

**The Ultimate Love-Hate Relationship:
Examining Sport Commitment in Collegiate
Track & Field Athletes**

The Honors Program
Senior Capstone Project
Student's Name: Kara Walsh
Faculty Sponsor: Ron Deluga
April 2015

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| ABSTRACT | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW | 3 |
| Trends in College Sport Participation | 3 |
| The Sport Commitment Model | 6 |
| The Exercise Commitment Scale | 7 |
| Combining the Sport Commitment Model and Exercise Commitment Scale | 8 |
| METHODOLOGY | 10 |
| Survey Part 1: Demographics..... | 10 |
| Survey Part 2: Track & Field Participation Questions..... | 10 |
| Survey Part 3: The Sport Commitment Model | 11 |
| Survey Part 4: The Exercise Commitment Scale | 12 |
| Survey Part 5: Reasons for Running & Additional Thoughts..... | 13 |
| RESULTS | 14 |
| Qualitative Results: The Themes | 14 |
| Regression I: Sport Commitment..... | 15 |
| Regression II: Attraction-Based Commitment..... | 18 |
| Regression III: Entrapment-Based Commitment | 19 |
| Comparing the Means: Other Factors | 21 |
| DISCUSSION | 23 |
| Implications of the Study | 23 |
| Study Limitations & Future Directions..... | 24 |
| REFERENCES | 26 |
| APPENDICES | 28 |
| Appendix A – Sample Letters & Survey..... | 29 |
| Appendix B – Sport Commitment Model (Modified)..... | 33 |
| Appendix C – Exercise Commitment Scale (Modified) | 36 |
| Appendix D – Survey Summary | 39 |
| Appendix A – Qualitative Results | 42 |
| Appendix E – Comparing the Means..... | 44 |

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine sport commitment among collegiate track and field athletes in order to determine what factors influence continued participation throughout an entire college career. A survey was administered to 431 track and field athletes across each of the three NCAA divisions. The survey included a modified version of the Athletes' Opinion Survey based on the Sport Commitment Model (Scanlan et al., 1993), which measures the relationship between sport commitment, sport enjoyment, personal investments, social constraints, social support, involvement alternatives and involvement opportunities.

Additionally, the survey included a modified version of the Exercise Commitment Scale (Wilson et al., 2004), measuring commitment in terms of attraction-based commitment versus entrapment-based commitment. Regression results revealed that enjoyment was the strongest predictor for sport commitment among the overall collegiate track and field population.

Results also revealed satisfaction as the stronger predictor of attraction-based commitment, followed by involvement opportunities. Involvement alternatives, however, proved to have the strongest negative impact on attraction-based commitment. Findings from this study provide essential information to athletic programs and coaches aiming to both recruit and retain athletes for a full four years.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

INTRODUCTION

In today's athletic culture, many high school athletes dream of the opportunity to compete at the next level. Despite the long-term efforts made to reach this glorified destination, a large proportion of athletes choose to forfeit their athletic identity upon entering college, finding their athletic career to be less worthwhile when compared to other campus opportunities. Others, however, are adamantly committed to finishing their college experience as a student-athlete despite the demanding lifestyle it requires.

Throughout my four years as a collegiate cross country and track and field athlete, I have often wondered what my college experience would be like without the struggle of balancing a Division I sport with academics, a social life and the search for post-graduation plans. Despite these reoccurring thoughts, I have always been able to find a reason, no matter how small, to remain committed to the sport I fell in love with as a young athlete. This struggle shared by many collegiate athletes is what prompted me to research the topic of sport commitment for my honors capstone project. I approached this research study with the hopes of discovering what drives commitment in a sport that runners, jumpers and throwers alike hate to love and love to hate so much.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent Trends in College Sport Participation

According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in the year of 2014, nearly eight million high school students participated in athletics in the United States. Only 460,000, or about six percent of those athletes, moved on to compete at the college level. It is predicted that a significantly smaller proportion of these college students will make it to the next level, competing as either a professional or Olympic athlete (NCAA – A). From these statistics, it becomes evident that a substantial amount of time, energy and effort must be invested into a sport at a young age in order to become one of the few individuals that are selected to continue sport participation at the college level.

Despite these large personal investments, many colleges and universities are reporting that a significant proportion of their student-athletes are choosing to leave their sports teams upon entering college. In a study conducted by the NCAA, the Study of College Outcomes and Recent Experiences (SCORE) survey was administered to 5,400 former Division II student-athletes. From this survey, researchers found that approximately 46 percent of respondents stopped participating in their sport before exhausting their athletic eligibility. Of these respondents, more than one-third of these athletes competed in men's and women's basketball and football. Additionally, it was concluded that student-athletes from these three sports were most likely to end their participation prematurely due to injuries or medical reasons. However, those who competed in other sports mentioned several alternative reasons for leaving their sport, aside from injuries or medical problems. Primary reasons included voluntary motives such as an internship opportunities or other activities (20.6%), wanting to concentrate more on academics (19.1%), or simply no longer wanting to compete in the sport (13.8%). The table below further details the NCAA's findings (NCAA – C).

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

| <i>Primary Reason Stopped Competing</i> | Overall | Men's/Women's Basketball & Football | All Other Sports |
|---|----------------|--|-------------------------|
| Injury/medical problem | 24.3% | 28.0% | 22.0% |
| Concentrate on academics | 16.5% | 12.0% | 19.1% |
| Financial constraints | 9.5% | 11.0% | 8.6% |
| No longer wanted to play | 14.6% | 15.9% | 13.8% |
| Completed degree | 7.8% | 8.7% | 7.3% |
| Other voluntary reasons (internship, other activity, etc.) | 19.0% | 16.2% | 20.6% |
| Other involuntary reasons (academically ineligible, kicked off team, etc.) | 8.4% | 8.2% | 8.5% |

Similar research has also been conducted at individual colleges and universities. In an article published by the *Brown Daily Herald* in 2011, authors Ethan McCoy and Ben Kutner detail a similar trend in athletics at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. According to a report submitted to the provost by the Compliance Office, nearly one-third of the university's recruited athletes in the class of 2011 had quit their sports by November of 2010. The Director of Athletics, Michal Goldberger, confirmed that this was a common trend seen each year at the university. Interviews with several Brown student-athletes revealed the reasons behind choosing to quit college sport participation prematurely. These reasons mainly included athletes recognizing other campus opportunities that were more aligned with their broader life goals. According to the article, female student-athletes at Brown University are more likely to quit their sport, as are students in their junior year.

Brown University is not alone, as many universities have reported the same trend. In a 2011 article published by the *Georgetown Voice*, author Nick Berti found that athletes at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. were likely to quit their team if they felt that the time commitment required by their sport restrained them from pursuing other opportunities such as studying abroad or focusing on academics. According to the article, the rigorous academics at Georgetown greatly contribute to the high athletic drop-out rate for both walk-ons and recruits. Similarly, in 2008 the *New York Times* featured an article on scholarship athletes at Villanova University and the University of Delaware, reporting that it is not unusual for as many as 15 percent of college athletes receiving athletic aid to quit their sports and turn down their scholarship after a year or two. Reporter Bill Pennington found this is

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

generally due to the high stress and intensity involved in competing for a college program, while also balancing the rigor of pursuing a degree.

There is a common theme throughout these studies and reports by the NCAA and individual colleges and universities. Student-athletes begin to weigh the costs and benefits of competing in their sport when several other factors come into play throughout the span of their college experience. These factors may include changing interests and passions, the strict time commitment required by college sports, the new intensity at the college-level that may cause athletes to feel burnt out or discouraged, and the occurrence of career-ending injuries. As a result of these factors, student-athletes may choose to pursue other opportunities, finding that competing in their sport is no longer worthwhile for them.

In a study conducted by Murphy et al. (1996), researchers examined athletic identity, identity foreclosure and career maturity in college athletes. Findings from this study showed that failure to explore alternative roles on a college campus and identifying strongly and exclusively as a student athlete early on in a college experience can sometimes lead to delayed career development. This can be seen as a concern when coupled with research conducted by the NCAA on Student-Athlete Identity in 2011. After administering the SCORE survey to athletes from 611 different schools across each division, the NCAA found that student-athletes were more likely to identify as an athlete than as a student, were more likely to have personal goals related to sports as opposed to related to academics and were more likely to report that their sports were an important part of their overall college experience, as opposed to academics (NCAA – B).

Through this research it becomes clear that in some cases, student-athletes recognize the importance of exploring non-athletic identities and are forced to decide which opportunities on campus will not only improve their overall college experience, but also benefit them in their long-term goals and aspirations. While many research studies have explored the reasons as to why student-athletes may choose to leave their athletic career behind them, it is also

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

valuable to understand what factors influence athletes to stay. This is what will be addressed in the following pages.

The Sport Commitment Model

With prior research on commitment mainly exploring the realms of general commitment, relationship commitment and work commitment, Tara K. Scanlan et al. (1993) set out to examine a rather untouched area of the topic, sport commitment. Sport commitment, as defined in her study, is a psychological state representing the desire or resolve to continue sport participation. With this area of commitment in mind, the Sport Commitment Model was developed by Scanlan and her colleagues as way to examine the rationale behind athletes choosing to continue their sport participation.

