket and make it a career, influenced their decision to dropout of the programme. *“I thought I could get another opportunity overseas or doing something like that, so that’s why I dropped out...So that was at the back of my mind. That was one of my main goals, is to travel. I was offered to play overseas. I wanted to leave because I wanted to go overseas and play cricket and do well in my cricket, (Participant 4).”* Participant 1 emphasised, *“Basically what happened, I was unhappy that year for a long period of time, at the same time I got a contract to go play in England in 2019, so I took the opportunity to go play cricket, and everything worked out since. It was basically the reason; I got another opportunity to pursue my dreams...from a cricket perspective. It wasn’t the right time for me to waste precious years I had especially from a cricket perspective, you know, you can only play cricket until you 30, 35 years old.”*

Management of cricket and academic responsibilities

Another recurring factor of discussion among participants was the difficulty in balancing cricket and academic commitments. All participants in this study expressed that they found it challenging to manage cricket and academic commitments and responsibilities prior to dropping out of the programme. *“I think that’s one of the things we as student-athletes struggle the most because it consumes a lot of your time. Like during the day you would have to go to class, then come back to the cricket field, have a net session then go back to class, and in between those times you had to finish your assignments or everything that was due, so it became tough (Participant 1).”*

Participant 7 affirmed, *“The academic aspect was going down the drain...cricket was always the main priority, simply because there is a window period. If you have a playing career, I*

mean if you have any ambitions of playing cricket you really need to make it happen before the age of 30. And so, when the belief element meets the reality element of the player, it endangers the dream of the player. It must be managed fairly in terms of what the expectation is.”

Participant 6 expresses, *“It was extremely difficult, I think to find the balance being so young. It was very difficult because you neglect the academic side to it, you just wana have fun and play cricket and that’s where it kinda just falls away. Another participant expressed, “So what made me leave is I was struggling to cope with the academic work, and my cricket was going fairly well at the time. I wasn’t able to give back as much because I was busy with my cricket...because you only losing marks because you unable to hand things in on time or write those tests.”*

4.2 Programme management perceived factors:

Academic performance

Participant 8 expressed that, as students, they dropped out of the programme due to academic reasons. *“Academics is the biggest, biggest factor why students leave. Our focus is on academic success rather than sports excellence...students will not leave if it’s a sport issue, but definitely if it’s an academic issue...and like I said students who dropped out in the past it’s because of their academic inability”.*

Management of cricket and academic responsibilities

All participants expressed that managing cricket and academics was a major challenge for them while at university. Participant 8 suggest that, *“The programme is not only sports based, but more about the holistic approach especially academic side of things...we sort of work really hard to get that sort of balance right, and we find there’s a lot of time management that*

is very important when it comes to the students.” Participant 9 expressed, “some students are more focused on their sport perhaps so when they get here, they are invested on their sport.”

Financial realities

Participant 8 acknowledged that student-athletes dropout of the programme due to financial realities, “It might also be financial concerns from their specific parents because, you know you want to help everybody, but you also can’t because of some financial constraints.”

Participant 9 affirmed, “We are providing finances which is always the issue...the primary aim of the programme is to give access to further education to aspiring young cricketers, both male and female. And that’s our limitation these days. We’d love to expand if we had more money!”

Lack of study skills

Participants perceived that student-athlete dropout was due to a lack of study skills, poor academic habits which may be the result of lack of preparation and guidance instilled from secondary school education. Participant 9 expressed, “Students come here with a misplaced expectation of University and what they can potentially achieve at University because they simply do not have the skills set, and it’s tough for them to overcome because some of them feel that maybe they are not bright enough, and it’s not because they are not bright enough, it’s because the education system failed them...it’s not just about having numerical skills but how to study, how to learn, your preparedness to learn and to apply your knowledge. So, changing that culture, that is the biggest threat to dropout at the end of the day.”

