Extracurricular Involvement and Its Effect on Student Success and Student Satisfaction

THESIS

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Dad, who always pushed me to do bigger and better things, and who has supported me in everything I've done. He came to every athletic event, and every presentation I ever gave, and with his support, I've always felt like I can accomplish great things. I did it, Daddy!

Abstract

For many years, academic professionals have studied the effect of student engagement on the student experience. Multiple studies have provided evidence that students who are more heavily engaged tend to see better academic outcomes such as higher GPAs and higher retention rates. These studies, however, tend to look at engagement as a whole and/or center on academic engagement, and not on extracurricular engagement. In this paper, I examine the relationship between student engagement and student success, particularly in regards to engagement in extracurricular activities. First, I examined the breadth and depth of student involvement and the correlation to student outcomes such as GPA, job placement and satisfaction ratings. Next, by classifying activities in to 1 of 11 classification types, I was able to examine the correlation between certain types of activities and the outcomes listed above. I found that certain types of activities tended to correlate more strongly with certain outcomes, where other types of involvement do not tend to correspond with strong outcomes in any success measure.

Keywords: student engagement, extracurricular activities, student outcomes

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A series of research studies have demonstrated that high levels of student engagement contribute to collegiate success (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2004; Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup, Gonyea, R, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). This research has generally taken a broad view of student engagement, considering both curricular and extracurricular activities. The findings rarely delve into exactly what engagement factors correlate with which types of success and satisfaction and though broad results prove useful in showing general trends and providing a look at broad success factors, these findings lack a practicality for faculty or student service personnel because of their wide range and over-arching implications. In this project, I have examined a more narrow view of student engagement to determine how particular extracurricular activities affect the student experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between student involvement in extracurricular activities and student outcomes. I will examine the effect of extracurricular involvement on student success by examining grade point average, job placement, and job preparedness. I will also study the relationship between involvement and student satisfaction after graduation.

It is my hope that the results can be used by (1) student services personnel to better provide a satisfying and successful experience to all students, (2) school administrations to better make a case for funding allocations and other such resources, (3) prospective students to help define their own college search criteria, and (4) current students to help them create the best student experience possible.

Research about student involvement and success is increasingly important because of the changing climate of higher education. Because of the rising cost of college tuition and the increasing vitality of a college degree, students and parents have become increasingly more savvy consumers looking for a smart investment. Students are looking for colleges that can not only provide a major, but also offer additional value for the increasing price tag. For colleges that have proven that they are able to provide a satisfying student experience and successful outcomes, students are more willing to pay the cost.

Although prices have been rising, six year graduation rates have remained stagnant over the past 20 years (Bok in Kuh et al., 2006 & "Graduation rates", 2013). Because of this, colleges have become more concerned with retention and success in an attempt to minimize dropout rates and increase the value of their degrees. As colleges look at opportunities to engage their students, the study of student involvement and success becomes increasingly more important so that colleges can better determine where to spend their resources, and how that might affect the student experience.

If we examine student schedules, we must consider that as much as 85% of their time is spent outside of the classroom. Colleges, who have traditionally focused a majority of their resources on the other 15%, must now consider how to allocate resources towards programs and opportunities to engage students in the majority of their waking hours (Terenzini and Pascarella, 1994). Using research about student engagement can help institutions to better provide engagement opportunities, improve their student outcomes and experiences, and in turn, use these outcomes to better retain students and recruit incoming students. Similarly, students looking to make a smart investment can use this research to further improve their own college search factors and better improve their own student experience and satisfaction.

Background Research of Student Engagement

The study of student engagement has been prominent in education for many years, but the work and theories of Alexander Astin are often used as a starting point. Since the 1970's, Astin has done extensive research including numerous longitudinal studies, and has used both qualitative and quantitative data to analyze his findings about student engagement. In his article, *Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education* (1999), Astin elaborates on his theory of student engagement. This article is commonly referenced to as the basis for the understanding of student engagement, which Astin explains as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1999, p. 518). In his paper, Astin stresses the importance of viewing engagement both qualitatively and quantitatively, in that some of the positive effects may not be explicitly measurable. A review of this paper will be covered in Chapter Two.

Using both qualitative and quantitative data, researchers have proven that student engagement positively correlates with student success and student satisfaction. The outcomes of this research suggest that student engagement correlates with higher grade point averages (GPAs), higher satisfaction rates, higher retention rates, more growth in personal characteristic traits and other such positive impacts (Astin 1993, Astin, 1999, Kuh, 2003, Carini, Kuh & Klein, 2004). In fact, student engagement is considered to be a strong predictor of personal growth and success when compared to other indicators of college success (Carini et. al, 2004).

In one of Astin's longitudinal studies, he found that overall involvement increases students' chances of persisting throughout their college career. Students with higher engagement levels were found to have higher self-esteem, higher competency, and a wider range of interests. They were more likely to express satisfaction in their undergraduate experience (Astin, 1999). In a similar study, considering a significant number of environmental factors and engagement, Astin found positive correlations in almost all college success factors to student engagement. He considered a wide range of variables, many associated with engagement: from tutoring others, consuming alcohol, smoking cigarettes, academic involvement, getting married, and having an internship or campus job, and their effects on an array of outcomes such as GPA, student leadership positions, standardized graduate test scores, careers and satisfaction. Astin's compilation of data led to a number of interesting conclusions regarding student engagement and can be a basis for proving extracurricular engagement benefits.

The primary survey that has been given attention as an accurate measure of student engagement is the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE, or "Nessie"). In the years 2004 and 2005, over 305,000 students responded from 741 four year colleges and universities. Using freshman GPA, first year persistence, and senior GPA as success indicators, an in-depth analysis of this survey shows that student engagement plays a significant role in student success ("About NSSE", 2013). I will review the NSSE more in-depth in Chapter Two.

Past research studies have focused predominantly on the academic components of student engagement and very few studies have concentrated solely on extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the research findings regarding extracurricular activities and student GPA have been mixed; extracurricular involvement was strongly linked to persistence in the first year, but hours spent in such pursuits had a negative effect on senior grades (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 34-35).

This study will focus on the relation between student involvement in extracurricular activities and student success after the students' careers by examining academic success outcomes such as GPA and job placement as well as student satisfaction.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study was completed using survey data from participants at a small liberal arts university, which henceforth is referred to as Engagement University. Data was analyzed from a single graduating class at Engagement University and the data sets used contain 89 to 225 students.

The data obtained is mostly accurate, however the involvement records are self-reported, so there may be students who were more involved, but the data does not capture this. Additionally, the data gives us only that a student participated in a given activity, and does not allow us to examine which terms, how long, and if the student held a leadership position within that club.

Finally, I was only able to obtain graduate data, so I will be unable to examine retention statistics within this data set. This, however, is a research topic that can be examined in future research and would be equally usefully to administrators.

Definitions

- Student engagement / involvement- the amount of time and effort a student puts towards their education; This includes effort and attention in class, time spent working on homework, seeking help at office hours, and extracurricular activities including sororities and fraternities, student clubs and organizations, athletics, and time spent on-campus in any capacity. The terms engagement and involvement are used interchangeably in this paper and in much literature on the subject.

- Extracurricular activities- a specific subset of engagement opportunities found outside of the classroom; These would include engagement opportunities such as participation in student organizations, joining fraternities or sororities, involvement in student government, athletics and other such activities.
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – A national survey about student engagement using freshman GPA, first year persistence, and senior GPA as success indicators.
- Persistence – In relation to retention. A student who persists is a student who is retained from a semester to the next
- Student Outcomes –A term encompassing student success variables as well as satisfaction variables

Summary

There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that student engagement plays an important role in student success and satisfaction. Because of this, colleges should consider how they can shape the environment to best provide their students opportunities to be involved (Terenzini and Pascarella, 1994). The evidence, however, lacks information about which types of activities truly influence the student experience. In this paper, I will examine the correlation between specific types of extracurricular activities and student outcomes in hopes that this data can be helpful in shaping college environments to promote student involvement in meaningful extracurricular activities.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the theory of student engagement and the findings of three primary research teams in the field. Through this review, I will demonstrate the lack of information regarding specific activities and their effect of student outcomes. In addition, I will validate exactly why the information is so valuable to the field.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Though the study of student engagement has been approached by numerous researchers, the work of the following authors has shaped most of what we know about the subject. In this chapter, I will examine the works of Alexander Astin, George Kuh, Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini.

