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Do professional football players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal?  

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|          | Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem.  
Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken. |
|          | **Introduction and literature review (25%)** |
|          | To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable). |
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To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol.

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To include: description and justification of data treatment/data analysis procedures; appropriate presentation of analysed data within text and in tables or figures; description of critical findings.

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To include: collation of information and ideas and evaluation of those ideas relative to the extant literature/concept/theory and research question/problem; adoption of a personal position on the study by linking and combining different elements of the data reported; discussion of the real-life impact of your research findings for coaches and/or practitioners (i.e. practical implications); discussion of the limitations and a critical reflection of the approach/process adopted; and indication of potential improvements and future developments building on the study; and a conclusion which summarises the relationship between the research question and the major findings.

Presentation (10%)

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Do professional football players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal?
(Dissertation submitted under the Management & Development area)

Kayne Mclaggon

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DO PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL PLAYERS HAVE SUFFICIENT EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STRUCTURES TO FACILITATE RETIREMENT AND WITHDRAWAL?
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

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Abstract

It is critical that facilitators of professional Football provide support mechanisms to aid the withdrawal and retirement from the Sport. With the odds firmly stacked against an apprentice turning professional, this study argues that Football clubs should do more to in order to help make these young apprentices’ journey worthwhile if they do not make the grade. The study used a qualitative research design in order to understand and analyze the opinions of 2 current professional football players on the current education structures. These views were critiqued and compared against a facilitator’s view of the education system they deliver. The data collection phase revealed three key issues to be analyzed, as a result of a thematic analysis approach. The themes were, Extra education depends on the individual; Planning for retirement; and Guidance on finance and mental health issues. Analysis of the results identified that higher education would enhance the person/player, although it would not suit all professional footballers. The data also highlighted that the current culture in Football is not conducive to the promotion of higher education opportunities for players and changes would be necessary in order to implement the educational support structures needed to aid player’s transition out of the sport. A framework was synthesized from the findings presented in order to further explain the results and offer the basis of future research on the subject area.

Introduction

Professional Football is a Sport that has evolved into an industry worth Billions of pounds to its clubs and associations. The players at the higher echelons of professional Football earn millions of pounds in line with the riches that their clubs accumulate. However, due to the high rewards, the road to becoming a professional footballer at the highest level is extremely competitive. At the less glamorous end of the football pyramid lies a vast pool of apprentices who fail to make the grade as well as professionals who fall out of the game due to the competition for contracts. Over 50% of players who are lucky enough to receive contracts at the age of 18 are no longer playing football by the age of 21 (The Premier League, 2013). Also, with the average career length of a footballer being around 8 years and the typical age of retirement at 35, it is clear in most cases players will have a secondary career at some stage in their life. The retirement or withdrawal from sport is something that every professional athlete will have to experience at some point during their career (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). For the purpose of this study retirement from sport is understood as the evident transition from Sport due to age and the deterioration of ability to play at the professional level (Grove, Lavallee & Gordon, 1997). The withdrawal from football is defined as leaving the Sport after not being offered a new contract at a club or to pursue another career and it is usually a process that takes place nearer the beginning of a professionals career (Swain, 1991). Considerable research has investigated the effects of
retirement and transition on sports people (Stambulova, 2007; Swain, 1991; Denison, 1994), however there is a lack of knowledge on what can be done to facilitate and support sports people in preparation for these occurrences. These issues are particularly prevalent in professional Football and the educational structure in particular has been targeted in this study in order to gain an insight into the measures that can be taken to support professional Football player’s retirement and withdrawal. The research will focus on a qualitative study in order to understand the opinions of current professional Football players and the voice of the organization responsible for education in professional Football. Current literature involving qualitative studies in this research area has used the perceptions of professional sports players (Aquilina, 2013; McGillivray, Fearn & McIntosh, 2005; Harrison & Lawrence, 2004), however, the literature does not have a counteracting view to compare or counteract with the perceptions. Subsequently, the originality of this report can differentiate from other sources and add valuable knowledge to this sector for future or further practice.

**Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if the current support structures in professional Football were adequately facilitating the transition out of the sport for those who have finished their careers or those who do not achieve their goal of making a career as a professional Football player. The main aim was to collect and analyze the thoughts of professional Football players in order to draw conclusions from which to inform future practice for those in charge of supporting player’s transition into secondary careers. The main objectives of the study are:

- To undertake a thorough review of the current literature surrounding the subject area, leading toward the research problem. The review of the literature should highlight the problem and enable the hypothesis to become clear.

- To identify an appropriate research design to investigate the education structures in professional Football and what the professional footballer’s opinions are of the system.

- To conduct primary research in order to inform the analysis phase. The process should aim to critically evaluate the data against the current literature whilst also offering personal opinion to come to succinct conclusions.

- To provide best practice advice for those involved in the delivery and implementation of the education system in professional Football.

The final objective can only be achieved if the processes beforehand are accomplished, therefore it is imperative that the initial research, informs the research design in order for the analysis phase to provide knowledge for the eventual proposals.
Literature Review

Elite Sports Development

Sport development is a wide subject within the discipline of Sport. Whilst Sport development is almost impossible to define (Girginov, 2008), it is possible to break it down into two key distinctions. Sport development can focus on aiming to enhance participation of a Sport, for social, economic and health reasons (Nicholson, Hoye and Houlihan, 2010). Additionally, the other characteristic of Sport development focuses on elite Sport and maximising performance of elite athletes (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Both objectives of Sport development must focus on grassroots and performance in order to be successful (Hylton, 2013). This dual focus on grassroots and performance is important for participation in terms of creating role models and a legacy (Houlihan & White, 2002). It is also critical in performance in terms of the correct talent identification at grassroots levels and the eventual development of potential elite athletes (Lloyd and Oliver, 2012). Moreover, Hylton & Bramham (2008) understand that Sport development provides sporting opportunities through policies, process and practice. Sport development in Britain, up until the 1980’s, was mainly concentrated on supporting elite athletes and offering provision for the increasing interest in sport that was coming from the middle class (Collins, 2010). After, this period Sport development began to focus on social inclusion and using Sport as a vehicle to limit crime, poverty and community issues (Collins, 2010). This shift in policy direction came as a result of a series of urban riots in the early 1980’s and an increase in crime rates in large cities such as London, Birmingham and Liverpool (Houlihan & White, 2002). This change in policy direction continued until 2008 when the New Labour government introduced ‘Sport for Sport’s Sake’, an initiative that coincided with the awarding of the London 2012 Olympic Games. This new policy focused on elite Sport performance and meant that the focus for participation and the promotion of physical activity was no longer a priority (Department for Culture/Media and Sport, 2008). The current political Sports development policy focusses on the legacy that the 2012 Olympics aimed to leave behind and works in conjunction with elite performance policies to improve participation and physical activity (DCMS, 2011). The current Sport Development climate is heavily reliant upon the legacy that the government hope the 2012 Olympic Games will leave (Weed et al, 2009). However, this legacy may not come to fruition for another 10 years at least (Grix and Carmichael, 2012). As the remit from the London Olympic Games was to ‘inspire a generation’. Subsequently, the next generation, in which the government were directly targeting may be the basis of future policy direction.

The focus of participation in Sports development is driven by the need to improve people and their communities through Sport (Collins, 2010). As a result of this aim, most National Governments have systems in place to emphasize the need to increase participation rates in Sport. National government interest derives from the benefits in which participation can offer with regards to social inclusion, improvements in health and reduction of crime rates (Nicholson,
Hoye & Houlihan, 2010). Additionally, increased participation in Sport, in particular at grassroots level can result in a larger talent pool of athletes and more chance of potential elite athletes being identified (Holt and Talbot, 2011). Creating more elite athletes and a better standard of elite athletes can add an heir of prestige to less recognized Sports as well as creating role models in order to further increase participation in Sport (Carmichael, Grix & Marques, 2013). The emphasis on creating elite athletes as a catalyst for driving participation in Sport conveys how both facets of Sport development inform each other and show the importance of performance and participation in elite sports development.

Elite Sport development, in terms of performance, is based upon the support athletes gain in order to achieve their potential (Martindale, Collins & Abraham, 2007 and Houlihan & Green, 2008). This support invariably relies upon the financing of processes in order to correctly develop and identify athletes (Green & Oakley, 2001). The Elite Sports development program in the United Kingdom is financed by UK Sport, who receives their finances from The National Lottery Fund. The funding the athlete’s gain include access to sports science programmes, training facilities and their relevant International competition calendars (UK Sport, 2013). A further area of support related to developing elite sports people is the obvious need to enhance physiological aspects of their characteristics (Balyi & Hamilton, 2004). The Long Term Athlete Development model (appendix A) in which Balyi and Hamilton’s work is based upon, provides a physiological model which can help facilitate the transition between being a child and a World class athlete (Ford et. Al, 2011). The coaching framework gives provision for the maturation of athletes and provides a structure for coaches to support and guide athletes through the fundamental; competitive and ultimately winning phases (Balyi & Hamilton, 2004).