4.3 The role of the coach, teammates and sports administration on student-athlete dropout

Academic support from coaches and teammates

Participants were asked if the role of coaches influenced their decision to dropout and whether they receive enough academic support. Seven out of the nine participants felt that their coaches and teammates supported them and influenced them to improve their academic performance, whereas two participants felt that a negative relationship with coaches and lack of academic support from teammates influenced their decision to dropout. Participant 7 described his relationship with his coach as, *“strained, very strained... I don’t think his management capabilities fitted in with my personality at the time...I was asked to add value from more than a results perspective, and that was missed between the two.”*

Another participant expressed, *“Things started to get a bit more hectic and challenging, so that was difficult because a lot of my teammates weren’t studying or doing the same course. Many of them were doing Sports Science and sports related courses and I was one of two doing the commerce degree. So, it was difficult to tap on guys doing some of the things and you know asking them for help...in all honest I don’t think there was enough support, I just needed more!”*

Participant 9 expressed the important role coaches play in the programme, *“Where our coaches buy in is very important, so we will re-arrange practices during exams and the like...So we make sure that when we get coaches, that they got the understanding of what the players are going through as students and how to manage it best...if it comes to my attention that a coaches conduct is counterproductive in terms of the outcomes we are trying to achieve, then that will be the last of the coach.”*

Lack of support from sports administration

Although it is difficult to determine if support from the Sport Administration department would have influenced participants to stay in the programme, it is still important to note that all participants in this study expressed a lack of academic and financial support from the sports administration department. In fact, the majority of student-athletes were not aware of the role that the Sports Administration department plays in the programme and had no interaction with them at all. Although the sport administration department does not have a direct role in the programme, one of the participant's perceptions were that the Sports Administration department primary focus is other sports codes and did not receive any academic support, *"While I was there... Umm... it's like the programme was basically on their own, and Sports Administration would be more focused on the rugby because they thought that you know...had everything under control and we were basically on our own.* Another participant expressed, *"I'm not entirely aware of what they did for me, what they were about. In that regard, I'm actually not entirely clued up, as far as I know, those things, if not all things on my side, were dealt with by the programme."*

Participant 5 affirmed, *"I had no interaction with them, I think I've been to their office once and that was to take a picture, I think I got nominated for some award, but I don't think you hear from them very often. As far as I know, you don't hear from them."*

4. 4 Summary of results

All student-athletes expressed that they performed poorly academically prior to dropping out of the programme. Five out of seven student-athletes expressed that the incorrect choice of degree influenced their decision to dropout of the programme. Two of the seven students indicated that absenteeism due to external cricket commitments which included professional cricket played a major role in poor academic performance which ultimately influenced them

to dropout. Four student-athletes affirmed that the lack of student faculty interactions and the university lecturers not being “*accommodating*” contributed to their poor academic performances.

Four out of seven student-athletes expressed that retraction of financial support prior to them dropping out of the programme was a factor that influenced their decision to dropout. Five of the seven student-athletes expressed that focusing more on their cricket and giving it “*one more shot*” together with the opportunity to play cricket professionally and overseas influenced their decision to dropout of the programme.

When asked about balancing the roles of cricket and academic responsibilities, all participants expressed that it was one of the major challenges they faced before dropping out of the programme. The following quote encapsulates this for participants:

“I think that’s one of the things we as student-athletes struggle the most because it consumes a lot of your time. Like during the day you would have to go to class, then come back to the cricket field, have a net session then go back to class, and in between those times you had to finish your assignments or everything that was due, so it became tough!”

Another participant consolidated: *“My priorities were always being at practice and stuff... My cricket was taking off quite nicely and I think I just wanted to give it my full attention, in order to get a lot further and accelerate my career.”*

All student-athletes expressed a lack of support from the university Sports Administration department; however, this was not a significant contributor that influenced their decision to dropout of the programme. Management expressed that more university support in terms of financial contributions from the Sports Administration department could assist with the

financial shortfalls of the programme. Seven of the nine participants expressed the importance of a good relationship with coaches and that they had received sufficient academic support from their teammates in the form of tutoring and mentorship, however, two participants did express a strained relationship with the coach and felt they needed more academic support from teammates.