First, I examine Astin's Theory of Development in Higher Education, which explains the importance of studying engagement as a whole. I then briefly summarize findings of Astin's research studies on the matter. Next, I examine the findings of George Kuh through his work with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Both of these researchers view student engagement as an entity in its own right. To finish this review, I will view the work of Pascarella and Terenzini, who have found numerous positive outcomes of student engagement by studying the effect of college on students.

Astin's Theory of Development in Higher Education

As mentioned in Chapter One, Alexander Astin is one of the most commonly referenced researchers in regards to student engagement. He has done research on the subject for over 40 years and his findings have proven time and time again that engagement leads to positive outcomes for students and colleges alike.

In his 1983 article, *Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education*, Astin explored the psychological effects of student engagement on success and satisfaction. He began his article by giving five postulates of his involvement theory. First, that involvement could be manifested in different ways by investing "physical and psychological energy in various objects" (Astin, 1984, p. 519). These objects, Astin claimed, could range from a general experience to studying for an exam. Second, that “involvement occurs along a continuum”, which allows different students to invest different amounts of effort and time into different objects at any given time (p. 519). Third, Astin stated that all involvement has both qualitative and quantitative measures. This could be shown in the student’s psychological investment in their assignments, extracurricular activities, etc… and the actual amount of time used to focus on that given object. His final two postulates state that any gain, personal or education, from a program is directly proportional to the student’s involvement and similarly, the effectiveness of any program is reflective of that program’s capacity for involvement. Astin suggested that his final postulates should be used to design better educational programs (Astin, 1984). Altogether, Astin asserted that these postulates create a theory of student engagement that could provide student service personnel a roadmap to better provide for their students.

Pedagogical Theories

In an attempt to further embed these postulates in educational theory, Astin (1984) discusses three categories of pedagogy: Subject Matter Theory, Resource Theory and Individualized Theory. In discussing these theories, Astin hoped that the reader would be better able to apply the ideas of student involvement to better shape the student’s developmental outcome.

On the matter of Subject Theory, Astin described teaching as relaying information and learning is believed to be done by attending lectures and doing assignments. For proponents of subject theory, strong emphasis is placed on course content and learning pre-defined subjects. Astin argued that, at least in relation to student involvement, this model of teaching caters to motivated students and students who struggle can easily fall behind. Here, Astin claimed that students are encouraged to take a passive role “as recipients of information”, and this directly contradicts the goals of Astin’s engagement theory, or rather, the students taking an active role (Astin, 1984, p. 520).

Another theory that contradicts Astin’s engagement theory is Resource Theory. Astin describes the challenge of seeking a large quantity of resources but also striving to obtain quality resources. The primary problems with resource theory are finite resources (such as high achieving students and faculty) and “focus on the mere accumulation of resources with little attention given to the use or deployment of such resources” (Astin, 1984, p. 521).

Instead of focusing on the resources, Astin stated that educators should “focus less on what they do and more on what the student does: how motivated the student is and how much time and energy the student devotes to the learning process” (Astin, 1984, p. 522). Additionally, Astin explains that student time should be considered one of the most valued resources, as time dictates the involvement and the energy that a student can put in to his/her academic experience.

Individualized Theory, in contrast to Subject Theory or Resource Theory, takes an eclectic approach, mixing subject theory and resource theory to best meet the needs of each individual student. Astin claimed that, “the philosophy underlying most student personnel work (guidance, counseling, selective placement, and student support services) implicitly incorporates the individualized or eclectic theory of student development” (Astin, 1984, p. 521).

Astin explained these theories to demonstrate to the reader the challenges in promoting an engaging atmosphere. When administrators and student service personnel place too much value on content, they allow the learner to be passive in his/her education. When they place more value on resources, they often struggle with providing the right quantity of quality opportunities.

Thus, there is an inherit challenge in looking to provide a quality education and a quantity of educational experiences.

In this study, I will look at how different types of engagement affect the student experience. From a resource theorist's perspective, this can provide information about certain types of activities that can help to direct where resources might be better spent. From a subject theorist's perspective, this study can provide better insight into which extracurricular activities are better preparing students for success, and thus, which activities subject matter is most important in the student experience. To individual theorists, this information can be valuable in helping students make decisions that can better affect their opportunities for success.

Extracurricular Involvement and Environment

In addition to student involvement in classroom and academic endeavors, Astin (1984) also showed that involvement in other facets of the student experience are beneficial. Astin described his longitudinal studies, which showed that living on campus and joining social clubs, such as fraternities or sororities or other extracurricular activities, reduced a student's risk of dropping out. Even more so, students who held a part-time, on-campus job were more likely to be retained.

Similarly, Astin (1984) described school environment, in way of atmosphere and fit, as playing a role in retention. Community colleges, where students generally attend part-time and commute, had far higher drop-out rates than traditional four year colleges. In addition, students who identified with characteristics of their school (religion, race, etc…), were more likely to persist than those who do not, Astin claims, because they are more likely to become involved if they identify with their school.

Summary Empirical Research Findings

To summarize and support Astin's theory, he referred to a longitudinal study that incorporated 200,000 students and examined many facets of the student experience. After analyzing the data, he found that "nearly all forms of student involvement are associated with greater than average changes in entering freshman characteristics" (p. 527). Much like his theory asserted, Astin found that overall involvement increases students' chances of persisting and expressing satisfaction with their undergraduate experience. Additionally, students found to be more involved had also grown more in "competency, self-esteem, artistic interests, liberalism, hedonism, and religious apostasy", though these traits were strengthened through different forms of involvement (Astin, 1984, p. 527).

Astin concluded his paper with suggestions for peer groups, administrators and student personnel to incorporate different styles of involvement to best help students grow, and encourage student engagement in all forms (Astin, 1984).

The study discussed in this paper mimics the outline of Astin's longitudinal studies. Though the scale is much smaller, I have designed my analysis and summary in a similar manner to Astin, by looking at overall trends, and then examining significant correlations between involvement variables and numerous outcomes.

George Kuh and The National Survey of Student Engagement

Following Astin's theory of engagement, researchers began to look for a tool that could measure engagement by collecting data about students from diverse backgrounds at all stages of their college career. In 1998, George Kuh developed The NSSE.

Administered to over 300,000 students each year, NSSE surveys students from over 650 institutions from across the nation. Each student, or respondent, is asked over 120 questions related to student engagement, most being answered on a Lichert scale ("About NSSE", 2013). The survey, because of the high volume of respondents and the amount of data collected from each of those respondents, is incredibly valuable in examining the effects of student engagement on a broad group of students, across a wide range of universities. In addition to the survey administered to current college students, there are related surveys given to faculty and staff, and entering college freshman at the institutions participating in the survey. These additional surveys help to create an even more holistic view of student engagement.

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) complements the NSSE by "measure[ing] faculty expectations for student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with student learning and development" ("About FSSE", 2013). With a focus on effective teaching strategies and the opportunities for engagement provided by the institution, this survey provides additional information that can be helpful in examining perceived engagement opportunities (from the student perspective) and actual opportunities provided by an institution. And, "since more than 196,000 faculty members from more than 710 different colleges and universities have participated in the survey" ("About FSSE", 2013) over the last ten years, this survey, too, provides a helpful look at the environment of engagement at a broad range of campuses.

Finally, the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) is administered to entering college students. The BCSSE “collects data about entering college students' high school academic and co-curricular experiences, as well as their expectations for participating in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year” (“About BCSSE”, 2013). It is often used in conjunction with NSSE results (from the same cohort) to create a more longitudinal array of data. The surveys combined offer a powerful view into the entire college life-span of a student, and the effects of engagement throughout their college career.