**Athlete Support Structures**

When dealing with elite Sports development in terms of performance, it is important to understand how athletes are developed from the fundamentals to the elite and what measures are offered to support athletes in the developmental stages. Processes that support neural and cognitive development are essential in the development of elite athletes (Yarrow, Brown and Krakauer, 2009). Athlete support must involve the provision for improvement and development of the mind in order to benefit decision making and the attainment of memory support to enhance the quality of decision making. Furthermore, another key notion involved in the support and development of elite athletes is the need for high class coaching. Stafford (2005) understands that qualified and high class coaching must be afforded to elite athletes, not only in the elite stage but also, more crucially, in the acute fundamental stage of development. Stafford’s understanding highlights the identification and fundamental stages of development which are also key areas of support that correlate with the need for coaching support. This coaching support can be reinforced by models such as the Long Term Athlete Development model (McKeown & Ball, 2013) in order to provide the identification and development phases in which Stafford understands are imperative in the supporting of elite Sport athletes. The coaching framework gives provision for the maturation of athletes and provides a structure for coaches to support and
guide athletes through the fundamental, competitive and ultimately winning phases (Balyi & Hamilton, 2004). Whilst it is evident that support systems containing the best finances, coaching and psychological provisions will aid the development of elite athletes it is imperative to understand that without these, support structures cannot compensate for deficiencies in the early fundamental stages of development (Stafford, 2005). These are the areas and stages in which the LTAD are crucial with regards to the FUNdamental, Learning to Train and Training to Train stages. The LTAD model further enhances this point and illustrates that the early stages of development are the most critical in the development of elite athletes. Moreover, another aspect of support for the elite Sports athlete can be the social support in which is provided for them during their development. Social support for elite athletes consists of the interchange of resources that can improve or have a positive effect on the wellbeing of an athlete (Rees, Jowett & Lavalee, 2007). The exchange of resources when dealing with this support can be offered by family members, friends and also coaches of the athlete. The athlete also has an obligation to participate in the process in order for this exchange to take place and have the required effect. For social support to have the necessary effect the athlete must participate in the requisite relationships and maintain family/friends in order to provide the correct networks (Rees, Jowett & Lavalee, 2007). Social support structures can be particularly advantageous to elite athletes in times of crisis, specifically, when dealing with failures long term injury or mental illness (Kristiansen & Roberts, 2010).

**Moral Obligation to Support Athletes**

With reference to support it is evident that structures are in place to help athletes develop physically and mentally throughout their sporting careers. However, as facilitators of Sport there may be an obligation to help develop the person through Sport, rather than just focusing on maximizing and exploiting the asset. This notion correlates to the relationship between developing elite athletes and developing people in the Sports development environment. Foucault’s (1982) theories are based upon the notion that Sport can be utilized as a vehicle to drive and promote values and ethics. Furthermore, Foucault (1982) suggests that as a facilitator of Sport you have a moral obligation to look after the person and not only the athlete. If, as Foucault understands, that Sport is based upon values and ethics, there are clear inconsistencies in the way in which Sport ‘uses’ some of its athletes. Some elite athletes are devoting significant parts of their lives in order to dedicate themselves to their Sport, and in return at the end of their short careers they are not given any considerable help (Aquilina, 2013). With the huge commitment and sacrifice that the elite athlete makes in order to succeed at their given Sport, the hierarchies in Sport can be seen to have an obligation to honour the ethics and values they believe in and support their assets once their talents are no longer sufficient. Huang (2006) suggests that Sport organizations, due to the nature of Sport, are obliged morally to provide assistance to athletes not only during their careers, but just as significantly, when the athlete leaves the Sport. This idea tells us that there should be systems in place for when athletes vacate
their given Sport, whether it is prematurely through injury or through retirement or withdrawal. However, Guilanotti (2004) understands Sport to be the greatest education and teaches athletes valuable life skills that are transferable to other services and aspects of employment. Guilanotti’s notion states that Sport is giving athletes an education better than any, and as a result, as a facilitator of Sport their ‘moral obligation’ is completed by the transferable learnings that Sport can offer. The statement of Sport being the greatest educator is an exaggerated opinion without any real knowledge behind it. Furthermore, whilst sport can be seen as a source of education it simply cannot replace or replicate the education young adults may receive at school or in higher education (Graham, Holt/Hale & Parker, 2007). Whilst this idea of Sport being the best educator can help an athlete in terms of transferring their skills to enhance their careers after retirement or withdrawal, the theory does not cater for other aspects of support to elite athletes. Furthermore, being an elite athlete does not give you a formal qualification and this limitation can prove to be crucial when attempting to gain employment in another sector.

Current Support

In light of Huang’s (2006) idea that Sport organizations must cater for elite athletes’ retirement from Sport, it is important to understand the current support that elite athletes have with reference to withdrawal and retirement. Myslenksi (1986) stated how athletes in America would be taken care of whilst the talent lasts. Whilst this is an outdated notion, scholars such as Fuller (2012) agree and understand athlete’s talents to be used in exchange for social hierarchy whilst their faculties last. However, the assistance or lack of assistance given for the eventuality of the athletes abilities diminishing is a key area for discussion. With the average career length of professional athletes being around 5 years (American Football - 3.5 years, Basketball - 4.8 years, Soccer - 8 years), elite athletes may have to plan for around 40 years of retirement (The IOC, 2014). Carodine, Almond & Gratto (2001) understand that it is essential for athlete support programmes to work in conjunction with education and psychology in order to support elite athletes during Sport and also to facilitate the transition from Sport to working life. Additionally, making the transition from elite athlete to working life without education can be challenging (Mets, 2002). In terms of preparation for this transition from elite Sport to eventual retirement and a second career, the current systems across sport can be analyzed in order to identify what support is offered to athletes. The National College Athletic Associate (NCAA) is the organization that provides the systems in which educational support is offered to amateur athletes in American Sports such as American Football and Basketball. The NCAA insists that all of their athletes must remain amateur, after leaving high school at the age of 18, for another three years. Whilst performing their chosen Sport in the collegiate ranks they must undertake an undergraduate degree as part of their education. The importance of educating athletes in American Sports is highlighted by the probabilities of becoming a professional athlete in America’s most popular Sports. Less than 2% of college basketball, baseball and soccer players actually turn professional (NCAA, 2015). Therefore, as highlighted previously, these American
Sports may have a moral obligation to support this vast population that fail to make the grade. In giving the athletes a high class education and the provision to undertake higher education whilst also developing their elite talent, the moral obligation can be seen to be fulfilled even if these athletes do not make it to be professionals. Moreover, not only does the NCAA provide the opportunity for these athletes to study, the graduation rate of student athletes from the NCAA is annually better than the average student (NCAA, 2015). Only 3 current NFL players did not attend college at any point in their lives, therefore it cannot be seen to limit the chances of becoming an elite athlete because you have an extended education. The numbers suggest a college education may help in order to become an elite American Football player. Being a successful student and elite athlete requires the same skills (Hamilton, 2004) and this may be one of the reasons that the NFL is predominantly filled with elite athletes who have been through higher education or the college education system.

**Current Education Support in the UK**

The educational support structures in the United Kingdom are vastly different to the NCAA model mainly due to the end of school age in being different. Elite athletes in Britain can leave full time education at the age of 16 and embark on their careers full time at the end of their 16th school year. In the case of British soccer, elite players may be identified to join an academy once they have finished school at the end of their 16th year. The academy they join will subject the athlete to an apprenticeship in which the athlete must take part in a 2 year education course, where they shall gain at least a BTEC qualification (LFE, 2004). Football players can turn professional on their 17th birthday provided they have been offered a contract, however, they must still complete the 2 year apprenticeship and education programme (The Premier League, 2014). At the end of the 2 year apprenticeship the club will decide whether to offer the athlete a professional contract or release them from the apprenticeship and the club then does not have any obligation to support the athlete in any way (The Premier League, 2014). The football apprenticeship programme is enforced by the LFE (League Football Education) and provides the ASE (Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence) framework (see appendix B) for its young elite athletes.

**Current Education in Soccer**

Education is offered to elite athletes from the ages of 16-18 in soccer, however, after this age the direct provision for education in soccer is not prevalent. In soccer the biggest drop out rate is between 18 and 21 years of age (McVeigh, 2013). Therefore, this rate of drop out is in direct correlation with the commencement of the apprenticeship programme. Furthermore, the latest studies from The Premier league and The Football league (2014) state that 60-65% of the 700 apprentices that are taken on each year are rejected at 18 and half of the athletes that actually turn
professional, drop out of the game by the age of 21. As highlighted previously, due to the using of elite athletes and the exchange of their talents for very little gain, Sports facilitators may have a moral obligation to support athletes when they withdraw from Sport due to the nature of it. In terms of provision for education, soccer does not provide clear opportunities to study in higher education during a soccer player’s career, however, soccer players can choose to undertake higher education and there is not a rule stating professional soccer players cannot do so. Aquilina (2013) argues that education alongside an athletic career can enhance both activities and it is also imperative with regard to preparing for a post-athletic career. Over 60% of the Great British team at the 2012 London Olympic Games were products of the higher education system (BUCS, 2012). This statistic can add qualitative evidence to Aquilina's notion that an educational career may not harm, but indeed, influence a sporting career. Only a few Sports people are reliant upon the current measures that are in place to aid with the psychological and financial impacts of their retirement from Sport (Stambulova, 2007). Additionally, most professional football players do not make realistic plans for their inevitable transition out of the game which can trigger these financial and mental health issues (McGillivray, Fearn & McIntosh, 2005). With players suffering from mental and financial problems after retirement, in some cases athletes who have engrossed tens of millions of pounds from soccer, there is an obvious need to help these types of people. The hierarchies of soccer must question whether or not they are doing enough to help facilitate professional football players transition from Sport, whether it is through early withdrawal or retirement.

