

Research article

High academic and sports performance. A challenge for higher education institutions and athletes

Alto desempeño académico y deportivo. Un desafío para las instituciones de educación superior y los atletas

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Abstract

Introduction: The crisis in US colleges arises from a dissonance between the educational mission and the lower academic performance of student-athletes, often seen as crucial figures in campus culture. Due to the high academic demands of traditional curricula, this issue has led to conflicting views between coaches, faculty, and administrators. **Methodology:** a qualitative and interpretive approach based on reviewing papers and NCAA documents. **Results:** Lower academic performance in athletes due to a lack of adaptation of curriculum as an educational experience to develop social and academic skills, integrating academic credits. **Discussion:** A faculty member should be included to close the gap and design subject content focused on athletes. **Conclusions:** Design a curriculum approach based on educational experience as a cornerstone for developing academic and social skills in student-athletes.

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Keywords: academic skills; resume; development; educational experience; social skills; student-athletes; subjects; universities.

Resumen

Introducción: La crisis en las universidades estadounidenses surge de la disonancia entre la misión educativa y el bajo rendimiento académico de los estudiantes-atletas, quienes son íconos de la cultura universitaria. Las altas exigencias académicas de los currícula tradicionales crea contradicción entre entrenadores, profesores y administradores. **Metodología:** enfoque cualitativo e interpretativo basado en la revisión de artículos y documentos de la NCAA.

Resultados: El bajo rendimiento académico en atletas resulta de la no adaptación del currículo a una experiencia educativa que reconozca créditos académicos en el desarrollo de habilidades sociales y académicas. **Discusión:** La inclusión de un docente, como enlace entre académicos y deportistas, a cargo del diseño del contenido de materias centradas en los atletas.

Conclusiones: Diseñar un enfoque curricular basado en la experiencia educativa para el desarrollo de habilidades académicas y sociales en estudiantes-deportistas.

Palabras clave: asignaturas; desarrollo; estudiantes-deportistas; experiencia educativa; habilidades académicas; habilidades sociales; plan de estudios; universidades.

1. Introduction

Universities in the USA have a rich history of making significant contributions to academic and sports fields. With all its complexities, this legacy is a source of pride and respect. The literary review uncovers the disparities between the academic vision of the faculty and administrators, deeply rooted in the university's educational mission, and the perspective of sports management, often emphasizing the university's business focus and sports teams as a brand.

The literary review identified three trends regarding the relationship between college and student-athletes: the institutional vision, the stakeholders' perspective, and the student-athletes' point of view. The following paragraphs provide a general review of those perspectives, authors, and research fields.

The institutional perspective has four different trends in the curriculum centered on student-athletes: sports as an extracurricular activity (Weight and Huml, 2016) (Buckley and Lee, 2021) (Skoglund, Wall, and Kiene, 2018); a flexible curriculum based on electives (Stripling, 2018) (Crismore, 1982) (Calkins, 2022); sports as an academic unit (Conners, Cochrum, Lund, and Sanchez, 2023), and a curriculum focused on a major about athletics (Comeaux and Harrison, 2011) (NCAA, 2001).

The second trend about the vision of stakeholders, faculty, and administrators reveals gaps within the university's academic mission and the vision of athletics as an icon (Stansbury, 2003) (Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis, 2020) (Brand, 2006) (NCAA, 1996) (Barefield and McCallister, 1997) (Rodriguez, 2014) (Williams, Colleen and Allen, 2010) (McHugh & Sedlacek, 1991).

Finally, the student-athlete perspective is based on the recruitment and selection processes, the strategies for their freshman year, and the factors that could affect academic and sports performance (Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis, 2020) (Stripling, 2018) (Ashorn, 2009) (Christie and Dinham, 1991) (Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, Kim, and Wilcox, 2013) (NCAA, 2003) (Huml, Hancock, and Bergman, 2014).

