TRI–SQUARED QUALITATIVE AND MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STUDENT ATHLETE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY [SALA]: A CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAM FOR YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the major dimensions and overall effectiveness of the Student Athlete Leadership Academy (or "SALA"). SALA is a character development and college preparatory program designed for middle grade student athletes. The focus of this paper is to provide information about year 1 of SALA. At the same time the paper will contextualize SALA within the spectrum of discussions regarding Teacher Education and its ability to address the needs of young African American men. The data analysis for this study highlights participant responses regarding the overall effectiveness of SALA through the careful examination of : qualitative focus group responses on issues related to SALA curricular implementation and lessons learned; and a Tri–Squared analysis of participant perceptions of overall SALA program effectiveness. The goal of this research investigation is to provide a community–oriented and based program that can be developed into a replicative model. This model can then be offered to other communities seeking to provide meaningful experiences designed to directly address the unique issues and specific needs of young African American men and young men of color.

Keywords: Investigative Instrument, Perceptions, Qualitative Analysis, SALA, Student Athlete Leadership Academy, and Tri–Squared Test.

INTRODUCTION

SALA

When asking a group of African American middle grades young men, "What do you want to be when you grow up?", "professional athlete" is a popular response. If asked the follow up question, "Which college would you like to attend?", the names of schools with top BCS and NCAA Division I football and basketball teams head the list. Yet, do these young men know about pursuing achieving dreams and aspirations? Even more important, what type of preparation and assistance do these young men receive? Often, such responses are criticized and the voices of young men who see athletics as a future pathway are warned against such pursuits. In dismissing their dreams and aspirations, authors suggest that these are failed opportunities to engage and enrich the lives of young men.

In response, the authors developed the Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) as a character development and college preparatory program for middle grades student athletes, to engage young African American males by drawing on collegiate athletics and professional sports to support a host of social, academic, and physical developmental needs. In addition to creating a safe space for young men to develop necessary skills, SALA also seeks to provide insights on how teachers might capitalize on such aspirations to promote positive outcomes in the classroom with African American males.

The Student Athlete Leadership Academy is a college readiness and character development initiative created to equip student athletes with vital life skills that promote positive academic performance and foster pro–social behavior(s) needed for NC (North Carolina) High School

Graduation, NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Eligibility, and Civic Engagement. This program reflects the NCAA champs / Life Skills Program model and emphasizes student development in the following areas: (1) Academic; (2) Athletics; (3) Personal/Character; (4) Career; and (5) Service. The program also integrates into its objectives the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba/ Kwanzaa which are: (1) Unity; (2) Self–Determination; (3) Collective Work; (4) Responsibility; (5) Cooperative Economics; (6) Purpose; and (7) Creativity (also integrated into the entire program is the additional component of "Faith"). Each of the aforementioned principles provides a basis for cultural guidance in citizenship and individual character development. SALA, as in Figure One illustrates, is comprised of three specific initiatives which are collectively designed to build on the strengths and address the risk factors that are currently associated with young men of color.

Figure One Summary

The three SALA Initiatives listed in Figure 1 are the heart and soul of the Student Athlete Leadership Academy. They are designed to "culturally respond" to the needs of the African American young men who are participants in the SALA program. Ultimately, the holistic nature of the initiatives lends to a mentoring/coaching process through the facilitation of program goals and objectives.

Rationale: Contextualizing SALA through the Lens of Traditional Teacher Education

The National Council of Teacher Educators Federation recently declared that, "the system of practice" in teacher preparation is inadequate for meeting current demands of teaching a diverse clientele of learners in public schools.

The Three SALA Initiatives	
SALA Initiative One:	"To increase engagement opportunities with young men of color and male educators of color and current and former student athletes. Engaging middle grades young men with a purposeful exploration of the anatomy of the student athlete, cultural/community engagement, academic enrichment, and athletic conditioning all ground SALA activities."
SALA Initiative Two:	"To expose participants to the academic, social, and physical/athletic requirements needed to pursue collegiate athletics."
SALA Initiative Three:	"To inform Teacher Education through insights gained through engagement activities with young men of color."

Figure 1. The Three Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) Initiatives

The report called for drastic improvements in the quality of teaching and teacher preparation. More than just content knowledge and instructional strategies, the call was for a more caring and competent teachers. Specifically, the report suggested that teacher education programs need to address difficulties in transforming teacher candidate attitudes regarding race, class and ethnicity and critical awareness of structural inequality in America. In other words, teacher educators must take a more intentional approach preparing teachers to address and overcome such barriers.

Teacher educators have the responsibility exposing a large group of teacher candidates to a plethora of issues stemming from various forms of institutionalized marginalization. Much of the literature in teacher education has drawn attention to the fact that the majority of public school teachers are primarily white females who do not share the cultural lived experiences of their Black and Brown students. The absence of male teachers of color, culturally irrelevant curricular and ineffective pedagogical approaches have severe implications on all students but perhaps more severally on young African American males.

The concern for the developmental outcomes of young African American males in education is well documented. A recent report from The Council of the Great City Schools declared that, the state of African American males is a "national catastrophe" (Lewis, Simon, Uzzell, Horwitz & Casserly, 2010). According to their report, "Black males continue to perform lower than their peers throughout the country on almost every indicator". As early as fourth grade, African American males reading and math scores lag behind their peers, a trend that widens through eighth grade. African American males perform lower on standardized test, are less engaged in school, and less prepared for post–secondary education and careers. Arguably, educational deficits lead to over representation in incarceration rates, unemployment, and health disparities. Therefore, their role as teacher educators is bigger than preparing teachers to improve test scores, "it's about saving our lives" (Ladson–Billings, 2003).