As the founding member of the NSSE, Kuh has been able to do analysis of its findings and offers many insights into student engagement and its effects on student success. In his study *Connecting the Dots: Multi-Faceted Analyses of the Relationships between Student Engagement Results from the NSSE, and the Institutional Practices and Conditions That Foster Student Success,* he breaks down findings from the 2005 NSSE. First, evaluating freshman year GPA, the study accounted for many variant factors including gender, ethnicity, family income, parent education level and high school achievement and more. The analysis showed that prior academic achievement accounted for the most variance in grades for first year students, and student engagement accounted for the next most variance, totaling 13%.

Regarding persistence, Kuh’s study found that involvement in co-curricular activities correlated to a higher persistence rate from first year to second year. Those who devoted five or fewer hours per week were two times less likely to retain than those who reported six to 20 hours per week. Those who reported even more involvement (21+ hours weekly) saw an even greater retention rate (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 21). The authors go on to cite Astin for both empirically and theoretically proving the link between extracurricular involvements and persistence.

Finally, covering the effects of involvement on senior GPA, results were mixed. Kuh found that co-curricular involvement had a negative effect on senior grades. Those with five or less hours per week of involvement had GPAs of .07 points higher than those who reported between six and 20 hours per week. However, even after controlling for prior GPA, global student engagement had a small positive impact (Kuh et al., 2006).

Kuh concludes that there are a host of pre-college characteristics that have been linked to first year college success and persistence, but when examined in conjunction with college experiences, the links between pre-college characteristics and success are weak. After controlling for these characteristics, engagement is a strong predictor of success and retention for students from all backgrounds (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 34).

Though the NSSE and Kuh's analyses have provided a vast pool of knowledge pertaining to engagement, there are limitations in examining extracurricular involvement. Where NSSE combines all extracurricular activities together, my study breaks different activities apart to fill in the gaps and help examine the question of what specifically matters in extracurricular engagement.

Pascarella and Terenzini

Like Astin and Kuh, many researchers have sought to prove that student involvement plays a critical role in student success and student satisfaction. Because satisfaction and success are difficult values to measure objectively, many researchers are examining and analyzing different methods to prove a strong correlation between involvement and success.

While Astin's and Kuh's work focused primarily on engagement and its effects on student outcomes, researchers Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini approach the subject from an entirely different perspective; not how engagement affects the student, but how college affects the student. And though their purpose is not intentionally to examine student engagement, their findings through this avenue offer insights into the role engagement plays in the college experience.

In Terenzini and Pascarella's paper *Living with myths* (1995), they explore myths present in higher education that they uncovered while doing research of over 2600 books and articles for their own study. Among other myths that they disproved, they offer "Myth Number 5: Students' academic and non-academic experiences are separate and unrelated areas of influence on learning" (p. 1).They stress the importance of faculty and staff playing a role both in and out of the classroom. "Evidence suggests that a majority of the important changes that occur during college are probably the cumulative result of a set of interrelated and mutually supporting experiences, in class and out" (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1995, p. 1).

They finish their paper by calling for institutions to examine their programs, and connecting the realms of extracurricular, or "out-of-class", experiences and curricular, in-class, experiences. They argue that many collegiate program structures are the outcome of budgetary restraints and politics and not from the actual way students learn. They assert that institutions must reorganize and change their mindsets to capitalize on the fact that students learn and are influenced, not only within the classroom, but in all realms of their collegiate experience. They finish this discussion with the suggestion that academic and student affairs divisions begin to work together to create an interrelated learning experience (Terenzini and Pascarella,1995, p. 3). The study in this paper stems directly from that need to create collaboration, and seeks to provide information that can be valuable in determining which extracurricular activities have more significant impact on the student experience.

Research Question

Though only three sources have been cited thoroughly in this chapter, it should be noted that volumes of research have been published on the subject of student engagement and the majority of findings show similar results. Based on the findings of Astin and his colleagues, student engagement has proven to be a factor to success and satisfaction for collegiate students at numerous institutions. And, as colleges look to strengthen the value of their degrees, they must consider that it is imperative to include involvement as a retention and satisfaction measure.
If we consider Astin's Developmental Theory (1984), we can see that school environment plays an integral role in allowing a student to become engaged and active in his or her academic and social experiences. In examining numerous types of involvement, Astin found that different forms of involvement yield different results in a student's growth. To finalize his theory, Astin provides suggestions for students, administrators and services personnel to offer more involvement opportunities at their institutions.

In looking to define involvement in measurable terms, I have examined Kuh et al.'s (2006) NSSE analyses which provided a quantitative analysis of student engagement. These quantitative results showed benefits to engagement in all three success factors that were considered. There appears to be a balance between social and academic involvement that can affect student outcomes.

Finally, I examined Terenzini and Pascarella, who suggest that learning happens most effectively when there is a mix between in-class and out-of-class experiences. These researchers suggested that change must stem from administration action to combine academic and student affairs, in order to best accommodate to how students actually learn.

Given Astin's broad definition of involvement, there is much research left to be done to determine which facets of student involvement most improve a student's chance for persistence, success and satisfaction with his or her college experience. This study seeks to close that gap in knowledge and to provide a better insight into what matters in extracurricular activities.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

My purpose with the present research was to examine the link between student engagement and its effects on student satisfaction and student success. In this chapter, I discuss the process in which I obtained pre-existing data to analyze the effect of different types engagement on student outcomes. I further describe how these data were categorized and the statistical methods applied for the analysis.

Hypothesis

It is my hypothesis that a strong positive correlation will exist between involvement and student success and satisfaction. Furthermore, I suggest that there will be a strong correlation between certain types of involvement and student outcomes.

Setting and Participants

Participants in this study were enrollees of a small liberal arts school, which is referred to as Engagement University (pseudonym). Engagement University is a selective institution, where, on average, nearly two-thirds of students in the incoming class were in the top 20% of their high school class. Freshman students have an average incoming high school GPA of 3.5. The average GPA of graduating seniors in this set was 3.230.

All participants in this study were members of the 2008 cohort and the Spring 2012 graduating class. The incoming freshman class of 2008 contained just over 400 students, of which, 225 graduated in 2012. These 225 students are the primary group of this study.

Research Design

This research aims to examine correlations between student outcomes and student involvement. I examined the relationship the relationship. I compared involvement with each outcome and used a Pearson's correlation coefficient to gauge the strength of the relationship.

Pearson's correlation coefficients (r values) are used to measure strength of linear relationships between two variables on a scatter plot. R values are between -1 and 1, and values close to 0 denote weak linear relationships, whereas values closer to -1 or 1 denote strong linear relationships. Relationships are considered strong if their absolute r value is above 0.7 and relationships are considered weak if the absolute r value is less than 0.3.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Engagement University collects participation data from all student organizations while students are enrolled. Data was obtained from three identifiable sources and linked together to create a holistic view of the participants. From this data I was able to obtain multiple subsets in which I examined links and correlations between involvement and outcomes.

For this study, the input variables were involvement measurements. I determined a student's involvement level by the number of activities a student was involved in, as well as the variety of activities in which the student participated.

In regards to measuring *satisfaction* as an outcome, I relied on pre-existing graduate surveys where each alumnus was asked about his or her satisfaction. To examine the outcome of *success*, I needed to define success in measurable terms. To do so, I chose three outcomes that might denote student success: Grade Point Average (academic success) and job placement and job preparedness (post-graduate success). Each of these outcomes is measurable and the data is obtainable through different tools and surveys administered by Engagement University. Below, each of these measures is described in further detail.

Student satisfaction survey

My first source of data was a satisfaction survey administered annually to graduates of the previous year by Engagement University's Alumni Association. The Alumni Association at Engagement University created the survey to collect data about student outcomes and satisfaction. They attempt to reach all graduates from the prior year via phone and the caller administers the survey. Those that they are unable to reach are sent an email with a link to the survey.