This paper concentrates on the most relevant authors from the abovementioned perspectives. The selection is based on common perspectives, shared points of view, and contributions regarding a curriculum centered on student-athletes through educational experiences.

The contribution to the institutional perspective is demonstrated in Weight & Huml (2016, p. 252), who thought that sports at the university are commonly considered an extracurricular activity with a lower cognitive value, tangential to academic education, or as a detractor from the educational mission of the academy. Furthermore, the authors consider that athletes should interact with the mercantilist advertising stereotype of sporting potential but academic fraud, recruitment for exploitation in a sports team, sacrificing academic experience, sometimes with the false Olympic promise and with devastating consequences such as burnout, injuries due to overtraining, pressure to limit athletes performance, also ethic issues as doping, and finally the student-athlete desertion.

Under the stakeholder's perspective, Stansbury (2003, p. 5) considers that faculty and administrators recognize that the academic performance of student-athletes with scholarships is historically lower than that of traditional students. This issue is due to the following factors: the time committed to sports activities, the physical stress of training, the high profile that must be kept on and off the university campus, and the mental stress caused by the high expectations of the faculty and administrators.

In addition, the author thought that faculty and administrators perceive student-athletes as people who receive academic gifts due to their participation in university teams. They also noted the imbalance between class absences and time invested in training and traveling for competitions, the low educational standards established during the recruiting process from high school, and the need for more management of the transition between high school and college.

Another aspect Stansbury (2003) considers relevant is during high school scouting. The recruiter's privilege is the view of an athlete's strengths over academic skills and concentrates on their goals in the select athletes who satisfy the coach's expectations. The Scouters prioritize the decision to quickly include student-athletes in college teams to impact the college's reputation positively. In contrast, enrolling in the university without prior cognitive and emotional preparation significantly affects their academic performance during the freshman year and results in low reading comprehension and mathematics grades.

In the same perspective, Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis (2020, p 144) compare athletes' performance with other disciplines, such as music and theater. As a contribution, highlight the perception of faculty and administrators about arts as an activity with a high academic value, oriented towards learning through practice or the execution of an instrument with the support of a qualified instructor. In contrast, athletes and coaches are considered "beer and circus," with a lack of orientation to hands-on academic content, more influenced by commercialism, in which the university invests disproportionate amounts of money in a few students, increasing the inequitable distribution of the educational budget.

In the student-athlete perspective, the same authors highlight the university's importance in balancing academics and athletics. Currently, the focus is on the high competitiveness of sports teams, often prioritizing winning and surplus value over the well-being of the student-athlete and the university's academic priorities. This imbalance gives the athletic department more independence in financial management, emphasizing branding and fundraising streams.

Stripling (2018, p. 2) proposes a recruitment strategy at Auburn University to balance academic and athletic perspectives by massively admitting football-playing athletes into Public Administration as a program. This decision not only allowed the university to mitigate the voices that wanted to close this program but also increased finances due to souvenir sales and the participation of new sponsors and donors. This initiative closed the gap between academia and sports management, motivating the sports faculty to create a flexible curriculum focused on the educational experience of athletes, with electives related to physical and mental health. This success story brings hope and optimism for student-athletes' future in academia.

1.1. The student-athlete in the curriculum focused on educational experiences

Stansbury (2003, p. 5) notes that researchers have examined the effects of extracurricular activities on academic performance (Buckley and Lee, 2021) (Ashorn, 2009) (Skoglund, Wall, and Kiene, 2018). However, only some studies have focused on the impact of these activities on student-athletes' performance.

This approach provides relevant information so that, during the freshman year, coaches, academic advisors, faculty, and administrators can effectively monitor the athlete's academic and social development, predicting episodes of stress to intervene and facilitate control over the student-athlete's academic life. This follow-up process boosts freshman athletes' confidence in their academic abilities. It involves them in meetings and workshops to develop academic skills and allow them to work individually with the faculty on specific projects and content.