As African American male faculty in the School of

Education at a HBCU (Historically Black College and University) the authors agree that much work is needed in preparing the candidates "for diverse cultural contexts". The researchers also recognize the need for pre–service teachers to gain experiences interacting with young men of color to develop the necessary cultural competencies needed for such work. The authors crafted the Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) as an action research intervention, to engage participants in identifying, analyzing, and developing effective solutions to address various complexities associated with African American males (Patton, 2002). In an attempt to move from deficit approaches and methods that inherently devalue the cultural identity and strengths of the learners while perpetuating various forms of institutionalized injustice, the authors seek to affirm the aspirations and desires of middle grades young men who express interests in sports and use what researchers learn to inform teacher education. This is yet another way authors suggest a novel process that begins rethinking traditional methods, approaches, and understandings of the developmental needs of African American males.

Purpose: Identifying the African American Male Student Athlete

SALA was developed to expose participants to academic, social, and physical/athletic requirements needed to pursue collegiate athletics. An estimated 79% of African American males in grades 4–12 participate in organized sports, many with hopes of making it to the professional ranks. Authors recognize that the likelihood of becoming a professional athlete is atypical, but still, as Hackett (2013) noted, "for Black males, athletics has been a vehicle and conduit for economic and social mobility." For the most popular team sports, such as, football and basketball, the college landscape must first be navigated before having the opportunity to turn professional. Most of these young men are depending on earning an athletic scholarship to finance college. Yet the number of athletic scholarships available is limited thus making this pursuit even more difficult. Even for those who are fortunate enough to secure an athletic scholarship, maintaining college eligibility proves to be challenging (Hyatt, 2003).

The mishaps of athletes are common in popular media and all too often reflect the turbulence found in the lived experiences of many African American males. Ever abundant are stories of "playground legends" and athletes whose athletic futures and or abilities were compromised due to various social/emotional, behavioral, and academic deficits. Academic ineligibility, personal misconduct and off–field incidents involving money, drugs, and violence are all too familiar themes associated with the narrative of the troubled athlete, usually a young African American male from a "dysfunctional background" and riddled with self–destructive behavior.

Research on Black (identified here as "African American") Male student athletes at the collegiate level noted the over representation of Black male student athletes in revenue sports such as football and basketball, and its influence on student culture. The research has highlighted the needs for preparation, mentorship, modeling, and coping skills needed for successful matriculation and graduation (Harper, 2006). Harper, Williams, and Blackman (2013) research provides guidance in this area. According to their study, "Between 2007 and 2010, Black men were 2.8% of full–time degree–seeking undergraduate students, but 57.1% of football teams and 64.3% of basketball teams. Across four cohorts, 50.2% of Black male student–athletes graduated within six years, compared to 66.9% of student athletes overall, 72.8% of undergraduate students overall, and 55.5% of Black undergraduate men overall.96.1% of these NCAA Division I colleges and universities graduated Black male student athletes at rates lower than student–athletes overall.97.4% of institutions graduated Black male student–athletes at rates lower than undergraduate students overall. No campus were rates exactly comparable for these two comparison groups."

However, Data on Black Male Student Athletes at HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), reveal a different story. Noted for the role they play in developing Black youth and future leaders, HBCUs as institutions of social justice in higher learning offer African American Male student athletes a more "nurturing and supportive" culture (Hodge, Collins, and Bennett, 2013). There is also data suggesting graduation rates of Black Male Student Athletes

are higher at these institutions. Student athletes have suggested that culturally relevant policies, language, and rituals enhanced Black student athletes' experiences in college (Charlton, 2011). As former student athletes at HBCUs, the authors recognize the impact of sports on African American male development. Thusly, the authors were able to craft SALA drawing from their own experiences as African American Male student athletes who attended and completed HBCUs. In this way the authors validated their shared experience while exercising theory into practice to inform research.

Theoretical Framework: The Critical Race Theory and the SALA Solution

In many scholarly endeavors theoretical frameworks must be established, so "that those concerned with schools avoid sets of piecemeal arguments that provide little change for students of color" (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Critical Race Theory (or "CRT"), as an oppositional discourse, draws upon interdisciplinary academic research and scholarship to participate in the agenda of working towards the elimination of racism and all other forms of oppression in society (Crenshaw, 1991; Russell, 1992; Vargas, 2003). CRT's conceptual framework is grounded in the "distinctive contextual experiences" (Morfin, Perez, Parker, Lynn & Arrona, 2006, p. 260) of people of color, thereby allowing scholars to interrogate "social, educational, and political issues by prioritizing the voices of participants and respecting the multiple roles held by scholars of color when conducting research" (Chapman, 2007, p. 157). Recognizing the experiential knowledge of people of color as a legitimate, appropriate, and critical source of knowledge, this approach challenges hegemonic frameworks and instructional practices that inherently devalue cultural identity and perpetuate various forms of institutionalized injustice (Carter, 2007). By requiring questioning the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) and a rejection of notions of "color–blindness" (Gotanda, 1996), CRT can be used to aid teacher educators in moving teacher candidates from deficit notions that view students of color, and others from marginalized backgrounds, as inherently lacking (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Lynn & Parker, 2006).