The model breaks the concept of sport commitment into three major causal conditions previously established in the examination of general commitment by Kelley (1983). These causal conditions include the attractiveness of the relationship, the degree to which alternatives to the current situation are viewed as less or more attractive and the forces which act as barriers to determination. From these three causal conditions, five determinants of sport commitment were established, which include sport enjoyment, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social constraints and involvement opportunities. Scanlan et al. (2003) later identified a sixth determinant of sport commitment, social support.

In order to better understand the use of the model, Scanlan et al. clearly defines each of the six constructs. To begin, sport enjoyment refers to positive responses to the sport experiences reflecting feelings such as pleasure and fun. Involvement alternatives refers to the attractiveness of alternative involvement opportunities which compete with the sport for the athlete's time. Personal investments refers to the time, energy and effort invested into a sport which would not be recovered if the athlete were to withdraw from their sport participation. Social constraints refers to the social expectations, influences or norms which create feelings of obligation to continue participating in the sport. Involvement opportunities refers to the opportunities, benefits and perks that are available to the athlete only through continued

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

participation. Finally, social support refers to the social influences that positively encourage the athlete to continue to participate in their sport. For each construct of the Sport Commitment Model, Scanlan and a group of psychologists developed related questions and provided answer options based on a Likert scale, thus creating the Athletes' Opinion Survey.

In a series of studies, Scanlan et al. tested this model on a wide array of youth sports. While sport enjoyment was consistently shown to be the strongest predictor of sport commitment, the results also revealed that personal investments, involvement opportunities and social constraints are all positively correlated factors in relation to sport commitment. Increases in each of these factors results in an increase in sport commitment, while decreases in these factors decreases sport commitment. Attractive alternatives, however, had a strong negative correlation with sport commitment. Therefore, increases in attractive alternatives leads to a decrease in sport commitment.

Because the Sport Commitment Model has been widely used on samples of youth athletes, its development and validity has been enhanced over time. There have also been a small number of studies that utilize this same model on adult samples. One study conducted by Alexandris et al. (2002) utilized the model in order to measure its validity in predicting exercise commitment at private health clubs in Greece. Through slightly modifying the wording of the survey to apply to his sample of exercisers, Alexandris et al. found that the constructs successfully predicted exercise commitment, with involvement opportunities being the leading predictor. This result differed from previous research on sport commitment at the youth level, however this difference could be attributed to either the age of the research participants or the form of the physical activity.

The Exercise Commitment Scale

In a 2004 study conducted by Philip M. Wilson et al., the Sport Commitment Model was used as a base in predicting the determinants of exercise commitment. The Exercise Commitment Scale measured commitment in terms of six predictors: satisfaction, social constraints, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social support and involvement opportunities.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

While the predictors of commitment were almost identical to the Sport Commitment Model, Wilson et al. chose to measure commitment in terms of two types. This idea stemmed from the work of M.P Johnson (1982), who separated commitment into the dimensions of voluntary actions, which Wilson et al. refers to as “wanting to commit,” and obligatory actions, which Wilson et al. refers to as “having to commit.”

The work of Johnson is very closely related to the work of Schmidt and Stein (1991), in which the researchers predicted that athletes will either have attraction-based commitment or entrapment-based commitment to their sport. It was determined that those athletes who have attraction-based commitment will have higher levels of enjoyment, personal investments and benefits from participating in their sport. These athletes will feel that they are voluntarily participating in their sport and will truly want to be there. On the contrary, those athletes who have entrapment-based commitment participate in their sport for more negative reasons and are said to feel obligated to commit.

Wilson et al. distributed the Exercise Commitment Scale in survey form to college-aged students enrolled in group exercise classes. The survey consisted of several questions related to the six constructs of exercise commitment with answer options based on a Likert scale. In this particular study, Wilson et al. found that satisfaction and personal investments were the leading predictors of exercise commitment. In addition, Wilson et al. found the constructs of involvement alternatives and social constraints to have a significant correlation with the dimension of obligatory actions, or “having to commit.” Because the Exercise Commitment Scale was developed based on the Sport Commitment Model, it can be a useful tool in not only measuring the different dimensions of commitment in exercisers, but also in athletes.

Combining the Sport Commitment Model and Exercise Commitment Scale

The base of this research on sport commitment at the college level starts with Jordan Boyst’s study conducted in 2009. In an attempt to examine the potential differences in predictors of sport commitment across age, Boyst led a study on collegiate soccer players by combining modified versions of the Sport Commitment Model and Exercise Commitment Scale into a

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

single survey. In modifying the surveys, Boyst eliminated the social constraints and involvement alternatives constructs from the Sport Commitment Model due to measurement problems reported by Scanlan et al. (1993). Boyst also altered the wording of survey questions for the Exercise Commitment Scale in order to apply to the new audience, college athletes, as opposed to exercisers.

After distributing the survey to 101 athletes, stepwise regression results presented involvement opportunities as the strongest predictor of sport commitment in the sample. In addition, satisfaction was the strongest predictor of “wanting to commit,” or attraction-based commitment, while social constraints was the strongest predictor of “having to commit,” or entrapment-based commitment. Results were then compared to previous use of the Sport Commitment Model on extensive samples of youth athletes in which enjoyment was proven to be the stronger predictor of sport commitment (Scanlan et al., 1993). The results obtained in Boyst’s study suggested important differences in sport commitment between youth and collegiate athletes, as well as the need for more research on sport commitment outside of the youth population.

In summary, the Sport Commitment Model and the Exercise Commitment Scale are reliable and valid tools in measuring sport commitment in collegiate athletes. Prior to examining sport commitment in collegiate track and field athletes using these two particular tools, several hypotheses were formed.

- H1: Under the Sport Commitment Model, the leading predictors of sport commitment for youth athletes will be different from the leading predictors of collegiate track and field athletes.
- H2: Under the Exercise Commitment Scale, the leading predictors of attraction-based commitment for exercisers will be the same as the leading predictors for collegiate track and field athletes.
- H3: Under the Exercise Commitment Scale, the leading predictors of entrapment-based commitment for exercisers will be the same as the leading predictors for collegiate track and field athletes.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a survey was developed and distributed by email to college track and field coaches and athletes. The survey began with general questions related to demographics and sport participation, followed by a modified version of the Sport Commitment Model and Exercise Commitment Scale. The modified versions of both surveys were based on the work of Boyst's 2009 study on collegiate soccer players. Sample letters to coaches and athletes, as well as the survey layout can be found in Appendix A. The Sport Commitment Model and the Exercise Commit Scale can be found in Appendix B and C respectively.

Distribution of the survey began with the Bryant University Track and Field team, which includes 34 males and 26 females. From here, the tight-knit nature of the track and field community played a role in further distribution of the survey to athletes that compete for other universities. Bryant Track and Field athletes confirmed survey distribution to 45 additional college track teams. The next step was random distribution, through which emails were sent out to 64 track and field coaches across all divisions with information about the study and a link to the survey. Although there is no reliable way of knowing which coaches actually sent the survey out to their athletes, it can be concluded with confidence that a representative, whether a coach or an athlete, at 110 or more track and field teams was contacted with the survey. In the end, 431 responses were collected. A summary of survey results can be found in Appendix D.

Survey Part 1: Demographics

Variables examined by this section of the survey included:

- a) Gender: A variable added in order to determine whether the respondent is a male or female.
- b) Year: A variable added in order to determine whether the respondent is a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student at their university.
- c) Region: A variable added in order to determine how far the survey reached.

Survey Part 2: Track & Field Participation Questions

Variables examined by the track & field participation questions included:

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

- a) NCAA Division: A variable added in order to determine the level of competition the respondent competes at.
- b) Events: A variable added in order to determine which events the respondent competes in and how many. Options included distance races, middle distance races, short sprints, long sprints, hurdles, relays, jumps and throws and respondents were directed to check all that apply.
- c) Training Hours: A variable added in order to determine how much time the respondent puts into the sport. Options included ranges of less than 10 hours per week, 10-20 hours per week, 20-30 hours per week, and more than 30 hours per week. Those respondents who checked 20-30 hours per week or more than 30 hours per week signaled additional time spent outside of scheduled practice training for their events, as the NCAA limits Countable Athletic Related Activities (CARA) hours to a maximum of 20 hours per week, or 4 hours per day.
- d) Athletic Scholarship: A yes or no variable added to determine whether or not the respondent receives financial compensation towards college tuition for competing in their sport.
- e) Likelihood to Score: A variable added to determine the respondent's self-perceived ability or talent as above average, average or below average based on their likelihood of scoring a conference championship meet.

Survey Part 3: Sport Commitment Model

A modified version of Scanlan et al.'s (1993) Athletes' Opinion Survey based on the Sport Commitment Model was included in each survey in order to assess sport commitment. As mentioned previously, the Sport Commitment Model in the form of the Athletes' Opinion Survey measures sport commitment in relation to several motivational factors including sport enjoyment, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social constraints, social support and involvement opportunities. The modified version included in this study was obtained from Boyst's (2009) study of sport commitment in collegiate soccer players, which excluded the involvement alternatives construct due to measurement problems reported by Scanlan et al. (1993) and the social constraints construct due to the questions' lack of relevance to

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

college aged individuals. Instead, the social support construct was added based on findings of its relevance in further research completed by Scanlan et al. (2003).

