Perception of Student Athletes Among Peers

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Abstract

Athletic status effects classmate's perception of intelligence, diligence, and academic achievement for college students. This study will examine how involvement in sports affects the perception of academic success. The participants will view a picture of a college student who will be classified as either an athlete that plays sports in college or non-athlete that doesn't play sports in college. Then the participants will answer a short questionnaire rating whether or not they perceive the individual to be academically successful. Individuals who play sports in college will be rated lower academically against those who do not play sports in college. This study will provide support for whether or not students perceive involvement in sports to be associated with academic success.

*Keywords:* perceive, academic achievement, sports, involvement, student

Perception of Student Athletes Among Peers

Playing sports in college can give students pleasure and satisfaction, but they can even provide some students with a free education, which are both very attractive and understandable reasons for pursuing such an activity. Playing sports can teach students teamwork, discipline, resilience, perseverance, how to play by the rules, and how to accept outcomes one may not like (Emerson, Brooks, & McKenzie, 2009). By this student athletes should be able to apply this in the classroom. However, there is a low positive relationship with academic achievement and the image of being an athlete (Eksi, 2011). One study also believed college athletes would show low levels of academic achievement and success (Melendez, 2006). This was assumed to be true towards non-white college students since they believed their results would be lower than the white students (Melendez, 2006). What they found was the exact opposite. While this study provides information against racial stereotypes that are associated with sports and academics, this proposal is more curious about whether or not our fellow students are aware of this trend.

In Mickey C. Melendez's study of "The Influence Of Athletic Participation On The College Adjustment Of Freshman And Sophomore Student Athletes", all participants will complete questionnaires assessing background demographics, athletic status, and college adjustment (Melendez, 2006). 300 questionnaires were distributed to student athletes and student non-athletes from four predominately White universities (Melendez, 2006). The athletes were at a Division 1 level and were recruited through coaches and administrators that were interested in the study. The non-athletes were recruited through undergraduate classes and residence halls with the approval of the Department of Residential Life (Melendez, 2006). The results found significant difference between athletes and non-athletes and discovered that athletes scored higher in academic adjustment. In the issue of sex and ethnicity, they found that minority females reported higher academic adjustment scores than their peers (Melendez, 2006). This study does not support that athletes may be perceived to be less academically successful since they found that athletes had higher adjustment scores than non-athletes.

Another study by John Emerson questions the academic performance of student athletes who are at the NCAA Division 3 level. What he believes that might be an important confounding variable is that high-intensity, narrowly focused athletic programs can distort the experiences of student athletes and threaten the educational missions of colleges and universities (Emerson, Brooks, & McKenzie, 2009). Emerson collects his data from the College Sports Project (CSP) which is developed to be a long term process. Since you cannot access either a student's or an athlete's GPA, Emerson required demographic questions and added them with the athlete's/non-athlete's high school achievements (SATs and ACTs) and their college experience (how much they participated in sports and what their class status was) to create a predictable GPA. From that Emerson would subtract the differences from each other. What Emerson found was that there was a significant academic underperformance in athletes who were recruited to play sports compared to athletes that were not recruited to play sports. In fact, athletes that were not recruited did just as well as non-athletes (Emerson, Brooks, & McKenzie, 2009). This study supports the hypothesis that non-athletes are perceived to be more academically successful.

Aside from the previous studies that have been discussed, another study by Joy Gayles focuses on Division 1 athletes because of their recent accusations about low graduation rates, gross misconduct, academic scandals, and student athletes leaving higher education institutions in poor academic standing (Gayles, & Hu, 2009). High profile athletes, such as football and basketball players, also might have trouble in deciding majors since college might not be a top priority because evidence showed the degree aspirations significantly dropped while those of other student-athletes did not change (Leppel, 2005). However, instead of comparing high and low profile athletes merely on their non-athletic counterparts, they will be measured on their interaction with their non-athletic peers and their engagement as a student (Gayles, & Hu, 2009). Unfortunately, the athletes who play in the high profile sports such as Division 1 football and men's basketball had low scores of engagement and cultural attitudes compared to those in low profile sports (Gayles, & Hu, 2009). However this can create hope for change because this means that the interaction with other students is positively and significantly related to student positive cultural attitudes such as gender, race/ethnicity, sport, and academic major (Gayles, & Hu, 2009). This supports the hypothesis that non-athletes are perceived to be more academically successful just as much as the last study because it explains how athletes are dependent on their non-athletic counterparts to help them succeed in school since their athletic apparently hinder their ability to excel off the game field.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants will include at least 50 students (25 males, 25 females, age range = 18-20) from a small public university in Southern Virginia. The participants will be recruited from an online signup system. The study will give them one point in extra credit for the class as a compensation.