In addition, athletes receive training to develop their leadership skills and optimize interpersonal relationships, expanding time and mental energy in academic aspects (Comeaux and Harrison, 2011) (Conners, Cochrum, Lund, and Sanchez, 2023). During this interaction, the teachers have the opportunity to rethink the educational process at the college in order to adapt the teaching process to the different types of learners. In addition, the participation of faculty, administrators, and coaches in academic and emotional support programs facilitates the student-athlete's transition between high school and college, allowing a quick adaptation to the campus and facilitating motivation and academic commitment.

For Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis (2020, p.143), the athlete-centered curriculum is focused on the schedule, educational experience, and perceived transferable skills. Throughout integrating these three factors, Brand's model (2006) states that the athlete-oriented curriculum can be organized in academic units similar to music, theater, or dance. To achieve this goal, the model involves the students in extracurricular activities to gain cognitive skills and the appreciation and admiration of the entire community. In addition, student-athletes financially support the university through performances and attracting new sponsors and donors.

Furthermore, the authors accentuate Brand's curricular model, which allows the university as a community to participate in activities to develop intellectual skills. This model will enable high academic value that promotes learning for life as citizens and physical and mental development activities that positively impact the triad of mind, body, and education.

Finally, the authors emphasize that education through sports is a trend based on academic credits, with a curriculum focused on athletes to minimize the transition from high school to college. For example, some benefits of the summer bridge programs are to promote the building of social skills, the improvement of time management skills, and the optimization of cognitive development.

As part of the athletics department, coaches can improve their self-perception as educators and academic administrators to achieve benefits such as job stability, adequate compensation for responsibilities, and spending more time with family, as current faculty do.

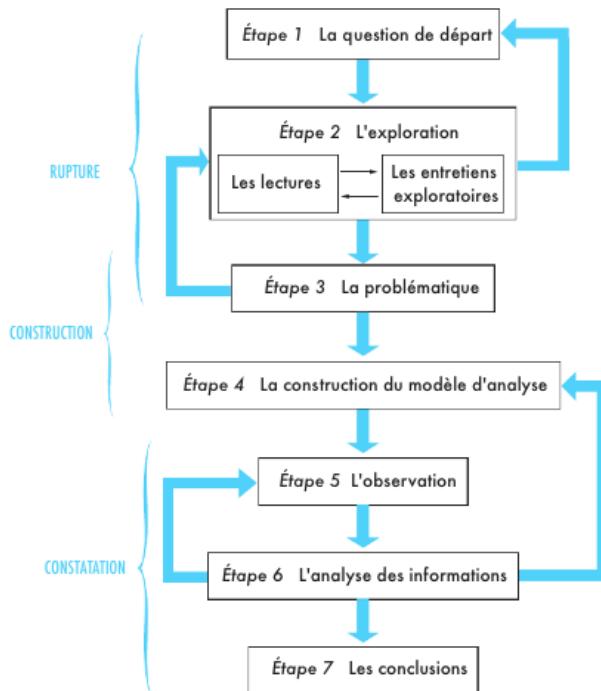
2. Methodology

This research is focused on a qualitative approach to exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups in a social context. Based on a literature review, the research explores aspects of the central phenomenon being conducted and is divided into topical areas with an interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2009, p. 54). This study explores the literature on a curriculum centered on student-athletes and the educational experience as a pedagogical strategy to improve adaptation and success in US universities.

The development of this approach is based on the contributions of Quivy and Van Carnpenhoud (1995, p. 20), and it is justified by its thoroughness and applicability to social science research. The authors articulate the investigation through three procedural acts: rupture, structuring, and verification.

Figure 1.

Stages of the investigative process



Source: Quivy & Van Carnpenhoud (1995) <https://bit.ly/4fdIqDA>

The first act of rupture identifies the problem and establishes the guidelines for exploring the information. This initial stage consists of breaking prejudices based on falsifying biased opinions that give the illusion of understanding the context.