This survey was further modified in order to better apply to the study at hand. Many of the constructs asked about the athlete's feelings "this year." "This year" was removed from each question in order to collect an overall perspective of the athlete's experience with collegiate track and field. An additional question was eliminated under the sport commitment construct that asked "What would you be willing to do to keep playing in your sport?" This question was eliminated because previous questions under this construct already addressed the concept. In addition, under the sport enjoyment construct, the question "do you like playing your sport?" was replaced with "do you find your sport rewarding?" This eliminated repetition of questions and also allowed a link to be made between the enjoyment construct of the Sport Commitment Model and the satisfaction construct of the Exercise Commitment Scale. The final modification made was eliminating the question pertaining to the athlete's financial investment in the sport located under the personal investments construct. The reason for this is because it did not apply to collegiate athletes, as most, if not all, participation fees are covered by the university.

In the final modified version of the Athletes' Opinion Survey included in this study, respondents were asked to answer two to five questions for each construct on a five-point Likert scale. The Sport Commitment Model has been proven to be a valid and reliable measure for assessing sport commitment. Internal consistency has been demonstrated by both Scanlan et al. (1993) and Boyst (2009) through obtaining Cronbach alphas. The survey is included in Appendix B.

Survey Part 4: Exercise Commitment Scale

Respondents were asked to complete a modified version of Wilson et al.'s (2004) Exercise Commitment Scale. For each item, "exercising" was replaced with "competing in track and field" and/or "training for track and field." This survey contained 33 total questions to assess the constructs of commitment, including attraction-based commitment, entrapment based

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

commitment, satisfaction, social constraints, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social support, and involvement opportunities. Each construct contained between three to four different questions. After being directed to read and respond to each question carefully, respondents based their answers on a 10-point scale, where 1 was considered “not at all true for me” and 10 was “completely true for me.”

According to Wilson et al.’s study, the Exercise Commitment Scale is a reliable and valid way of measuring commitment in those who exercise. This was demonstrated through obtaining Cronbach alphas. Boyst (2009) modified the Exercise Commitment Scale to measure commitment in collegiate soccer players by replacing “exercise” with “playing my sport” in each question and found consistent reliability through also obtaining Cronbach alphas. By modifying the scale in a similar way to apply to track and field athletes, it is presumed to be a reliable and valid way of measuring commitment in those who compete in the sport. One additional modification made to better serve for this particular research study was the elimination of the question “I have invested a lot of my own money into playing my sport.” The reason this question was not included was because it does not apply to college athletes as mentioned previously, therefore responses were likely to skew the results. This portion of the survey is included in Appendix C.

Survey Part 5: Reasons for Running & Additional Thoughts

In order to obtain more qualitative information that could potentially be helpful in determining causation later in the study, two additional questions were included. The first question asked the respondent’s reason for running, giving them several options to select, while also allowing them an open ended “other” response in case their reasons for running were not fully addressed in the options provided. The second question was simply an open-ended box giving respondents the option to include any additional comments or thoughts pertaining to their commitment to collegiate track and field.

RESULTS

Qualitative Results: The Themes

The analysis of survey responses began with examining the qualitative data received in response to the open-ended question at the conclusion of the survey, “Please include any additional thoughts related to your participation in track and field.” Although this was an optional question, survey participants took advantage of the opportunity to not only detail their love and appreciation for track and field, but to also vent about their many frustrations and difficulties with competing in the sport.

Responses to this question demonstrated several positive themes in relation to track and field participation. The most common theme involved the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that individuals felt for competing in track and field. Many participants commented on the amount of hard work and effort that the sport requires, but explained that this hard work truly pays off after experiencing a successful performance. Other prominent themes included the sense of family that individuals feel as a result of their membership to a team and to the overall track and field community. Additionally, several athletes explained that the sport of track and field teaches many invaluable life lessons and instills many important values such as dedication, strong work ethic, and perseverance.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback, quite a few athletes used this open-ended question as an opportunity to detail their many frustrations with the sport. Common themes in this category included athletes doubting their track and field participation, referring to the sport as a burden or obligation, complaining about the intense time commitment that makes it challenging to enjoy a normal college experience, sharing their difficulties in dealing with teammates and coaches, as well as injuries and poor performances, and admitting that they truly do not love track like they once did.

From the qualitative results alone, it becomes evident that participating in track and field is truly a love-hate relationship. This can be seen in not only the responses that blatantly refer to the sport as a love-hate relationship, but also in the countless responses in which athletes

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

explained how taxing the sport can be physically and mentally, but further explained that overall, participating in track and field provides for many positive college experiences and benefits. Several of the responses from the open-ended question can be found in Appendix E.

Regression I: Sport Commitment

The first regression attempted to answer the following question: What are the leading predictors of sport commitment in collegiate track and field athletes? Data from the Sport Commitment Model portion of the survey were used to answer this question. The dependent variable was sport commitment, while the explanatory variables included sport enjoyment, personal investments, involvement opportunities and social support.

Prior to running the model, it was hypothesized that the leading predictor of sport commitment in collegiate track and field athletes would be different from the leading predictor of sport commitment in youth athletes (Refer to H1). This was previously determined by Scanlan et al. (1993) as enjoyment. This prediction stemmed from the idea that enjoyment of a sport at a young age is what impacts initial participation, however as an athlete develops other factors may reinforce continued participation. Results that were statistically significant at the five percent level of significance were reported.

This model predicted that overall, enjoyment was the leading predictor of sport commitment in collegiate track and field athletes (Table 1). This concluded that the initial hypothesis was incorrect, as enjoyment was determined to be the leading predictor of sport commitment in both college track and field athletes and youth athletes. While sport enjoyment is what impacts initial sport participation as a youth athlete, this enjoyment is what carries athletes to the college-level. According to the model, this enjoyment remains with them throughout their college experience, influencing their decision to continue their sport participation.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

TABLE 1. Overall Sport Commitment

| Commitment | St. β | St. Error | t | Sig. |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Enjoyment | 0.378 | 0.036 | 7.606 | .000 |
| Personal Investments | 0.246 | 0.070 | 6.842 | .000 |
| Involvement Opportunities | 0.231 | 0.038 | 4.407 | .000 |
| Social Support | 0.049 | 0.027 | 1.050 | .294 |
| Constant | - | 0.651 | 0.984 | .326 |

Using the same model, determinants of sport commitment were assessed in order to measure changes in the leading predictors as student-athletes progress through their college experiences. Results revealed obvious changes in the determinants of sport commitment occurred over time (Table 2). Freshmen reported involvement opportunities as their leading predictor of sport commitment in their first year of college. This can be attributed to the fact that freshmen come into college looking for a niche and their place to belong. Freshmen athletes are at an advantage in the search to fit in as they are able to immediately identify with a group on campus and are exposed to new people, new places and new norms. Senior athletes, on the other hand, reported personal investments as their leading predictor of sport commitment. This can be attributed to the fact that seniors often times may reflect on the amount of time, energy and effort spent while competing in their sport over the years. When taking these investments into account, seniors may feel as if they must remain committed in their final year of college athletics to make it all feel worthwhile. While differences in the determinants of sport commitment were demonstrated for freshmen and seniors, sophomores and juniors reported enjoyment to be their leading predictor of sport commitment, mirroring the results of the overall track and field population.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

TABLE 2. Sport Commitment in Freshmen & Seniors

| Freshmen Commitment | St. β | St. Error | t | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Enjoyment | 0.270 | 0.076 | 2.494 | .014 |
| Personal Investments | 0.163 | 0.164 | 2.100 | .038 |
| Involvement Opportunities | 0.391 | 0.084 | 3.557 | .001 |
| Social Support | .006 | .063 | .063 | .950 |
| Constant | - | 1.702 | 0.818 | .415 |

| Senior Commitment | St. β | St. Error | t | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Enjoyment | 0.327 | 0.069 | 3.220 | .002 |
| Personal Investments | 0.407 | 0.144 | 5.509 | .000 |
| Involvement Opportunities | 0.274 | 0.081 | 2.349 | .021 |
| Social Support | -0.061 | 0.060 | -0.57 | .573 |
| Constant | - | 1.230 | -0.26 | .792 |

Additionally, this same model was used in order to determine differences in sport commitment based on self-perceived talent. It was concluded that the commitment of those who viewed their track and field talent as below average were most influenced by involvement opportunities (Table 3). One individual responded to the open-ended question on the survey with the following: “I am one of the slowest members of my team but I get to travel to cool places, bond with amazing teammates, learn from wise coaches, and witness incredible athletes. I am very blessed.” From this response alone, it is clear that despite feeling as if an athlete has little to contribute to the overall success of their track and field team, there are still several benefits in participating in track and field at the college level. This athlete, despite perceiving her talent and ability as below average, still remains dedicated to the sport because of all the opportunities she is exposed to just for being a member of a sports team. It is also interesting to note that despite personal investments being a significant variable for the overall track and field populations, for athletes who perceive their talent as below average, the variable becomes insignificant. This demonstrates that those athletes who perceive themselves as below average may tend to invest less time, effort and personal

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

resources in order to improve their performance.

TABLE 3. Sport Commitment in “Below Average” Athletes

| Commitment | St. β | St. Error | t | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Enjoyment | 0.270 | 0.113 | 2.000 | .050 |
| Personal Investments | 0.102 | 0.233 | 1.023 | .311 |
| Involvement Opportunities | 0.464 | 0.120 | 3.170 | .002 |
| Social Support | 0.010 | 0.101 | 0.072 | .943 |
| Constant | - | 2.509 | 0.028 | .978 |

Regression II: Attraction-Based Commitment

The second regression attempted to answer the following question: What are the leading predictors of attraction-based commitment in collegiate track and field athletes? Data from the Exercise Commitment Scale portion of the survey were used to answer this question. The dependent variable was attraction-based commitment, while the explanatory variables were satisfaction, social constraints, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social support, and involvement opportunities.

