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STUDY FINDS STUDENTS WITH PART-TIME JOBS HAVE HIGHER GPA'S

College students are the key to America's future, and a part-time job just may be the key to their own futures.

A new study released by the University of Denver reports that DU students who held a part-time job during the school year had a higher Grade Point Average (GPA) and studied more often than DU students who did not hold a job.

"From observing our friends who have part-time jobs, we assumed that this would be true, and therefore we were not too surprised at our findings," said Matt Bigelow, one of the three researchers in the study. Matt Bigelow, Nichole Garofalo, and Joel Thomson began their study with a survey of 100 DU students, asking them if they had a part-time job, what their GPA was, and how often they studied and worked. The researchers found that most students with part-time jobs had higher academic performance, based on having a GPA of 3.5 or more on a 4.0 scale, and studied more often, than students without part-time jobs. "I would have thought that the opposite would have been true; that kids would have lower grades because they would not have enough time to do their homework," said Kyle Block, a First-Year student at the University of Denver.

Matt Bigelow, Nichole Garofalo, and Joel Thomson are all First-Year students at the University of Denver, and conducted their research as part of their "Writing and Research" class. They have all had experience balancing part-time work and being full-time students at DU.

Part-Time Jobs and Their Implications on College Students

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Abstract

More and more students at the University of Denver are getting part-time jobs, and at the same time have an expectation to excel in academics on their path to their degree. Students with a part-time job could have the necessary skills to surpass students without a part-time job in the academic arena, despite the clear shortfall of time to work and study. This article addresses this subject in the analysis of surveys given to DU students dealing with questions on work and academics. The research yielded results demonstrating that students with a part-time job do, in fact, surpass students without a part-time job in their GPA, and do not seemingly appear to be affected negatively by the extra workload of having a part-time job while being a full-time student. Implications of these results and future research are also discussed.

Introduction

There is an increasing expectation that college students will have some useful experience before entering their chosen career field. Many students gain this experience through internships or part-time jobs, which help them gain the necessary skills they will use in their career. In addition, from our personal experience as college students, today's increasing cost of college tuition causes many students to seek out part-time jobs that will help them earn the essential money they need to pay their educational expenses. Since part-time jobs are time consuming, they have the possibility of taking away from time spent doing academic work, which may result in negative academic performance. To study the effects of part-time jobs on students' academic performance at the University of Denver, we surveyed students to determine whether part-time jobs adversely affect academics. From our personal experiences of holding part-time jobs during our first year of college, we have noticed that balancing time spent on school-related tasks and time spent on our jobs yielded positive results. Therefore, we hypothesize that part-time jobs do not affect DU students' academic performance negatively. Furthermore, we hypothesize that students with part-time jobs tend to have higher grade point averages and spend more time on their school work than students without part-time jobs.

Method

Based on our hypothesis, we determined to get an accurate reading of our theory we had to survey 100 students if they had a part-time job, how many hours they worked, if they felt their job interfered with their academic success, what their GPA was, and how many hours a week they spent studying. We also decided to ask their class standing and gender to see if there were any other non-hypothesized effects. Out of all these variables, we determined that our final

measurement unit for academic performance would be student GPA's and their work status in order to confirm or refute our hypothesis.

To make our variables more defined and clear, we characterized a student as having academic success by holding a GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. To further qualify this, we recognized students with exceptional academic success as having a GPA of 3.5-4.0, average academic success was a GPA of 3.0-3.5, and anything below 3.0 we considered marginal to poor academic success.

We surveyed students during the afternoons and evenings, primarily in the Johnson-MacFarlane Hall, a first-year dorm, with others surveyed in the Driscoll Student Center. Because of this, most of the students surveyed were first-year students. This could play a role in our results because it is more likely for upper classmen to have more time to hold part-time jobs, and have more experience in delegating time.

We defined "part-time job" as working under 30 hours per week. We assumed that no DU students would have full time jobs along with being a full time student, so we didn't feel the need to ask students if they had a full time job.

After administering our surveys, we organized our data in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, as illustrated in Table 1. We used the features of Microsoft Excel such as averages, standard deviation, and histograms to further tabulate our results in order to come to a conclusion about our hypothesis.

