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Understanding Risk Factors for Plagiarism Among MBA Students at a Northeastern US
Research University

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Developing a Career Transition Model for Professional Baseball Players

Abstract:

The probabilities of becoming a professional athlete in any sport are slight. For professional baseball players, the problematic scenario is slightly different as upwards of 1,500 baseball players will be released from their employer or team, making them victims of the “revolving door” (Pifer et al., 2020; Raabe et al., 2018).

This study examined the resources that: (1) prepare professional baseball players for transitioning into their next career or life; (2) identify the factors that play a role in the career transition of professional baseball players, and (3) reference current working models in professional sports or other industries that could rely on the application to transitioning from professional baseball.

The study leveraged the Delphi technique, a forecasting method that relies on a panel of experts. In this study, the Delphi method included a three-round series of questions completed by a panel of 27 experts to establish a framework to serve as a model for baseball players transitioning out of their playing careers. This framework provided a basis for a career transition program implemented from the onset of a professional baseball player’s career to their career exit.

Aim

The purpose of this study was to understand the career transitions of professional athletes to identify existing career transition models and factors that facilitate the career transition towards the development of a career transition model for professional baseball players. Prior to this study, there was no research-based model or program of this type exists for professional baseball players.

Problem or Issue

Currently, various models exist in the realm of career transition, but none specific to the needs of professional baseball players. The existing models provide a framework for phases of the athlete career transition. The intent was to develop a model for professional baseball players that efficiently address the vacancy of fulfilling these needs (Moviel, 2015).

It is known that one’s career could be an abbreviated experience due to the minor league system and lack of financial security. In Minor League Baseball (MiLB), nearly 90% of players will be released from an organization at some point in their career (Raabe et al., 2020). This is the predicament faced by players who do not reach the highest level of their profession after years of training and dedication. The sensation is characterized as death since a player’s life has been devoted to getting a job and keeping work (Brown, 2019). If the minor league system does not permit an advantageous environment for players to succeed, the problematic scenario of players entering retirement from baseball must be explored.

Research Findings

This study used the Delphi method over six weeks and collected data from three rounds of opinions from expert panelists. The expert panelists who participated in the Delphi method's iterative process offered a unique perspective given their ability to meet the required criteria of Mental Health/Sport Psychologists, Player Services, or Retired Players within the last five years. Thirty-one experts participated in Round 1. Twenty-nine expert panelists completed the survey in Round 2. Twenty-seven panelists were able to finish and conclude the survey in Round 3. The Delphi study intended to establish a working model that applies to a demographic of professional baseball players encountering this complex transition process. The intended model features a ranking of essential factors yielding quantitative results along with qualitative results. The findings and results of the intended model address the void of a career transition model for professional baseball players. The qualitative and quantitative data from the three rounds of the Delphi study developed the career transition model for professional baseball players.

Conclusion/Discussion

This study established a model to assist professional baseball players with transitioning their sport and into their next stage in life. The Mezy Athlete Career Transition (MACT) Model was developed utilizing the Delphi method and a panel of experts across mental health and sports psychology, player services, and retired baseball players within the last five years. This reality emerged in a four-part approach to the career transition process for professional baseball players. This study utilized the S-Four headings (i.e., Situation, Self, Strategies, and Support) from The Transition Guide (Schlossberg & Kay, 2003) in Round 1 on the original Delphi instrument to collect open-ended feedback. These four sections, which came from the emergent themes, are structured into an organized list of emergent factors and strategies from the expert panelists. The model is grounded in the results of the expert panelists that meet one of the three-prong criteria to provide content in a structured approach to address the transition process.

The four sections that come from the emergent themes and make up the MACT Model include:

1. Home: Personal
2. First Base: Professional
3. Second Base: Game Plan
4. Third Base: Team

Research Implications

1. *Focus on only one area of the criteria: or specific key Factor*
2. *Investigate the urgency of the critical factors within the transition process*
3. *Create a curriculum utilizing the structural approach of the model*
4. *Pilot study a group of professional baseball players*
5. *Application of the model to other sports*
6. *Application of the model to international baseball players and athletes*

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Author Biography

Dr. Caleb S. Mezzy earned his EdD from Drexel University in 2021. Dr. Mezzy's thesis centered on an analysis of the intersection of athletes and their career transition into retirement. This area is a passion, and inspired Dr. Mezzy to create a consultancy, Grit & Glue, which assists athletes to successfully transition from "life after sports". Dr. Mezzy is an accomplished sports business professional and Professor at Neumann University in Aston, PA. This allows him to combine his passion for the business with his work, life, and teaching experience. His track record of building effective sports business relationships has resulted in the growth of sports organizations, nonprofit and for profit, and successful careers of students under his guidance and mentorship at Neumann. Dr. Mezzy is married with one son, and another child expected in August. Dr. Mezzy enjoys collecting baseball cards, exercising on his Peloton, and spending time with his family and dog.