Prior to running the model, it was hypothesized that the leading predictors of attraction-based commitment in collegiate track and field athletes would be the same as the leading predictors for exercisers (Refer to H2). These were previously determined by Wilson et al. (2004) as satisfaction and personal investments. This prediction was based on the fact that the Exercise Commitment Scale was previously utilized on the same aged population, college students. This was also based on the fact that despite track and field being a sport, it can also be compared to an intense form of exercise, therefore relating to the previous study conducted by Wilson et al. Results that were statistically significant at the five percent level of significance were reported.

Regression results revealed that satisfaction was the leading predictor of attraction-based commitment in collegiate track and field athletes, concluding that the previous hypothesis was

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

partially supported. Results, however, showed that the second strongest predictor of attraction-based commitment was involvement opportunities, as opposed to personal investments for exercisers in the previous study (Table 4). This can be attributed to the fact that there are more involvement opportunities in being a part of a sports team as opposed to working out recreationally at a gym. Interestingly, this regression also revealed that involvement alternatives have a high negative impact on attraction-based commitment, meaning the more an athlete finds other activities on campus to be appealing, the less likely they are to want to compete in their sport. This relates back to the study by Murphy et al., in which the researchers found that failing to engage in exploratory behavior can often times lead to delayed career development. Student-athletes may feel restrained from exploring other activities and opportunities on campus due to the intense time commitment of a college sport, thus resulting in a decrease in attraction-based commitment.

TABLE 4. Attraction-Based Commitment

| Commitment | St. β | St. Error | t | Sig. |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Satisfaction | 0.467 | 0.076 | 12.04 | .000 |
| Social Constraints | 0.035 | 0.030 | 1.174 | .241 |
| Involvement Alternatives | -0.213 | 0.028 | -6.42 | .000 |
| Personal Investments | 0.103 | 0.105 | 2.837 | .005 |
| Social Support | 0.110 | 0.099 | 2.735 | .006 |
| Involvement Opportunities | 0.162 | 0.055 | 3.810 | .000 |
| Constant | - | 2.630 | 1.641 | .101 |

Regression III: Entrapment-Based Commitment

The third and final regression attempted to answer the following question: What are the leading predictors of entrapment-based commitment in collegiate track and field athletes? Data from the Exercise Commitment Scale portion of the survey were used to answer this question. The dependent variable was entrapment-based commitment, while the explanatory variables were satisfaction, social constraints, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social support, and involvement opportunities.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Prior to running the model, it was hypothesized that the leading predictors of entrapment-based commitment in collegiate track and field athletes would be the same as the leading predictors in exercisers. These were previously determined by Wilson et al. (2004) as social constraints and involvement alternatives. This prediction again was based on the similarity in the age and the context of physical activity in the two studies. Results that were statistically significant at the five percent level of significance were reported.

Regression results reported social constraints to be the leading predictor of entrapment-based commitment in collegiate track and field athletes, concluding that the previous hypothesis was again partially true (Table 5). Involvement alternatives, however, ended up being an insignificant variable in this model and therefore could not be deemed a predictor of entrapment-based commitment. Interestingly, satisfaction was reported as the second strongest predictor of entrapment-based commitment. At first, this seemed to be a contradicting result. How could satisfaction cause athletes to feel entrapped by their sport? After reviewing the qualitative data, this idea began to make more sense. One participant wrote, "Once you get a taste of competition it is very hard to live and breathe anything else. Personal records are addicting." From this response, it can be concluded that athletes can in fact feel obligated to continue their sport participation due to an addiction they may develop over time to the satisfaction and rewarding feelings associated with participating in track and field.

TABLE 5. Entrapment-Based Commitment

| Commitment | St. β | St. Error | t | Sig. |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Satisfaction | 0.266 | 0.079 | 3.897 | .000 |
| Social Constraints | 0.460 | 0.031 | 10.24 | .000 |
| Involvement Alternatives | 0.069 | 0.029 | 1.387 | .166 |
| Personal Investments | -0.011 | 0.108 | -0.20 | .840 |
| Social Support | 0.124 | 0.102 | 2.057 | .040 |
| Involvement Opportunities | 0.022 | 0.056 | 0.341 | .733 |
| Constant | - | 2.718 | -0.19 | .846 |

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Comparing the Means: Other Factors

While the regression results revealed very interesting trends in sport commitment, attraction-based commitment and entrapment-based commitment, there were still additional factors important to college sports that had not been covered or needed to be covered in more depth. These factors included gender, year, division, scholarships, self-perceived ability and event. One-Way ANOVAs were performed in order to compare the means of different groups, ultimately determining whether there were significant differences in the levels and dimensions of commitment based on the latter factors. Results were only reported at the five percent level of significance. Graphical depictions of these results can be found in Appendix F.

- Gender: There were no statistically significant differences in commitment across gender. Whether you were a female or a male had no significant impact on your levels of commitment or types of commitment.
- Year: Seniors reported less attraction-based commitment than all other years. This can be attributed to the fact that seniors reported that personal investments was their strongest predictor of sport commitment. Therefore, seniors may feel obligated to continue their sport participation in their final year, as not to waste the extensive investments including time, energy and effort that they have devoted to their sport over the course of their college career.
- Division: DI and DII athletes reported more entrapment-based commitment than DIII athletes. This can be attributed to several reasons. Athletes at the DI and DII levels may face more intense social constraints forcing them to continue their participation. They may also face a stricter time commitment, therefore limiting the time they have to spend on alternative campus activities. As previously mentioned, when athletes are constrained to their athletic identity and incapable of exploring other opportunities, this can lead to a decrease in their attraction-based commitment. Lastly, there is more availability of scholarships at the DI and DII levels, therefore athletes receiving athletic aid may feel obligated to continue their sport participation.
- Scholarship: The presence of a scholarship resulted in higher attraction-based commitment and entrapment-based commitment than those without a scholarship. The

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

presence of a scholarship resulted in higher overall commitment levels. This finding can be attributed to the fact that athletes may feel overall more committed if they are receiving athletic aid, as they are essentially being paid to commit. Higher levels of attraction-based commitment may be due to scholarship athletes' likelihood of being talented in their event, and therefore rewarded for their hard work. Higher levels of entrapment-based commitment may be due to money acting as an extrinsic motivator to commit.

- Self-Perceived Ability: Track and field athletes with higher self-perceived ability reported higher levels of overall commitment. This can be attributed to the idea that athletes that are performing well and feel that they are being rewarded for their hard work with successful performances will likely feel more motivated to continue to commit to their sport. Those who do not experience such success may experience lower levels of commitment since they are not being rewarded for the work that they put in.
- Event: Distance and middle distance runners reported higher levels of overall commitment than all other events. This can be attributed to the fact that distance runners at the college level are often required to compete in not just indoor and outdoor track, but also in cross country. Therefore, distance runners and middle distance runners are essentially "in season" throughout the entire school year. In addition, extensive training is required over the summer months in order to prepare for the cross country season. The amount of time and the intensity of the training that goes into competing as a distance or middle distance runners requires extreme levels of commitment. Jumpers and throwers reported lower entrapment-based commitment than all other events. This may be due to the differences between running events and field events. While field events require a certain skill or technique, all other events are pure running.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

DISCUSSION

This study provides an extensive understanding of the determinants of sport commitment in collegiate track and field athletes. Not only did this study take into account a reliable and previously used model and scale in order to measure sport commitment, but it also incorporated several other important factors applicable to college-level sports.

Key findings from this study include the following:

- Overall, enjoyment proved to be the leading predictor of sport commitment in collegiate track and field athletes.
- Involvement alternatives had a strong negative impact on sport commitment, which in turn has the biggest impact on a student-athlete's decision to quit their sport.
- Obvious changes in the determinants of sport commitment occurred over time, with freshmen reporting involvement opportunities as the strongest predictor of sport commitment, while seniors reported personal investments.
- Satisfaction proved to be the leading predictor of attraction-based commitment, followed by involvement opportunities.
- Social constraints proved to be the leading predictor of entrapment-based commitment, followed by satisfaction. This can be attributed to the "addiction" an athlete develops to the satisfying and rewarding nature of the sport.
- Other factors such as year, NCAA division, self-perceived ability and talent, and event have impacts on the levels and dimensions of commitment in collegiate track and field athletes.

Implications of the Study

With research on sport commitment somewhat lacking at the college level, these findings are essential to the field of sports psychology. In identifying the leading predictors of sport commitment based on different factors applicable to college sports, coaches and athletic programs can use this information to create effective recruitment and retention strategies. This information is also helpful to athletes, specifically those competing in track and field, as it provides insight into the thoughts of their teammates and competitors. Findings from this

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

study may be extremely relatable for athletes, which could offer them comfort in either their positive or negative perspectives of sport participation.

Study Limitations & Future Directions

Limitations of this study are identified below. Recommendations are offered concerning how such limitations can be avoided and improved in future research of sport commitment at the college-level.