Method

Research Approach

The epistemology that will shape this research is of an objectivist’s viewpoint. The epistemology can be seen as the philosophy that will shape the study (DeRose, 2002). Objectivism is the theory that all conclusions are reached through a particular method and in research the knowledge is reached through reason (Rand & Peikoff, 1979). The notion behind the objectivism derives from the need to draw generalizations from the results, in order to justify the findings (Hunt, 1993). The research question derived from the initial review of literature and the recognition of the problem as a consequence of understanding the current research around the subject area. Additionally, the hypothesis brought to the attention in the initial inductive phase of the research are to be verified and factual conclusions can be drawn in the results phase (Remenyi et al. 1998). Furthermore, with reference to an inductive and deductive method of research, the initial inductive phase, involving the generating of the hypothesis is imperative in order to develop grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Grounded theory is the research method that is to underpin the process by developing a concept that can offer an explanation on the fundamental area of research (Dillon, 2012). The deductive stage is to be facilitated by a qualitative method of
research in which the results will be discussed and conclusions will inevitably be drawn from the data collected.

Sample and Population

With regard to sample size and the specific sample technique used to inform the research process, there is not a definitive methodology for all studies and the sampling framework identified must adequately suit the research in terms of allowing for grounded theory (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). A purposive sampling technique is to be used to aid the data collection. Whilst the purposive sampling technique is more biased than a random sampling technique or snowball sampling technique (Teddlie and Yu, 2007), the purposive method can ensure for richer data due to its efficiency in identifying the correct participant and ensuring the participants are relevant to the study (Tongco, 2007). This can be imperative to enhance the reliability of the data collection process.

Three footballers of varying age were identified in order to provide an array of data and personal experiences of the education system in British football. It was important to identify football players of differing ages to understand if there were any changes in the education system and also to identify whether football players of different age groups may have a differing view on the subject. When using a sample size that is small compared with the population being researched, it is crucial that the data is beneficial and offers value for future research or a larger scale research project (Kahneman & Tversky, 1972). Additionally, the notion that larger samples enhance the reliability or validity of data is unfounded (Petersen, Minkkinen & Esbensen, 2005). The sample size and how representative the sample is can be important, however, the quality of the research will ultimately be determined by the richness of the data and not necessarily the quantity or amount of data (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). The ages of the participants were 20, 24, and 34. The purpose of the particular age groups were to include views of a young footballer at the start of their career and an experienced footballer coming to the end of their career. The purposive sampling technique ensured that the viewpoints of differing age groups and job description were captured in the data. This may not have been possible if other means of sampling were explored.

The population identified for the research question are persons who have been involved in the educational process in professional football. As the research is to focus on qualitative data it is essential that the population targeted as well as the correct sampling methods are incorporated (Coyne, 1997). The target populations for conducting this research are the people involved in the delivery of professional football as well as the beneficiaries of professional football education. Due to the magnitude of the population and its vagueness it may be difficult to gain representative data. Therefore, it is imperative that the sampling technique ensures reliability and validity of the research (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

Research Instruments
The choice of instrument is to be influenced by the type of research being conducted as well as the type of data the research aims to provide (Gibbs, 1997). As the research is focused on qualitative data it is critical that the choice of instrumentation facilitates the type of data the research requires. The research aims to collect the opinions and personal experiences of the participants using an open and semi-structured methodology. When using the qualitative interview, the researcher is the instrument (Britten, 1995; Seidman, 2013 and Rubin & Rubin, 2011), therefore in order to ensure that the data collection process is successful it is essential that the researcher enlightens the participants on their beliefs and potential bias’s to make certain that interviewees feel comfortable (Greenbank, 2003). The qualitative interview, when used with a series of semi-structured questions can allow for participants to answer open ended questions and have agency over their answers (King & Horrocks, 2010), this can allow for reliability and validity of the data, due to the ownership and comfort that the interviewee’s have over the process (Pope & Mays, 1995). Whilst interviews can capture individual data, they may not have the facility for interaction, which can lead to shared beliefs and clarification of points (Kitzinger, 1994). This interaction can only be identified in a group scenario. The focus group technique may not be as personal as the interview technique, (Gibbs, 1997) however, due to the sharing of ideas and the provision for disagreement/clarification, the focus group instrument can offer data that can be scrutinized in the analysis phase (Litosseliti, 2003). Conversely, the agency given to participants in a focus group setting can also be problematic for the researcher in terms of alleviating power and losing full control of the scenario (Morgan, 1988). However, the interview technique can allow for full control of the data collection process. The choice of just using the interview technique was taken due to the sample size and purposive technique. It was also identified in order ensure that single opinions are collected to be compared and coded later in the research process.

3 separate participants were individually identified due to their differing experience and knowledge of the education system in football. 1 young (24) current professional who had recently withdrawn from the professional game was selected. 1 experienced (34) ex professional who had withdrawn from the professional game in order to pursue a managerial role in football after 10+ years of being a professional. The project manager of an organization responsible for education in British Soccer was also identified, in order to promote a facilitator's view of the education system that they deliver.

Procedure

The interview technique was used in order to collect the individual thoughts and feelings of the participants. A series of open ended interview questions were created in order to guide the interview process. The three identified participants were individually interviewed on separate occasions. Each individual was asked the same questions, however, the interviews allowed for tangents in subject. Therefore, the questioning phase may have been delayed or advanced due to
this. The same interview questions were used in the project manager interview and the professional footballer interviews. Due to the researcher being the instrument in qualitative interviews (Seidman, 2013), the structure and content of the interviews had to be consistent and this was made possible by a list of interview questions which can be seen in appendix K. Bergman (2008) communicates that there must be structure in the qualitative interview even when trying to understand perceptions and feelings. Furthermore, all participants were asked introductory questions which communicated why they were relevant to the study as well as aiding in ensuring the participants were comfortable when answering the main questions.

**Recording and analysis of data**

The qualitative interviews will be recorded using a Dictaphone and transcribed in order to establish recurrent themes from the differing opinions of each participant. These themes will then be analyzed using the thematic analysis strategy which can be used in order to encode the qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998). The themes will be deduced from the transcriptions and prioritized in order of importance. The most relevant themes as decided by the researcher will then be used to inform the discussion and conclusion and only the most appropriate quotes will be used in the literature. However, the process in which the themes were chosen will be evident in the appendices. Strauss and Corbin (1990) understand that an open coding technique should be used if the researcher is to compare and categorize the data. This approach is necessary for this research as themes are to be drawn from the interviews in order to inform the later comparative stage. Once the themes are identified and analyzed, the interviews from the professional football players can be compared with each other in order to eventually comprise a comparative analysis. Further comparisons will then be drawn from the professional footballer interviews and the project manager interview. The constant comparative method can add verification to the analysis and provide credibility to the report phase or findings (Boeije, 2002). The education project manager interview will be used as a screenshot of best practice with inference to the current educational system and the professional football players opinions will be compared and analyzed against the best practice.

**Validity and reliability**

A key limitation of the research process with regard to the methodology is the selection of the participants. The purposive sampling technique can be biased in the selection phase (Guarte & Barrios, 2006) and the validity of the results from the interviews can be difficult to justify due to the selection process. However, the purity of the data can be seen as the one of the most important facets of research (Snyder et.al, 2010) and in order to ensure the rich data, the purposive sampling technique takes precedence in order to maintain the high quality of data. Additionally, when using interviews it can be difficult to justify the results being representative of the selected population, especially if the population is vast (Jackson, Drummond and Camara, 2007). In order to be rigorous in maintaining the validity when using instruments such as the individual interview it is vital that the structure of the interviews remain the same for all
participants. The interview personnel must be consistent when aiming to deduce qualitative data in order to maintain confirmability of the data (Shenton, 2004). In terms of reliability and honouring anonymity of participants, consent and participant information forms will be issued to the interviewees and can be seen in appendices I and J. The interview questions are designed by humans so there will inevitably be some degree of bias in the questioning phase, due to the viewpoint and epistemology of the researcher (Patton, 1990). In order to have adequate confirmability in research to enhance the validity and reliability of the research it is imperative that the researcher honours his or her own predispositions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The objectivist viewpoint from which the research is to be undertaken may shape the questioning and ultimately the results that derive from the interviews and focus groups.

**Ethics**

Ethical principles must be shaped by the type of research and way in which the researcher chooses to carry out the research (Simons and Usher, 2000). Due to the qualitative nature of the study and the use of human participants the ethical principles will inevitably be based upon the participants and instruments. The anonymity of all participants is vital to the ethical validity of the research process (Grinyer, 2001). Additionally, another way to enhance the confirmability of the research process is the rigour in documentation (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001). The use of consent forms and participant information forms for each interviewee can ensure that the participants understand the ethical principles that are guiding the process (Flory & Emanuel, 2004). In addition to this, correct use of documentation can also reduce the risk of negligence and liability for the researcher (Jansson, 2003). The completed ethics form for this study can be seen in appendix C.