An attempt is made to reach all graduates and the response rate for this survey in 2012 was 26%, which is equivalent to 89 student responses. The survey is comprised of 20 questions focusing on the graduate's satisfaction and job placement. Students are asked to classify their current position among options such as Full-Time Employed, Part-Time Employed, Graduate Student, Volunteer, etc… If employed, the graduate is asked whether the employment is within his/her field of study, what his/her compensation is, and finally, whether or not the graduate believes Engagement University adequately prepared him/her for his/her job.

The data for this survey was delivered as a row for each participant with columns corresponding to each of his/her answers. Therefore, I was able to examine the satisfaction ratings and employment data in conjunction with each student and his/her specific involvement.

In my original research plan, I planned to obtain results from both the 2011 and 2012 graduating classes. When I began to collect data, however, I found out that, due to a different survey collection tool, 2011 results would not contain any identifiable information. Therefore, I would be unable to link the survey results to any academic or involvement data, rendering the results of the survey unworkable in this study. Therefore, the Survey Subset in this study contains 89 students for the 2012 graduating class.

Student organization data

Each spring, the Alumni Association at Engagement University also collects data about student organization involvement. Each student organization leader is sent an email requesting a list of participants in their particular organization. Leaders then compile a list of active members in that organization and submit the list to the Alumni Association. When the graduating class is announced, the Alumni Association creates a record for each graduate and archives the a activities he/she took part in over his/her career.

I shall note here that that many organization leaders fail to report their membership, or submit incomplete lists of their members. This is especially true for larger student organizations where it is difficult to determine attendance and participation. These lists, however, are the only recorded participation in student organizations and gave fairly accurate information for those who were actively involved in organizations.

Even with this limitation, data indicated that 66% of the 2012 graduating class have involvement records, which equates to 225 members in the Involvement Subset. Within these records, 159 students who have recorded post-graduate records, and the 89 students who submitted the Satisfaction Survey. It is worth noting that the Survey Subset and Post-Graduate subset are proper subsets of the Involvement Subset, meaning all graduates who submitted a survey or have post-graduate records also have an involvement record.

Table 1
Student Organization Classifications

Classification	Description	Example Clubs	Number of Clubs within Classification
Academic	A student club or organization that is directly aligned with a specific major	Math Club, Biology Club, Anthropology Club	24
Active	A student club or organization that's purpose is active or athletic, but the activity is not a varsity or intramural sport	Martial Arts Club, Running Club, Dance Ensemble	15
Athletic	A varsity athletic team or intramural sport	Football Team, Women's Soccer, Intramural Basketball	19
Identity	A student club or organization that's purpose is to explore identity or culture	Black Student Union, E-Quality, Women of Color	11
Leadership	A student position in committees, campus leadership or governance.	Student Government, Community Advisors, Orientation Leaders	16
Musical	A musical group	Band, Choir, Orchestra	6
Newspaper	A student run literary publication	Campus Newspapers	3
Religious	A student club or organization that's purpose is to connect members of a given faith	Catholic Campus Ministry, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship	3
Social	A student club or organization that's purpose is mostly social. A "just for fun" club.	Bad Movie Club, Big Friend/Little Friend, Food club	13
Volunteer	A student club or organization that's primary purpose is volunteering	Tutoring, Habitat for Humanity, Community Outreach	7
Work Study	A student work study position	Internships and other on campus work study positions	5

Within these involvement records, 122 types of involvement were represented, and I categorized those activities into 11 varieties, which I will henceforth refer to as classifications. These classifications and their descriptions can be seen in Table 1. Categorizing the activities into classifications helped me to analyze which types of involvement had stronger correlations to success and satisfaction. Students were given an involvement score based on the number of activities they were involved in over their career as a student. Some students had no activities listed, and others had up to 15 separate clubs and activities in their record. Additionally, they were given a score based on the variety of activities they were in. For example, if a student was involved in Math Club (Academic), Running Club (Active), Dance Ensemble (Active), and Food Club (Social), the student's respective scores would have been 4 (Number of clubs), and 3 (Classifications).

Since many students had more than one activity represented on their record, I also attempted to extract subsets of students with only a single type of classification (For example: the subset of students involved in only athletic activities). This, however, led to subsets containing less than five students for nine of the 11 classification groups. Because of small sample populations, I decided to proceed with my analysis of the entire Involvement Subset as opposed to these specific classification groups. So, it should be noted that many students have involvement in multiple classifications. The average breadth of involvement will be examined more closely in the following chapter.

Academic data

Data about each student's final grade point average (*GPA*) was obtained by querying academic records for the final terms in which the students were enrolled at Engagement University. Academic data was available for all students in this study (n=225). GPA was the only measure of academic success used in this study.

Analysis

The analysis of this data was modeled after Astin's longitudinal studies in which he examined each outcome in concordance with each of the input variables. In this study, I had three primary outcomes to examine; academic success, post-graduate success and satisfaction.

For the first, I compared involvement data with GPAs to determine what effect involvement may have on the students' academic success. Next, I compared involvement records with post-graduate records. I used employment or enrollment in graduate or pre-professional school as a mark of success, as well as feelings of preparedness. Finally, I observed the correlation between involvement and student satisfaction as reported by the Student Satisfaction Survey.

Summary

Using GPA and job/graduate school placement, I examined student success outcomes in conjunction with involvement data. To examine satisfaction in relation to involvement, I used student rankings of overall satisfaction and job preparedness ratings. I explain each of these correlations in detail in the following chapter, and finish this study with a summarization of the most statistically significant findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Analysis

In this chapter, I discuss the results of the analysis of student involvement and student outcomes. There are three main sections, each covering involvement and it's relation to a single outcome variable: academic success, post-graduate success, and satisfaction. I then break each of these sections in to smaller subsections to examine which type of activity classification had the strongest effect on the outcome. In the next chapter, I discuss the overall results and findings as well as general trends in the data.

Results

Once all data were obtained and merged, I divided in to three primary subsets. Of all Fall 2012 graduates, I was able to obtain involvement information for 225 students. These are referred to as the Involvement Subset. Fully contained within that set were 160 students who had records for postgraduate information (employment, grad school, etc). This will be referred to as the Post-Graduate Subset. Finally, within both of the above sets, were 89 students who completed the Satisfaction Survey. These students are referred to as the Survey Subset. For each correlation examined below, I used the largest subset possible that provided the information examined.

For involvement data, student data were aggregated and each student was given multiple scores: first, for the number of clubs he/she was involved in: second, for the number of classifications he/she was involved in. So, if a student was involved in two clubs from a single classification, his/her scores would be two and one respectively. Likewise, if a student was involved in two clubs, each from a different classification group, that student's scores would be two (clubs involvement) and two (types of classification).

Therefore, for each category of classification, students could be members of multiple classification groups. Table 2 below displays the average number of classifications that members within a classification were involved in. Results show that students involved in religious groups (n=8) tended to be involved in a larger number of group classifications. These students' mean classification involvement was 4.125, whereas the overall group mean was 2.533 classifications. Students in athletic groups (n=73) had the lowest mean classification count (2.945) of all classification groups.

Table 2

Average Student Classification Involvement Within Each Classification Group

Classification	n	M	(SD)
Academic	153	3.052	1.380
Active	64	3.719	1.527
Athletic	73	2.945	1.527
Identity	20	3.400	1.392
Leadership	51	3.941	1.333
Musical	40	3.800	1.522
Newspaper	14	3.786	1.805
Religious	8	4.125	1.246
Social	62	3.710	1.541
Volunteer	43	3.721	1.517
Work Study	42	3.786	1.423

Involvement and academic success

Not surprisingly, results of this study indicate that students who are more involved tend to have higher GPAs. Table 3 displays the average number of activities and classifications within GPA brackets. Results show that students with lower levels of involvement have lower GPAs in general, but the data suggest that the relationship between involvement and GPA isn't linear.

