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5-2020

## Impact, Prevalence of Cognitive Overload and Athlete Burnout: Division II Athletics

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### Recommended Citation

Teague, Luke, "Impact, Prevalence of Cognitive Overload and Athlete Burnout: Division II Athletics" (2020). *Leadership Education Capstones*. 25.

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# Comprehensive Exam Presentation

Prevalence, Impact of Cognitive Overload and Athlete Burnout: Division II Athletics

Luke Teague

Master's Program Leadership Education

May 6, 2020



# Introduction

- Burnout is a syndrome involving the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment among individuals who work (Maslach, 2008).
- As a syndrome, burnout consists of a constellation of symptoms which occur together functionally and are relevant to a variety of contexts including competitive sport (Raedeke & Smith, 2009).
- Cognitive overload, can be closely related to athlete burnout from a psychological, emotional, and physical standpoint (Cresswell & Eklund, 2007).



# Purpose of the Study/Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore how collegiate coaches and student athletes contribute to cognitive overload and athlete burnout.

# Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

**RQ1: How have Division II athletes experienced student athlete burnout?**

**RQ2: How have Division II athletes experienced student cognitive overload?**

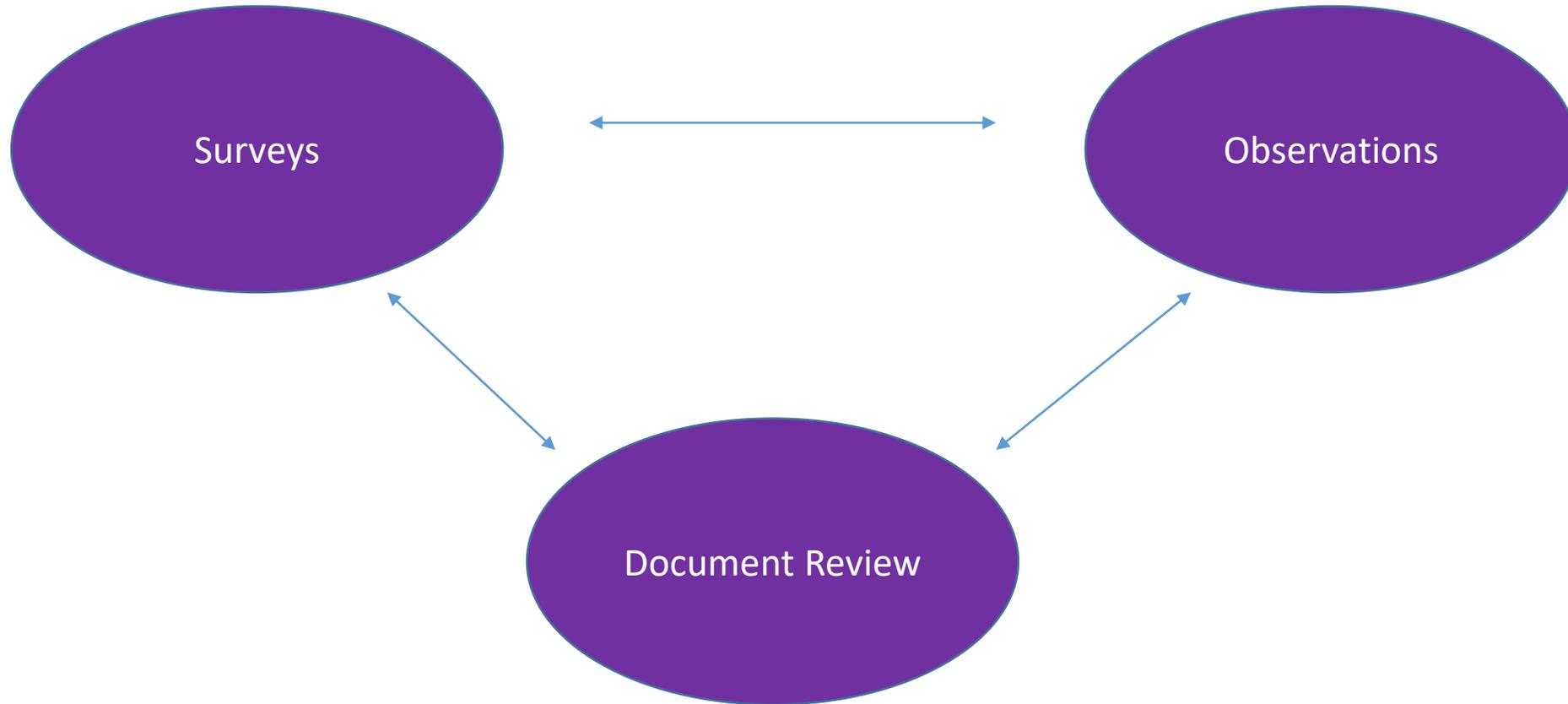
**RQ3: What mental and physical tools have Division II athletic coaches utilized to connect better with student athletes exhibiting athletic burnout and/or cognitive overload?**



# Research Methodology & Rationale

- This study will dive into various avenues by which coaches utilize to prevent cognitive overload and athlete burnout using a phenomenological qualitative research design.
- The researcher has extensive experience with the relationship between players and/or coaches with sports. Therefore, the heuristic inquiry will be used throughout this research study.