CRT begins with the premise that racism is an ordinary fixture permeated in United States. society (Bell, 1980a). Bell's (1980b; 1991; 1992) thesis of "interest convergence" suggested that systemic and legal efforts to benefit Blacks are only granted in the interests of Whites. Intersectionality in CRT is a way of recognizing the manner in which gender, class, and other social constructs intersect with race, and how racism intersects with other forms of oppression and subjection (Crenshaw, 1991; Russell, 1992). Although there are no uniform tenets of CRT, most CRT considers the following: (1) Racism is ordinary; (2) The commitment to social justice; (3) Race and racism are products of social thought and relations; (4) Acknowledgement of differential racialization; (5) The intersectional ideology and anti–essentialism and the ways that race intersects with other forms of oppression and subjection; (6) The centrality of experiential knowledge and utility and effectiveness of storytelling; and (7) The challenge to dominant ideology(Delgado & Stefancic,2000; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson–Billings, 1998). Recognizing CRT's ability as a framework to both understanding and critiquing racism in the educational process (Ladson–Billings, 1998; Ladson–Billings & Tate, 1995), it demonstrates a good fit with the construction of SALA.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) identified five approaches to conducting critical race research. First, a critical race approach foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process. Second, it challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color. Next, the research offers a transformative solution to combating racial, gender, and class subordination. Fourth, the research focuses on the "racialized", gendered, and classed experiences of students of color. Finally, this methodology offers an interdisciplinary approach that is undergirded by disciplines such as ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities, and law to better understand the experiences of students of color (Solorzano & Yosso 2002). In translating these approaches into SALA, the

authors found the following: (a) Race and racism are central tenets that influence the selection of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in SALA; and (b) In order to challenge the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color, this research is grounded in the lived experiences of African American male athletes. Also, as an insider teacher–researcher (i.e., participant–observer), one of the author is able to use data sources from interviews, focus group discussions, journals, field notes, and classroom observations to better construct a counter story that challenges the dominate narrative concerning the education of African American students. The authors offer a transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination through the construction of an emancipatory theory of student athlete development.

Lastly, SALA draws on interdisciplinary knowledge found within the discourses of curriculum studies, urban education, and the African American experience to lead participants. This approach towards investigation allows a more frank discussion of complexities associated with the citizenship education of African American students. Notably, the researchers recognize SALA as an intervention strategy to counter a host of issues related to identity development, summer learning loss, sedentary lifestyles and delinquency. In proposing this set of interventions, authors hope to motivate participants to move away from simply viewing themselves as "student" athletes, but more so as "scholar" athletes, that is, young people who will be equally as adept in the classroom and life as they are in their chosen sport.

The Problem

The SALA Concentration on Four Core Problem Areas such as [1] Identity Formation; [2] Summer Learning Loss; [3] Sedentary Living; and [4] Delinquency.

1. Identity Formation

Much has been written about the role of identity formation, including self–concept and self–esteem, and its impact on young Black males' behavioral and academic performance. Negative media images and the absence of positive male figures complicate young black males' identity formation. Further, as Edwards (1984) noted, Black student–athletes "must contend of course with the connotations and social reverberations of the traditional "dumb jock" caricature. But Black student–athletes are also burdened with the insidiously racist implications of the myth of "innate Black athletic superiority", and the more blatantly racist stereotype of the "dumb negro" condemned by racial heritage to intellectual inferiority" (p. 8).

The authors wish to create a space that first affirms the essence of our participants and their uniqueness (Bush L and Bush E. C, 2013) and provides them with opportunities to examine the lived experiences of other athletes and males of color. Sharing our experiences and stories is a way to reflect on how our decisions influenced our own experiences. The goal is to get participants to better deconstruct the experience of others to aid in construction of positive identities. In this way, identity construction reflects a process informed by the shared experiences of people who look like them, pursued their own dreams, and aid them in determining what is necessary and what pit falls they may avoid.

2. Summer Learning Loss

Traditional summer school breaks have proven to be difficult times for youth not involved in structured activities (both socially and academically). Research from the National Summer Learning Association suggests that, all young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer, most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months. Accordingly, children from low–income backgrounds and who are at high risk of obesity are a greater risk of losing more than two months in reading achievement and gaining weight more rapidly when they are out of school during summer break. Parents consistently cite summer as the most difficult time to ensure that their children have productive things to do.

Unfortunately, African American boys have been at present, routinely amongst the lowest academic performers. The authors suggest that, both disengagement and disinterest are key contributing issues to the summer academic loss epidemic. In direct opposition to offering remedial grade level activities, SALA constructs and offers

academic activities based on requirements needed for college entry and provides ongoing guidance to problem–solve and to identify and expose academic problem areas. Reading and writing activities were constructed to affirm identity development and textual lineages, not simply to reflect lexicon scores (Tatum, 2008). Mathematical concepts are reinforced through games, gamification, and various examples of sport as reference such as: athletic performances; athlete's salaries/sport revenues and; subtle and non–subtle cultural nuances.

3. Sedentary Living

Obesity and poor health (along with diet) are the new epidemic both ravaging and plaguing the lives of our youth which includes of young men of color. Physical activity is much needed and in SALA, it is introduced and engaged through service learning and physical fitness. SALA is full of activities that require movement. The authors also recognize that hours spent sedentarily consuming media verses without robust physical activity can adversely affects an individual's mental health. Thus, SALA encourages actionable healing as a developmental tool.

4. Delinquency

Poor self–esteem, low academic performance, and poor physical health can be a perfect combination of factors that can attribute to juvenile delinquency. In addition to those attributes mentioned, there are also major contributors to low productive living. For African American men who may have limited access to ideal resources, better employment, and optimal educational opportunities, the dreams of pursuing college and professional sports are often thwarted as early as third and fourth grade. As a direct result of the previously mentioned, young men can become disengaged and as such this can manifest negatively as rampant violence and generally destructive behavior. By engaging in holistic meaningful and engaging activities designed to promote positive behavior better attitudes and positive outcomes can and do occur.