**Materials and Procedures**

The students will be seated and shown a picture of a college student, on a projector screen, wearing casual clothes and a backpack. One group will be told that the picture of the student plays sports on campus and for the University. The other group will be told that the student is not involved in any sporting activity on campus. The independent variable will have two levels and that is whether the participants will see the picture of an athlete or a non-athlete. An Athlete is someone who belongs to a college affiliated sports team (Club, Intramural, etc) during the semester or longer. A Non-Athlete is not involved in an any college affiliated sports during the semester. After the participants are told the description of the person in the picture, they will be asked to answer five demographic questions on a sheet of paper. The questions will be answered on a five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The dependent variable will be how the participants rate the student to be academically successful. The differences will be measured between males and females in the Athlete Group and the difference between males and females in the Non-Athlete group.

**Results**

The student who plays sports in college will be perceived to be less successful, academically, than the student who does not play in sports in college. The analysis used for the data will be an independent T.

**Discussion**

The hypothesis states that the student athlete will be rated academically lower than the student who does not participate in any sport. Research has shown that in order to provide support for the student athletes underperformance in college, researchers look to their non-athletic counterpart and measure the difference. Each student has the ability to succeed and to do well in the classroom, it's about time management. A non-athlete is not smarter than an athlete, he/she simply has more time to commit to studies. The relationship between sports participation and academic outcomes is more complicated than a one-dimensional causal relationship (Videon, 2002). Confounding variables such as long hours of practice and commitment to the team are understandable reasons that can hold the athlete back and produce lower than expected grades.

To better this experiment, the survey would ask for deeper demographic questions that would not be too personal, but would easily identify each participant as an athlete or a non-athlete to measure how well they perceive themselves and the other group. Also, so that participants would not pass through my experiment carelessly. Adding and collecting more pictures of real college students and create a slideshow would make the questionnaire more real. A larger sample size would benefit the study because their needs to be more participants that are athletes so that they could provide their insight.



*Figure 1.* This picture will be shown to each participant in the Athlete and Non-Athlete group.

Photo retrieved from www.google.com

References

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Appendix A

Demographic Information

Name: Class Rank: (circle one) Freshman / Sophomore / Junior / Senior

Age: Sex: (circle one) M / F

Appendix B

Background Information of the Athlete

Tyler is a sophomore in college and is finally getting adjusted to the new college life. John has been on the basketball team since last year and now plays intramural soccer and football. While he can still manage a steady social life, his sports and placement in the gym seem to fill up his whole week.

Appendix C

Background Information of the Non-Athlete

Tyler is a sophomore in college and is finally getting adjusted to the new college life. Tyler has the opportunity to be more involved for his university, but doesn't want it to take away from his own free time. Tyler also does not participate in any sport activity on campus.

Appendix D

Questionnaire

1) Does Tyler have good grades?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all No Neutral Yes Definitely

2) Do you think Tyler has enough time for school?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all No Neutral Yes Definitely

3) Do you think Tyler is too distracted from school?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all No Neutral Yes Definitely

4) Is Tyler a kind of guy you would ask for help on an assignment?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all No Neutral Yes Definitely

5) Can you rely on Tyler to do his part of the work?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all No Neutral Yes Definitely

**LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY**   
**Human Subjects Research Review Committee**   
**Committee Action Form**

(To Be Completed By Researcher)

Proposal Title: Perception of Student Athletes Among Peers

Principal   
Investigator: Benjamin Baker

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(For Committee Use Only)

[  ]  Meets the criteria for making research exempt from obtaining written informed consent and Committee review.

[  ]  Approved by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

[  ]  Approved with revisions by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.  The researcher(s) must provide a revised copy of the proposal to the Committee before commencing research.

[  ]  Rejected by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Committee (circle one) Member/Chair:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**Longwood University Human and Animal Subjects Research Review Committee**   
**Research Proposal Submission Form**

**I. Proposal**

All Longwood University administration, faculty, and students conducting investigations involving human subjects, and all other researchers conducting investigations involving human subjects at Longwood University, must submit a research proposal to be reviewed and approved by the Human Subject Research Review Committee prior to the commencement of research.  Research involving children should conform to the ethical standards found at <http://www.srcd.org/ethicalstandards.html>. **Some types of human subjects research are exempt from the provisions of state and federal law, however, even research exempt from these provisions must be reviewed by the committee to determine that they are indeed exempt.**  Research proposals submitted to the committee must follow the protocols contained in this form and include the following information.  *Check those that are included*.

[ X ]  A description of the research, including:

1) A Title,   
2) The purpose of the research, and   
3) The methods or procedures to be employed including descriptions of:   
    a) The human subjects and the criteria for including them in the research,   
    b) What is to be done with or to them,   
    c) Any possible risks, stress, or requests for information subjects might consider personal or sensitive, or which may be illegal, and whether or not the only risk to the subjects is the harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality,  
    d) the steps that will be taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects,   
    e) the permissions from other institutions, if required, that will be obtained.