1. *Expanding Geographical and Sport Coverage:* Although this study produced very informative results, there are areas in which future studies on this topic may be improved. To begin with, this study was very highly concentrated in the northeast region, with over 90 percent of responses coming from athletes in the northeast. In expanding geographical coverage of a study such as this, differences in commitment may be revealed based on the region an athlete competes in. In addition, researchers may find it interesting to include additional sports in their study of commitment at the college-level in order to compare differences across sports, while also determining commitment in college athletics as a whole.
2. *Developing a Tailored/Shortened Survey:* The Sport Commitment Model and Exercise Commitment Scale were used in the measurement of collegiate sport commitment in both this study and Boyst's 2009 study of college-level soccer players. Although the model and scale were proven to be reliable and valid in measuring sport commitment, they were originally developed for different audiences, youth sports and exercisers. The development of a more tailored survey may be beneficial in examining collegiate sports, as several influential factors such as division, scholarship, team travel, academics and more were not addressed. Aiming to create this survey in a shortened form may also be beneficial in obtaining responses due to the fast-paced lifestyle of college athletes. The survey used in this study had a 27 percent drop-out rate, therefore a lot of valuable information was lost due to its length.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

3. *Considering Other Factors:* After conducting this research, additional areas of interest were identified in measuring sport commitment at the college-level. First, the concept of overall team success, as well the idea of institutional support, would be interesting factors to include in measuring sport commitment. Would a more successful sports team produce more committed athletes? Does the promotion of a mastery climate by coaches influence the levels of sport commitment? Does the social or financial support of university athletic departments and administrators effect the levels of commitment in athletes?

It may also be interesting to explore first-hand perspectives of those who quit their sport before graduation. In this study, surveys provided first-hand responses from current track and field athletes, however secondary research was the only source detailing the factors influencing an athlete's decision to quit. Speaking directly with former athletes would provide excellent supplemental information, resulting in a better understanding of both sides to sport commitment.

Lastly, the survey participants were primarily females, making up for 65 percent of responses. This could have potentially altered the results of this study, as it can be concluded that males and females behave differently and therefore would commit differently. A next step would be to look for differences in sport commitment by gender in order to determine whether there are in fact statistically significant differences when male track and field athletes are better represented.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

REFERENCES

- "Estimated Probability of Competing in College Athletics." NCAA.org. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, 25 Feb. 2015. Web. (A)
- "Examining the Student-Athlete Experience Through the NCAA GOALS and SCORE Studies." NCAA.org. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, 13 Jan. 2011. Web. (B)
- "SCORE Study: Athletics Experiences of Former Division II Student-Athletes." NCAA.org. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, n.d. Web. (C)
- Alexandris, K., Zahariadis, P., Tsorbatzoudis, C., Grouios, G. (2002). "Testing the sport commitment model in the context of exercise and fitness participation." *Journal of Sport Behavior*.
- Berti, Nick. "Turning in the Jersey: Student-athletes Call It Quits." *The Georgetown Voice* [Washington, D.C.] 20 Oct. 2011: n. pag. Print.
- Boyst, Jordan. (2009). "An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Athletes." *The University of North Carolina Greensboro*. Web.
- Johnson, M.P. (1982). "Social and cognitive features of the dissolution of commitment to relationships." In S. Duck (Ed.), *Dissolving personal relationships* (pp. 51–73). New York: Academic Press.
- Kelley, H. (1983). "Love and Commitment." *Close Relationships*. New York: W.H. Freeman, 1983. Print.
- McCoy, Ethan, and Ben Kutner. "Nearly One-third of All Athletes End up Quitting." *The Brown Daily Herald* [Providence] 16 Nov. 2011: n. pag. Print.
- Murphy, Geraldine M. "Identity Foreclosure, Athletic Identity, and Career Maturity in Intercollegiate Athletes." *The Sports Psychologist* (1996): n. pag. Web.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Pennington, Bill. "It's Not an Adventure, It's a Job." *The New York Times* 12 Mar. 2008: n. pag. Print.

Scanlan, T.K. Russell, D.G., Beals, K.P., & Scanlan, L.A. (2003). "Project on elite commitment (PEAK): II. A direct test and expansion of the sport commitment model with elite amateur sportsmen." *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*.

Scanlan, T.K., Simons, J.P., Carpenter, P.J., Schmidt, G.W., & Keeler, B. (1993). "An Introduction to the Sport Commitment Model." *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*.

Schmidt, G.W., & Stein, G.L. (1991). "Sport Commitment: A model of integrating enjoyment, dropout and burnout." *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*.

Wilson, Philip M., Wendy M. Rodgers, Paul J. Carpenter, Craig Hall, James Hardy, and Shawn N. Fraser. "The Relationship between Commitment and Exercise Behavior." *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* 5.4 (2004): 405-21. Web.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

APPENDICES

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Appendix A – Sample Letters and Survey

A.1 Sample Letter to Athletes

Dear Track Athlete,

In order to graduate from Bryant University, I am conducting a research study that will measure levels of commitment and motivation in college track athletes across the nation. I am asking, as a fellow member of the track community, for you all to take my quick 5 minute survey. If you have friends that run track at different universities, please feel free to forward this email along to them as well. Thank you in advance for your help, it is truly appreciated.

SURVEY: https://bryant.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1ZwA116UPjkieB7

Best wishes for a great indoor season!

Kara Walsh

A.2 Sample Letter to Coaches

Dear Track & Field Coaches,

My name is Kara Walsh and I am a senior at Bryant University in RI. I am also a member of the women's cross country and track & field teams. I am writing to request the participation of your athletes in a study I am conducting as part of my graduation requirements.

The study I am conducting involves college track athletes across all divisions and their commitment and motivation levels. Too often throughout my four years as a collegiate track athlete, I witnessed teammates fall out of love with the sport of track & field and eventually quit our team. I am hoping that my study will shed light on the driving forces behind continued participation in college athletics, specifically track & field, as well as what causes athletes to make the big decision to quit. If you would like to help out, please send the following survey link to your athletes.

https://bryant.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1ZwA116UPjkieB7

If you are interested in the conclusions and findings of this study, please do not hesitate to contact me, as I would be more than happy to share my final report. Thank you in advance for your time and any effort you may extend on my behalf. Best of luck this indoor and outdoor season!

Sincerely,
Kara Walsh

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

A.3 Survey

Introduction:

Welcome College Track & Field Athletes!

The purpose of this survey is to learn more about what motivates student-athletes to participate in track and field at the college level. Information collected will identify factors that may affect sport commitment for the collegiate student across all NCAA divisions. If you agree to participate in this study, you will complete the following survey regarding your current participation level and feelings towards participating. Completion of the survey will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes maximum.

I welcome you to contact me by email if interested in learning more about what motivates the unique individual that is a college runner, jumper, or thrower. Thank you in advance for your time and valuable contributions!

Kara Walsh
kwalsh6@bryant.edu

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

In what year are you?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate Student

In what region of the country are you located?

- Northeast
- Midwest
- South
- West

At which division do you compete in college Track & Field?

- Division I
- Division II

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

- Division III

In which events do you compete? (Please check all that apply)

- Distance Races
- Middle Distance Races
- Short Sprints
- Long Sprints
- Hurdles
- Relays
- Jumps
- Throws

In a typical week, how many hours do you spend training for your event(s)?

- Less than 10 hours per week
- 10-20 hours per week
- 20-30 hours per week
- More than 30 hours per week

Do you have an athletic scholarship?

- Yes
- No

How likely are you to score points for your team at a conference championship meet?

- Unlikely- I never score at championship meets.
- Somewhat Unlikely- There is little chance I could score at a championship meet.
- Somewhat Likely- There is a good chance I could score at a championship meet.
- Likely- I always score at championship meets.

Why do you compete in collegiate track & field? (Please check all that apply)

- To improve fitness and physical appearance
- To experience satisfaction and rewards
- To be a member of an athletic team
- To bond with teammates/friends
- To get financial support for my college education
- Other: _____

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Please feel free to include any comments or additional information related to your participation and commitment to track & field.

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Appendix B – Sport Commitment Model (Modified Version)

Commitment

How dedicated are you to track and field?

1. Not at all dedicated
2. A little dedicated
3. Somewhat dedicated
4. Very dedicated
5. Dedicated

How hard would it be for you to quit?

1. Not at all hard
2. A little hard
3. Sort of hard
4. Hard
5. Very hard

How determined are you to continue competing until graduation?

1. Not at all determined
2. A little determined
3. Sort of determined
4. Determined
5. Very Determined

Enjoyment

Do you enjoy training and competing?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Sort of
4. Pretty much
5. Very much

Are you happy training and competing?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Sort of
4. Pretty much
5. Very much

Do you have fun training and competing?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Sort of
4. Pretty much
5. Very much

Do you find track and field to be rewarding?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Sort of

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

4. Pretty much
5. Very much

Personal Investments

How much of your time have you put into training and competing?

1. None
2. A little
3. Some
4. Quite a bit
5. A lot

How much effort have you put into training and competing?

1. None
2. A little
3. Some
4. Quite a bit
5. A lot

Involvement Opportunities

Would you miss being a track and field athlete if you left the program?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Would you miss your coach if you left the program?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Would you miss spending time training and competing if you left the program?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Would you miss your teammates if you left the program?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Social Support

Do you feel encouragement and support from other people for participating in track and field?

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Do you feel encouragement and support from your teammates for participating in track and field?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Do you feel encouragement and support from your coach for participating in track and field?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Do you feel encouragement and support from your family for participating in track and field?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

Do you feel encouragement and support from your friends for participating in track and field?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Appendix C – Exercise Commitment Scale (Modified Version)

Please read the following statements carefully and choose the response that best describes how you usually feel about participating in track & field.