The Solution

The solution defined the followings: (1) The Major tenets of SALA; (2) SALA Outcomes; and (3) Focus on the Student Athlete

The major tenets of SALA are as follows: (1) The SALA program operates from the belief that the idea of a "dumb athlete" does not exist; and (2) The SALA program uses Dr. Howard Gardner's "Theory of Multiple Intelligences" which acknowledges that individuals possess and are capable of engaging eight different Multiple Intelligences in all stages of learning. Thus, within the SALA program Student Athletes are required to navigate multiple landscapes in order to function academically and participate athletically. SALA recognizes that athletes must learn, know, and be able to execute and implement game plans and complex strategies, identify symbols, possess quick reaction, and engage in successful teamwork to successfully carry out a given task. In this aspect, SALA Student Athletes (in terms of their given athletic endeavors) for the most part are over achievers. For the SALA participant to be successful (both on and off of the playing field) the SALA Student Athlete must possess the following: (a). Have a competitive nature and will to win; (b). Recognize their own talents and strengths and those of others; (c). Spend a great deal of time enhancing their skills and performance; (d). Be willing to test and push their body beyond normal conditions and limits; (e). Continuously operate at high levels of performance as they develop; and (f). Possess the desire to win expressed as having both the drive and need to be their very best at all times.

One SALA outcome recognizes that student athletes are leaders. As such, SALA notes that the influence of Student Athletes as school leaders and their overriding effect on school culture that cannot be ignored. Student Athlete leadership is often a reflection of the larger, more general culture that influences mainstream life. A good example of this is professional sports. Professional Sports for the most part has its marketing directed towards youth culture. The 1990s had a proliferation of youth–oriented marketing campaigns such as "I want to be like Mike" and "I am not a role model". Which were two examples of highly influential marketing that has primarily affected mainstream culture. Examples of Student Athlete Leadership in terms of addressing social issues can be primarily seen in institutions of learning. Some examples of Student Athlete leadership in the arena of social protest are: the University of Michigan's Fab Five Basketball Team's "Blue Tee Shirt Protest"

against rules prohibiting student athletes from receiving pay, the Grambling State University Football Player's "Refusal to Play" under what they referred to as "Inhumane Conditions", and the current "All Players Unite Movement". All of the aforementioned are ideal examples of ways in which student athletes have taken action as social leaders and advocates of social change. Two additional SALA Student Athlete outcomes are based upon the use of engaging experiences for purposes such as : (1). Providing a unique form of socialization; and (2). Aiding in the process of identity formulation.

About SALA Program

SALA Staff

The SALA staff consist of African American Men who served in the role of Director (1), Educator (4), and Undergraduate Volunteer (2). Each staff member's own personal experiences with athletics and a desire to uplift young men serve as key motivating factors for working with SALA. The staff used the title "Coach" as opposed to "Mr." The usage of "Coach" was derived from SALA activities and engagement. Participants preferred the term "Coach" due to the athletics aspect of the program.

SALA Participants

A total of 13 young men participated in the SALA program. Participants were all African American young men currently enrolled in grades 6–8. They represented four of Durham's public and charter schools and one young man was from Arlington, Virginia. SALA was fee based camp open to all middle grades young men in the aforementioned grades. Advertisement for the camp was listed online at a local HBCU website located in the heart of the African American Community. The camp lasted five weeks, from June 17 through July 19, during the summer of 2013. The camp was housed in the School of Education at the HBCU and activities were conducted in purposefully identified locations within a 5 mile radius of the HBCU designated Community Village.

SALA Daily Schedule: A Typical Day at SALA (Highlighting Regular Daily Activities)

a. Pre–Game

A typical day at SALA began with Breakfast and fellowship (30–45mins). During this time staff and participants engaged in activities such as dominoes and card games. Rules were established to promote quick thinking, encourage cooperation and full participation, not to penalize. Music and various sports clips found on the internet served as the backdrop of discussion. This period of the day was important, as it "set the tone" for the day's activities. During the "Pre-Game" sessions relationship building was important, as authors viewed it as necessary for young men to have meaningful discussions with each other and with older men. Collaborative Games provided a positive element and were designed to encourage mathematical thinking. The selected music created a canvas that allowed for stories to be shared based on lived experiences.

b. Warrior Walk

The Warrior Walk is a 3 mile walk around the HBCU campus. Participants were charged to learn information about HBCU's campus, SALA mantras, and engage in conversations pertaining to their lived experience. Particular focus was placed on participants learning about historical landmarks and campus services to highlight the true meaning of education. This period was also designed to address any and all issues relating to healthy living and anything related to overall mental and physical health.

c. Personal Development

During Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays SALA Warrior Walks included activities that focused on Personal Development. Participants were able to use the outdoor facilities and areas located at the HBCU and in the outlying community. Staff and participants would compete in games and drills that promoted teamwork, personal strength, and courage. Activities ranged from physical challenges such as: monkey bars challenges, circles of trust, basketball drills, Frisbee, handball, the Dunk Contest, etc. Sportsmanship, teamwork, skill–building, exploration, and discovery were various themes during the Personal Development period.

d. Community Service Project

All SALA participants were required to participate in a Community Service Project. On every Tuesday and

