An Investigation of the Role of Extracurriculars on Academic Performance

Olivia G Bruno, Ilana M Shanes, Abrielle F. Weissman
Research Methods, Muhlenberg College, Dr. Kenneth Michniewicz

Introduction

Our study: The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of extracurricular activities on academic performance.

Clubs:

- Students who engage in campus programs (clubs, activities, etc.) tend to report higher GPAs and greater academic success, likely due to increased social integration and sense of belonging (Bergen-Cico & Viscomi, 2012)
- First-year liberal arts students who lived on campus had higher GPAs than those who lived at home (Turley & Wodtke, 2010)
- Extracurricular involvement has been shown to promote important life skills such as time management, perseverance, and self-esteem, all of which are linked to improved academic performance (Seow & Pan, 2014)

Athletics:

- Some research suggests that student-athletes perform similarly to non-athletes academically (Richards & Aries, 1999)
- Other research suggests that students who strongly identify as athletes may experience lower academic performance due to prioritizing sports over academics (Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2022)

Employment:

- Research suggests that higher work hours are associated with lower academic performance due to work–school conflict (Butler, 2007)
- However, another study found that students with on-campus jobs graduated at slightly higher rates than those without on-campus jobs (Beeson & Wessel, 2002)

Research Question

- How does one's on/off-campus involvement affect their academic performance?

Methods

Independent Variables

- Primary extracurricular activity
- Passion for one's extracurricular activity

Dependent Variables:

- Academic Performance
  - GPA
  - Perceived academic performance

Age (Mean age: 19.81)	Gender	Race
• 4.5%-Age 18 • 36.4%-Age 19 • 36.4%-Age 20 • 13.6%-Age 21 • 4.5%-Age 22 • 4.5%-Other Age	• 13.6%-Male • 86.4%-Female	• 68.2%-White • 9.1%-Hispanic/ Latino • 18.2%-Black • 22.7%-Asian

Total participants: 22

Design:

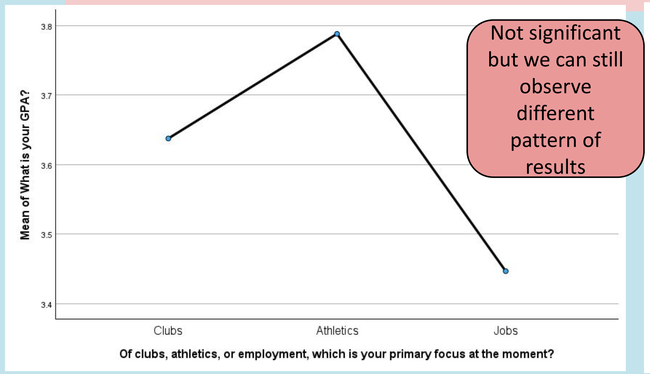
- This study is a between-subject design

Procedure:

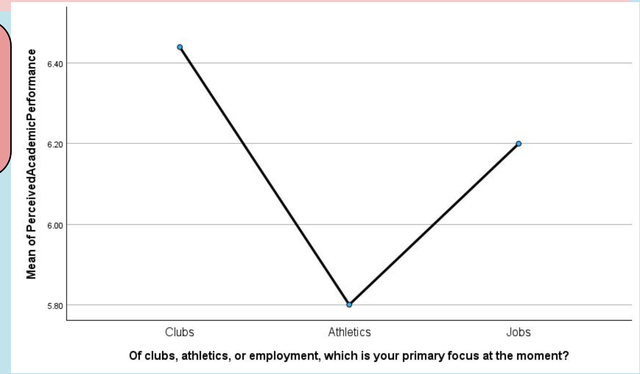
- Participants were sent a survey.
- First, they were asked about their GPA and perceived academic performance.
- Then, they were asked whether they are part of any clubs and were only asked questions about them if they selected yes. If not, they moved onto being asked if they are part of varsity sports.
- This process was repeated for sports and employment.
- Finally, participants were asked which of the three activities was their primary focus and how passionate they were for their primary activity.

Results

GPA vs Perceived Academic Performance between 3 different extracurricular activities



$F(2, 15) = 2.14$ $\eta^2 = .22$ $p = .15$



$F(2, 16) = .93$ $\eta^2 = .10$ $p = .42$

Frameworks

1. Zero Sum Framework: Participation in extracurricular activities has a negative effect on academic performance due to more time being spent on the activity and less time being spent on schoolwork.
2. Developmental Framework: Extracurricular activities have a positive effect on academic performance due to social benefits and the development of important life skills that can be transferred to academics.
3. Threshold Framework: Extracurricular activities increase academic performance up to a point, but after this point, extracurriculars have a negative impact on academic performance. (Seow & Pan, 2014)

Hypotheses:

- Overall involvement will be significantly related to academic performance
- Participation in clubs and campus activities is expected to be positively associated with GPA due to their developmental and social benefits
- Higher levels of athletics involvement and employment are expected to be negatively associated with GPA
- It is predicted that club and campus involvement will show the strongest positive relationship with academic performance compared to other forms of involvement

Discussion

Limitations:

- We did not have enough participants to be able to conduct factorial ANOVA and find significant results.
- This was a correlational study, so no causal relationship can be established.

Discussion:

- No significant difference in GPA or perceived academic performance between those who participate in clubs, athletics, and jobs due to small sample size
- Marginal difference between athletic and employment GPAs
- Although not significant, clubs and athletics boosted GPA while employment lowered it
- Although athletes had the highest GPA, they perceived their academic performance to be the lowest

Future Directions:

- Recruit more participants and examine why certain activities increase or decrease GPA (time, stress, voluntary vs involuntary involvement)

Conclusion

Academic performance did not differ between clubs, athletics, and jobs but the marginal differences suggest that significant results would be found with more participants.

References

Beeson, M. J., & Wessel, R. D. (2002). The impact of working on campus on the academic persistence of freshmen. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, *32*(2). https://doi.org/10.55504/0884-9153.1181
Bergen-Cico, D., & Viscomi, J. (2012). Exploring the association between campus co-curricular involvement and academic achievement. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, *14*(3), 329–343. https://doi.org/10.2190/CS.14.3.c
Butler, A. B. (2007). Job characteristics and college performance and attitudes: A model of work–school conflict and facilitation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *92*(2), 500–510. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.2.500
Richards, S., & Aries, E. (1999). The division III student-athlete: Academic performance, campus involvement, and growth. *Journal of College Student Development*, *40*(3), 211–218
Seow, P.S., & Pan, G. (2014). A literature review of the impact of extracurricular activities participation on students' academic performance. *Journal of Education for Business*, *89*(7), 361–366. https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2014.912195
Turley, R. N. L., & Wodtke, G. (2010). College residence and academic performance: Who benefits from living on campus? *Urban Education*, *45*(4), 506–532. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085910372351
Yukhymenko-Lescroart, M. A. (2022). Sport-to-school spillover effects of passion for sport: The role of identity in academic performance. *Psychological Reports*, *125*(3), 1469–1493. https://doi.org/10.1177/00332a941211006925

Poster Presented at Psychology Day, Spring 2026