Table 3
Student GPAs and Involvement Measures

		Number of Activities		Number of Classifications	
GPA	n	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
2.00-2.25	3	2.333	1.528	2.000	1.732
2.26-2.50	6	1.500	1.517	1.167	1.169
2.51-2.75	21	3.429	2.336	2.333	1.560
2.76 -3.00	37	3.270	2.795	2.162	1.537
3.01-3.25	46	2.957	2.658	2.413	1.720
3.26-3.50	51	4.216	2.745	2.882	1.423
3.51-3.75	32	4.031	2.694	2.563	1.318
3.76-4.00	29	4.483	2.586	3.034	1.523

Using a correlation coefficient comparing average number of activities to GPA, $r = .214$. This means that a linear relationship exists, but isn't overwhelmingly strong. In other words, one can weakly conclude that the more activities a student is involved in, the higher his/her GPA will be. Similarly results regarding breadth of involvement and academic success, reveal a weak relationship ($r=0.194$) between number of activity classifications, and the students' GPAs (Table 3). This suggests that students who are more widely involved in activities across classifications may be more apt to succeed academically. Students in the lowest GPA band ($n=3$) averaged being involved in two types of activities. Those in the highest band ($n = 29$) averaged over three types of activities. Again, this relationship isn't overwhelmingly strong, but I believe that a larger survey population might strengthen the coefficient.

To further examine the data to determine which types of activities are associated with the highest GPAs, the data were examined in multiple ways. Table 4 displays each classification and the mean GPA of students within that classification. The mean population (n=225) GPA was 3.230. Examining the average GPA of each classification allowed me to conclude that students involved with student newspapers (n=14) have the highest success rate within the classroom achieving an average 3.460 GPA and those who participate in Identity (n=20) clubs tend to excel less with an average GPA of 3.163 (Table 4).

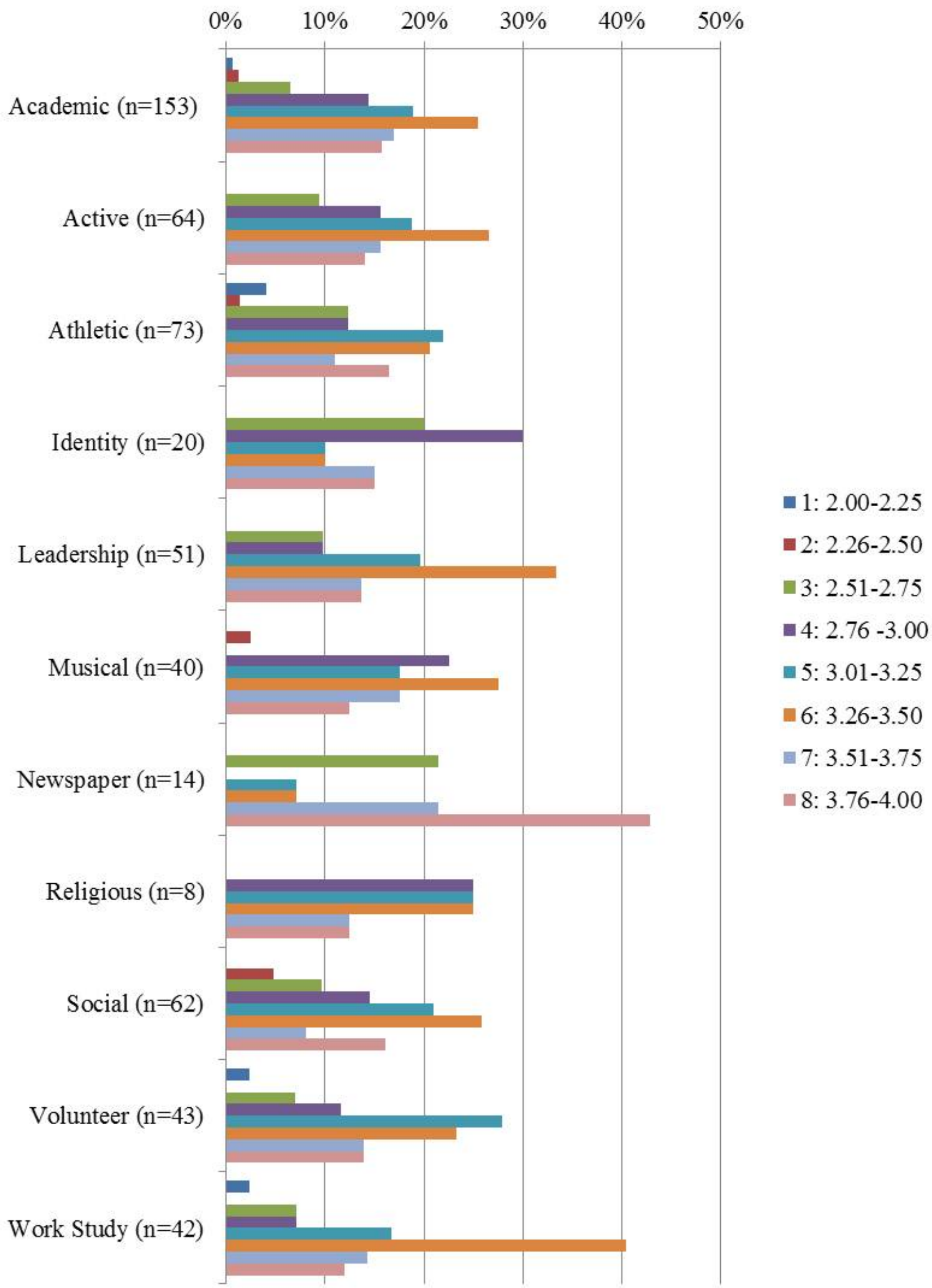
Table 4
Student GPAs and Activity Classifications

Classification	n	M	(SD)
Academic	153	3.305	0.386
Active	64	3.278	0.367
Athletic	73	3.221	0.454
Identity	20	3.163	0.448
Leadership	51	3.298	0.359
Musical	40	3.287	0.351
Newspaper	14	3.460	0.495
Religious	8	3.236	0.389
Social	62	3.227	0.412
Volunteer	43	3.281	0.399
Work Study	42	3.316	0.384

Figure 1 displays the distribution of GPAs within each club classifications. It appears as though athletic (n=73), active (n=64), and social organization (n=62)classifications have the most even distributions of students across the GPA bands. This means that students in these clubs tend to come from across GPA levels, and aren't clustered in a certain GPA band. Other classifications, such as newspaper (n=14), religious organizations (n=8), and academic clubs (n=153), have a higher concentration of higher achieving students. This means that lesser achieving students do not tend to participate in these clubs, since most of their members are from higher GPA bands. This can help to explain the higher average GPA of these classifications.

Figure 1

Student Involvement Classifications and GPA Distribution



Involvement and post-graduate success

To inspect post-graduate success, I examined two measurable outcomes from the Post-Graduate Subset (n=225): (1) employment or acceptance in to graduate school and (2) perceived employment preparation

To begin my analysis of post-graduate success, I first examined the average number of activities students were involved in compared to their post-graduate position. Table 5 shows post graduate position and the average number of student activities and classifications. The data show those students (n=113) who went straight to the workforce (full-time) participated, on average (4.106 clubs), in significantly more clubs than those who went to graduate/professional school (n=15) (full-time) (2.933 clubs). Additionally, it doesn't appear that the number of activities a student was involved in had any relationship to the type of job (full or part time).