Thursday, SALA participants laid the foundation for a local Public School/HBCU Community Garden Project at a local Elementary School. This activity promoted community development and sustainability along with the personal benefits of agricultural skill and knowledge.

e. Academic Enrichment

College Preparation/Academic activities were held every day after lunch. Participants would collaborate on SAT mathematics problems, write essays that affirmed their individual self–development, and conduct research on current and historical events in collegiate athletics (centered around certain topics such as: student athletic conduct and college admission requirements).

f. Character Development

Participants were required to regularly create goals and self–strengthening affirmations to support their individual development. During this time, socially conscious, and sport oriented films would be reviewed and discussed. Each day SALA participants were given enough time to reflect on the day's activities and various experiences.

g. Evening Conditioning

From 4:30–6:00p.m. each day participants would venture to the HBCU track and participate in organized athletic practice. These practices consisted of the following: field space drills, physical conditioning exercises, designated running drills, and a series of activities that required the use of using agility cones, tractor tires, and resistant bands. In addition to the aforementioned exercises martial arts practices were integrated into physical practices to provide a well–rounded and high intensity workout.

Research Methodology: The Research Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this research help to explain the use of summer camps as an intervention method for the holistic development of Young African American Men. Data was collected via a Qualitative Synchronous Method of Interactive Inquiry: Participant Insight into the inner workings of the SALA Summer Camp Solution (via traditional qualitative methods interviews, focus group discussions, distributed questionnaires, etc). Overall Evaluation of the SALA solution took place through the following qualitative evaluation methods: Scheduled SALA Discussions and distribution of the research investigation instrument. Data were collected over the course of the study via the following: (1). Hinton–Osler Survey Assessment; and (2). Interviews, Focus Group Discussions.

Mixed Methods Experimental Research Procedural Description

Tri–Squared is grounded in the combination of the application of the research, two mathematical pioneers and the authors' research in the basic two dimensional foundational approaches that ground further explorations into a three dimensional Instructional Design. The aforementioned research includes the original dissertation of optical pioneer Ernst Abbe who derived the distribution that would later become known as the "chi square distribution" and the original research of mathematician Auguste Bravais who pioneered the initial mathematical formula for correlation in his research on observational errors. The Tri–Squared research procedure uses an innovative series of mathematical formulae that do the following as a comprehensive whole: (1) Convert qualitative data into quantitative data; (2) Analyze inputted trichotomous qualitative outcomes; (3) Transform inputted trichotomous qualitative outcomes into outputted quantitative outcomes; and (4) Create a standalone distribution" for the analysis possible outcomes and to establish an effective—research effect size and sample size with an associated alpha level to test the validity of an established research hypothesis.

The process of designing instruments for the purposes of assessment and evaluation is referred to as "Psychometrics". Psychometrics is broadly defined as the science of psychological assessment (Rust & Golombok, 1989). The Tri–Squared Test pioneered by the author, factors into the research design a unique event–based "Inventive Investigative Instrument". This is the core of the Trichotomous–Squared Test. The entire procedure is grounded in the qualitative outcomes that are inputted as Trichotomous Categorical Variables based on the Inventive Investigative Instrument (Osler, 2013c). Osler (2012a) defined the Tri–Squared mathematical formula in the i-

manager's Journal on Mathematics article entitled, "Trichotomy–Squared – A novel mixed methods test and research procedure designed to analyze, transform, and compare qualitative and quantitative data for education scientists who are administrators, practitioners, teachers, and technologists" as follows:

$$Tri^2 = T_{Sum}[(Tri_x - Tri_y)^2 : Tri_y].$$

The Experimental Research Analysis Methodology: The Tri–Squared Distribution

The Tri–Squared distribution is a static mathematical extraction out of the Chi Square distribution. This test is not the only test based on the Chi Square distribution (as it is a mathematical distribution that is frequently used directly or indirectly in many tests of significance). Similar to the Chi Square distribution, the Tri–Squared distribution has the following characteristics: (1) It has only a single parameter (the distribution Degrees of Freedom written as "d.f."); (2) The entire distribution is positively skewed; and (3) The Degrees of Freedom are mathematically written,"[C–1][R–1]" which is equal to the distribution mean.

The Tri–Squared distribution has the following characteristics: (1) The distribution Degrees of Freedom never changes; (2) As a static test the "Tri–Squared Degrees of Freedom" is always [C– 1][R–1] =[3 – 1][3 –1] = [2][2] = 4 = the distribution mean; (3) The distribution mode is always [d.f.– 2] = [4 – 2] = 2; (4) The distribution median is always approximates [d.f. – 0.7] = [4 – 0.7] = 3.3; (5) Due to the static or unchanging nature of the distribution, the distribution skew is always positive with the d.f. always equaling 4; and (6.) The distribution formulae uses brackets "[ ]" in its formulaic notations to emphasize "a concentration on" (similar to the field of Chemistry) for purposes of clarity.

The Tri–Squared distribution is the foundation for the Tri–Squared Test which comprehensively incorporates the following Tri–Squared formulae: The Calculated Column Standard Deviation, The Calculated Row Standard Deviation, and the Sample Effect Size. The Tri–Squared Test is designed to create a comprehensive holistic research methodology from calculations conducted on the Standard 3 × 3 Tri–Squared Table which produces the following:

(1) A positive result; (2) No information on the variable relationship direction; and (3) Associated Effect Size, Sample Size, and Alpha Levels (Osler & Waden, 2012b). It is important to note that the research instrument used in the Tri–Squared is an invariant (unchanging) fixed static Test.