1= Not at all true for me

10= Completely true for me.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I am determined to keep competing in track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am dedicated to competing in track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am committed to competing in track and field | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am willing to do anything to compete in track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I want to continue to compete in track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It would be hard for me to quit track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel obligated to continue competing in track and field | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel it is necessary for me to continue competing in track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel like competing in track and field is a duty. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| All things considered, competing is very satisfying. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because I compete in track and field, I feel satisfied. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find competing in track and field to be rewarding. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| People will think I am a quitter if I stop competing in track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel pressure from other people to compete in track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I have to keep competing in order to please others. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| People will be disappointed in me if I were to quit. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There are other things I could do that would be more enjoyable than competing. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There are other things I could do that would be more fun than competing. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| There are other things I could do which would be more worthwhile than competing. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would be happier doing something else instead of competing. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would like to do something else instead of competing. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have invested a lot of effort into track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have invested a lot of energy into track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have invested a lot of time into track and field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| People important to me support my participation. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| People important to me think it is okay that I participate. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| People important to me encourage me to participate. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Track and field gives me the opportunity to relieve stress. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Track and field gives me the opportunity to do something exciting. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Track and field gives me the opportunity to have a good time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

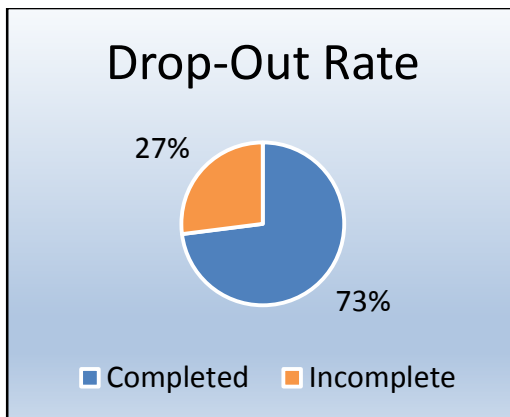
An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Track and field gives me the opportunity to improve my health and fitness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Track and field gives me the opportunity to improve my physical capabilities/skills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Track and field gives me the opportunity to be with my friends. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

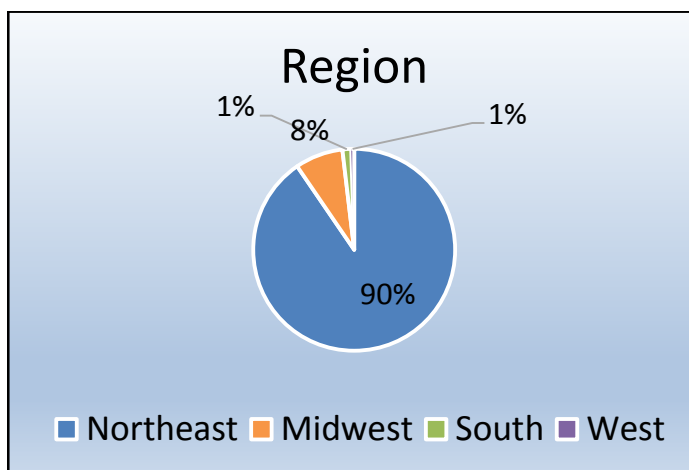
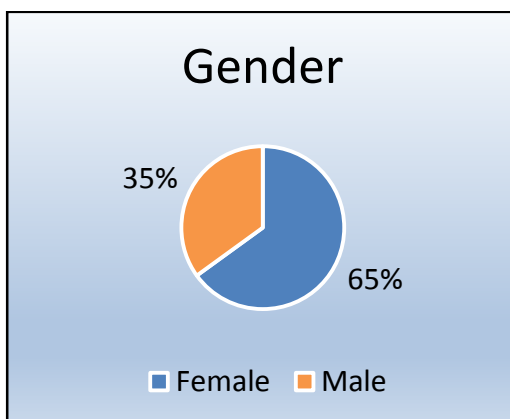
An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Appendix D- Survey Summary

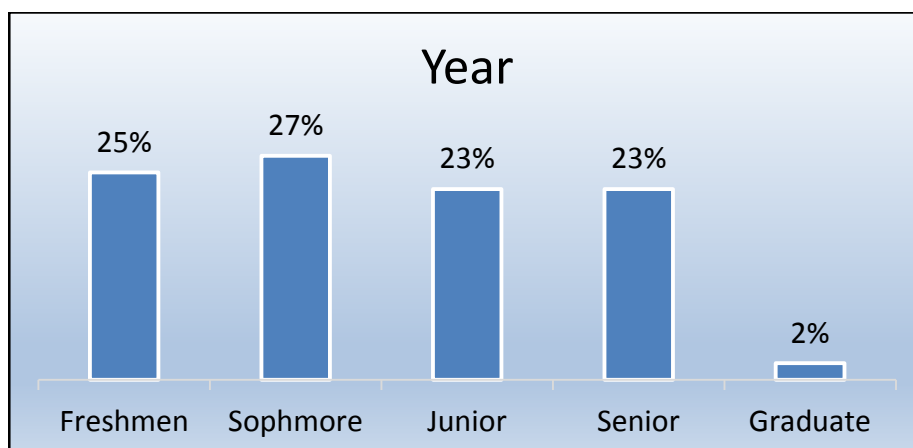
D.1 Survey Drop-Out Rate



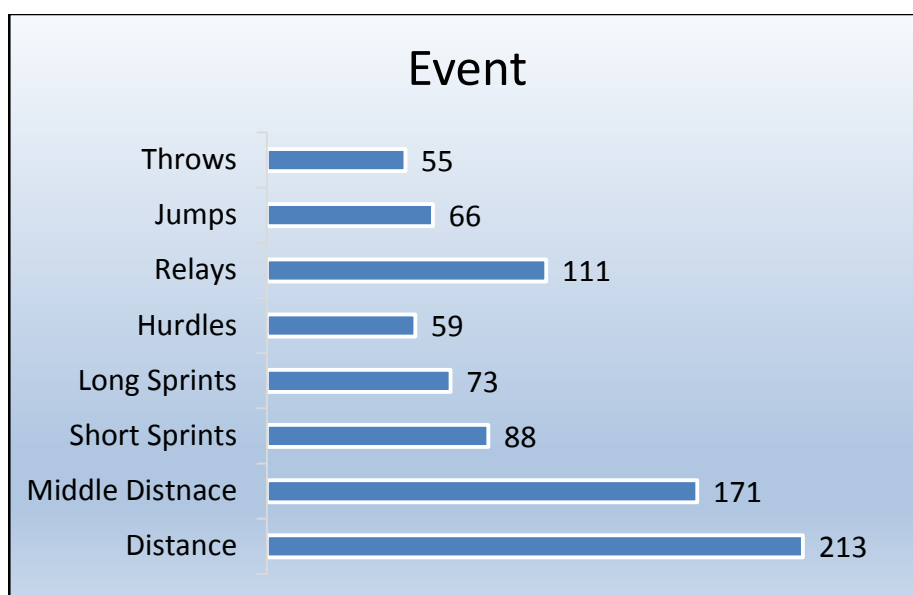
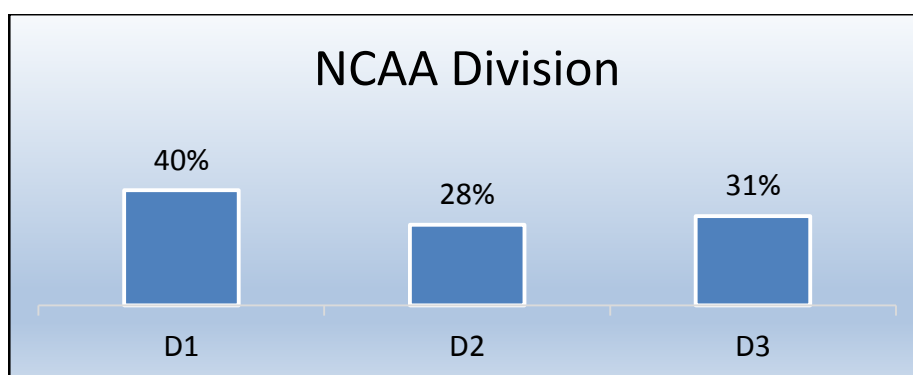
D.2 Demographics