**Results and Discussion**

The tables below include the most prevalent themes that were taken from the data. The data taken from the professional footballer interviews are shown in table 1 and each theme has a quote taken from the data to summarize that particular theme. The same process was used for table 2 to conclude the project manager interviews and the most relevant quotes were chosen to represent each theme. The tables were created as a result of the thematic analysis process used to code the data from the interviews. The progression from the original data into the eventual themes can be seen in appendices D and E.
Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Quote (Professional Footballers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Extra education depends on the individual.</em></td>
<td>Um, I don’t think doing more school work would stop you being a pro footballer but for some players, doing both they would find it very difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Planning for retirement.</em></td>
<td>Um, well to be honest football clubs just look after themselves really, um at the end of the day I think they should help the players to find a new club or find a new career, but, I don’t know if that seems to happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>Guidance on finance and mental health issues.</em></td>
<td>I think the realities need to be brought to them through the PFA, through the likes of the LFE, the reality of what could potentially happen and where they need to go to move forward in the future could be presented better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Quote (Project Manager)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Extra education depends on the individual.</em></td>
<td>C: The line between producing a professional footballer and developing the person can be quite vague at times and it needs to be managed carefully. I think it probably depends on the individual and their buy-in once they become old enough and are already managing a professional career in football.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Planning for retirement.</em></td>
<td>C: It would be wrong for a club to disband of players without providing support and guidance toward alternative opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>Guidance on finance and mental health issues.</em></td>
<td>C: Information, advice and guidance is the key for supporting bodies and networks within football. There needs to be a clear pathway to accessing professional advice services for players and the PFA ensure this happens.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The thematic analysis process and the constant comparison to the current literature have revealed
some key findings from the data. The most prevalent themes deduced from the data were the notions that **extra education relied upon the individual**; **professional football players should plan for their retirement** and the notion that **guidance should be given on financial and mental health issues**. Due to the small sample used and the implementation of a purposive sampling technique, the professional footballer responses were similar. However, the responses from the project manager came from a different perspective and were aimed at providing comparisons between what the athletes understand and what the facilitator perceives to be best practice. The respondent labelled ‘C’ is the project manager of the organization responsible for implementing the education process in professional football and is referred to as the ‘facilitator’ of education or the ‘project manager’ for the purpose of this study. Respondents A and B are both professional football players and are referred to collectively as the professionals or football players.

The first theme that was taken from the data was the idea that extra education relies upon the individual in professional football. This theme can be summarized by the quote given in table 1 above which clearly illustrates the idea that the individual circumstances of the player are of paramount importance in the decision process. This theme was prevalent throughout each participant’s data and was cited on numerous occasions. For example respondent A remarked that “...i think it depends on the individual, if you can organize and balance your work and your flexible, you don’t mind putting yourself out and doing the work then I think it can definitely enhance you” and respondent B remarked that “it is hard for some players to get there head around it but for some players it would definitely work”. All candidates were of the understanding that higher education as part of being a professional football player could be advantageous, however, it may not work for all football players and it was completely down to the individual. Both professional football players interviewed agreed that extra education can be 'effective' and 'detrimental' to the athlete. In addition to this, the facilitator view conveyed that the support structures are in place for extra education and it simply relies on the professionals 'desire to engage' for it to be effective. All participants did highlight that further education in professional football can be dictated to by how quickly footballers develop and are inevitably used in the senior team. The project manager understood that athletes should remain in education in the early stages of becoming a professional in order to develop as a person and to enhance performance. The professional footballer view also conveyed that education can provide guidance especially when they start earning money and gaining social recognition.
The second theme highlighted was the notion that professional football players should plan for their retirement. Both professional footballer interviews convey the need to plan for the transition out of professional football. For example respondent A argues that “I think they should help the players to find a new club or find a new career”. Additionally, the professional players perceive the guidance on transition and retirement from football clubs to be insufficient. It is interesting to note that the facilitator’s view was that there are annual events run by the Professional Footballers Association to help with career planning and transition and that these do go some way toward meeting the need to support players in this way. The project manager stated “Information, advice and guidance is provided by the LFE and the PFA proactively to support career transition into secondary careers and education courses as well as invitations to events such as Create Your Legacy, Making the Transition and My Future Today”. However, the interview with the project manager gave no evidence to suggest that football clubs in particular, currently offer any support or guidance after they have released players. Moreover, the project manager highlighted that support for player transition and retirement were not present in any of the footballer interviews. In confirmation of this, the professional football players did not have a clear idea of the systems in place when asked about retirement support structures that they were aware of. With reference to planning for retirement, both professional football candidates declared that as an athlete you have a lot of spare time and education or career planning could be a productive way of utilizing this spare time.

The third theme highlighted in the data is the guidance on financial and mental health issues in the current professional football systems. The facilitator view understood that guidance and advice on secondary careers and career transition is critical in preventing mental health and financial issues at a later stage in an athlete’s life. Furthermore, the project manager stated that the players unions and the organization responsible for education in football have systems and courses in place to facilitate the career transition process and ultimately to negate financial and mental health issues. Both professional football candidates shared the notion that guidance is the key to limiting mental health and financial issues. However, the participants did convey that the help should be brought to the players during their professional careers rather than the systems being in place during the career transition phase. The facilitator highlighted three courses/events that they claimed are offered to professional athletes to aid with their transition from football. These events were Create Your Legacy, Making The Transition and My Future Today which are
all in conjunction with the company whom the project manager is employed. Nevertheless, the athletes did not mention any of the initiatives that the project manager highlighted to be readily available to the professional football players and failed to show any recognition of the processes in place.

Whilst a range of literature understands that education alongside elite sport can aid both careers (Aquilina, 2013, Stambulova, 2007 and Lally & Kerr, 2013), there is very little research on understanding the persons individual situation and needs as highlighted by the first theme in the results section. It is clear in the literature that a dual career can enhance the person/athlete, (Aquilina, 2009 and Harrison & Lawrence, 2004), however, there may be provision for further research on whether education is suitable for all and what traits are necessary to combine both an elite sport career and academia. The project manager states that “The line between producing a professional footballer and developing the person can be quite vague at times and it needs to be managed carefully”. This opinion conveys that there is not a definitive framework or pathway with regards to implementing higher education into a professional football player’s life. Whilst being in agreement with the literature concluding that higher education can be advantageous in professional football, the facilitator understands that the implementation can be “complex”. Participant B shares the view of the facilitator in understanding the complexity of producing an educational program to suit all professional footballers and states, “I don’t think doing more school work would stop you being a pro footballer but for some players, doing both they would find it very difficult”. Again this view communicates the ambiguity of implementing education alongside a professional contract. Nevertheless, regardless of this complexity, the inclusion of increased access and availability to extra/higher education courses must be offered to candidates who do wish to continue learning and plan a secondary career.

With the probability of becoming a professional football player extremely slim according to the Premier League’s and Professional Football Association’s statistics highlighted in the review of the current literature, it is imperative that measures are taken to plan for the inevitable transition out of professional Football. The uncertainty of who is responsible for taking these measures can be seen in the perceptions of both the professional Football players and the project manager opinions. The project manager understands that “It would be wrong for a club to disband of players without providing support and guidance toward alternative opportunities”. However, he
also opined that clubs cannot be responsible for changing the success rates regarding turning an apprenticeship into a professional contract and “…a contract should be on the table for the right reasons, for example, ability rather than massaging numbers”. One view taken from participant B’s interview communicates that “…football clubs only think about themselves” when releasing players and they should be “…made to help players find a new club or career”. The facilitator view and the view of the athletes are conflicting when they consider the responsibility that football clubs and associations have over the graduation rates from apprentice to professional footballer. Aquilina’s work (2013) found that education is seen as a threat to the development of talented athletes by hierarchies in sports organizations, especially in Football. This mindset is in direct confrontation with the literature and it is important that Football clubs and associates are made aware of the knowledge that education is not seen as a detriment to an athletic career and has been proven to enhance the person/player. Also if Football clubs believe that education is a threat to reaching Football players potential, it may deter athletes who want to undertake extra education or the individuals whom have the traits to combine an athletic and academic career. Participant A states that “…managers disregard the academic side because the be all and end all is winning games and Football”. With the pressures of modern day Football, especially at the elite level, it is easy to understand why managers and chairmen do not have an interest in something that they feel will not benefit them and their Football club. However, if the managers and chairmen are given the statistics and the evident literature that states that these player’s performances will not be compromised and may even be enhanced, they may change their stance on education in Football. This change in attitude could allow for players to adequately plan for their retirement during their careers and be reassured rather than pressured if they wish to undertake an external activity alongside their professional Sport careers.

Another theme deduced from the data that relates to the current mentality in football, is *Employing from within and the culture of the organization*. All participants communicated that employing from within can help with general performance in an organization and Participant A specified “I mean the longer you’re at a club obviously the better you know the culture, the better you know the people, you form relationships and on that side of it, it becomes easier…”. Again, if managers and chairmen understood that having people who understand their organization was productive, they may think twice when disposing so freely of some of these professionals, especially if they have had a long standing association with the club. On the other hand,
Participant C also stated that “…it would be more time efficient in terms of establishing a working relationship but training time would be no different if employed in a completely different role. There may even be additional time required for external training or qualifications to be undertaken.” Therefore, while the evidence suggests that employing from within can help with understanding and maintaining the culture at an organization, there is no guarantee that employing from within, in Football, is time effective, according to Participant C. However, the data and the current literature suggest that employing from within could enhance the performance in a Football organization and it could be another reason that could be pitched to hierarchies at Football clubs in order to persuade the change of the current transition and education system in professional Football. Subsequently, whilst it is not clear where the responsibility lies in order to provide or pursue higher education in professional Football, it is clear that the mentality in Football is not helping players who wish to pursue this career or even clubs who may want to help players plan their careers. The acceptance that higher education is not a detriment to a professional’s chance and the evidence showing Football clubs can also benefit may be the key in offering better access to these courses for professional Football players.