Construction or structuring includes identifying a problem. It implies building an analysis model through the research plan design, collection, and classification or categorization of the information.

Finally, constatation or verification seeks to analyze the information based on previously established categories, generating the discussion that leads to conclusions.

This comprehensive approach guarantees a reliable and exhaustive study based on the scientific procedure that describes the fundamental principles applied in social research.

2.1. The methodological procedure

In the rupture, as the first act, the question of how the academic and social life of the student-athlete is managed at the university was raised. The next step consisted of consulting the NCAA and the University of Kansas databases, recognized worldwide for their athletics departments and reservoirs of sports research. This stage allowed the researcher to download academic papers related to categories such as curriculum centered on student-athletes, educational experience, innovation in pedagogy and sports, NCAA, and academic success.

During the second act, construction or structuring, Cornell notes were used to compile empirical evidence from the literature review and consolidate information about the abovementioned categories. This structuring of the reference framework allowed the researcher to create a route to characterize the academic and athletics interpretations from the institutional, stakeholders, and student-athlete perspectives.

The constatation or verification as a final act allowed the researcher to analyze the literary review, which could be consolidated on three axes of the design of educational experiences focused on the student-athlete: the institution, the stakeholders, and the student-athletes. The last act concludes how the coincidences between those three perspectives provide a first approach to the curriculum centered on student-athletes and their educational experience.

3. Results

The review of scientific articles published in journals specialized in sports and academic management allowed the researcher to characterize universities' current trends and visions about developing cognitive and social skills in student-athletes. These findings have been compiled from the following perspectives: institutional, the stakeholders, and the student-athletes.

3.1. Findings from the institutional approach

The institutional approach represents the policies, rules, and procedures established by colleges during the recruitment process and throughout the four years a student is an athlete.

Regarding recruitment as a rapprochement between athletes and university, Stansbury (2003, p. 7) highlights academic standards in Proposition 48 and Proposition 16 of the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association)—minimums required of universities to admit student-athletes who wish to participate at the Division I level (NCAA, 1996).

Proposition 48 (NCAA, 2003) states that colleges do not admit student-athletes with lower academic averages than the high school population in an attempt to boost the school's athletic performance. Additionally, student-athletes who want to find college admission must meet the requirements established by the NCAA regarding high GPA, SAT, or ACT scores. However, Proposition 16 (NCAA, 2001) increases the standards established in Proposition 48, requiring higher GPAs and test scores for students attempting to enter as freshmen with a monetary scholarship.

Additionally, the NCAA argues that student-athletes who want to participate in the top levels of college athletics to access scholarships must enroll in the NCAA Clearing House to allow colleges to monitor academic information from high school. The Clearing House focuses on providing necessary information to the college about student-athlete's performance during high school. This is valuable information in the recruitment process to enroll those who meet the school's high academic and athletic standards, optimizing the college's investment in sports scholarships.

To design a plan for retaining student-athletes, some strategies to protect them in their first year as freshmen emerge in Stansbury (2003, p.3). The author proposes the "redshirt" and the Medical Hardship Waiver as the NCAA's institutional guideline to facilitate the transition between high school and college.

The redshirt lets the student-athletes keep out of sports competitions during their freshman year and participate exclusively in team practices. NCAA considers this strategy very common among coaches if they have many players in the same position and want to keep them on the team based on talent and high-level skills. This allows freshmen to remain on campus during team travels, let them be part of the team, and maintain their eligibility for the next four seasons. Institutionally, the college benefits by helping the freshman improve their adaptability to academic activities, engage with traditional students in extracurricular activities, and improve their academic performance.(Christie and Dinham, 1991) (Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, Kim, and Wilcox, 2013).