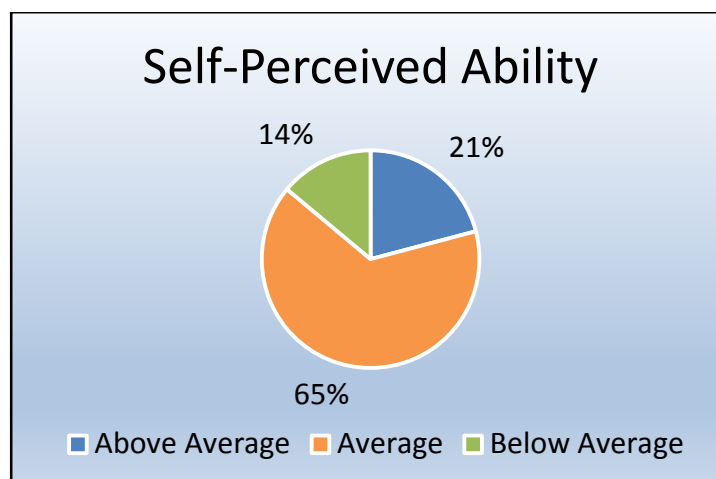
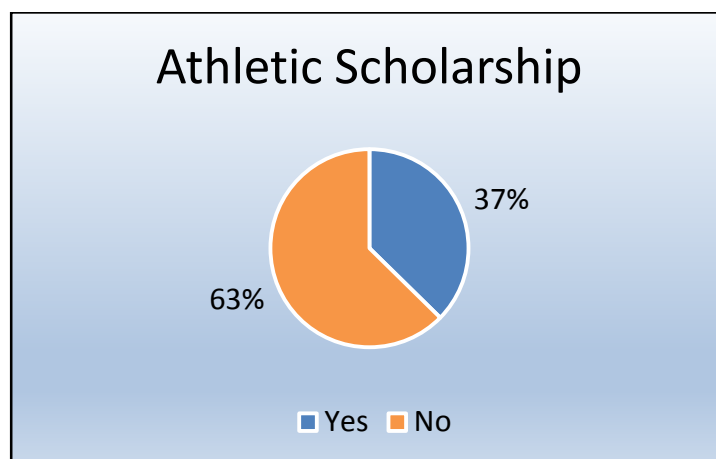
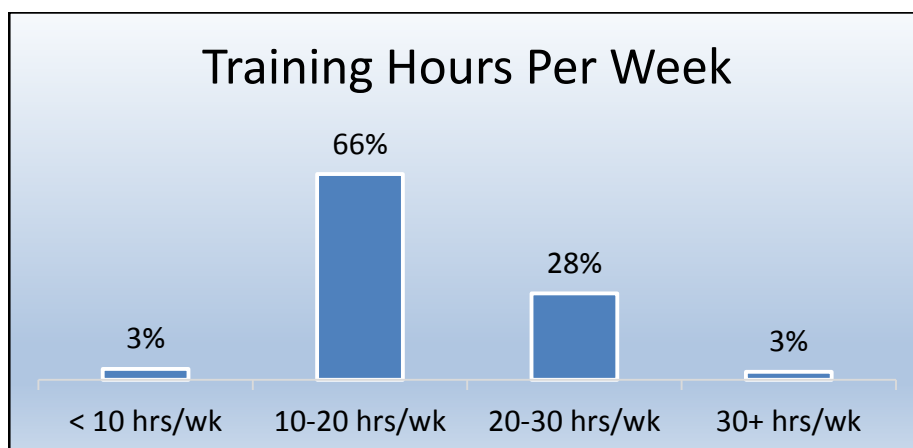


An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh



D.3 Track & Field Participation Questions





An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Appendix E– Qualitative Data

“Running is a love-hate relationship. I always ask myself during workouts ‘why do I do this?’ But in the end, when you are on that bus ride home with a large steak and cheese in your hand, you feel nothing but accomplishment.”

“Track teams are like families that’d I’d be lost without.”

“Running is part of my life and as long as my body can handle to compete, I will run. This sport gave me so much and I don’t want to quit because quitting is the easiest thing in the world.”

“I used to love it, but as I’ve gotten older/further in school it has become more of an obligation.”

“There is very little encouragement among team and from my coach, so I don’t really feel invested in my team. The nature of track in general allows for the experience to become very individual, and it has. I no longer runner in relays, mostly just the 1000m, 1600m, and 3000m. The indoor season is going to spill into the outdoor season, but I am not sure if I want to continue competing. I have being doing well this season and hitting great times, but it just feels like a waste of time. I can continue working out without the team and avoid chewing up my entire Saturday. I can find road races on Saturday mornings, especially since it’s getting warmer, and fulfill desires to compete. Of course there is the guilt and sense that I am “letting the team down” if I quit, but I don’t necessarily feel invested in this team and I would mostly feel quitted by the idea of quitting and being a “quitter”. This all felt very wrong to write, but you can’t force feelings of pride for your team and its very difficult to find purpose in distance running... it’s painful to compete! Thank you for giving me an opportunity to say (type) this... this was healthy.”

“I’m leaving my team fairly soon, because I don’t love track anymore.”

“It’s just such a burden, it’s not fun anymore. I’m a senior so I’m sticking with it for the last semester, but if I was a freshman or sophomore, I would quit in a heartbeat. ”

“I’m in it for the general issue sweatpants and I always have been.”

“Practice SUCKS!”

“It’s like having a little sister who’s your best friend but can get under your nerves every once in a while.... I mean sure she can be annoying occasionally but you would never ever want to live without her.”

“Out of all the sports I have competed in, track and field is the most enjoyable and tight nit community. Everyone, even those on other teams, are some of the friendliest and warm people I have ever met. I wouldn’t pick any other sport over it.”

An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

“Participating in track & field has given me another family. We have all bonded and created great friendships.”

“Running is naturally aligned with many values such as dedication, strong work ethic, and perseverance. Running keeps me centered.”

“Distance running isn't for the faint of heart. You have to love it. To be successful you have to have a passion for it. You can't rely on anything else, people, financial support etc to motivate you. You have to be your own motivator and want it.”

“You invest so much time and effort into training that it makes it very difficult to imagine yourself walking away from it. Not competing anymore would feel like I am throwing away a part of myself.”

“I am one of the slowest members of my team but I get to travel to cool places, bond with amazing teammates, learn from wise coaches and witness incredible athletes. I am very blessed.”

“It is the hardest sport but once that hard work pays off in competition, that's all that matters.”

“I work very hard to be the best athlete I can be, but I almost don't even notice how hard I am really working because I am too busy enjoying the company of my friends/teammates.”

“Sometimes I think it's a bummer that I am not a normal college student. I always have to think about running.”

“My father pushed me to compete at the collegiate level. He would be disappointed if I were to quit.”

“Once you get a taste of competition it is very hard to live and breathe anything else. Personal records (PRs) are addicting.”

“There is a difference between myself and many other athletes that is difficult to put into words. It is a separation that often elevates a person from being a great athlete, to being a champion. Many people want to do well, athletically, academically, socially, but very few people need to do well in one or all of these areas. It is not necessarily a positive character trait, often leaving the person whom it consumes with a unsatisfied feeling that is rarely alleviated by success, however, it sparks a desire within a select few that is ferocious in nature and can only be quenched by the sound of their own national anthem. This feeling, this desire, is why I need to compete, and the reason why I will succeed.”

“As a runner extremely prone to injuries, track has been rewarding though mentally and physically taxing at times. I am determined to finish my seasons with my teammates but also look forward to the time I control my own schedule.”

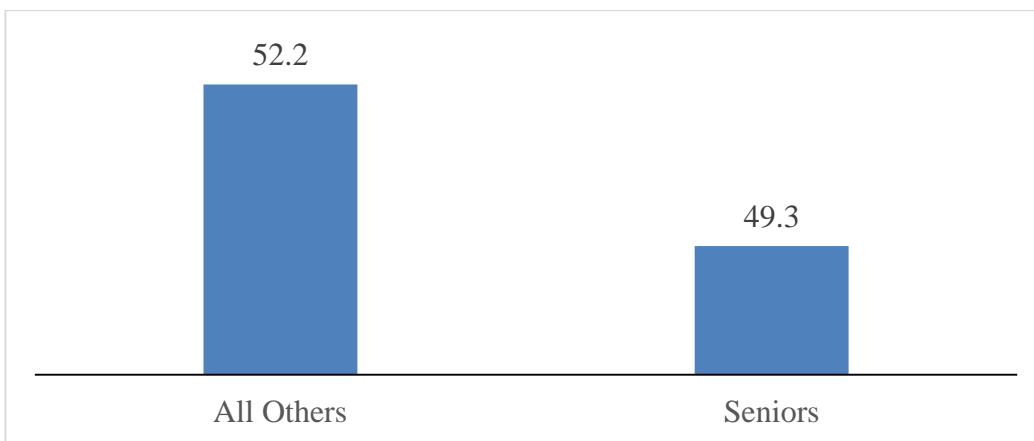
An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Appendix E– Comparing the Means

E.1 Year

Seniors reported lower levels of attraction-based commitment than all other years.

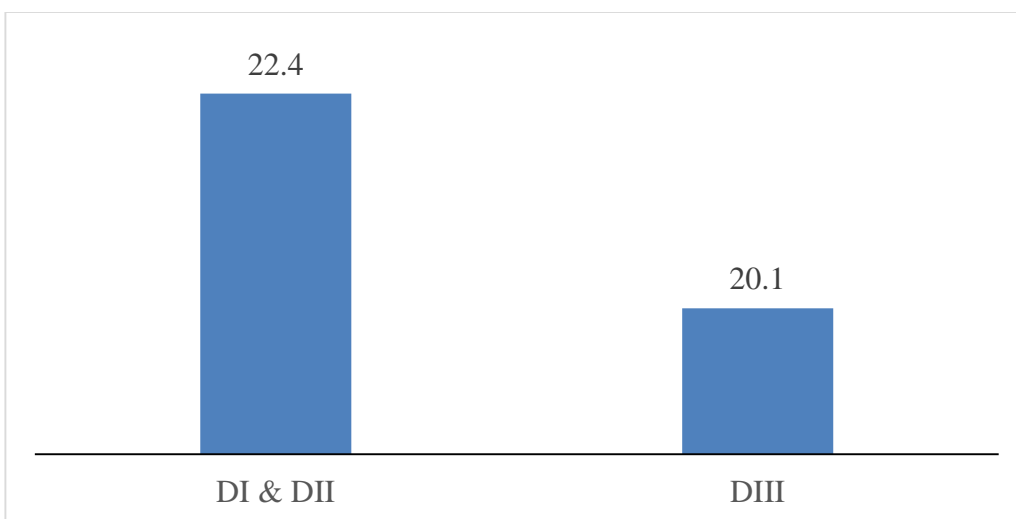
(Statistical Significance = .016)



E.2 Division

Division I and Division II athletes reported higher levels of entrapment-based commitment than all other years.