Programme management perceived that a lack of study skills and habits is a major factor why student-athletes dropout of the programme, together with financial challenges, poor academic performance and incorrect choice of degree.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion of findings

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the Student Athlete Retention Model (SARM) by Rivera (2004). The results of this study were consistent with this framework in so much as each participant identified factors that influenced their decision to dropout that aligned with factors within the SARM. In addition, consistent with the theoretical framework, was the confirmation that the dropout process is complex and is the result of a longitudinal process. Finally, the framework confirmed that dropout is the joint responsibility of the student-athlete and the institution or organisation while the student-athlete population is a diverse group, resulting in student-athletes dropping out for various reasons.

This study used student-athletes and stakeholders who had first-hand experience regarding dropout from a cricket and development programme in order to answer the following research question: What are the factors that influenced students from dropping out of cricket and development programme at a University in the Western Cape metropole?

In order to achieve the main research question, the following sub questions explored the factors that influenced students to dropout of a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole.

1. What are the factors student-athletes perceived to have influenced their decision to dropout of the programme?
2. What are the factors the programme management perceive to influence student-athletes to dropout of the programme?

3. Does the role of the coaches, teammates and the sports administration department influence students to dropout of the programme?

The first research question explored what factors student-athletes perceived to have influenced their decision to dropout of the programme. Results of study revealed three major factors that student-athletes perceived as major factors to have influenced their decision to dropout of the programme.

Academic integration

In keeping with the SARM theoretical framework (Rivera, 2004), poor academic integration was a major factor contributing to participants' decision to in dropout of the programme. It must be stated that the factors student-athletes perceived to have contributed to their poor academic performance were interlinked and overlapped prior to the dropout process. Poor academic performance was a major and recurring factor for all student-athletes. Each of the participants alluded that they had performed poorly academically prior to dropping out the programme.

This study found that not being able to register for their first choice of degree was a major factor influencing students to dropout of the programme. Five out of the seven student-athletes felt that not being able to study their first-choice degree influenced their motivation and commitment to continue, which contributed to their poor academic performance. This was consistent with Casanova et al. (2018) who indicated that, if student-athletes fail to find entry to their first-choice university degree they will have less commitment to academic activities, and this results in academic failure and dropout. This is also consistent with Vries et al. (2011), who highlighted the importance of vocational issues in determining student-

athlete dropout and stated that students who fail to enrol in their first choice degree will find it hard to overcome academic difficulties, which ultimately results in lack of motivation and interest and eventually dropout.

This study found that students who lacked positive interaction with lecturers and university staff felt that they did not receive enough support or accommodation by lecturers, which was linked in their attitude and intentions to study further. This is consistent with Brecht (2014) who found that student faculty interactions affect student satisfaction, which in turn affects institutional commitment of the student-athlete and ultimately their dropout. The reality behind student-athlete dropout is the meaningful positive contact and interaction with faculty staff, which can influence overall academic satisfaction of student-athletes (Rankin et al., 2016).

Not being able to attend regular classes and handing in tasks and assignments on time affected the academic performance of students. Being absent for long periods of time, due to increased travel for sport competitions and events was a major factor influencing student-athlete academic integration and eventually dropout. This is supported by Coggins and Raunig (2018) who stated that absenteeism from increased competitions and travelling are connected to classroom failures as student-athletes may miss important conceptual and factual knowledge domains and find it hard to submit assignments and write exams on time.

In short, the findings of this study show that students who had not registered for their first choice of degree, who had limited interaction with faculty staff and spent large amounts time away from campus due to sport commitments performed poorly academically, which eventually resulted in dropping out of the programme.

Environmental pull factors

As described by Bradley and Renzulli (2011) students-athletes' decision to dropout of university is determined by two categories of factors, namely push and pull factors. Rouse (2019) describes push factors as when the primary determiner is the university and how its functions discourage student-athletes from staying in university, whereas pull factors are the factors that the individual considers important when dropping out or when assessing the losses and gains of their current circumstances. Four of seven student-athletes stated that financial implications influenced their decision to dropout of the programme. Students indicated that the withdrawal of scholarships and financial support left them with large amounts of student debt that they had to work to pay off, which resulted in them dropping out.