The Medical Hardship Waiver, or medical redshirt, is defined by the NCAA as the condition in which the student-athlete injured during the season can qualify to remain eligible in the following academic year. This condition requires that they have not participated in more than 20% of the team's schedule. For Stansbury (2003), NCAA strategies seek to improve and expand the educational and social experience of the student-athlete who lives on campus, minimizing mental and physical stress during the freshman year, in addition to protecting and retaining talented athletes and facilitating the strengthening of relationships with the traditional student community.

Regarding aspects of institutional structure, Stripling (2018, 1) proposes that all academic decisions related to the curriculum should be managed and led by the faculty, administrators, and athletics departments. They must be included in the design of educational experiences. The author highlights the importance of the athletics department as a representative of the coaches and student-athletes, which must link with the faculty and administrators to align the university's educational mission with the student-athlete's educational experience.

Regarding the academic structure of the curriculum, Weight, Harry, Navarro, & Lewis (2020, p. 5) propose that pedagogy focused on creation and presentation, with a focus on music students, can be extrapolated to student-athletes. The authors said that the educational structure is analogous in the commitment to the tasks, the physical nature of the specialty, the student-teacher relationships, the instructional methods received from rigorous demands on time for training, and public presentations. Also, the structure focused on a curriculum centered on athletes improves their identity and impulse the cognition process through applying theory to reality as lifelong learning.

Based on this perspective, Weight and Huml (2016, p. 355) said that in the same way as arts, educational experiences in sports are possible. However, the curriculum must emphasize its offer of academic credits and even degree programs. So far, sports as an academic credit is exclusively linked to physical education (PE) in various educational programs.

The stakeholders need to innovate the curriculum to include subjects focused on sports with topics such as sports psychology, nutrition, mental health, and leadership.

This emerging vision of the curriculum based on educational experiences seeks the integration of science, history, and the theory of knowledge as foundations of science and literature, with the possibility of proposing a minor or a major focused on sports such as football or sports experiences such as elite performance.

3.2. Findings from the stakeholder approach

The papers consulted identify three stakeholders, faculty, administrators, and coaches, as the basis of the curriculum focused on student-athletes: educational experiences.

In predicting and improving academic performance, Stansbury (2003, p. 12) infers that the high school grade average can be considered a non-cognitive variable in predicting student-athletes success in college, while the SAT score predicts their performance. For this reason, he proposes that future educators and academic counselors must focus on the college education process, without the high school GPA as a predictor of success, and keep the attention on how to respond to a possible low academic performance during the early stage of the learning process.

This challenge requires the university stakeholders to provide student-athletes with academic support programs that allow them to influence their success and participate in feedback with teachers to move the faculty to rethink how the athletes approach education. This decision will strengthen academic support programs and adapt them to the needs of athletes.

Regarding administrators, Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis (2020, p.3) concerning the Integrated View of Athletics proposed by Brand (2006) highlight the prejudice of university administrators about why physical or corporal skills cannot be considered an art and must be structurally and philosophically relegated to the context surrounding the university.

This perception about intercollegiate athletics is responsible for undervaluing the educational aspects of sports in college, the tenuous relationship between academia and athletics based on competition for budget, academic scandals due to athletes' poor performance, a collision between academic calendar and athletic commitments, and the intense pressures of competitiveness in both scenarios.

Concerning coaches as a structure integrated into the academy, Weight, Harry, Navarro, & Lewis (2020, p.4) highlight that they perceive themselves as educators and wish to be seen as such but have yet to receive the recognition of university administrators, faculty, or the community.

When comparing music instructors, Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis (2020, p.21) highlight that, unlike coaches, music educators have a significant academic background strengthened by a K-12 educational system, which incorporates music as a subdiscipline that includes performance, education, theory, history, management, and therapy. It being perceived from the evolution of musical pedagogy.

Although sports management and sports science have recently gained credibility, they continue to be perceived at a recreational level, with the minimum of academic credits offered as physical education in courses taught by coaches who are not considered faculty.