(Statistical Significance = .044)



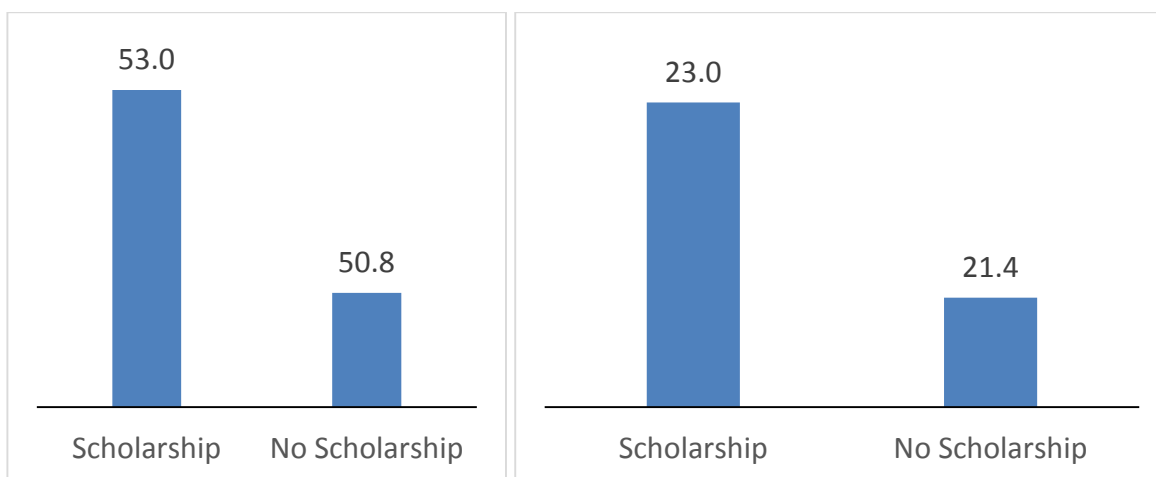
An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes

Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

E.3 Scholarship

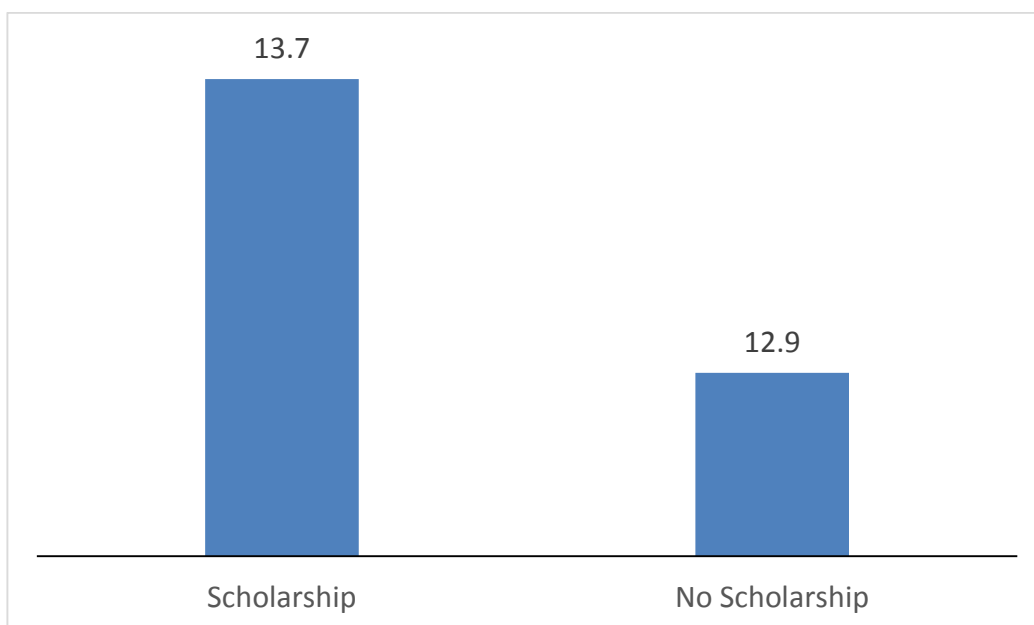
The presence of a scholarship resulted in higher attraction-based and entrapment based commitment.

(Statistical Significance = .033/.027)



The presence of a scholarship resulted in higher overall commitment levels.

(Statistical Significance = .001)

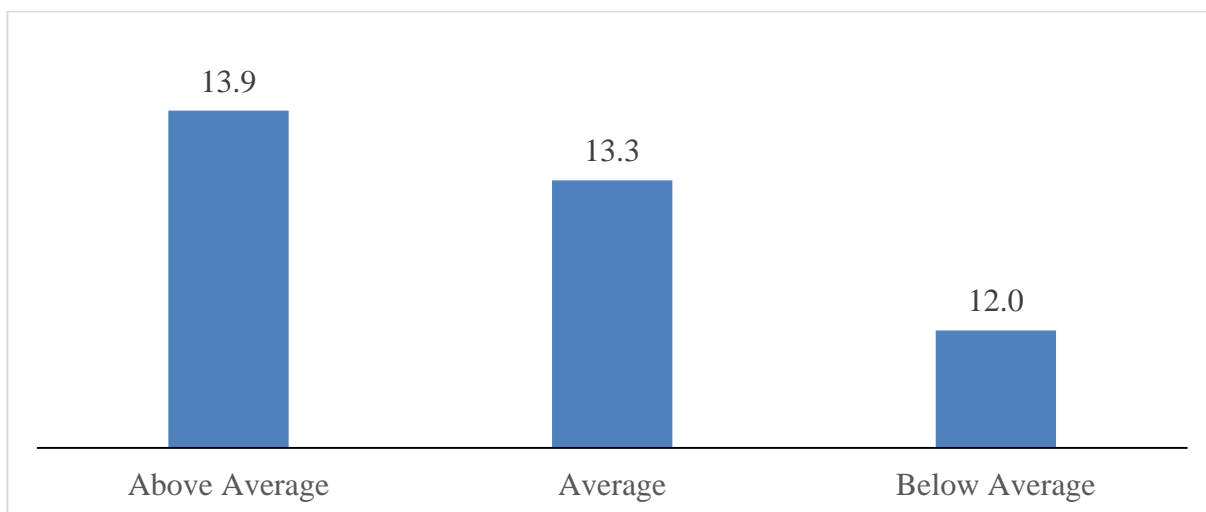


An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

E.4 Self-Perceived Ability

Track and field athletes with higher self-perceived ability reported higher levels of overall commitment.

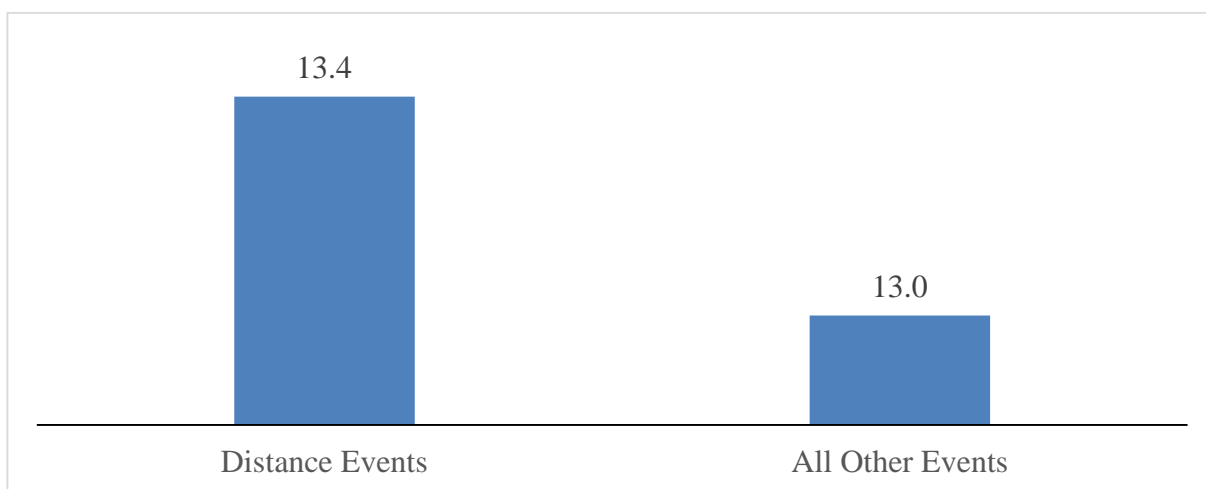
(Statistical Significance = .000)



E.5 Event

Distance and middle distance runners reported higher levels of overall commitment.

(Statistical Significance = .049)



An Examination of Sport Commitment in Collegiate Track & Field Athletes
Senior Capstone Project for Kara Walsh

Jumpers and throwers reported lower entrapment-based commitment.

(Statistical Significance = .035)