The reality of financial implications can be daunting to students who already come from a disadvantaged background. Many students in this study are from previously disadvantaged background and rely on financial support to complete a university degree. Many participants in study needed financial support to continue their studies. This is consistent with Khuong (2014), who stated that factors, including lack of finances to cover educational and living costs, family and work responsibilities, play a key role in the dropout process. This is also consistent with Coggins and Raunig (2018) who argued that financial security has an impact on student-athletes academic success. For example, if the student-athlete's scholarship is not renewed, coaches and the university are making it clear that the student-athlete is not part of the greater plan of the coach, which will cause a lack of motivation and will shift the student-athletes focus away from the academic responsibilities.

Furthermore, this study found that five of the seven student-athletes expressed that focusing more on their cricket and giving it “*one more shot*” together with the opportunity to play cricket professionally and overseas influenced their decision to dropout of the programme. Gaston-Gayles (2003) found that the aspirations of playing professional sports, however remote the possibility, have been linked to academic failure and dropout. This is also supported by Nichols et al. (2019) who further stated that pressures on student-athletes from external professional sport organisations emphasizing what student-athletes can gain from sport, have a strong influence on student-athlete academic dropout.

Management of cricket and academic responsibilities

Balancing academic and cricket responsibilities is a major factor influencing student-athletes’ decision to dropout of the programme. The study found that all participants felt that balancing the roles of full-time student and athlete was challenging. The amount of time spent on the cricket field for training and matches together with additional individual training between classes was challenging to manage. This is consistent with Coggins and Raunig (2018) who indicated that managing time and roles is important for both academic and sport success of student-athletes at university.

The current study found that the inordinate demands of the cricket programme result in the neglect of the academic responsibilities of the participants. This is consistent to Hendricks and Johnson (2016), who stated that the challenge for student-athletes is meeting academic requirements at university while balancing their sport and academic responsibilities, especially when student-athletes spends large amounts of time on the sports field each week. Student-athletes are more likely to focus more on sport than on academics, which will result in academic dropout.

The second research question explored what factors management perceived to have influenced student-athlete's decision to dropout of the programme. Results of this study revealed three factors that management perceived as major contributors to have influenced student-athletes decision to dropout of the programme. Like the student-athletes, management perceived that poor academic integration, poor academic performance and the wrong choice of degree were the major factors that influence student dropout. Environmental factors included financial support as well as the inability to manage cricket and academic responsibilities, which also contributed significantly to student dropout.

An important, additional factor that emerged from this study: Management perceived that a lack of study skills and study habits play a major role in students dropping out of the programme. This has a negative influence on the expectations of students when arriving at university. Bean (1990) stated that students need to acquire the necessary study skills, time management skills, exam preparation skills and communication skills in order to meet the academic requirements of university. This is also consistent with Bernardo et al. (2016) who indicated that bad study habits, skills and techniques are positively linked to poor academic performance and student dropout. However, it must be noted that this is dependent on the students learning style and the techniques needed for the completion of the degree, hence early detection is important and the necessary remedial action taken.

Role of the coaches, teammates and university sport administration

The current study found that the majority of participants perceived that the relationship with their coaches did not influence their decision to dropout of the programme. Most participants felt they had a positive relationship with their coaches, but that it was mainly cricket focused

and not focused on the academic responsibilities. One participant, however, did stress the negatively relationship with his coach influenced his perception of self and caused a lack of motivation towards sport and academics. The relationship of the coach and the dropout process is directly linked as student-athletes spend most of their time outside of the academic environment with their coaches. This is consistent with Van den Berg and Surujlal (2020) who argued that coaches supportive role may encourage student-athletes' motivations and it is evident that coaches need to go for training and development to understand how to enhance the university environment for student-athletes.

The study found that the role of teammates did not influence the decision of participants to dropout of the programme. In contrast, all participants stated that their teammates, especially the ones enrolled in the same degree, acted as tutors and provided academic support when needed and a positive environment for them to succeed academically. Raabe et al. (2016) stated that student-athletes who perceived their teammates as providing a positive, motivational climate emphasising learning and improvement, had greater levels of competence and a positive attitude towards their academic success.