3.3. Findings from the student-athlete approach

Weight and Huml (2016, p.354) recognize some benefits and contradictions in the literary review. As a conceptual foundation, participation in sports generates educational effects on students and results in character construction as the basis of educational commitment, satisfaction with the university experience in general, positional leadership, motivation to obtain a university degree, and a high educational level stand out.

However, some contradictions include inequity in the distribution of benefits. The privilege of the male gender on the football and basketball teams and the academic institutional culture increase the attitude of the faculty and administrators towards student-athletes because of eligibility focused on athletic advisors and the stereotypes that discourage student participation in activities other than academics.

As mentioned previously, Stansbury (2003, p. 3) highlights that the redshirt and the medical hardship waiver allow the student-athlete to improve the adaptation and performance in college, minimizing the impact on the transition from high school. This NCAA policy creates non-cognitive benefits within where Stansbury's (2003, p. 13) highlights the motivation, commitment to achieving goals, social status, excuses for disability, and interpersonal relationships with non-athlete peers.

In addition, he points out that a better freshman year as a redshirt allows them to develop skills for stress management, improve performance in reading comprehension and mathematics, and enjoy the university experience with traditional students, maintaining the focus on learning cognitive skills and necessary social skills for their future professional career.

For Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis (2020, p. 145), the student-athlete and student-musician profiles show more coincidences than differences. Both the musicians and the athletes start non-professional careers before beginning college, demonstrating their skills in auditions to be promoted to higher levels as part of a selection process in teams, bands, or orchestras. In addition, they could win scholarships as an admission choice to the college.

Regarding competitiveness and higher-level effort, musicians and athletes have a stretched schedule that demands extra time when rehearsing or practicing for countless hours, a craft-intensive training. Also, they must give presentations or performances in the evenings, on weekends, and vacation. Finally, the authors highlight the interrelationship between teams and bands. These activities positively impact musicians' opportunities through sport and the possibility of increasing the relationship between sponsors and donors.

The literary review by Weight & Huml (2016, p. 355) proposes measuring the future success of the student-athlete as a professional through the following seven areas: critical thinking, self-awareness, communication, diversity, citizenship, relationships, and leadership. They also highlight that the educational success of athletes is evidenced in job placement, occupational market abilities, and industrial movements as entrepreneurs.

The authors said that employers characterize former athletes as employees with positive attitudes to work, a competitive nature, goal orientation, the ability to handle pressure, a strong work ethic, confidence, the ability to embrace feedback, self-motivation, the ability to work with others, personal self-confidence, cognitive development, higher wages, and relevant skills for success in life after athletics.

4. Discussion

The theoretical review identifies a significant gap between the academic perspective of the faculty and administrators and the athletic perspective of the coaches regarding student-athlete and their educational and sporting success in college. This paper underscores the need to close this gap through the intervention of a faculty member as a mediator. The proposed curriculum is a crucial step in this direction, seeking to add common interests to the student-athlete educational experience and thereby fostering a more balanced and comprehensive development.

The curriculum centered on student-athletes for an educational experience seeks to create transversal academic units that allow them to learn by doing through applying theory in the sports context. The faculty-mediator, a crucial figure in this process, has solid pedagogical skills and expertise in the college's educational programs, with an interdisciplinarity vision to link subjects and topics to sports. This profile ensures a comprehensive understanding and effective implementation of the curriculum.

From an academic perspective, Stripling (2018) and Weight, Harry, Navarro, and Lewis (2020) said that administrators should design a more flexible curriculum by including electives with academic credits focused on creating student-athlete opportunities.

The empirical evidence supports the creation of leadership and negotiation as a subject, with content related to decision-making through cases of study applied to sports, in which it seeks to develop critical thinking and inquiry activities. The curriculum develops intellect, ethics, and morality skills in interactions between student-athletes and reality.

