

Comparison between Student Athlete Identity and Academic Performance

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Introduction

There are incredibly high demands for student athletes who must attempt to delicately balance their academic and athletic endeavours. Our study will further look at the effects of associating with one role over another. This research is important as few students turn into professional athlete's meaning that a student centered approach could aid an athlete after their sport career ends.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine whether identifying more strongly as a student or an athlete will compare to ones academic performance.

Methods

•107 Douglas College Varsity Athletes (59 female and 48 male) from men's and women's basketball, soccer and volleyball as well as the baseball and softball teams filled out the below survey

Please check of the answers that best represents you

Do you identify as a: Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐

My GPA falls within: A (4.33-3.50) ☐ B (3.49-2.50) ☐ C (2.49-1.50) ☐ P (1.49 or under) ☐

My year of eligibility is: 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th ☐

Are you on the Performance Based Tuition Scholarship within Douglas College? Yes ☐ No ☐

Which sport do you play? Volleyball ☐ Basketball ☐ Soccer ☐ Baseball ☐ Softball ☐

Academic and Athletic Identity

Directions: Imagine that the figure below is a diagram of you and characteristics that are central to your sense of who you are as a person.

Please indicate how central to your sense of who you really are is each of the following characteristics. If a quality seems good or desirable to you but is not an important part of who you are, you should answer "Not at all central to who I really am" (1). Circle the response that best represents your opinion about each characteristics being central to who you are.

Not central to who I really am

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The central core to who I really am

How central to your sense of who you really are is each of these characteristics:	Not central	Slightly central	Somewhat central	Central	Very central	Extremely central	The central core
Being a capable student.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being satisfied with my academic work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doing well in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Getting good grades.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Having high GPA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a capable athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a good athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being athletic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being proud to be an athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being satisfied with my athletic achievements.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doing well during sport competitions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gender

Gender	Athletic	Academic
Males	6	4.5
Females	6	4.8

Note: Males scored higher on athletic identity than females but the difference is not significant (p value=.88). Females had a slightly higher average for academic identity but the difference is not significant (p value= .43).

Eligibility

Eligibility	Athletic	Academic
1st	6	4.8
5th	5.8	4.4

Note: First year students had stronger academic identity than fifth year students but the difference is not significance (p value=.33). First year students reported more athletic identity but the difference is not statistically significant (p value=.51).

Grade Point Average

Grade Point Average	Athletic	Academic
A	5.7	5.6
B	6	4.8
C	6	3.7

Note: A students reported stronger academic identity than B students (p value=.008). B students have a stronger academic identity than C students (p value=.0004). B students have a stronger athletic identity than A students but difference is not significant (p value=.28). B students had a stronger athletic identity than C students but the difference is not significant (p value=.93).

Team Comparison

Team	Athletic	Academic
Softball/Baseball	6	4.5
Basketball	5.4	4.5
Soccer	6.1	4.8
Volleyball	6	5

Note: Male and female sports teams are combined. Soccer identified most strongly as athletic while the basketball teams had the least athletic identity (p value =.014). Volleyball teams have the most academic identity whereas the softball and baseball teams have the lowest (p value=.05).

Discussion

- Similar to previous findings by Yukhymenko-Lescroart (2014), gender did not have any bearing on academic or athletic identity.
- Eligibility is not a factor when determining identity.
- Those with higher grade point averages have a stronger academic identity.
- This fits with our hypothesis as these individuals likely care more about their schoolwork and put more effort into their education.
- Yukhymenko–Lescroart (2018) corroborates this evidence as they found that students who identified more strongly as academics did better within their studies.
- No significant differences were identified when comparing grade point averages to athletic identity.
- It is important to determine why volleyball teams have such high academic identity to model this behaviour and why soccer has such strong athletic identity to see how this may be shifted.
- Limitations include a self reported survey as well as unclear separation of grade point averages.

Conclusion

Since having a stronger academic identity can aid ones career, it is important for athletic organizations to put additional programs in place to foster academic identity. Further investigation should look at why certain sports teams identified more closely as either athletes or academics. Overall, institutions should be cautious of producing student athletes who too closely identify with their athletics, instead ensuring that they are students first, providing them a greater chance of successfully transitioning to the world outside of sport.

References

Yukhymenko–Lescroart, M. A. (2014). Students and athletes? Development of the Academic and Athletic Identity Scale (AAIS). *Sport, Exercise, And Performance Psychology*. 3(2), 89-101. doi:10.1037/spy0000009

Yukhymenko-Lescroart, M. A. (2018). On identity and sport conduct of student-athletes: Considering athletic and academic contexts. *Psychology Of Sport & Exercise*, 3410-19. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2017.09.006