The study also found a lack of academic support from sport administration department. All participants expressed no academic support from the university sports administration department. The lack of support and involvement from the sport administration department can have a huge effect on the student-athletes' educational experience. Although most participants felt that they did not receive any educational support from sports administration, this was not a factor that influenced their decision to dropout of the programme. The programme is independent from the university and the student-athletes did not expect any academic support from the sport administration department.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed that student-athletes dropout of the cricket sport for development programme due to several reasons that can be reduced if the correct interventions are implemented. Not being able to register for one's first choice of degree, limited faculty-interactions, withdrawal of financial support due to miscommunication and misunderstanding of what financial aspects the programme covered, and a lack of support from sport administration were all factors that can be addressed by more collaboration from all stakeholders involved. In the case of sports administration, it should be noted that more collaboration is needed between the programme and the university sports administration department. The challenge many students face is balancing sport and academic responsibilities. Although the coaches do try to rearrange practices and training during exam times, it is often the period prior to exams that should be taken into consideration as well.

A thorough understanding of financial obligations and commitments needs to be honoured, unless all avenues have been exhausted, in order to reduce the psychological aspects of debt, which affects the academic performance of student-athletes. The enticing dream of professional sport contracts will always be a challenge for the programme, memorandums of understanding need to be in place between the players, programme and cricket associations to enable students to be flexible in their professional cricket responsibilities and academic requirements.

Participants have made it clear that being able to study their first choice of degree, more interaction and support from lecturers and faculty and improved study skills and habits are needed for changes to occur. The results of these findings call for the need to monitor students-

athletes academic progress early and often. Although the programme does evaluate academic performance every six months, this should be done much earlier and more regularly, perhaps monthly. Although this may require the need for an additional academic advisor and facilitator, it may flag academically at-risk student-athletes much earlier and may reduce dropout if the correct intervention method like additional study support and tutors is applied. The programme stakeholders will be able to prevent dropout if they listen to the concerns and thoughts of dropout.

The perceived factors of these participants who have dropped out of the programme is a useful source of information for the programme stakeholders and provide some answers to the dropout misfortunes of the programme. The data gathered in this study could create strong support for current and future at risk students to ensure a successful completion of the academic programme. Even though these participants have not completed their academic studies, their desire to express themselves and tell their stories can help both the university and the sport and development programme to correct mistakes that may have been made with students on the programme.

Using the information produced from this study and prior research, it is important that the cricket sport for development programme understand the need to support these students and to identify the individual needs early, then develop interventions that will reduce their dropout as well as that of future students. Doing so will improve the retention rates, increase graduation throughput and enhance the cricket and academic experience and success of the programme.

5.3 Limitations

This study constitutes a starting point for the understanding of the factors that influence the dropout of student-athletes from a university cricket and development programme. Various limitations were identified for this research. This study was undertaken at one university in the Western Cape metropole and studies undertaken at other institutions may support or result in different findings. This study focused on cricket student-athletes and cannot be generalised to all student-athletes at the university in the Western Cape. These students are part of a very specific programme with very specific sport and academic demands and cannot be compared with other sport related recruited student-athletes. These students are dropping out of a sport related programme and not out of a sport. Moreover, if the study was conducted at another time and focused on a different time-period, the sample size and responses may be different. Another limitation is the sample only included male student-athletes.

5.4 Recommendations

The experiences and perceptions described by student-athletes in this study provide useful information that could assist the cricket sport for development programme to prevent student dropout. There are several recommendations for practice, that should be taken into consideration. The first recommendation is to ensure that a detailed contract or memorandum of understanding between student-athletes and organisers are fully understood by both student-athletes and parents of the student-athletes before joining the programme. There seems to be lack of understanding of the MOU by the student-athletes especially from a financial perspective.

The second recommendation would be to formalise attention to student dropout within the programme. Formalising attention to student dropout would be to convey to stakeholders that reducing dropout is a critical component for the stability and sustainability of the programme. It also demonstrates that the programme leadership and management is taking a proactive approach to student dropout.