The SALA Research Investigation Hypotheses

The SALA Research Hypotheses were as follows:

H_0:There is no significant difference in the Tri–Squared Test outcomes in terms of participant perspectives regarding the overall effectiveness of the SALA program in terms of interpersonal development, academic development, and social development.

H_1:There is a significant difference in the Tri–Squared Test outcomes in terms of participant perspectives regarding the overall effectiveness of the SALA program in terms of interpersonal development, academic development, and social development.

The Mathematical SALA Two–Tailed Research Hypotheses

The research Mathematical Hypotheses are as follows:

$$\mathbf{H_0}: Tri^2 = 0$$

$$\mathbf{H_1}: Tri^2 \neq 0$$

Quantitative Experimental Mixed Methods Data Analysis: Tri–Squared Research Results

The Hinton–Osler Holistic Assessment © Qualitative Outcomes of the Tri–Squared Test

Data Analyzed Using the Trichotomous–Squared Three by Three Table designed to analyze the research questions from an Inventive Investigative Instrument with the following Trichotomous Categorical Variables: a_1 = [Did the Academic Camp holistically aid the participant in terms of interpersonal development?]; a_2= [Did the Academic Camp holistically aid the participant in terms of academic development?]; and a_3= [Did the Academic Camp holistically aid the participant in terms of social development?]. The 3 × 3 Table (Table 1) has the following Trichotomous Outcome Variables: b_1 = Yes; b_2 = No; and b_3 = No Opinion. The Inputted Qualitative Outcomes are reported in the following sections.

The Tri–Square Test Formula for the Transformation of Trichotomous Qualitative Outcomes into Trichotomous Quantitative Outcomes to determine the validity of the

$n_{Tri} = 13$

$\alpha = 0.995$

TRICHOTOMOUS OUTCOME VARIABLES	TRICHOTOMOUS CATEGORICAL VARIABLES a_1	a_2	a_3
b_1	31	31	26
b_2	0	1	3
b_3	3	2	5

$$Tri^2 d.f. = [C-1][R-1] = [3-1][3-1] = 4 = Tri^2_{[\alpha]}$$

Table 1. The Hinton–Osler Holistic Assessment © Qualitative Outcomes of the Tri–Squared Test

Research Hypothesis:

$$Tri^2 = T_{Sum}[(Tri_x - Tri_y)^2 : Tri_y].$$

Tri^2 Critical Value Table = 0.207 (with d.f. = 4 at $\alpha = 0.995$). For d.f. = 4, the Critical Value for $p > 0.995$ is 0.207. The calculated Tri–Square value is 5.468, thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected by virtue of the hypothesis test which yields the following: Tri–Squared Critical Value of $0.207 < 5.468$ the Calculated Tri–Squared Value.

Qualitative Holistic Data Analysis: SALA Responses

The SALA Participant Qualitative Feedback from Focus Groups, Interviews, and Related Questions yielded the following in five areas: (1) Personal Development; (2) Career Development; (3) Academic Development; (4) Athletic Development; and (5) Community Service Engagement on items R1–R9 of the qualitative data gathering instrument:

1. Personal Development Responses:

R1: Strengths – everything but my attitude.

R2: I need to do my best and stop making shortcuts in everything I do.

R3: I love my family very much and I want to have a great life.

R4: My personal development is exercising and eating right.

R5: My stance and shaped figure getting smaller before I die young.

R6: My appearance, behavior, and social skills.

R7: A personal development is how to work hard and my mind set has changed how I think about things.

R8: Some personal things I need to work on is my Math and Reading. Also getting in shape.

R9: My personal development is eating healthy and exercising.

2. Career Development Responses:

R1: What I'm doing in the future.

R2: In career, I do not know what I want to do in life sometimes I think about becoming a football player, or a basketball player, or sports broadcaster, or a truck driver.

R3: For my career development it is going to be good and I want to become a helpful doctor.

R4: My career development is conditioning and stretching.

R5: My dedication and empowerment for exercise is better and I am getting better understanding of football.

R6: Finding what career I want to do. What it takes to get there.

R7: I developed a way to pick my paths while I'm in my athletic.

R8: My career dream is that I want to be an Aerospace Engineer, NFL Player, and have different companies to work with.

R9: My career development is going to every opportunity for basketball or any conditioning I do to it.

3. Academic Development Responses:

R1: I need help in Math

R2: In academic, I need to bring my grade up in math class and start studying more.

R3: For my academic development, I might be a Lawyer or a Engineer.

R4: My academic development is getting good grades and being good in school.

R5: My changing percent into decimals and changing decimals into percent.

R6: Paying more attention in class. Correcting my

behavior. Being able to do boring things.

R7: I developed my Math skills and I feel more confident about my SAT scores.

R8: I need to develop my skills for reading because I need to read more fluently. Also my Math skills so I can calculate more faster.

R9: My academic development is studying after school and doing all of my homework.

4. Athletic Development Responses

R1: I need help in keeping my energy

R2: In athletics, I am trying to lose weight because, I want to play a wide receiver.

R3: For my athletic development, it is going to be awesome and I'm going to become a NFL football player.

R4: My athletic development is attending practice every opportunity I get.

R5: My tackle and catch for football and high knees.

R6: Getting stronger, building my endurance, and getting faster. Stretching and getting my hip stronger.

R7: I have physically got stronger and more skilled since my injury.

R8: My athletic development is that I want to get in shape. Also gain muscle.

R9: My athletic development is exercising.

5. Community Service Engagement Responses:

R1: I need help in doing the service.

R2: I do community service every 3 to 4 months.

