

The Effect of Greek Life Participation on GPA and Alcohol Consumption in College Students

It is no secret that many of those going to college plan on joining a social sorority or fraternity. Those who attend rush week are expected to put in copious amounts of effort to be admitted into these associations. Once admitted, many have social expectations, however, some might not realize the risk that accompany these events. According to one study, Greek Life membership is found to have a causal relationship with higher and more frequent alcohol consumption (Routon & Walker, 2016). Fraternity members were found to drink as much as 11 percentage points more than non-Greek affiliated students, and sorority members as much as 8 percentage points more than non-Greek affiliated students (Routon & Walker, 2016). By using scores from the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test- Consumption (AUDIT-C), a separate study found that those in Greek life had high self-reported drinking levels that surpassed what was considered safe by the AUDIT-C test (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015). The participants were scored on both the frequency and amount of their alcohol consumption. The data was evident in both male and female groups (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015). This conclusion was further investigated through the consequences of binge drinking. Higher rates of alcohol-related injuries, emergency room visits, and alcohol-related ^{problems} issues with law enforcement were found in students affiliated with Greek life compared to those unaffiliated with Greek life (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015). Even more prevalent were elevated rates of alcohol-related unprotected sex, sexual assault, and confusion on the consent status of sex amongst Greek life students compared to non-Greek life students (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2015). Another self-reported survey of Greek life

members cited academic underachievement, alcohol dependence, and drunk driving as negative side effects from episodic binge drinking (Hingson, 2009). These studies show that not only can joining a social Greek organization increase your likeliness to engage in binge drinking, but it can also increase your risk of harmful alcohol-related consequences. *Good !*

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While it is clear ~~the magnitude of the~~ relationship between Greek affiliation and alcohol consumption, ~~the correlation~~ *is also* the correlation between Greek affiliation and overall grade point average (GPA) ~~has similarly become more~~ apparent. In 2015, one study found only a small significant difference

in the GPAs of Greek members and non-members (Routon & Walker, 2016). Fraternity members were found to have a -0.05-point difference, *→ lower?* and sorority members showed no significant

difference in overall GPA (Routon & Walker, 2016). This was speculated to be explained by GPA requirements many Greek associations have that would necessitate members to maintain a ~~higher~~ *certain* cumulative GPA. However, a couple more recent studies designed to control for this possibility

arrived at the conclusion of a statistically significant impact from Greek life on academic performance for both males and females (Even, 2022; Field, 2018). This impact manifested as a lower overall GPA and fewer completed credits (Even, 2022). There was evidence that showed

students affiliated with Greek life tended to opt into easier classes and course loads as well (Even, 2022). These results have been found to be more substantial in the spring semester rather

than the fall semester with the theorized reasoning being *spring or fall?* ~~(that)~~ is when the members are most involved with recruiting events and other social events that typically include alcohol

consumption (Field, 2018).

these
Due to ~~this previous~~ evidence-based conclusions, I did not see any indication or reason that Birmingham Southern College would be an exception. I hypothesized that those who participate in a Greek sorority or fraternity on Birmingham Sothern's Campus are more likely to consume alcohol more often on average and have an overall lower grade point average (GPA) than those who do not participate. Our Statistics and Research Methods class designed and conducted a study to collect data about Birmingham Sothern's student body. The purpose of our study was to answer *questions* ~~curiosities and hypotheses~~ we had about our peers on campus, and to facilitate practice for conducting research.

Great Intro!

Method

Participants

95 Birmingham Southern students were surveyed for this study. Out of the 95, 78 identified as female, 14 as identified as male, and 3 identified as other. 71 were Caucasian, while 24 were a person of color. 53 reported as active members in a social sorority or fraternity on campus, and the remaining 42 were not.

Materials

Our survey was distributed, and answers collected through Microsoft Forms. The PY 101 class participants used Sona Systems; a platform Birmingham Southern uses for any experiments or studies that can be joined for class credit. To evaluate our data, our class used the program SPSS version 24. This program was also used for any statistical tests or analysis conducted by individual students. My analysis focused on 2 questions as my dependent variables. The first being "What is your current cumulative GPA?". The answer choices were: 1.0-1.49, 1.5-1.99,

commitment each week in addition to their academic commitments (Lopes Dos Santos et al., 2020). This increase of practice/competition time each week is a strong indicator of the ^{high amount} ~~increase~~ of stress ~~level~~ in college athletes compared to those who are not college-sponsored athletes.

A study discussing the impact of college athletes and academic outcomes indicated that participation in college athletics had a negative impact on academic outcomes but only by a margin of -0.05 on the GPA scale. This same study also investigated high achieving students which revealed that competing in college athletics had a negative impact on their GPA (Routon & Walker, 2015). A study conducted that analyzed the graduation rates in athletes and non-athletes found that athletes that are accepted into colleges and universities have, on average, lower GPAs and less impressive high school transcripts than those who are not going to college to play a sport. The school's motivation for doing this is to "produce winning teams" and "to pursue the bifurcated goal of athletic *and* academic excellence" (Ferris et al., 2004).

The central hypothesis for the current study is that student athletes will report a higher average stress level and a lower cumulative GPA than non-student athletes. A survey was conducted by the PY222 Research Methods class and sent out to the students of Birmingham-Southern College to get a wide variety of information on the demographics of the students as our independent variables and questions regarding studying habits, social media habits, drug/alcohol use as our dependent variables.

Also
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good
purpose
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Method

Participants

The number of participants for this survey included 95 under Birmingham-Southern College. Of the sample, 78 were female, 14 Caucasian and 24 were a person of color. The selection also had 36

survey was generated and sent out to the student population across Birmingham-Southern College's campus. Participants were asked to complete the survey. Some responses were voluntary while other responses were given in exchange for extra course credit. All responses received from the survey were anonymous. After the target goal of participants was met, the survey was closed and the results of the survey were analyzed by the professor and students of the PY 222 course.

Results

The data was analyzed using SPSS version 24. Independent samples t tests were used to compare student athletes to non-student athletes on frequency of alcohol consumption and GPA. There was not a significant difference between student athletes ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.75$) and non-student athletes ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.74$) on frequency of alcohol consumption $t(92) = .556$, $p =$

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.580. Student athletes reported about the same frequency of alcohol consumption than non-student athletes. Both student athletes and non-athletes reported alcohol consumption between once a month and once every 2 weeks. For GPA, there was not a significant difference between student athletes ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.53$) and non-student athletes ($M = 1.87$, $SD = .870$), $t(90) = -.008$, $p = .994$. On average, students reported that their GPA was between a 3.0 and 4.0.

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Great!

Discussion

As hypothesized, student athletes are more likely to have a lower cumulative GPA than non-student athletes. This hypothesis was not supported by the results of our study. College students have many duties and the top priority is academic success (Arnold & Liu, 2020). Many universities as well as the NCAA define academic success as what allows the student to participate in the sport or (sports) that they love (Arnold & Liu, 2020). The results of our study showed that there was not a significant difference between student athlete and non-athlete GPA