The third recommendation is to ensure that, if students are not able to study their first choice of degree, to provide more guidance regarding career choice, access to university bridging courses, higher diplomas and certificates study options or even to allow them to study at a different institution of higher learning. To accomplish this, the programme needs to implement an early talent identification, tracking and monitoring system of prospective and promising cricketers who, once identified, enroll in an academic mentorship programme while still in secondary school. This will ensure proper guidance and information regarding study choice and future careers and allow for timeous application for the desired programmes. Partnerships with the university marketing departments to create road shows and information sessions regarding study options should occur prior to joining the programme. This could include 'job shadowing' and a school internship programme with alumni and organisations. In this way, prospective student-athletes will be aware of what career options and study programmes are more suited for them prior to registration of their degrees.

The fourth recommendation to address poor academic performance of registered student-athletes, is to implement an academic monitoring system for all students of the programme. This should be done timeously, after each test period and not only every six months of the year, which is the current practice. In monitoring more frequently, early flagging of at-risk students will occur and provide a platform for early intervention to reduce dropout of at risk

students. Ameen, Alarape and Adewole (2019) indicates that early prediction using an early warning system will improve the image of a university and help student-athletes remain in the system. To accomplish this, the programme needs to task the academic advisor or employ an assistant to focus primarily on the academic performance of student-athletes and “red flag” at risk students to coaches and programme leadership. This will provide enough time to intervene and place at risk students under strict academic control. Individual one-on-one sessions must be made mandatory with all coaches, academic advisors and stakeholders, which will ensure structured planning and intervention from an academic perspective.

The fifth recommendation would be for the programme to collaborate and strengthen their relationship with the sport administration department of the university. Although a relationship does currently exist, it could be far stronger. The strengthening of this partnership will give the cricket sport for development programme access to additional resources like funding, additional academic support, access to the academic faculties and access to internship opportunities. To accomplish this, the programme needs to sign a memorandum of understanding with the university sports administration department outlining the responsibilities, services and benefits for both entities and, at the same time, it will serve as a platform to be represented as a united front to prospective student-athletes.

Lastly, a recommendation for ongoing personal development and training of staff and coaches within the programme. The focus for the future development of the programme needs to be on the retention of student-athletes, including the latest trends, programmes and best practices that can be used to positively reduce student dropout. This will enable coaches and staff to identify early signs and triggers of at-risk students. The ever-changing nature of the programme and the competitiveness of high-performance sport, means regular turnover of

coaches and support staff, so it is important that the cricket sport for development programme implements personal development for all staff on a regular basis.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

There is no shortage of literature relating to the dropout of traditional student populations, however, literature pertaining to special student populations like student-athletes, specifically cricket, is not so easily accessible. The need to fully understand students' perspectives and views is vital in understanding why student-athletes dropout of university sports programmes. Future study suggestions would be to interview a diverse population and include female student cricketers who have also dropped out of the programme.

Another recommendation for future research studies would be to replicate this study at different tertiary institutions across South Africa. This could assist researchers with a better understanding why student-athletes dropout of university within a South African context. Another recommendation for future studies is to explore the views and perceptions of student-athletes from different sports codes who have dropped out of a university sports programme. Another recommendation for future studies is a comparative study on the perceptions of students-athletes from different institutions who have dropped out of university sports programmes in South Africa. Lastly, another recommendation for future research studies would be to explore the role of university academic departments in the academic success of student-athletes in sport and development programmes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A (1): Interview Schedule for student-athlete participants



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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Background factors:

1. How did you come to know about the programme?
2. What were your expectations about the University Programme prior to joining?
3. What were your perceptions about the University Programme prior to joining?

Academic Integration factors:

4. What was your initial goal regarding balancing your academics and cricket when joining the programme?
5. Did you choose the right course of study? And did you perform well academically?
6. Did you find it hard to balance academics and cricket with regards to studying, tests, assignments and exams?

Coach and Athletic department factors:

7. How was your relationship with the coaches, and team mates? Do you feel you received enough support from the coaches and teammates regarding your academic responsibilities?
8. Do you feel the University Sports Department supported you enough with regards to your academic responsibilities?

Environment Pull factors:

9. Did financial gain influence you to dropout?
10. Did the chance to play professional cricket influence your decision to dropout?
11. What were the thoughts and reactions of your parents and family when you decided to dropout?