Table 5
Post-Graduate Position and Involvement

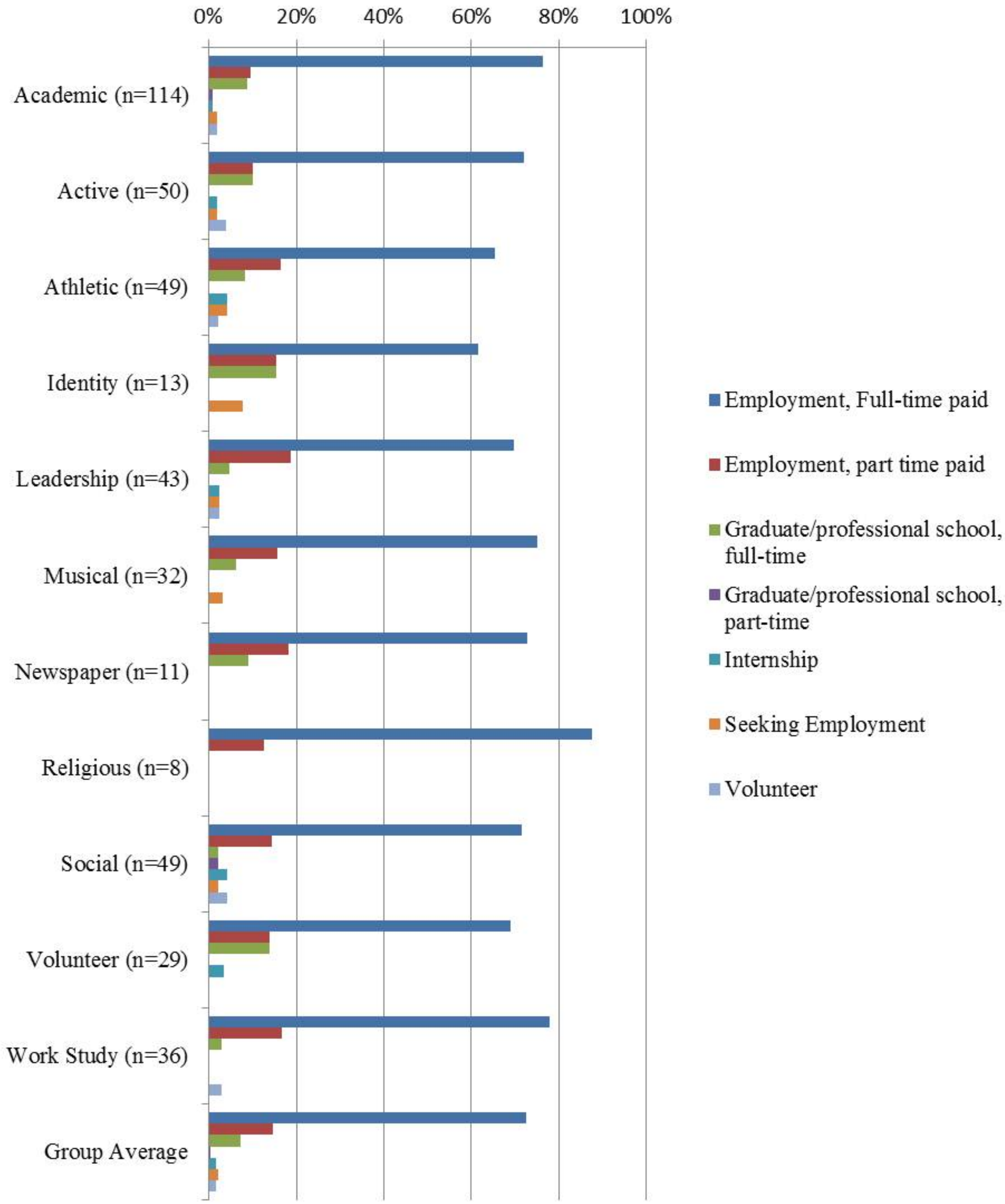
		Number of Activities		Number of Classifications	
Post-Graduate Position	n	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Employment, Full-time paid	113	4.106	2.889	2.788	1.628
Employment, part time paid	21	4.333	3.055	2.810	1.601
Graduate/professional school, full-time	15	2.933	2.017	2.133	1.246
Graduate/professional school, part-time	1	3.000	n/a	2.000	n/a
Internship	3	3.333	4.163	2.667	3.055
Seeking Employment	4	3.250	0.957	2.250	0.500
Volunteer	2	10.000	0.000	4.500	0.707

To conduct a correlation analysis, I must put post-graduate positions in parametric order. In this case, I ranked graduate school (part or full time) and full time employment as the highest outcomes. Next; part-time employment and internships, then volunteer positions, and lastly those still seeking employment. It can be noted that participants were able to choose multiple post-graduate positions, but if they did so, they were asked to note which position was primary at the time of the survey. I used the primary position for those graduates in the analysis. Using these numerical scores of post-graduate positions against involvement measures, $r=0.0643$.Therefore, the relationship between number of activities and post-graduate success is linearly very weak. In other words, the effect of student involvement on post-graduate placement rates was not statistically significant.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of post-graduate outcomes by activity classification. The largest majority of members in religious organizations (n=8) (88%) and work study positions (n=36)(78%) went directly to full-time employment after graduation where the group average was 73% of graduates going in to full time employment. In contrast, students who were members of identity organizations (n=13)(8%) or athletic groups (n=49)(4%) were still seeking employment within a year of graduation, where the overall average was 2%. The analysis shows that members of identity (n=13) and volunteer organizations (n=29) enrolled in graduate/professional school in higher percentages (15% and 14% respectively) than those in other types of organizations where the average percent of population attending graduate school was 7%.

Figure 2

Post-Graduate Outcomes by Activity Classification



Using a different measure of post-graduate success, I examined how prepared graduates felt when they entered their post-graduate position. In the Satisfaction Survey, graduates were asked, "How well do you think your undergraduate experience at [Engagement University] has prepared you for graduate/professional school or employment?" Table 6 displays student preparedness ratings and the average number of activities and classifications those respondents were involved in. Graduate responses (n=89) ranged from very well prepared to very inadequately prepared. There does not appear to be a relationship between involvement with graduates' preparedness ratings. However, a more discrete analysis shows a somewhat different set of results. Table 7 shows the same results broken down by student responses to how their current employment or graduate school field related to their field of study at Engagement University. When asked "How would you describe the relationship between your major at [Engagement University] and your current (primary) job", graduates were asked to choose from options of different by choice, different not by choice, same field and related field.

Table 6
Preparedness Rating and Involvement

		Number of Activities		Number of Classifications	
Preparedness Rating	n	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Very Well	37	4.351	2.850	2.838	1.444
Generally Well	41	4.659	3.167	2.927	1.634
Neutral	6	4.500	3.937	2.667	1.966
Inadequate	1	9.000	n/a	6.000	n/a
Very inadequate	4	3.500	1.291	3.000	0.816

Table 7
Preparedness Rating and Involvement by Field Relation

		Number of Activities		Number of Classifications	
Preparedness Rating	n	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Very Well	**37**	**4.351**	**2.850**	**2.838**	**1.444**
different field by choice	4	9.000	3.742	4.500	0.577
different field not by choice	4	1.750	1.500	1.500	1.000
related field	7	5.143	2.968	3.286	1.799
same field	17	3.941	1.853	2.706	1.312
(blank)	5	3.066	2.278	2.400	0.894
Generally Well	**41**	**4.659**	**3.167**	**2.927**	**1.634**
different field by choice	5	5.800	3.701	3.400	1.817
different field not by choice	7	5.857	3.716	3.571	1.397
related field	15	4.400	3.481	2.667	1.952
same field	13	3.923	2.397	2.692	1.377
(blank)	1	4.000	n/a	3.000	n/a
Neutral	**6**	**4.500**	**3.937**	**2.667**	**1.966**
different field not by choice	5	5.400	3.647	5.000	3.200
same field	1	0.000	n/a	0.000	n/a
Inadequate	**1**	**9.000**	n/a	6.000	n/a
same field	1	9.000	n/a	6.000	n/a
Very inadequate	**4**	**3.500**	**1.291**	**3.000**	**0.816**
different field by choice	1	4.000	n/a	4.000	n/a
same field	1	2.000	n/a	2.000	n/a
(blank)	2	4.000	1.414	3.000	0.000