[ X ]  A signed, completed copy of this submission form.

In addition, the research proposal may have to include the following documents.  *Check those that are included*.

[X ] A copy of the test, survey, or questionnaire, if employed, and if it is not a standardized professional diagnostic tool otherwise specified in the proposal.

[ X]   A copy of the written statement explaining the research indicating that participation is voluntary, if required. (See III. A. below.)

[X ]  A copy of what will be said to subjects before and after the research is conducted, if the methodology requires that the subjects be misled in any way.  (See III. B.)

[ X ] A copy of the informed consent statement that will be used, if required.  (See Sec. IV. below.)  A model informed consent statement can be found at the end of this form.   
    
 **II. Exemptions**

If your research falls into any of the categories of research below, it is exempt from the requirement of obtaining written informed consent and being reviewed by the entire Committee, and only 1 copy of the proposal need be submitted. All others must submit 3 copies of their proposal. If your project conforms to any of the following descriptions, check those which apply:

[ ] Research or student learning outcomes assessments conducted in educational settings involving regular or special education instructional strategies, the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods, or the use of educational tests, whether cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, or achievement, if the data from such tests are recorded in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

[ ] Research involving surveyor interview procedures unless responses are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.

[ ] Research involving survey or interview procedures, when the respondents are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

[ ] Research involving solely the observation of public behavior, including observation by participants, unless observations are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.

[ ] Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

# III. Special Types of Research

A. In addition to the above types of research that are exempt from the requirement to obtain written informed consent and full committee review, the committee may waive the requirement that the investigator obtain written informed consent for some or all subjects for the following type of research. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

[ ] Research in which the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.

In the forgoing type of research, the committee may require the investigator to provide the subjects with a written statement explaining the research and indicating that their participation is voluntary. In addition, each subject shall be asked whether s/he wants documentation linking him or her to the research, and the subject’s wishes shall govern. In the case that the subject agrees to be identified in the research, her or his written permission to do so shall be obtained by the researcher.

B. Some research methodologies may require that the subjects be initially misled regarding the purpose of the research, and so require that the consent procedure omit or alter some or all of the basic elements of informed consent, or waive the requirement to obtain informed consent. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

[ ] Research involves no more than "minimal risk" or risk of harm not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests, research could not practicably be performed without the omission, alteration or waiver, and the omission, alteration or waiver will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

Inthe forgoing type of research, the committee requires the researcher to provide the subjects with an adequate post-investigative explanation of the purpose and methods of the research, or explanatory debriefing procedure to be undertaken immediately after the conclusion of each subject's participation. The committee requires investigators undertaking this sort of research to furnish the committee with copies of the information that will be supplied to the subject before and after the investigation.

**IV. Written Informed Consent**

    Research engaged in all other types of research must obtain written informed consent from the research subjects. Informed consent means the knowing and voluntary agreement, without undue inducement or any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, or other form of constraint or coercion, of a person who is capable of exercising free power of choice.

    The basic elements of information necessary to such consent are:

 1. A reasonable and comprehensible explanation to the person of the proposed procedures of protocols to be followed, their purposes, including descriptions of any attendant discomforts, and risks and benefits reasonably to be expected;

 2. A disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures or therapies that might be advantageous for the person;

 3. An instruction that the person may withdraw his consent and discontinue participation in the human research at any time without prejudice to her or him;

 4. An explanation of any costs or compensation which may accrue to the person and, if applicable, the availability of third party reimbursement for the proposed procedures or protocols; and

 5. An offer to answer and answers to any inquiries by the person concerning the procedures and protocols.

    Informed consent must be obtained in the following manners for the following types of human subjects: (a) competent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person and witnessed; (b) not competent at the time consent is required, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person’s legally authorized representative and witnessed; or (c) a minor otherwise capable of rendering informed consent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by both the minor and her or his legally authorized representative.   
    Legally authorized representative means (a) the parent or parents having custody of a prospective subject, (b) the legal guardian of a prospective subject, or (c) any person or judicial or other body authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject’s participation in the particular human research.   
    Any person authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject’s participation in the particular human research shall include an attorney in fact appointed under a durable power of attorney, to the extent the power grants the authority to make such a decision. The attorney in fact shall not be employed by the person, institution, or agency conducting the human research. No official or employee of the institution or agency conducting or authorizing the research shall be qualified to act as a legally authorized representative.   
    A legally authorized representative may not consent to nontherapeutic research, or research in which there is no reasonable expectation of direct benefit to the physical or mental condition of the human subject, unless it is determined by the human subject research review committee that such research will present no more than a minor increase over minimal risk to the human subject.   
    Notwithstanding consent by a legally authorized representative, no person who is otherwise capable of rendering informed consent shall be forced to participate in any human research.   
    In the case of persons suffering from organic brain diseases causing progressive deterioration of cognition for which there is no known cure or medically accepted treatment, the implementation of experimental courses of therapeutic treatment to which a legally authorized representative has given informed consent shall not constitute the use of force.   
    No informed consent form shall include any language through which the person who is to be the human subject waives or appears to waive any of her or his legal rights, including any release of any individual, institution, or agency or any agents thereof from liability for negligence.   
    Human subject research investigators are responsible for obtaining written informed consent from research subjects in accordance with these specifications, and for obtaining permissions from any other institutions that may be involved in informed consent statement which conforms to these specifications.