R3: I'm going to make my community service engagement really good and the best with a big house.

R4: My community service engagement development is helping the earth and cleaning up.

R5: Building homes for homeless and help plant gardens and learn how to farm.

R6: Getting more community service hours.

R7: I have helped my community.

R8: I want to help my community by starting the garden at W.G. Person Elementary.

R9: My community service is gardening.

Summary

In the introduction section, the Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) was introduced, described, and thusly, provided a brief analysis of the elements and concepts that formulate and construct SALA year one. In crafting SALA, our primary goal as teacher educators was to practice a pedagogy that was responsive to the psycho–social dynamics of young African American men. As researchers authors sought to demonstrate and provide support in the body of knowledge that is the polar opposite of the often reported "catastrophic" and somewhat dismal outlooks reflecting the African American community in regards to its young men. Despite much of the negative mainstream discourses surrounding African American males, there are many alternative models of exemplary programming that often result in positive life–changing outcomes. These programs do exist, and SALA is one of them. The results of the mixed methods experimental design yielded the following results: The Tri–Squared Test of the SALA program during year one provided the following results: Tri^2 Critical Value Table = 0.207 (with d.f. = 4 at α = 0.995). For d.f. = 4, the Critical Value for $p > 0.995$ is 0.207. The calculated Tri–Square value was 5.468, thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected by virtue of the hypothesis test which yields the following: Tri–Squared Critical Value of 0.207 is smaller than 5.468 the Calculated Tri–Squared Value. As a result, the SALA Research Hypotheses had the as following results:

H_0: [Rejected]: There is no significant difference in the Tri–Squared Test outcomes in terms of participant perspectives regarding the overall effectiveness of the SALA program in terms of interpersonal development, academic development, and social development.

H_1: [Accepted]: There is a significant difference in the Tri–Squared Test outcomes in terms of participant perspectives regarding the overall effectiveness of the SALA program in terms of interpersonal development, academic development, and social development.

This in turn, resulted in the SALA Mathematical Hypotheses having the following results:

H0: [Rejected] $Tri^2 = 0$

H1: [Accepted] $Tri^2 \neq 0$

Implications

The experimental and qualitative research findings regarding the SALA program reflect much of what is necessary for good teaching practices that apply to all learners. However, the resulting outcomes as research implications are worth reemphasizing as they relate in this particular set of circumstances to Young African American Men that participated in the SALA Program. Thus, these implications are meant to highlight the specific lessons learned from SALA as they hold even greater implications for the general improvement of all instruction.

The following list consists of "Eleven Lessons Learned" from year one of the SALA Summer Program:

1. Young African American Men perform better when they receive Guided Instruction;
2. African American Young Men understand that they both need and want guidance;
3. This particular group of SALA participants were somewhat emotionally fragile and required both patience and foresight when they were engaged by the staff;
4. Efforts and initiatives design to "motivate"participants may be difficult as individual motivation is "innately intrinsic", yet, there was a recognized need for the creation of an environment that provided experiences that the participants identified as important;
5. SALA participants need space to process experiences;
6. Non–verbal communication and defense mechanisms were identified as: a.) the scowl; and b.) the stare down;
7. Young African American Men need a lot of positive feedback, positive reinforcement, and recognition whenever and wherever deemed appropriate and possible;
8. Modeling desired behavior and active engagement is often a far more effective instructional method than simple lecturing;
9. Time is needed to build trust between staff and participants;
10. Relationship building at any level cannot be forced; and
11. The job of the Teacher Educator is to impart knowledge and provide direction, never to judge and/or condemn.

Resulting Outcomes

All SALA participant–related feedback and data outcomes suggest that, all who participated greatly benefited from SALA and would be interested in attending the program again. Recognizing a host of complexities associated with being a student athlete, SALA staff were able to: (1) Strengthen skills in areas such as literacy, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, financial management, problem–solving, and public speaking; (2) Provide insights and strategies to support and balance academics and athletics; (3) Focus on high expectations and increased achievement; (4) Provide experiential learning experiences that promoted good character, leadership, and service; (5) Identify and connect student athletes with positive role models and mentors; and (6) Promote healthy living and athletic conditioning.

Relevant Questions for Future Research

As a result of the outcomes of this research investigation, the authors believe that the following research questions will be relevant areas to explore in future research studies regarding SALA program and its overall effectiveness:

(1) What are the characteristics of high quality SALA summer program staff?

(2) What are relevant decisions regarding SALA curriculum, staff development, and quality assessment?

(3) What resources (financial, human) are needed to access quality supports across diverse SALA sites?

Conclusion

Discussion on the Broader Future Implications of SALA

In year two of this project, more research is needed. The research investigators would like to expand the Summer Camp programming to include a year round after school program and services for female student athletes. The planned program structure will consist of three components: (1) An after–school program providing culturally engaging activities, academic enrichment, peer mentoring / tutorial sessions; (2) One Saturday session per

month that will focus on a specialty topic/project; and (3) A bi–monthly stakeholders session for parents, teachers, students and administrators to receive information and feedback regarding student athletes' progress, identify and discuss concerns regarding a host of issues that influence youth development, assess the program's effectiveness, discuss program components that can be improved, and plan ongoing activities. Through the SALA program, the authors are confident that they will continue to enhance the "schooling experience" for young African American men by supporting the student athletes' lives, education, future aspirations and socio–cultural development.