The final theme deducted from the data was Guidance on finance and mental health issues. This idea relates to the second theme (planning for retirement) in the sense that the participants understood these issues to surface as a result of not having an adequate plan for the retirement or withdrawal from professional football. All 3 candidates emphasized the word “guidance” and communicated that this could be the key during a professional footballer’s career to negate later issues. However, Participant C communicates that, “There needs to be a clear pathway to accessing professional advice services for players and the PFA ensure this happens”. There seems to be a lack of awareness of the services available from the professional footballers viewpoint and Participant A states that, “I think the realities need to be brought to them through the PFA, through the likes of the LFE, the reality of what could potentially happen and where they need to go to move forward in the future could be presented better”. While the services and processes seem to be in place to support the transition from professional Football, it seems as though they may not be communicated clearly enough and therefore the athletes feel the accessibility to these systems is not sufficient. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that these results only communicate the opinions of 2 professional Football players and while it gives an
indication of the professional footballer opinion, the results may need justification from further research on a larger scale. However, the results do support the need to identify a clear pathway for Football players to proceed through in order to limit the chances of the three issues brought to the attention through the encoding process in the research.

The need to tailor the education in Football to the individual as well as offering a system that can facilitate the transition from professional Sport to everyday life is evidently complex. In order to add some rational to the ambiguity of the education and transition structures in professional Football, a model of best practice can be offered to help clubs and associations. The proposed model below (Figure 1) identifies a framework which could be implemented into a young professional Football player’s contract as an extension to their apprenticeship or as assistance to their early transition. All participants in the study understand that guidance during the professional’s career can aid the transition phase and extra education during their career would not be as a detriment to their chances of progressing. Therefore this framework can aid with academia, sporting performance and the eventual transition from the game which has proven to be the catalyst to later mental health and financial issues. The model offers provision for players who are released at 18 to plan a career without having to accumulate debt or pay for their own higher education course. The complexity of implementing a rational system to aid the transition is still evident in this model as it would require significant investment from clubs to fund these higher education courses. However, the players interviewed and the project manager communicated a need for clubs to help players “find a new career” and this model, whilst arguably not cost effective, gives the clubs the opportunity to facilitate the player’s eventual transition out of Football. The system could be implemented firstly at the higher levels of Football where the clubs may have more funds at their disposal. The framework also offers the facility to undertake higher education for players who are offered professional contracts. As conversed in the interviews, higher education depends on the individual and it may not work for all professional Football players. The permission from the clubs to allow higher education alongside a professional contract will give the individuals who feel they can combine a dual career, the chance to further their knowledge. Moreover, if clubs are giving recognition to higher education in professional football it may persuade other professionals to take on education as the clubs will be showing that they do not see education as a threat in football as Aquilina (2013) highlighted in her research. The model importantly illustrates the need to look after the young
professionals in particular and not just dispose of them especially after the apprenticeship age where the biggest drop out rate is. With reference to the final theme highlighted in the data the model can help with limiting mental health and financial problems by ensuring that each professional has the access to plan for their retirement during their professional career.

Figure 1:
It is important to highlight that higher education or the implementation of a framework to add structure to the system cannot guarantee that professional Football players will not suffer from mental or financial health problems. Furthermore, Participant A agreed with this when stating “…no matter what course is implemented, they are ultimately going to make their own decisions but if you've just got that guidance you might just give people that thought”. However, the guidance and structure that education can provide may aid in stopping these problems and most certainly can give an element of organization to the education system in professional Football. Participant A states that “managers disregard the academic side because the be all and end all is winning games and Football”. With the pressures of modern day Football, especially at the elite level, it is easy to understand why managers and chairmen do not have an interest in something that they feel will not benefit them and their football club. Nevertheless, the hierarchies at Football clubs must show some compassion with regards to the huge dropout rates in professional Football and while it may not be their responsibility to change these rates, it is clear that they have a moral obligation in helping and allowing professional players to plan for their withdrawal from the Sport. Consequently, if the managers and chairmen are given the statistics and the evident literature that states that these players’ performances will not be compromised and may even be enhanced, they may change their stance on education in Football.

Conclusion

This research has provided an insight into the perceptions of professional Football player’s views on the current education system in professional Football. Whilst, the views are a restricted representation of the whole professional Football population, the data and the analysis can provide assistance for future research projects using larger samples or professional footballers from different demographics. The study sought to understand whether professional Football players have the sufficient educational support to facilitate retirement and withdrawal. The study has adequately communicated the views of two relevant candidates with regards to the professional Football players and in order to differentiate from current literature the work has included a view of best practice with regards to the project manager opinions. This allowed for constant comparison throughout the analysis of the data and has provided for even further
research using the same or similar techniques. The literature communicated that clubs have a moral obligation to help players with their transition out of Football and the data backed up current literature suggesting that education, particularly before retirement and withdrawal, is the way in which the transition can be facilitated. The data has given knowledge on the research problem and the Football players views communicated that the structures may be in place for education to support transition. However, the accessibility to these structures is not sufficient and the literature reports that this is due to the mentality in Football hierarchies. With reference to the aims and objectives emphasized in the introduction of this study, the main aim was to collect the opinions of current Football players in order to inform future practice on the subject area. This aim was achieved and the evidence of this is shown in the creation of the framework discussed in Figure 1. The first objective, to review the current literature, was completed and current research was studied, not just on the subject area but also the surrounding and wider topics in order to realize the research problem. An adequate research design was formed in order to provide qualitative data, which informed the encoding and analysis phase. When deciding the final objective, it was discussed that it would not be achieved unless the previous aims were successfully completed. These objectives were met and the evidence lies in the synthesis of the findings highlighted in Figure 1. The framework can assist future practice and collaborates the key findings of this study in order to offer ideas to the current system and inform further research.

**Limitations and Recommendations**

The constraint highlighted previously regarding the restricted representation of the sample used in the data can be viewed as a limitation and an asset to the research. Whilst the use of just 3 candidates to collect data from cannot provide an adequate representation of the whole professional Football population, it can offer an insight into the professional Football perception. Additionally, as the work differentiates from current research due to the comparisons and critique of the professional’s opinions and the project manager thoughts, the small sample can be used to inform future research of this kind as well as providing similar ideas to further knowledge on this research area. Future research can focus on whether professional footballer’s perceptions rely on how successful they have been in football or their personal experience of education in Football, using a larger sample to try and make the data more representative of the
population. Furthermore, the framework offered in the discussion can be analyzed and critiqued as part of a research project or it can be put into action by educators in professional Football and tested in order to understand if the framework can work in practice. The data revealed the complexity of implementing new ideas into the education system and while some rational has been offered in the form of a framework, it would benefit from some knowledge on how to combat the complexity of its implementation and what measures can be taken to insert a model of best practice into the system. This complexity has grounds for future research. Finally, with reference to the first theme in the results it is imperative to understand the individual traits needed to combine higher education and a sporting career. The ideas on what the student-athlete needs to be successful in both domains simultaneously are communicated and the results and propositions offered in this study can be tailored to the individuals in professional Football. Therefore, further research on athletes who have become students whilst competing in elite sport would certainly to inform this research and add weight to the studies findings.
References


Grinyer, A. (2001). Ethical dilemmas in nonclinical health research from a UK perspective. Nursing Ethics, 8(2), 123-132.


Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: the importance of interaction between research participants. Sociology of health & illness, 16(1), 103-121.


Appendix A

Appendix B

Apprenticeship in sporting excellence (ASE)

Diagram:
- Work Based Experience
  - The Football Development Programme
- Apprenticeship in sporting excellence (ASE)
- Work Based Learning
  - L3 NVQ Diploma in Achieving Excellence in Sports Performance
- Technical Certificate
  - BTEC Subsidiary Diploma/Extended Diploma
Appendix C

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency such as the NHS or MoD, you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your NHS application in order that your School is aware of the project.

The document *Guidelines for obtaining ethics approval* will help you complete this form. It is available from the [Cardiff Met website](#).

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to your School Research Ethics Committee.

**PLEASE NOTE:**
Participant recruitment or data collection must not commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

**PART ONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Kayne Mclaggon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Greg Dainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>Cardiff Metropolitan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>St20033674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>Sport Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Do professional football players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Start Date:</td>
<td>20/12/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate Duration:</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>If your collaborators are external to Cardiff Met, include details of the organisation they represent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>If yes, attach a copy of your NHS application to this form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?</td>
<td>Choose an item.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In no more than 150 words, give a non technical summary of the project

The project will be based on undertaking research in order to collect and analyse the views of current and former professional football players on the current education support offered to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, no further information regarding your project is required.

If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.

**DECLARATION:**
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

| Signature of the applicant: KM | Date: 11/12/2014 |

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

Name of supervisor: Date:

Signature of supervisor:

Research Ethics Committee use only

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Decision reached:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project approved in principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision deferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project not approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project reference number: Click here to enter text.

Name: Click here to enter text. Date: Click here to enter a date.

Signature:
PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project? No

A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used

Click here to enter text.

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

I will conduct a series of interviews with current and former professional football players as well as a focus group with current young professional football players (over 18), in order to find qualitative data, to understand their views on educational support in the current professional football environment. The participants will remain anonymous and will only be referred to by their job title or previous job titles where necessary. With regard to the focus group, all participants will be given a letter to identify them if need be. The data collected will be used for analysis and for purpose in the discussion. After the research is finished the data will not be used and will be destroyed if necessary.