Table 8
Preparedness Rating and Involvement in Relationship to Field Relation

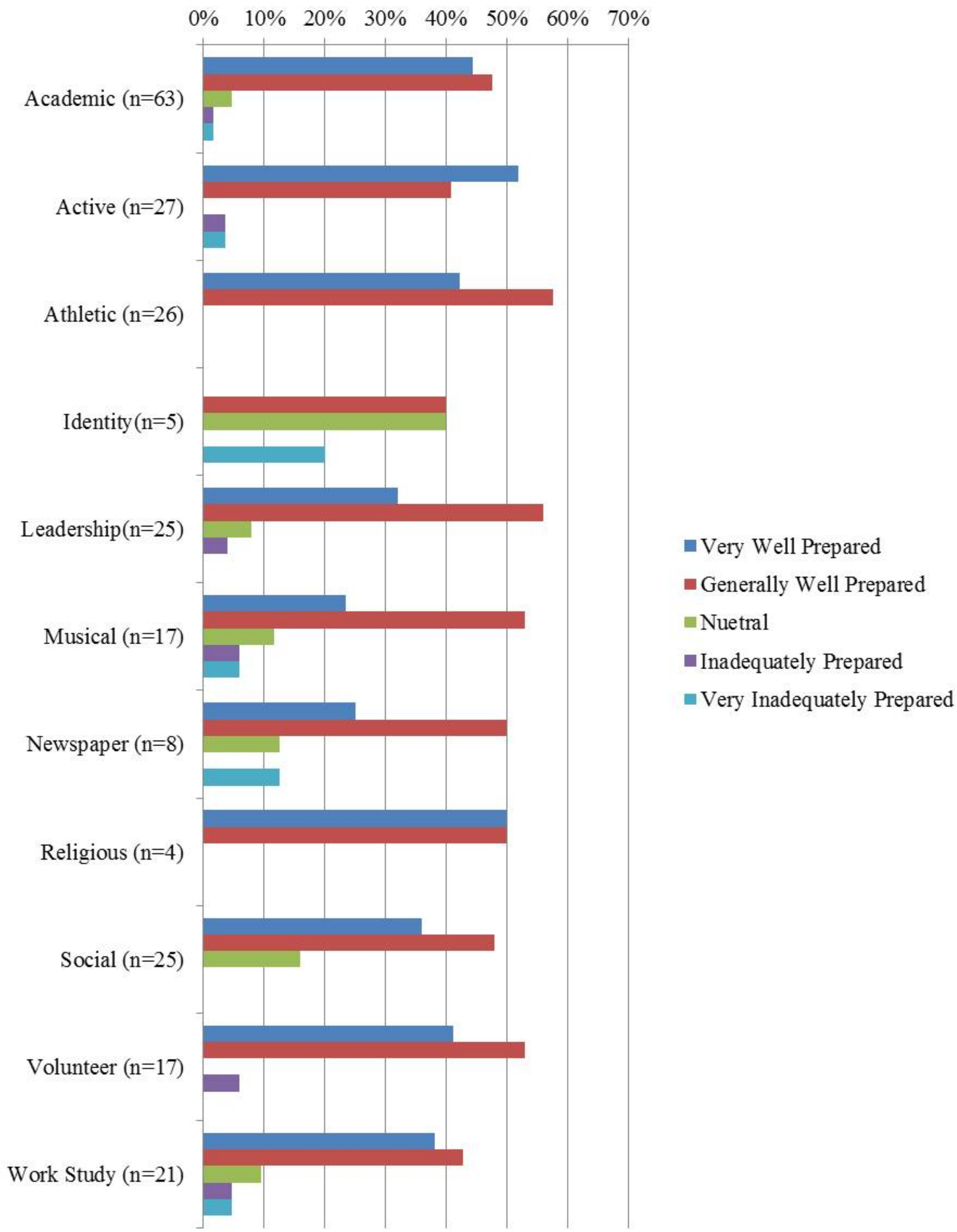
	Different Field			Related/Same Field			
Preparedness Rating and field	n	Activities	Classification		n	Activities	Classification
Very Well	**8**	**5.375**	**3.000**	**Very Well**	**24**	**4.542**	**2.996**
different field by choice	4	9.000	4.500	related field	7	5.143	3.286
different field not by choice	4	1.750	1.500	same field	17	3.941	2.706
Generally Well	**12**	**5.829**	**3.486**	**Generally Well**	**28**	**4.162**	**2.679**
different field by choice	5	5.800	3.400	related field	15	4.400	2.667
different field not by choice	7	5.857	3.571	same field	13	3.923	2.692
Neutral	**5**	**5.400**	**3.200**	**Neutral**	**1**	**0.000**	**0.000**
different field not by choice	5	5.400	3.200	same field	1	0.000	0.000
Inadequate	**0**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**Inadequate**	**1**	**9.000**	**6.000**
	0	0.000	0.000	same field	1	9.000	6.000
Very Inadequate	**1**	**4.000**	**4.000**	**Very Inadequate**	**1**	**2.000**	**2.000**
different field by choice	1	4.000	4.00	same field	1	2.000	2.000

Post-Graduate outcomes by activity classification results show that for students who responded that their current positions was in a different field than that which they studied (n=26), the average involvement both with number of activities (5.538 overall) and number of classifications (3.308 overall) was much higher in every preparedness rating level than those who reported staying in related or same field (4.095 and 2.746 respectively). This result can have numerous interpretations, but implies that students who are more involved in activities have a higher likelihood of pursuing careers or post-graduate degrees outside of their field of study than students who are less involved.

Figure 3 shows preparedness ratings in relationship to involvement classifications. The figure shows that, of students involved in any given classification, students in identity groups felt the least prepared for their post-graduate careers. Of the 5 students involved in identity clubs, only 2 (40%) students reported preparedness feeling prepared (Either very well prepared of generally well prepared). In contrast, a high percentage of students within in athletic (100%), religious (100%), and volunteer (94%) organizations felt prepared for their post graduate careers.

Figure 3

Post-Graduate Preparedness by Activity Classification



Involvement and satisfaction

To examine the effect of involvement on student satisfaction, the Survey Subset data were examined since the survey data contain the student responses about their overall experience at Engagement University.

Of those surveyed (n=89), all but one answered positively to the question , “In general, how satisfied were you with your experiences at [Engagement University]”. Table 9 shows the relationship between student satisfaction and involvement levels. Examining the average involvement level of the responders, there is a significant difference in the number of activities for those who provided stronger responses (4.625 and 4.667) than those who answered with more indifference (2.333 and 1.000) (Table 9).

Table 9
Student Satisfaction and Involvement

		Number of Activities		Number of Classifications	
Satisfaction	n	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Very Satisfied	64	4.625	2.973	2.938	1.413
Moderately Satisfied	21	4.667	3.230	3.095	1.868
Slightly Satisfied	3	2.333	2.082	1.667	2.082
Slightly Dissatisfied	1	1.000	n/a	1.000	n/a

Assigning the satisfaction ranking a numerical value, 1 aligning with “Very Satisfied” and 4 aligning with “Slightly Dissatisfied”, the r= -0.12 for satisfaction and number of activities. Similarly, r= -0.118 for classification of activities and satisfaction. These r values display weak linear relationships meaning the larger the number of activities, and the larger the number of classifications in which a student is involved, the greater his/her satisfaction rating after graduation will be. These relationships support the historical findings discussed in earlier chapters of this paper, however, the weakness of the relationships is surprising. I can guess that this weakness is related to the sparse data on the unsatisfied end of the rating scale, and therefore less representative data of the population as a whole. Without additional data for negative satisfaction ratings, the analysis must rely on biased data, which has wide confidence levels and higher standard deviations.

Further delineating the data, I examine the classification of involvement to better determine which types of activities are leading students to report more satisfaction after their time at Engagement University. Table 10 shows the average satisfaction rating of students involved in each activity classification. Of respondents, those in volunteer organizations (n=19), athletics (n=28), and active clubs (n=31) were the most satisfied compared to their counterparts. Those in newspaper (n=8) seem to be the least satisfied with their experiences (Table 10, Figure 4).