Results

After administering our surveys to 100 DU students, we determined that our data supported our primary hypothesis, that part-time jobs do not affect DU students' academic performance negatively. Furthermore, our secondary hypothesis, that DU students with part-

time jobs tend to have higher grade point averages, was also supported in our data. In a survey of DU students, participants ($N = 100$) gave their grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale. Those who did not have a part-time job ($n = 51$) had an average GPA lower ($M = 3.5$, $SD = .4$) than those students who had a part-time job ($n = 49$, $M = 3.7$, $SD = .31$). Moreover, the majority of students with a part-time job felt their job did not interfere with their academics ($n = 37$), as opposed to the students who felt their job did interfere with their academics ($n = 12$). These results are illustrated below in table 1.

Those Who do not Have a Part-Time Job		Those Who Have a Part-Time Job	
<i>Number of Participants</i>		<i>Number of Participants</i>	
Male	32	Male	22
Female	19	Female	27
Total	51	Total	49
<i>Mean GPA (on 4.0 scale)</i>	3.5	<i>Mean GPA (on 4.0 scale)</i>	3.7
<i>Standard Deviation of GPA</i>	0.4	<i>Standard Deviation of GPA</i>	0.31
<i>Hours Studying per Week</i>		<i>Hours Studying per Week</i>	
0 to 2	2	0 to 2	0
2 to 5	15	2 to 5	9
5 to 10	21	5 to 10	24
More than 10	13	More than 10	16
Total Number Surveyed	100	<i>Do you feel job interferes with school work?</i>	
		Yes	12
		No	37

Also, we asked the participants how many hours they study per week to help determine whether our hypothesis was proved or disproved. We found that more students with part-time jobs study either five to ten hours a week ($n = 24$) or over ten hours a week ($n = 16$) than those without part-time jobs, ($n = 21$, $n = 13$, respectively). Also, we found that more students without part-time jobs, study fewer hours per week, from two to five hours ($n = 15$) and zero to two

hours ($n = 2$), than those with part-time jobs ($n = 9$, $n = 0$, respectively). This could account for the lower average GPA within the students without part-time jobs than the students with part-time jobs.

Discussion

From the results of our research, and from the confirmation of our primary and sub hypotheses, we have concluded that DU students who work are often times more studious and scholarly than students who do not have a part-time job. Also, we have come to the realization that part-time jobs may help students delegate time more productively, help them gain useful organizational, responsibility, and discipline skills, and help them have a more active, social, and stimulating life. This in turn allows the students to get more quality work done in their college classes in a shorter amount of time, with positive results. Universities can use these results in order to suggest to their students that working during school is not an academic hindrance, and may actually help the student perform better. Parents can use these results to encourage their children to obtain jobs in order to be fully successful in their school work. Students can also use these results in order to falsify the misconceptions about having a job while being a full-time student. Additionally, we did not expect so many DU students, especially first-years, to have part-time jobs, as almost fifty percent of our total participants had jobs. Because of this, many DU students obviously have a positive outlook on having a job and see it useful to be employed while working towards their degree. Also, we did not expect the average GPA of the participants to be so high, as the average GPA of the students with a part-time job is 3.7 and the average GPA of the students with no job is 3.5, putting to shame the “‘C’ Average” standard. These unexpected results did not affect our hypotheses, as the hypotheses related two groups of students within DU, and societal norms would not affect one of these groups without affecting

the other equally. Future researchers may also want ask the non-job holders whether or not they feel that a job would affect their academic performance, in order to possibly make any further conclusions about the physiological mindset of working and non-working full-time students.

Appendices

Appendix A: The Survey

Student Research Survey

By completing the following questions, you are also granting consent for this information to be used as part of a research exercise that I am completing for my WRIT class at the University of Denver. Your participation is completely voluntary. The information you provide may be used in a class project. While profile information may be included in my writing project (i.e. your age, sex, class standing, etc.), your name will NOT be used.