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Appendix

Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA)Schedule

Schedule Summary: The purpose of the Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) is to equip young men with vital life skills that will promote positive academic performance and foster pro–social behaviors. SALA is designed to engage participants in purposeful exploration of the anatomy of the student athlete, college readiness, and athletic conditioning. Special features of SAL A include SAT/ACT preparation, a weekly field trip, and evening summer workout sessions. SALA supports the development of participants' lives, their education, and their future aspirations. Research/Evaluation Areas: (1) Identity development. (2) Academic Preparation; (3) Health/ Wellness; and (4) Civic Engagement/Responsibility.

PRISM Summary: Participatory Research In Science and Mathematics (PRISM) is a research oriented science and math camp created to ignite interest in science and math careers for middle grade students. PRISM will provide participants with unique opportunities to conduct research activities designed to explore the urban landscape and acquire strategies that lead to career pathways in science and math. Research/Evaluation Areas: 1.) Identity development. 2.) Academic Preparation; 3.) Health/ Wellness; and 4.) Civic Engagement/Responsibility.

Investigator Research Comments and Notes:

Summary of the Tri–Squared Test Research Instrument: The above Researcher–Designed Tri–Squared Inventive Investigative Instrument (Osler, 2012) was created by the authors as a part of the experimental mixed methods research design. It was delivered to the research participants (SALA Program participants) during their time in the SALA Program. The data was then gathered and aggregated for data analysis using the Tri–Squared Test mathematical calculation: $Tri^2 = TSum[(Tri_x - Tri_y)2: Tri_y]$, with d.f. $= Tri^2$d.f. $= [C-1][R-1] = [3-1][3-1] = 4 = Tri^2[x]$.

Cumulative Results of the Tri–Squared Test after all data has been properly assessed and aggregated as:

Tri^2 Critical Value Table $= 0.207$ (with d.f. $= 4$ at $\alpha = 0.995$). For d.f. $= 4$, the Critical Value for $p > 0.995$ is 0.207. The calculated Tri–Square value is 5.468, thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected by virtue of the hypothesis test which yields the following: Tri–Squared Critical Value of $0.207 < 5.468$ the Calculated Tri–Squared Value.

Dates:	June 17–July19 No camp July 3–5
Grades:	Rising 7th–9th Graders
Cost:	$200 Per Week/ session (Must be paid weekly).
Early Drop Off:	8:00–9:15 am– Extra $25 per week
Regular Drop Off:	9:15–9:30 am
Drop Off Location:	H.M. Michaux Jr. Building – 712 Cecil Street – NCCU Campus– Durham, NC 27707
Pick Up:	4:00–4:15 pm 4:00–6:00 pm Extended Day– $35 Fee Applies Early Morning & Late Afternoon
Pick Up Location:	4:00–4:15 pm– H.M. Michaux Jr. Building – 712 Cecil Street – NCCU Campus– Durham, NC 27707 4:00–6:00 pm Extended Day– TBA
Weekly Fee	8:00–6:00pm Extended Day Additional $50 Per Week

Student Athlete Leadership Academy (SALA) Schedule

Dates:	July 22– August 9
Grades:	6–8 Graders
Cost:	$125 Per Week/ session (Must be paid weekly).
Drop Off:	8:00–9:30 am– Extra $25 per week
Regular Drop Off:	9:15–9:30 am
Drop Off Location:	H.M. Michaux Jr. Building – 712 Cecil Street – NCCU Campus– Durham, NC 27707
Pick Up:	3:00 pm
Weekly Fee	8:00–4:00pm Extended Day Additional $50 Per Week

Participatory Research in Science and Mathematics (PRISM) Schedule

The Hinton–Osler Holistic Assessment to Determine Participant Perspectives of a Summer Program Designed to Empower 21st Century Student–Athletes ©

Was the service provided by the Summer Camp successful?

A. In your opinion has the Summer Camp been:

	Yes	No	No Opinion
1. Helpful and Caring?	☐	☐	☐
2. Relevant and Engaging?	☐	☐	☐
3. Empowering and Thought–provoking?	☐	☐	☐

Did the Summer Camp provide information regarding student–athlete eligibility?

B. In your opinion did the Summer Camp aid you with:

	Yes	No	No Opinion
4. Understanding academic requirements?	☐	☐	☐
5. Understanding athletic eligibility?	☐	☐	☐
6. Producing better grades?	☐	☐	☐

Did the Summer Camp provide you with a sense of Responsibility and Accountability?

C. In your opinion did the Summer Camp strengthen your:

	Yes	No	No Opinion
7. Thoughts regarding identity?	☐	☐	☐
8. Need to be responsible?	☐	☐	☐
9. Knowledge regarding consequences?	☐	☐	☐

Additional [Qualitative] Comments and Notes:

The Tri–Squared Research Instrument: The Hinton–Osler Holistic Assessment ©

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Harvey Hinton, is Professor in the NCCU School of Education. He has completed his Undergraduate studies at North Carolina A&T State, and he went on to pursue higher education at Purdue University. The foundations for many of Dr. Hinton's beliefs are in accordance with the Critical Race Theory, which asserts a variety of common themes; including the idea that race is still a topic of significant consideration in the United States.

Dr. James Osler is an accomplished Artist, Teacher, and Scholar. Osler is interested in how information is delivered and continues to explore many different methods, models, modes of traditional and distance instruction. He has completed M.A. in Educational Technology at NCCU and he has also completed his Doctoral work in Technology Education at North Carolina State University (NCSU). His research primarily focuses on Education as a Science. He also has a profound interest in fundamental Christian Education and the Mathematical Foundations of Qualitative and Quantitative Instructional Design. He has received the Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Service and the University Award for Teaching Excellence.