Another elective related to athletics is health sciences. This subject includes studies in nutrition and the human body based on mathematics and statistics to research athletes' performance. It also contains topics on ethics and morality that integrate a reflective study of doping, sports legislation, and civil rights. The study of the history of the Olympic Games is another topic that is closely related to student-athletes. In this topic, history, global politics, and human development are integrated, paralleling sporting events and the sociopolitical context in which they have been held.

Finally, business is a general topic that could be used to design a minor and major, as Weight & Huml (2016) and Stripling (2018) proposed. As an approach to the empirical evidence of the curriculum oriented to the educational experience, business broadly involves functional areas such as marketing, human resources, finance, operations, and logistics.

Based on these functional areas, content such as sustainable business models are proposed as the basis of entrepreneurship, sports management and strategy applied to event organization and team management, personal branding as a marketing strategy, and corporate topics such as clustering, organizational structure, governance, human behavior, and sports psychology.

From the social approach, Stansbury's (2003) and Weight and Huml's (2016) contributions focus on facilitating the student-athlete's transition from high school to college.

For this purpose, the main concern is to design a curriculum that strengthens the educational experiences of athletes to formalize elite sports performance as an academic field of study. This approach to the development of social skills involves assuming the redshirt strategy proposed by the NCAA, as well as athletics-centric curricula as approaches that seek to keep the student-athlete during the freshman year on the university campus interacting with non-athlete peers focused on the process of adaptation to the culture and study method of the college, away from competitions although training with the team.

This decision significantly minimizes mental and physical stress, increases self-confidence and self-awareness, and improves academic performance.

5. Conclusions

The gap between academic and sports approaches persists despite the empirical evidence approaches that served as the basis for this paper's theoretical review. Efforts to create an athlete-centered curriculum based on educational experiences have been dissipated in arguments about the pros and cons of each proposal, relegating the final decision to the NCAA. This decision significantly affects the admission to college for a student-athlete who has been studying in a high school characterized by a rigid curriculum, non-centered in a specific type of learners such as student-athletes, with a concentrated academic schedule, without any flexibility to share time with training and travels for competitions.

In addition, this situation causes student-athletes to leave sports in high school or to suffer college rejection after a successful career as an athlete during middle and high school. The same problem emerges when the student-athlete is admitted to a college with an appropriately adapted curriculum. Without a program to accomplish them during their freshman year, they could invest more time in training than academics, negatively impacting the short term because they failed in academics, which is a cause of college desertion.

Approaches to make the curriculum more flexible or adapt to student-athletes have a clear tendency to highlight social skills, which is why these attempts increase the gap.

There is a lack of research from an academic and athletic approach to narrow the distance between the subjects' contents and the student-athlete profile as part of the educational experience. Most of the proposals conform to the guidelines established by the NCAA. However, some of them propose the creation of academic units related to sports and extracurricular activities with academic credits, and the most hopeful mention creating a major without delving into the content. Given these phenomena, literary reviews raise the need to increase empirical evidence in research that delves into specific academic approaches.

The reviewed papers show how stakeholder prejudice negatively impacts advances in the educational experience as the basis of the student-athlete-centered curriculum. In these, the university's academic vision counteracts the point of view of sport as an integrating factor of science in which intelligence results from the balance between the mind and the body.

However, these differences not only remain in the field of ideology but also go beyond the personal level, exacerbating the gap between perspectives by considering coaches as personnel with little academic training, which is evident in the socio-labor benefits. The bibliographic review tangentially raises this situation by presenting an "ideal situation or desires" over concrete actions that allow closing the gap to promote the design of the curriculum based on educational experience.

This research is moving forward in responding to the concerns presented by the authors cited in the bibliographic review about delving into the curriculum design that allows student-athletes to develop academic and social skills from the educational experience. The next phase of this study is the design of the first phase of the curriculum, represented by transversal academic units that link content focused on athletics. Future research aims to design majors in sports based on subjects that link content with applications to sports.

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