- 1) What is your class standing? First-Year Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate
- 2) What is your gender? Male Female
- 3) Do you have a part-time job? (If no, skip to question #6) Yes No
- 4) How many hours per week do you work? 0-5 5-10 10-15 15+
- 5) Do you feel your job interferes with your academic success? Yes No
- 6) What is your GPA? _____
- 7) How many hours per week do you spend on school work and studying? 0-2 2-5 5-10
10+

Appendix B: The Survey Data

Class Standing	Gender	Have PT Job	# Hrs Worked	Do you feel Job Interferes?	GPA	#Hrs Studying
First Year	Female	No			3	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.3	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.96	2-5
First Year	Female	No			3.9	10+
Sophomore	Female	No			3.64	10+
First Year	Male	No			3.27	2-5
First Year	Male	No			2.6	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.65	5-10

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First Year	Male	No			2.93	10+
First Year	Male	No			3.55	10+
First Year	Male	No			3.1	0-2
First Year	Male	No			3.7	5-10
First Year	Female	No			3.5	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.37	2-5
First Year	Male	No			2.6	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.2	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.6	5-10
First Year	Female	No			3.5	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.9	10+
First Year	Male	No			3	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.14	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.3	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.9	10+
Sophomore	Female	No			3.92	10+
First Year	Female	No			3.9	5-10
Sophomore	Female	No			3.9	5-10
First Year	Female	No			3.81	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.84	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.83	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3.5	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.5	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.1	10+
First Year	Male	No			3.6	2-5
Sophomore	Female	No			4	10+
First Year	Female	No			4	10+
First Year	Male	No			3	0-2
First Year	Male	No			2.7	2-5
First Year	Female	No			3.96	2-5
First Year	Female	No			3.96	10+
First Year	Female	No			3.93	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.86	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.845	5-10
First Year	Female	No			3.83	5-10
Senior	Female	No			3.6	5-10
First Year	Female	No			3.6	5-10
Senior	Male	No			3.5	5-10
Junior	Female	No			3.5	2-5
First Year	Female	No			3.48	2-5
First Year	Male	No			3.47	5-10
First Year	Male	No			3	10+
Senior	Male	No			2.7	10+
Junior	Male	Yes	10-15	No	3.92	10+
Senior	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.89	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.83	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	5-10	No	3.8	10+
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.8	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	No	3.8	5-10
Graduate	Female	Yes	15+	No	3.78	5-10

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Sophomore	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.76	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.7	5-10
Sophomore	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.7	2-5
First Year	Female	Yes	15+	Yes	3.58	10+
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	Yes	3.56	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	15+	No	3.5	10+
First Year	Female	Yes	5-10	No	3.5	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	0-5	No	3.5	2-5
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	No	3.5	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	Yes	3.35	10+
Senior	Male	Yes	5-10	No	2.81	2-5
First Year	Female	Yes	0-5	No	2.25	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.93	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.9	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	0-5	No	3.99	10+
Junior	Female	Yes	15+	Yes	3.95	10+
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	Yes	3.4	10+
Sophomore	Female	Yes	5-10	Yes	3.8	2-5
Junior	Male	Yes	10-15	No	3.82	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.8	10+
First Year	Female	Yes	5-10	No	3.8	10+
Sophomore	Female	Yes	15+	Yes	3.8	10+
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	No	3.1	2-5
Sophomore	Male	Yes	5-10	Yes	3.3	10+
Sophomore	Female	Yes	5-10	Yes	3.7	5-10
Sophomore	Male	Yes	15+	No	3.6	2-5
First Year	Female	Yes	0-5	No	3.5	2-5
Sophomore	Male	Yes	10-15	No	3.9	10+
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	No	3.91	2-5
First Year	Male	Yes	15+	Yes	3.9	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	10-15	No	3.63	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	3.67	10+
First Year	Female	Yes	5-10	Yes	3.48	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	10-15	No	4	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	10-15	No	3.87	5-10
Junior	Male	Yes	10-15	No	3.82	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	No	3.9	10+
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	No	3.7	5-10
First Year	Female	Yes	5-10	No	3.6	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	15+	Yes	3.9	5-10
First Year	Male	Yes	15+	No	3.52	10+
First Year	Male	Yes	5-10	No	3.9	2-5