

Do Sports Have an Effect on School Performance?

Tara Clegg

Lindenwood University

The amount of time someone spends playing and practicing for a sport, or how much involvement it has with other activities was studied in respect to performance in school. Students were assumed to not do well in school if they were too involved with sports and other extracurricular activities. The students that participated in the research were all from the human subject pool at Lindenwood University. These students were either in a psychology, anthropology, or sociology class to receive extra credit. All of them were administered a ten questions survey in regards to involvement and school. In the study, 28 participants were studied, 16 being males and 12 being females.

Students, who are involved with athletics or other activities, usually have a heavier load on their hands than other kids. In this paper, college students were asked to answer a few questions about their schoolwork, their involvement in other activities. Then results were analyzed to see if being too involved in activities has an effect on grades.

In an article, "Working Overtime," Debra Viadero (1998) explains how students who work more than 20 hours a week will be more drawn to drugs and alcohol, and will tend to do poorly in school. Throughout the article, many researchers were named on conducting this study in other states: Viadero- Minnesota, Steinberg- Wisconsin and North Carolina, Wendy Piscitelli- Pennsylvania, Jerald Bachman- Michigan, Jeylan Mortimer- University of Minnesota, Michael Frone- New York. One

study found, that “if students work fewer than 20 hours a week they will receive better grades than those students who do not work at all or who work more hours” (Viadero, 1998). Wendy Piscitelli, as cited in Viadero, says that most students do a fair job of juggling the demands of homework and jobs in the Philadelphia area.

Laurence Steinberg, a psychology professor, says, “Kids, students, who work a lot manage their academic schedules to protect their GPA” (Viadero, 1998). This does not always mean that they work especially harder; they might cheat on homework or tests or maybe even take easier courses. Either way, there is no real answer as to if working so many hours a week has an effect on students’ education.

“Coaching the Student in the Student-Athlete,” talks about coaching a student, reveals that students consider themselves hyphenated student-athletes. The author talk defines student-athlete: coaching and educating a student this is also an athlete. The article mentioned that these athletes spend more time with teammates than in the classroom. Furthermore, these athletes spend more time together than all their classes combined. “Coaches can go a long way toward helping student-athletes get their priorities straight, but many institutions don’t encourage coaches to get involved with academic culture” (Krebs, 2004).

Does this mean that if a person is an athlete at a top-notch university, he or she should get special treatment for their classes? What about the other students who do not play a sport and are having a difficult time? The article says, “Professors should find out who among our majors are athletes and reach out to them, bring them into an intellectual environment that can offer some of the rewards that sports do (Krebs, 2004).” Overall, this article says that student-athletes should be able to miss a few classes here and there

for departmental events, and should be treated different from other students who are not athletes.

Does involvement with athletics and other activities overwhelm students to a point that they will end up using drugs or alcohol to help calm things down? An article by Pyle (2003), states, “males have been shown to be more vulnerable to externalizing disorders such as drugs and alcohol abuse, risk taking and acting out (2003). This is not stating that every athlete or someone else that is involved with many activities will use drugs or alcohol as a way out of stressful situations. “Sport participation has often been associated with the precipitation of eating disorders in girls” (2003).

Pyle’s study concluded, “an elite level serves as a protective factor most notable for eating disordered behavior in girls (2003). Therefore, playing a sport at a level higher than high school will make females more likely to have an eating disorder. There is also a question of determining attentional sets between athletes and nonathletes. Jim McAuliffe (2004) conducted a study on this and found out that both groups showed attentional sets. He did find that “the volleyball participants had greater attentional control than did the nonathletes (2004). “ Athletes take longer to move attention to a new target location if they have adopted an attentional set for a feature of the cue that matches a feature of the target” (2004). In plain terms, this means that it takes athletes longer to focus on a moving object if that one object has been in a spot for a long time.

Therefore, overall playing a sport or being involved in activities does not seem to be the only reason why athletes or nonathletes have to drop clubs from their busy schedules of everyday life. The purpose of this study was to test whether extracurricular activities or athletics have an effect on your school performance.

Method

Participants

The participants were recruited for this study was 16 males and 12 females, through the human subject pool in Young Hall. The college participants ranged from freshman to seniors. The college participants received extra credit for their respective class.

Materials

For the study, the experimenter used paper work: Informed consent forms, one for participant and one for the researcher, survey, feedback letter and participant's receipt. The survey contained 10 questions: asking if each person if they were involved with athletics, if they worked, and others. See Appendix A for all the questions. The participants provided their own pen for this study. The participants were surveyed in the Psychology Lab, room 105 in Young Hall. The rooms are small with white walls, a desk, and two chairs were provided.