Table 10

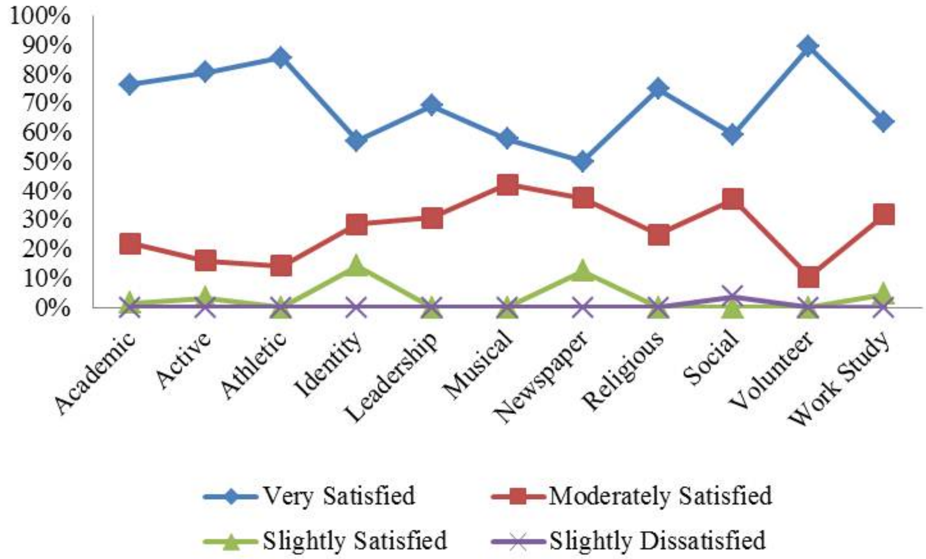
Satisfaction Rating with Activity Classifications

		Average Satisfaction Rating	
Classification	n	M	(SD)
Academic	68	1.250	0.469
Active	31	1.226	0.497
Athletic	28	1.143	0.356
Identity	7	1.571	0.787
Leadership	26	1.308	0.471
Musical	19	1.421	0.507
Newspaper	8	1.625	0.744
Religious	4	1.250	0.500
Social	27	1.481	0.700
Volunteer	19	1.105	0.315
Work Study	22	1.409	0.590

Note: Satisfaction ratings closer to 1 correspond to higher levels of satisfaction

Figure 4

Student Satisfaction by Activity Classification



Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the analysis of student involvement and its relationship to student success in college and post-graduation. I have also examined the relationship between involvement and student satisfaction. Overall, the findings appear to support the idea that a higher level of student involvement correlates to a higher level of achievement and satisfaction. However, the findings in all three categories are considered statistically weak since the correlation coefficients have an absolute value less than .3. In the next chapter, I will summarize and discuss my results and provide implications of the findings for student personnel.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of this research and summarize the implications for student personnel at Engagement University, as well as the potential of this research in the student engagement research landscape.

Educational Implications

The strength of the relationships between student engagement and student outcomes in this research were weak when compared to the findings of Astin, Kuh and Pascarella and Terenzini, however the primary purpose of this research was to fill in gaps in prior research. Specifically, my goal was to determine if certain types of involvement had a greater effect on outcomes than other types of involvement.

By combining alumni records with academic data and satisfaction survey results, I was able to gain a holistic view of involved students at Engagement University and their student outcomes of success and satisfaction. What I found was that different types of involvement tend to correlate with different types of student outcomes.

In terms of academic success, students who were involved in more academically oriented clubs tended to achieve higher GPAs than those in other student organizations. Students who wrote or edited the school newspapers at Engagement University had an average GPA .144 points higher than the next closest type of club. Students who held work study positions, were involved in academic clubs, or became involved in leadership were the next most successful.

Overall, the data showed that higher involvement levels, across classification types, correlated with higher GPAs.

In contrast, those who participated in more socially focused clubs tended to have lower GPAs, but in some cases expressed more satisfaction after graduation. Students involved in volunteering and athletics reported the highest satisfaction ratings with their experiences at Engagement University, as well as higher satisfaction in their feelings of job or graduate school preparedness.

Overall, it appears as though student athletes have the most satisfaction with their student experiences and preparedness after graduation: however their actual success measures do not reflect more success than those in other groups. Though they still have gainful employment, fewer athletes are employed full time, and their average GPA is on the lower end of club classifications. Also of note for athletics was the tendency to be involved in fewer types of activities.

Closely following athletes, students involved in volunteering reported a high level of satisfaction and a large percentage were employed full time within a year of graduation. Students involved in volunteering also reported feeling prepared for their employment or graduate school positions. Academically, those involved in volunteering had GPAs in the middle of range. On the opposite end of the spectrum, students involved in newspaper organizations tended to be the least satisfied and were neutral toward being prepared. However they seemed to experience higher levels of success, both as students with high GPAs and in post-graduate job placement. These students tended to be involved in an average breadth of activity classifications.

Students in musical groups and leadership organizations landed mid-level in almost every comparison that I ran; reporting average levels of satisfaction, average levels of post-graduate success and preparedness and both groups had GPA distributions that left their members' average GPAs slightly above the group average. Similarly, students in religious groups ended without overwhelming findings in any of the areas I examined. They reported mid-level satisfaction, and tended to be well-employed within a year of graduation. During their undergraduate careers, they obtained slightly lower than average GPAs, but report being well prepared for their positions post-graduation. Students involved in religious groups had the highest level of activity in other classifications as well.

Students in identity and social clubs ended below average in almost every outcome examined in this study. They report lower overall satisfaction levels than their counterparts and identity participants felt less prepared in their post graduate careers. They had lower than average GPAs when compared to the other classification groups. However, their after-graduation employment rates were average when compared to other students, so their low scores in the other outcomes don't necessarily reflect their overall success.

Members of academic and active clubs rate their student experiences highly, but their post graduate employment or enrollment in graduate school and their ratings of preparedness fall in the middle range when compared to the other classifications. Participants in these groups tended to be involved in an average breadth of activity classifications.

The above findings suggests that student service personnel could reasonably spend extra effort or put forth outreach to students in social and identity groups to help improve their experiences overall. It may be that students who join these clubs may be searching for a non-academic community due to lower achievement levels in the classroom. To help these students feel more engaged with campus, it may be worthwhile to engage them in academic clubs, which may help positively affect their success both within the classroom and within their satisfaction of their experience.

Student service personnel may also look to provide more services to students who are less likely to feel prepared and/or those who may struggle to find employment or graduate school admission after graduation. These students are generally doing well in school (by way of GPA) but are involved in few classifications of clubs, and fewer clubs overall.

Overall, it appears as though encouraging involvement in multiple activities across different classifications is beneficial for students, especially in terms of academic success. The strongest takeaway from this study is that involvement in a well- rounded range of activities, or involvement in multiple classifications, improves the student experience and leads to better student outcomes.

Recommendations for Future Research

With a Survey Subset of 89 students, sample populations became small when I parsed out certain involvement classifications. Because of this, I was unable to examine, in meaningful depth, the classification subsets singularly. For example: I was unable to examine students with only active involvement as compared to those with multiple types of involvement. Future research with larger populations might allow the researcher to examine those students and determine even more precisely which types of involvement are shaping the picture of student outcomes.

Additionally, longitudinal involvement data should be collected so that the relationship between student involvement and retention can be examined thoroughly. This would also allow for examining GPA in conjunction with involvement by term, and therefore give retention advisors better flags in determining students who might be at risk of doing poorly in classes, and or those who may consider leaving Engagement University.

Having longitudinal data would also allow for better methods in determining a measure of student involvement. Longevity of involvement and leadership positions within clubs all play an integral role in the involvement experience, and without this data, student involvement as a rating is fairly flat. This additional data could help to strengthen some of the relationships that were examined in this study.

The results of this additional research could have significant results for college administrators, as well as college student services personnel. In finding strong relationships, student personnel can better predict which students may need help, and can better market resources and opportunities to students. Additionally, the university can use their knowledge to push students into opportunities and positions that may lead to higher success and satisfaction, thus improving the University's image by both survey results and word of mouth.

Summary

In this study I have examined student involvement at Engagement University to determine which types of involvement seem to have a relationship to student outcomes. Through looking at trends in these data, I established certain club classifications and involvement indicators correlate with certain success indicators. Though there is further research to be completed, it is clear that the depth and breadth of a student's involvement plays a role in his or her experience and that this data can be quite valuable to student service personnel in providing a more successful and satisfying experience to students.

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