Intervention factors:

12. What, in your opinion, would have prevented you from dropping out?
13. If you were in charge of the programme, what measure would you put in place to ensure that students complete their studies and at the same time excel in cricket?
14. Do you regret your decision to dropout? Explain?
15. Is there anything else that contributed to you dropping out the Programme that was not mentioned earlier?

Appendix A (2): Interview Schedule for Programme Director and Head of recruitment



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Interview Schedule for Programme Director and Head of Recruitment

1. Why do you think students want to form part of the programme?
2. What information about the programme do you give potential students prior to them joining the programme?
3. The programme aims to develop holistic individuals and the main aim is for students to graduate with a degree, and obviously at the same time develop their cricket. Do you feel that enough emphasis is put on the education aspect?
4. Reason for the previous question, is that with the development of varsity cricket over the past 5 years, has that influenced the way the programme recruits and retains their students?
5. Why do you think student dropout of the programme?
6. Do you feel the students had a good relationship with their coaches and teammates while they were involved with programme? Did that affect some student's decision to leave the programme?
7. Do you think that balancing academic responsibilities and sport commitments influenced the students decision to dropout?
8. What support does the Sports Admin give the programme to minimize the dropout of students from the programme?
9. In your opinion is there any outside factors that contribute to the dropout students from the programme? Money? Family? Professional Sport?
10. Have you seen a trend over the past 5 years of as to why students leave your programme?

Appendix B: Information Sheet



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INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Factors influencing the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme at a University in the Western Cape metropole.

What is this study about?

This is a research study will be conducted by Faizel Simon (student number: 2116869) at the University of the Western Cape. The purpose of this research project is to identify factors that influence students to dropout of the cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole. We are inviting you to participate in this research study, because you could provide us with meaningful information regarding dropout of a cricket and development programme.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be requested to sign a consent form to participate in a semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on your perception of the programme and the factors that influenced you to dropout the programme.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

To ensure your anonymity, pseudonyms will be used in place of your name, and only the researcher will have access to the identity of participants. In order to maintain confidentiality, all information gathered will be stored on a password protected computer or as a hardcopy in a filing cabinet in my supervisor's office at the University of the Western Cape, and only the researcher and supervisor will have access. All data and records will be destroyed and deleted after 5 years.

What are the risks of this research?

There may be some risks from participating in this research study. Some of the known risks are that you may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable with answering some of the questions, and you may withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any question, without penalty. We will nevertheless minimize such risks and act promptly to assist you, if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise, during the process of your participation in this study.

Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable medical professional, for further assistance or intervention.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help us to understand and inform the programme regarding factors that influence students to dropout and to address these problems in the future.

Do I have to be in this research, and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time and you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Faizel Simon of the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact:

Faizel Simon Cell:
0724285412

Address: 21 Athwood Crescent, Hanover Park
Telephone: (021) 691 7471

Email: 2116869@myuwc.ac.za; faizelsimon@gmail.com

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Prof. Marion Keim: Director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Sport Science and Development
University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535
mkeim@uwc.ac.za

Dr Marie Young: Head of Department,
Department of Sport, Recreation & Exercise Science, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535
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Prof Anthea Rhoda: Dean CHS faculty,
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Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville
7535
Tel: 021 959 4111
e-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee - (REFERENCE NUMBER: HS19/9/27.)

Appendix C: Consent Form



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CONSENT FORM

Factors influencing the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve, and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

I give my permission to have the interview recorded for data analysis: Yes No

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

Appendix D: Letter to Permission



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LETTER TO PERMISSION

Managing Director: Adv. Nick Kock

The Programme

University of the Western Cape

Dear Sir

I, Faizel Simon (student number: 2116869) am registered for a MA Sport for Development 2019 and have been granted permission by the HSSREC to conduct a research study entitled: **Factors influencing the dropout of students from a cricket and development programme at a university in the Western Cape metropole** (Research Ethics Clearance Number: HS19/9/27). My supervisor is Professor S. Bassett.

I hereby request permission to conduct my research involving previous students, both males and females, who dropped out of the Sports Skills for Life Skills programme from 2014 - 2019.

I trust that you will give my request your favourable consideration, and I look forward to a positive response.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Faizel Simon

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