A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research? No

A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research

Click here to enter text.

B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have? None

B2 Student project only

What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have? Vast experience

C POTENTIAL RISKS

C1 What potential risks do you foresee?

The participants may not want to part with crucial data due to their affiliation with the relevant education sectors. Conducting a focus group may be problematic due to power struggle and the age of participants. Due to the population being big it will be hard to have a representative sample for professional football players.

C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?

---

3 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here
The sample used can add to knowledge and give provision for future research. It is important that, as a researcher, I have common beliefs and things in common with participants to bridge the gap of interviewer and interviewee. Make the interviews open in order to gain as much rich data from interviewee’s as possible.
Appendix D

Themes

Spare time
A: you find yourself sitting around a lot, filling gaps needlessly really when you could actually be sat round doing something more efficient and that will help you in the future.

B: I know you get a lot of spare time on your hands as an apprentice so i dont see why they shouldnt do some sort of schooling.

PFA and associate help
A: they do, do a good job to a certain extent at the moment
i found myself within the last year of my professional terms when i was coming out of, when i sort of had an idea i was coming out, to sort of chase up something academic with the PFA, um, they did help to a certain extent, however, when i tried contacting them on a few occasions, it did sort of get more hassle than it was worth so i did decide to go through it on myself in the end, they do support me now to a certain extent, with funding
obviously when i did initially join i think they could have done a little bit more.

B: I know they do help with issues of gambling or alcohol and i know the PFA do support in any funding, i think they pay 50% of any courses you decide to go on once you've left.

Football is the priority
A: if your a manager then you sort of disregard the academic side of it because the be all and end all is winning games and football

but i do think that people like managers, chairmans, they might disagree with the fact that its their business and their main priority is the football side of it

B: Um, well to be honest football clubs just look after themselves really, um at the end of the day i think they should help the players to find a new club or find a new career, but, i dunno if that seems to happen.

1.Extra education depends on individual
A: Um, i think it depends on the individual, um, if you can organise and balance your work and
your flexible, you don't mind putting yourself out and doing the work then I think it can definitely enhance you

so I think it's balancing between their decisions and what the individual wants to do, but I think it definitely can be effective and detrimental in some ways.

I wouldn't say it's the key. I would say it definitely plays a major part, cause like I said, ultimately, each individual gonna make their own decision regardless of what education they have

B: But, it is hard for some players to get there head around it but for some players it would definitely work.

Um, I don't think doing more school work would stop you being a pro footballer but for some players, doing both they would find it very difficult.

C: The line between producing a professional footballer and developing the person can be quite vague at times and it needs to be managed carefully. I think it probably depends on the individual and their buy-in once they become old enough and are already managing a professional career in football.

C: The support is there and communicated when given the opportunity but a desire to engage with this support is required from the player for it to be effective.

Success stopping further education

A: Um, I think they should, um I think it can be difficult, providing on how quick your pushed on, obviously as a 17 year old, 18 year old, a lot of people do get pushed into the first team and they end up signing 5 year contracts and they have no interest in it

Um, but then I do think it's difficult if, like I said, your involved quite a lot as a youngster and it is hard to balance it.

B: Um, ye I think it keeps their feet on the ground because I know being a pro footballer when the money starts coming in it can get to their head really so I think the education puts them on an even par with people their age and gives them a good guide in life.

C: It is important for Apprentices to remain in education whilst training because it broadens their knowledge of performance and theory which will complement their training as well as their wider skills to learn and develop as a person.

Employing from within & culture of organisation

A: Um, I definitely think there's a platform there if you're a professional footballer you obviously have a certain amount of knowledge about the game so, you will find a lot of people do go back
to uni and do a sporting course like myself and the others you've probably spoke to so its sort of along the same lines so if you can just get a framework to go straight into that then i think a lot of people would probably do that.

Yeah, definitely, I mean the longer your at a club obviously the better you know the culture, the better you know the people, you form relationships and on that side of it, it becomes easier. Um, financially obviously, if you have to bring in a new manager or a new coach then it can cost quite a lot. I think it depends obviously the situation, on the situation and the goals and the ambition of the club, so i think in some situations it is practical to, um, employ someone from within, but in other areas maybe not.

B: Well thats happened to me really because i dont class myself as being very old, being 30, but i'm assistant manager so i think i'm in a good place at the moment as I have plenty of time to learn my role.

The club i'm at right now really, i think if they had to get somebody new in, it might take them a while to um, fit in or take a while for us to get used to.

C: The existing expertise of people would be useful to employing from within as these people will already understand the culture of the club and have relationships with the people who work there.

3. Guidance on finance and mental issues

A: obviously each individual is different, no matter what course is implemented, they are ultimately going to make their own decisions but if you've just got that guidance you might just give people that thought before they actually go off and spend money on something that they have no idea about.

i think the realities need to be brought to them through the PFA, through the likes of the LFE, the realitiy of what could potentially happen and where they need to go to move forward in the future could be presented better

So, any additional, basically bringing awareness to players on what they could actually do with their money more efficiently is, yeah, maybe the key.

B: Ye, i think um, counselling can help with these problems. Its just having someone to guide them, you know, if things get out of hand. Just to have someone to guide them along the way.

C: Information, advice and guidance is the key for supporting bodies and networks within football. There needs to be a clear pathway to accessing professional advice services for players and the PFA ensure this happens.

C: Information, advice and guidance is provided by LFE and the PFA proactively to support career transition into secondary careers and education courses as well as invitations to events
such as Create Your Legacy, Making the Transition and My Future Today.

2. Planning for retirement

A: Um, i think they should start it a lot earlier. I know they do the apprenticeship programme but then it sort of stops there. As, you will find out in a lot of jobs that an apprenticeship, a B-TEC's not enough to carry you through so i think it should be the intensity of carrying on that education rather than ending at 18.

B: Well, i think its happened a couple of times in the past with gambling and alcoholism. Um, i think the clubs should do more to help and help players plan their futures.

B: Um, well to be honest football clubs just look after themselves really, um at the end of the day i think they should help the players to find a new club or find a new career, but, i dunno if that seems to happen.

C: It would be wrong for a club to disband of players without providing support and guidance toward alternative opportunities.

C: The PFA run an annual event called ‘Making the Transition’, current and ex-players are invited to attend and take part in a two day programme which covers areas such as career planning, CV building and interview techniques.
### Appendix E

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Participant A</th>
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<td>Extra education depends on the individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra education depends on the individual</td>
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some players, doing both they would find it very difficult.

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<tr>
<td>Extra education depends on the individual</td>
<td>The line between producing a professional footballer and developing the person can be quite vague at times and it needs to be managed carefully. I think it probably depends on the individual and their buy-in once they become old enough and are already managing a professional career in football. The support is there and communicated when given the opportunity but a desire to engage with this support is required from the player for it to be effective.</td>
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Appendix F

Transcript. Participant A

Ryan Doble: Participant A

Interviewer: I’m here with Ryan Doble.

So Ryan, what is your previous experience of football and what have you done and why, why are you relevant to this study?

Participant A: Um... I started playing football obviously at local level when I was a youngster um... moved to playing to Southampton around eleven years old, stayed there till I was about twenty one. Went through the academy and obviously signed professional terms for I think four years. Um... I went on loan whilst at Southampton to a few football league clubs, um... Bournemouth um... Stockport, what not. Um I’ve had a couple of national caps, the ages of seventeen’s, nineteen’s, twenty one’s and I moved to Shrewsbury in the last year of my professional contract permanently and since came out and come back to Uni.

Interviewer: okay um... do you think that all football players should remain in education whilst they’re doing an apprenticeship so from the ages of 16 to 18?

Participant A: Um ye definitely, um obviously I’m going to say that 'cause I’m in Uni now and it’s helped me massively but with regards to continuing it, if I would have opted to go, if it was my decision to come to Uni and I hadn’t got the BTEC that I got through um my apprenticeship at Southampton then I probably would not of come back to be honest.

Interviewer: Fair enough. Um... Approximately 60% of apprentices are rejected at 18 and half of those who become professional are no longer playing at 21 so do you think football clubs have a moral obligation to change this rate or support apprentices… apprentices who are rejected? So do you think football clubs should maybe offer a degree if they had to reject players at 18 or even if they take a player on at 18 do you think that they could help them with higher education also?

Participant A: Yeah no doubt um you obviously get a lot of free time as a professional footballer um and that free time could be used by even if its just sort of a little bit extra over… over a longer period of time then I think it’s efficient it, all adds up um you find yourself sitting around a lot, filling gaps needlessly really when you could actually be sat round doing something more efficient and that will help you in the future.

Interviewer: Yeah. Um… Gordon Taylor the Chief Executive of the PFA has been quoted as saying ‘if it was a university, with our success rate we’d be closed down’. so hes talking about the football, basically, yeah, how do you think organisations such ass the PFA can help players make the grade profesionally?

Participant A: Um, they do, do a good job to a certain extent at the moment, um, i found myself within the last year of my professional terms when i was coming out of, when i sort of had an idea i was coming out, to sort of chase up something academic with the PFA, um, they did help to a certain extent, however, when i tried contacting them on a few occasions, it did sort of get
more hassle than it was worth so i did decide to go through it on myself in the end, but, they do support me now to a certain extent, with funding, um, which is very helpful, but, obviously when i did initially join i think they could have done a little bit more.