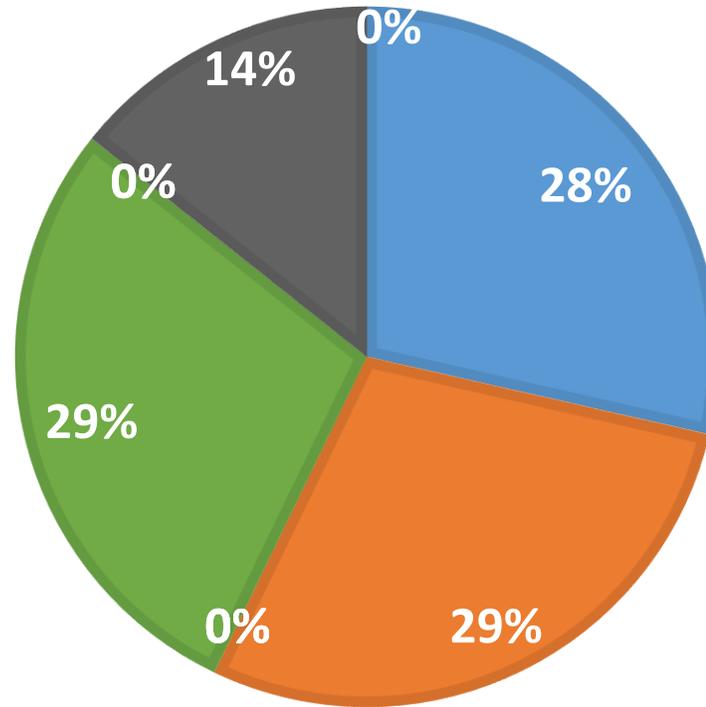
# Triangulation



# Participant Profiles

## ATHLETE DEMOGRAPHICS

- Football Senior
- Football Junior
- Womens Bball Senior
- Womens Bball Junior
- Baseball Senior
- Baseball Junior



# Research Question 1 Findings

**RQ1: How have Division II athletes experienced student athlete burnout?**

**Theme: Excessive Demands of Athletes**

**Data Collection Method:**

Surveys

**Data Analysis Method:**

Qualitative

Maslach (1982) defined burnout as a syndrome involving the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment among individuals who work.

As a syndrome, burnout consists of a constellation of symptoms which occur together functionally (Shirom, 2005) and are relevant to a variety of contexts including competitive sport (Raedeke & Smith, 2001).

# Research Question 2 Findings

**RQ2: How have Division II athletes experienced student cognitive overload**

**Theme: Surplus Demands of Athletes**

**Data Collection Method:**

Surveys

**Data Analysis Method:**

Qualitative

According to Sullivan, Blacker, and Murphy (2019), “Recent research in the United States and Canada suggested that mental health (anxiety and depression) differs between student-athletes and student non-athletes”

According to Reimer, Park, and Hinsz (2006) in “International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology,” the ability to select stimuli and understand others’ actions is crucial in many aspects of our lives.

These abilities underlay the perceptual – cognitive skills that encompass a series of cognitive functions, such as attention, visual discrimination, anticipation, problem solving and decision making (Mann et al., 2007; Marteniuk, 1976).

# Research Question 3 Findings

**RQ3: What mental and physical tools have Division II athletic coaches utilized to connect better with student athletes exhibiting athletic burnout and/or cognitive overload?**

**Theme: Coaching Style**

**Data Collection Method:**

Surveys

**Data Analysis Method:**

Qualitative

The types of behaviors and/or leadership styles exhibited by coaches can either facilitate or undermine the psychological growth and development of their athletes (Horn et al., 2011).

Three coaching styles based on leadership studies have found Democratic, Holistic and Autocratic as fundamental coaching styles (Lewin, 1935).

# Conclusions Linked to Research

<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>Research</b>
<p>Coaches and athletes alike need to do a better job of communicating various requirements (specific to sport and educational)</p>	<p>Smith (1986) conceptualized burnout to occur as a potential (but not the sole) outcome for an athlete who is unable to effectively cope with the chronic psychosocial stress involved in sport training and competition.</p>
<p>Coaches at Winona State University demonstrate coaching styles and practices that athletes enjoy and respond positively to.</p>	<p>Coaching styles and practices have been a point of emphasis in sport to ensure athletes are improving on a daily basis (Deci &amp; Ryan, 1985).</p>
<p>Coaches who understand their athletes on a deeper level rather than what position they play have a greater opportunity to retain players and ensure they are mentally healthy.</p>	<p>A large body of evidence has also accrued suggesting that personality factors are associated with athlete burnout (Gustafsson, DeFreese, Madigan, 2017).</p>

# Recommendations

It is recommended that research be conducted:

Continued development of valid and reliable diagnostic measures of burnout is needed (Gustafsson, DeFreese, Madigan, 2017).

Future research should work to accommodate to all factors of a student athlete's life over various time periods. Personality, personal life, preferred coaching style, mental training, physically training should most notably all be taken into consideration.

Athletes and coaches need to break down barriers and expose their vulnerability to confirm trust is mutual and if issues do arise, they can be handled efficiently and effectively.

# Leadership Implications

## Core Course

## Leadership Implications

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Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking became a real life “workshop” as students were given a stakeholder and examined their stakeholders’ view during this pandemic. I thoroughly enjoyed this adjustment.

Change Leadership

Change Leadership allowed for students to interact in small groups and discuss various avenues to take when dealing with change in leadership. This turned out to be very beneficial to learn from another peer’s perspective.

Communications

Communications developed into a class where all felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas which ultimately led to a very beneficial class communicating through issues and obstacles.

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