    The Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee must be informed of any violation or alteration of the research protocol.  Continuing research projects must be re-approved annually.

    The undersigned researcher(s) indicate that the information provided to the committee is accurate and true to the best knowledge of the researcher(s), and that the researcher(s) have conformed to the above guidelines to the best abilities of the researcher(s).

Date: \_11/25/2012\_\_\_\_  Signed (legibly): \_\_Benjamin N. Baker \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signed (legibly):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signed (legibly):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If this research is being completed in partial fulfillment of a Masters degree, the thesis committee must approve of your project prior to submission of these forms. The signature(s) of your committee chair/advisor on the appropriate form constitutes acknowledgement of this prior approval by your committee.

Please indicate the address where you would like the approval form sent (along with phone # and/or e-mail address):

P.O. Box 191 201 High Street Farmville, VA 23909

Further information of the status of proposals may be found at the following:

        Dr. Eric Laws   
        Department of Psychology   
        Phone:  (434)395-2841; e-mail:  lawsel@longwood.edu

**DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH**

Title of Research: **Perception of Student Athletes Among Peers**

1. Purpose of Research: The goal of this research is **to determine whether students perceive participation in sports to be associated with academic achievement**. The research is being conducted as a **proposal for Research Methods**, under the supervision of  **Dr. Buchert**
2. Methods and Procedures:
3. Participants: Participants will be Longwood University students who agree to voluntarily participate in the research. The purpose of the research will be explained to the students and they will be asked to participate with the provision that they are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
4. Procedures:  Participants will be randomly placed into two groups. One group will view a picture of a student and be told that the student plays sports. The other group will view the same picture and be told that the student does not play sports. Both groups will be asked a short questionnaire after viewing the picture. The participants will rate the athlete or non-athlete on a Likert-scale.
5. Possible Risks: It is anticipated that participants will be at no physical, psychological, or emotional risk at any time during the research. Nor is it anticipated that participation in the research will place the participants at any risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage the participants' financial standing or employability.

              Assurance of Anonymity and Confidentiality: Participants will be informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of the research via instructions on the data collection instrument. Participants will also be instructed not to put their name or any identifying information on the instrument. When collecting data from participants, the researcher will immediately place the data in a large envelope, and will not examine any of the data until all data have been collected. Once collected, the raw data will only be accessible to **Benjamin N. Baker and Dr. Buchert**. In the event that any information provided by a participant should become known outside the research, it is unlikely that any harm would come to the participant.

**Longwood University**   
**Consent for Participation in Social and Behavioral Research**

I consent to participate in the research project entitled:

**Perception of Student Athletes Among Peers**

being conducted in the Department of Psychology by

**Benjamin N. Baker**

* I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and to discontinue participation in this project without penalty.
* I acknowledge that the general purpose of this study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation have been explained to me.
* I acknowledge that I have the opportunity to obtain information regarding this research project, and that any questions I have will be answered to my full satisfaction.
* I understand that no information will be presented which will identify me as the subject of this study unless I give my permission in writing.
* I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.  A copy of this form will be given to me.

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_        Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that if I have concerns or complaints about my treatment in this study, I am encouraged to contact the Office of Academic Affairs at Longwood University at (434) 395-2010.

Opening Statement: Hello, my name is Benjamin Baker. The title of this study is Perception of Student Athletes Among Peers. You will view a photo of a college student and then asked to answer a brief questionnaire. Please do not flip the questionnaire until I say so. If at any point in this study you feel uncomfortable, you did sign a consent form and you are free to leave whenever.

Debriefing Statement: You were in the Athlete / Non-Athlete group. You were told that the male in the picture was an athlete / non-athlete and asked to rate the individual on whether or not he has been perceived to be academically successful. Please do not discuss the nature of this experiment and you are free to leave. Email me for information about the results at the next poster session. Thanks and have a wonderful day!