Interviewer: Yeah. Um, some football clubs including Wrexham have introduced higher education courses alongside pro contracts to their young players, they've got players training 5 days a week as you would as a pro and your actually doing, like, a university course aswell. Do you think this could work at other clubs? So clubs, maybe, higher up the pyramid?

Participant A: Yeah, definitely, but, then its just a matter of the football gets more intense the higher you go up and if your a manager then you sort of disregard the academic side of it because the be all and end all is winning games and football and adequate rest, whereas, its not just physically you need to rest, you need to rest mentally and obviously if your doing academic work it can be mentally challenging, so, bigger clubs at a higher level may disagree with it. Um, but i definitely think it should be up to the individual to decide.

Interviewer: Ok, um, so staying with the Wrexham framework, do you think, whats being implemented there, could be used at other clubs and you said it could be, but, um, say in 5 years time, no, sorry, uh is 5 years worth of formal education, is that enough do you think? and is it too much to combine? so 5 years worth of education, if you were to do a 2 year apprenticeship and then 3 years of a university course, is that too much to combine do you think, for these young professionals? do you think they could combine their football and their academic work?

Participant A: Um, I think they should, um i think it can be difficult, providing on how quick your pushed on, obviously as a 17 year old, 18 year old, a lot of people do get pushed into the first team and they end up signing 5 year contracts and they have no interest in it, but, i mean, they could possibly implement it as part of a contract, where if you have a 5 year contract, then you have to do a certain amount of academic work. Um, but then i do think its difficult if, like i said, your involved quite a lot as a youngster and it is hard to balance it.

Interviewer: OK, um, do you think higher education courses alongside a pro contract would enhance the person or player, or do you think, like you've kind of said, do you think it could be detrimental to their, um, their chance of becoming a pro player, or becoming, you know, a premier league player is probably the pinnacle now so, do you think that would be detrimental or do you think it would enhance them?

Participant A: Um, i think it depends on the individual, um, if you can organise and balance your work and your flexible, you don’t mind putting yourself out and doing the work then i think it can definitely enhance you, um, but i do think that people like managers, chairman’s, they might disagree with the fact that its their business and their main priority is the football side of it, so i think its balancing between their decisions and what the individual wants to do, but i think it definitely can be effective and detrimental in some ways.

Interviewer: OK, You touched on, um, businesses and chairman’s and what they want. Um, i've got a question here saying, most organisations worldwide people are moved up through an organisation, instead of being rejected they'd be used in a different role or like sector, so could
this work in football organisations and instead of releasing the young players at say 18 or 21, which are the main ages their being released, could they be trained as coaches, managers, scouts, so could they be trained internally to become part of that organisation?

Participant A: Yeah, i think, obviously, as a chairman, it would be sort of more, well whats the word, it would be more acceptable as a chairman to do that, but as a manager, if you look at it from the point of view where, if your not a young lad, but if your around 24 years of age and you've come out of football and you look to go into management then, what im trying to say is, there's not a lot of managers in football and the more managers that their taking in to sort of train up, they may see it as being detrimental to them and their job security and they may disagree with it. Um, i definitely think theres a platform there if your a professional footballer you obviously have a certain amount of knowledge about the game so, you will find a lot of people do go back to uni and do a sporting course like myself and the others you've proba

Interviewer: Yeah, um, do you think clubs might also benefit from employing from within so, employing from within, its been, you know, its been proven that it helps with job satisfaction, performance and its obviously cost effective aswell because your not probably paying the money you would pay to someone you'd gone and, you know, scouted if you like, to become a manager or a whatever you employ them as. So do you think, um, organisations would benefit, in terms of money, people wanting to perform and people actually enjoying their job?

Participant A: Yeah, definitely, I mean the longer your at a club obviously the better you know the culture, the better you know the people, you form relationships and on that side of it, it becomes easier. Um, financially obviously, if you have to bring in a new manager or a new coach then it can cost quite a lot. I think it depends obviously the situation, on the situation and the goals and the ambition of the club, so i think in some situations it is practical to, um, employ someone from within, but in other areas maybe not.

Interviewer: OK. Some high profile football players who've made millions from from professinall football. So Lee Hendrie at Aston Villa, um, David James who played obviously for England and i think he had over 50 caps for England went to World Cups, they've recently gone bankrupt. Um, what can football clubs and assiociations do to help these players, so you know, obviously thats mis management of money as theyve made you know, tens of millions of pounds from football, so what do you think football clubs and associations like the PFA, the LFE, what do you think they can do to help these players?

Participant A: Um, they obviously you have certain amount of talks and meetings you have to attend as a player, certain obligations. Um, you could get people in from the PFA, I know they do offer advice to a certain extent but it might well be just doing a programme, a course on the financial side of the game. Um, management of money, um, just the foundations, obviously each individual is different, no matter what course is implemented, they are ultimately going to make their own decisions but if you've just got that guidance you might just give people that thought before they actually go off and spend money on something that they have no idea about.
Interviewer: Also, players have reportedly been unable to fill the void left by football, when they've retired so they get, um, mental issues and basically they retire at say 30-35 and they don't know anything else but football, they probably don't have an education or something like a secondary hobby if you like, so what do you think football clubs again and associations like the PFA and LFE can do to help these people?

Participant A: Um, i think they should start it a lot earlier. I know they do the apprenticeship programme but then it sort of stops there. As, you will find out in a lot of jobs that an apprenticeship, a B-TEC's not enough to carry you through so i think it should be the intensity of carrying on that education rather than ending at 18. Um, like you said if 30-35 is the age, people should look at it like where they've got another 30 years worth of work, um, unless your at the top level then your not really gonna see yourself through on your wage so i think the realities need to be brought to them through the pfa, through the likes of the LFE, the reality of what could potentially happen and where they need to go to move forward in the future could be presented better.

Interviewer: OK. Um, last one. Is the education during a footballers career the key to stopping mental and financial problems at a later stage?

Participant A: Um. I wouldn't say its the key. I would say it definitely plays a major part, cause like i said, ultimately, each individuals gonna make their own decision regardless of what education they have but i do definitely think, like i said it makes people think more and better idea and it allows to recognise what could potentially be detrimental and what could be effective in ways of investing money. So, any additional, basically bringing awareness to players on what they could actually do with their money more efficiently is, yeah, maybe the key.

Interviewer: OK. That wraps it up. Thanks for that interview.
Appendix G

Transcript. Participant B

Interviewer: I'm here with participant B, doing an interviewer on whether professional players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal. Could you just tell us why our relevant to the study and your football background.

Participant B: Yes, umm, i was an apprentice at Cardiff City, went onto Newport County, um signed for Merthyr, been here 10 years and now i am Assistant Manager.

Interviewer: Fantastic, um, so we'll kick on with the questions. First question, what do you know about the current education structures for professional football players?

Participant B: Um, well as an apprentice we went through a BTEC, so we got some sort of qualification, um but thats about it really, you know with qualifications.

Interviewer: ok, um do you feel that all football players should stay in education whilst there undertaking their apprenticeship?

Participant B: Ye, definitely, um, we were made to gain an education in college. I know you get a lot of spare time on your hands as an apprentice so i dont see why they shouldnt do some sort of schooling.

Interviewer: Ok, um approximately 60% of apprentices are rejected at 18 and half of those who become professional are no longer playing at 21. Do you think football clubs have a moral obligation to change this rate or support apprentices who are rejected?

Participant B: Um, well to be honest football clubs just look after themselves really, um at the end of the day i think they should help the players to find a new club or find a new career, but, i dunno if that seems to happen.

Interviewer: Ok, Gordan Taylor the chief executive of the PFA has been quoted as saying 'If we were a university, with our success rates, we would have been closed down'. How do you think organisations such as the PFA can help players who fail to make the grade professionally?

Participant B: Um, im not too sure to be honest, how they could help players who dont make it. I know they do help with issues of gambling or alcohol and i know the PFA do support in any funding, i think they pay 50% of any courses you decide to go on once you've left.

Interviewer: Ok, some football clubs including Wrexham have introduced higher education courses alongside pro contracts to their young players. Do you think this could work at other clubs or at your club?

Participant B: Definitely, um, the young players, i know get a lot of time on their hands. Therefore they have a lot of spare time so i dont see any reason why they shouldn't think of their future and do some education.
Interviewer: Ok, do you think the framework being used at Wrexham might be used at other clubs higher up in the football pyramid in the future or is 5 years worth of formal education alongside the competition of becoming a professional too much to combine?

Participant B: Ye, well, when i was younger all i wanted to do was become a professional footballer so basically i gave the education the backseat. But, it is hard for some players to get there head around it but for some players it would definitely work.

Interviewer: Do you think higher education courses alongside a pro contract would enhance the person or player or do you think it would be detrimental to their chances of becoming a pro football player?

Participant B: Um, i dont think doing more school work would stop you being a pro footballer but for some players, doing both they would find it very difficult.

Interviewer: In most organisations worldwide, people would be moved up through an organisation. So instead of being rejected or released they would be used in a different role. Do you think this could work in football organisations so instead of releasing young players they could be trained as coaches, managers, scouts, admin etc.?

Participant B: Well thats happened to me really because i dont class myself as being very old, being 30, but i'm assistant manager so i think i'm in a good place at the moment as I have plenty of time to learn my role.