Procedure

The college students were tested over a two-week period. The students signed up for a specific time slot. At their specific time, they arrived at the psychology lab in young hall, signed a permission slip to participate and completed the survey. Once the participant completed the survey a receipt was filled out and given to them so that they could receive extra credit for their class. Participants have ten minutes to fill out the survey in the Psychology Lab. All the students that are studied are completing the same survey. After completion of the survey, each participant was given a feedback letter explaining the interest in comparing students' participation in activities to those who do

not, and to determine if this affects their grades. After all the surveys have been filled out, analysis will determine if playing a sport, or being too involved in school as an effect on your schooling in any way.

Results

The research question was whether involvement in sports and activities has an effect on school performance in college students. Of the data that was received from 16 males and 12 females, here is what was found to be true. Of the 28 participants, 57 percent played a sport while 42 percent did not play a sport. If you want to go further into detail then, it comes to equal out that four quit, while twelve stuck it out.

Also found was that of those who played a sport, 26 of them also work, and 21 percent are involved with other activities. Also found out was that three-fourths of them have not quit an activity cause of grades as slipped, but one-fourth of them have had to quit something before. Sixty-four percent of the total are involved with other activities, while thirty-five percent are not involved in anything else. Of these percents, it equals out to be nine have not quit, while there was only one who did have to quit cause of his/she involvement with other activities.

This study also factored working outside of school athletics, and other activities into my study. It was found that 15 students could balance work and other activities while there was only three who had to quit cause of work. Along with all the percents that were calculated, the found mean age of the study was 20 years old, with the minimum age being 18 and the maximum being 24.

The participants also rated how the sports, activities and other factors had affected them school wise. One equals not at all and five equally completely. The one people most

rated were three, which should not surprise anyone. Most people chose the middle number since it is in the middle and no one has to make a choice of the first or last.

Discussion

The study showed information that was believed to be true from the start. The study needed more participants in order to have a better understanding of the results. This led me to realize that if I had been able to gather more data then maybe my hypothesis would not have been totally correct. My results that I did gather did help me realize that there was a difference and my hypothesis was accepted.

With all the information I gathered, I came to understand that there are people who had to quit an activity because of falling grades, but not by a big margin. This makes me wonder, if I did gather more data, would there have been a difference? To me, it seems that students know how to handle the stress of many activities on their plate and to also balance schoolwork at the same time. Some students have been dealing with this issue for many years of schooling, and instead of quit something they love to do, they know how to balance their time right so that quitting is not an option to them.

In regards to my study, I understood that more participants would have helped me in different aspects. I would have been able to analyze data by conducting a chi-square test, a t-test or even an ANOVA. Instead, I have to conduct my paper on percents of the twenty-eight participants that I did receive. I now also realize that if I had gotten the 28 participant consent to obtain their GPA, it may have had an effect on my project also.

Once I found all my calculations for my study, you can really tell that there is a problem with sports, activities and school, but not by a huge margin. The only thing that I was able to put into this paper was percents only because of the lack of participants. So as

mentioned earlier, my study could have been done better with better results supporting my hypothesis.

References

Krebs, P. M. (2004). Coaching the student in the student-athlete. EbscoHost, 1, Article

00095982. Retrieved March 21, 2005 from <file:///E:/intro%20artic%202.htm>

McAuliffe, J. (2004). Differences in attentional set between athletes and nonathletes.

ProQuest, 2, Article 00221309. Retrieved April 15, 2005 from

<http://proquest.umi.com>

Pyle, R. P. (2003). High school student athletes: Associations between intensity of

participation and health factors. ProQuest, 3, Article 00099228. Retrieved April

15, 2005 from <http://proquest.umi.com>.

Viadero, D. (2005). Working overtime: After-school jobs may do kids more harm than

good. EbscoHost, 4, Article 10466193. Retrieved March 21, 2005, from

<file:///E:/intro%20artic.htm>.

Appendix A

Survey

Age: _____

Gender: _____

What grade are you? (Circle one) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Do you play a sport in school? No Yes

 If yes, how many hours per week do you practice? _____

Do you work? No Yes

 If yes, how many hours a week do you work? _____

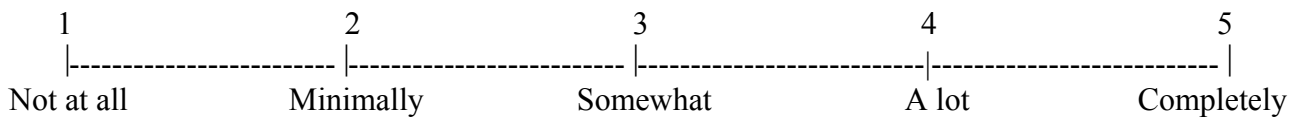
 If yes, how many days do you work a week? _____

Are you involved in any other clubs or activities? (ex.: key club, club sports teams) No Yes

 If yes, please list each one and also how many hours per week you spend on them:

Activity	Hours Per Week
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please rate, how much your involvement with other activities affects your grades?



Have you ever quit an activity because your grades slipped? No Yes

If yes, which one(s) did you take out of your schedule? _____