Interviewer: Fair enough. Do you think clubs might also benefit from employing from within? So employing from within, its been shown that it helps with job satisfaction, performance and being economically effective.

Participant B: The club i'm at right now really, i think if they had to get somebody new in, it might take them a while to um, fit in or take a while for us to get used to.

Interviewer: Some high profile football players who have made millions from pro football have recently gone bankrupt. What do you reckon football clubs and associations can do to help these players?

Participant B: Well thats happened a couple of times in the past with gambling and alcoholism. Um, i think the clubs should do more to help and help players plan their futures.

Interviewer: Um players have also reportedly been unable to fill the void left by football when they've retired. Do you think football clubs can help with these mental issues after football, after retirement?

Participant B: Ye, i think um, counselling can help with these problems. Its just having someone to guide them, you know, if things get out of hand. Just to have someone to guide them along the way.

Interviewer: Ok, last question. Is the education during a footballers career the key to stopping mental and financial problems at a later stage do you think?
Participant B: Um, ye i think it keeps their feet on the ground because i know being a pro footballer when the money starts coming in it can get to their head really so i think the education puts them on an even par with people their age and gives them a good guide in life.
Appendix H

Transcript. Participant C

Do professional football players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal?

Professional football clubs employ Education Officers to support players from the foundation phase right through to the first team. The Professional Footballers’ Association (PFA) and League Football Education both have departments dedicated to facilitating access and support into education and career transition. The support is there and communicated when given the opportunity but a desire to engage with this support is required from the player for it to be effective.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: What do you know about the current education structures for professional football players?

Participant C: There are no mandatory education requirements for a professional footballer, only for Apprentice footballers (16-18 year olds) who play for the youth team.

Interviewer: Do you feel that all football players should remain in education, whilst undertaking their apprenticeship?

Participant C: Apprentice footballers are required to undertake the Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (ASE) programme which consists of a BTEC in Sport, NVQ in Achieving Excellence in Sport Performance and Functional Skills. The Football League, the PFA and LFE also require Apprentices to complete the FA Level 2 Coaching in Football Certificate.

It is important for Apprentices to remain in education whilst training because it broadens their knowledge of performance and theory which will complement their training as well as their wider skills to learn and develop as a person.

Interviewer: Approximately 60% of apprentices are rejected at 18 and half of those who become professional are no longer playing professionally at 21. Do you think Football Clubs have a moral obligation to change this rate or support apprentices/professionals who are rejected?

Participant C: In some cases football clubs will have had players who have belonged to their club for 10 years all in the hope they could one day become an asset to the first team. It would be wrong for a club to disband of players without providing support and guidance toward alternative opportunities.

However there is always a ceiling after the age groups of youth football and so increasing the number of professional contracts is difficult to improve given squad sizes and wage budgets. In addition to this some players don’t develop enough to meet the required standard and so a contract should be on the table for the right reasons, for example, ability rather than massaging numbers.
Interviewer: Gordon Taylor, the Chief Executive of the PFA, has been quoted as saying ‘If it was a university, with our success rates, we would have been closed down’. How do you think organisations such as the PFA can help players who fail to make the grade professionally?

Participant C: The PFA run an annual event called ‘Making the Transition’, current and ex-players are invited to attend and take part in a two day programme which covers areas such as career planning, CV building and interview techniques.

Interviewer: Some football clubs including Wrexham FC have introduced higher education courses alongside professional contracts to their young players. Do you think this could work at other clubs?

Participant C: I think education could be continued for players beyond the age of 18, I know that in some countries players required to undertake some form of education for longer than what is in place in the UK.

Interviewer: Do you think higher education courses alongside a professional football contract would enhance the person/player or be detrimental to the professional’s chance of becoming a professional football player?

Participant C: My opinion is that a prolonged education keeps young players focused on productive activity away from the football pitch and may even enhance performance on the field. My reasoning for this is not directly linked to education, any additional commitments would offer the same personal development i.e. community initiative involvement or even learning an instrument. I don’t believe in the unwritten rule that a footballer is only a footballer, they are a person and football is a thing that a person does alongside many other things and doing other things is positive towards success in life not simply detached success in football – this thinking can also support career transition when players leave the game.

Interviewer: In most organisations worldwide, people are moved up through an organisation and instead of being rejected they may be used in a different role or sector. Could this work in football organisations? (1) Instead of releasing young players they could be trained as coaches, managers, scouts, admin etc.? (2)

Participant C: In an ideal world, yes. I think football clubs look to do this where possible and utilise the knowledge and experience players already have but the volume of players leaving the game versus job opportunities at football clubs is outweighed. LFE is aware of many released players who still work in football in a different capacity.

Interviewer: Do you think clubs may also benefit by employing from within? (1) Can employing from within the organisation help in terms of job satisfaction, performance and being economically effective as it does in organisations in other sectors? (2)

Participant C: The existing expertise of people would be useful to employing from within as these people will already understand the culture of the club and have relationships with the people who work there, it would be more time efficient in terms of establishing a working relationship but training time would be no different if employed in a completely different role.
There may even be additional time required for external training or qualifications to be undertaken.

Interviewer: Some high profile football players, who have made millions from professional football have recently gone bankrupt. What can football clubs and associations do to help these players?

Participant C: Information, advice and guidance is the key for supporting bodies and networks within football. There needs to be a clear pathway to accessing professional advice services for players and the PFA ensure this happens.

Interviewer: Players have also reportedly been unable to ‘fill the void’ left by football when they have retired. What can football clubs and associations do to help?

Participant C: Information, advice and guidance is provided by LFE and the PFA proactively to support career transition into secondary careers and education courses as well as invitations to events such as Create Your Legacy, Making the Transition and My Future Today.

Interviewer: Is the education during a footballers career the key to stopping mental and financial problems at a later stage?

Participant C: Clear signposting to the professional services who can advise in these areas and highlighted at the earliest stage i.e. youth team level. This currently takes place.

Interviewer: Do you think the framework being implemented at Wrexham may be used by other clubs higher in the football pyramid in the future or is 5 years’ worth of formal education alongside the competition of becoming a professional too much to combine?

Participant C: The line between producing a professional footballer and developing the person can be quite vague at times and it needs to be managed carefully. I think it probably depends on the individual and their buy-in once they become old enough and are already managing a professional career in football.

Appendix I

Participant Information Form

Participant Information Sheet
Research Title

Do professional football players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal?

Selection

You have been chosen as part of this research process as you may have information on the educational support system in professional football. This information may be as a result of being a professional footballer or having direct influence on the educational system in professional football as a facilitator, manager, or any person involved in the delivery of education systems.

Risks

There are not any unforeseen risks involved in participating in this research study. All participants have the right to remain anonymous and any associations with other companies shall not be scuppered by the involvement in this study.

Benefits

As a result of partaking in this study you may gain a greater understanding of the education system in football and also by sharing the experiences of your own football education journey, you may enhance the education service for future football professionals.

All information will be used to inform the study and all participants have the right to remain anonymous. If participants wish to remain anonymous, their name will not be revealed and they will be referred to as a code name or code letter.

There is a consent form that accompanies this information sheet and there will not be any research undertaken without prior consent from all participants.

If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact myself.

Kayne Mclaggon,
St20033674@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk
Telephone: 07584030008

Appendix J

Consent Form

UWIC PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM
UREC Reference No:

Title of Project: Do professional football players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal?

Name of Researcher: Kayne Mclaggon

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 12/12/2014 for this research study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that it is possible to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

3. I also understand that if this happens, our relationships with the relevant sectors involved, or our legal rights, will not be affected.

4. I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes, and I will be contacted if my name is to be used.

5. I agree to take part in this research study.

__________________________________  __________________________________
Name of Participant
Appendix K

Do professional football players have sufficient educational support structures to facilitate retirement and withdrawal?

Interview Questions
What do you know about the current education structures for professional football players?

Do you feel that all Football players should remain in education, whilst undertaking their apprenticeship?

Approximately 60% of apprentices are rejected at 18 and half of those who become professional are no longer playing professionally at 21. Do you think Football Clubs have a moral obligation to change this rate or support apprentices/professionals who are rejected?

Gordon Taylor, the Chief Executive of the PFA, has been quoted as saying ‘If it was a university, with our success rates, we would have been closed down’. How do you think organisations such as the PFA can help players who fail to make the grade professionally?

Some football clubs including Wrexham FC have introduced higher education courses alongside professional contracts to their young players. Do you think this could work at other clubs/your club?

Do you think the framework being implemented at Wrexham may be used by other clubs higher in the football pyramid in the future or is 5 years’ worth of formal education alongside the competition of becoming a professional too much to combine?

Do you think higher education courses alongside a professional football contract would enhance the person/player or be detrimental to the professional’s chance of becoming a professional football player?

In most organisations worldwide, people are moved up through an organisation and instead of being rejected they may be used in a different role or sector. Could this work in football organisations? (1) Instead of releasing young players they could be trained as coaches, managers, scouts, admin etc.? (2)

Do you think clubs may also benefit by employing from within? (1) Can employing from within the organisation help in terms of job satisfaction, performance and being economically effective as it does in organisations in other sectors? (2)

Some high profile football players, who have made millions from professional football have recently gone bankrupt. What can football clubs and associations do to help these players?

Players have also reportedly been unable to ‘fill the void’ left by football when they have retired. What can football clubs and associations do to help?

Is the education during a footballers career the key to stopping mental and financial problems at a later stage?