

Extracurricular Participation, Collective Self-Esteem, and Academic Outcomes Among College Students

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ABSTRACT. Participating in extracurricular activities during college has been linked with positive peer relations and academic success (e.g., Astin, 1984; Stuart et al., 2011). Yet, less research has focused on identity development and collective self-esteem within extracurricular activities, or whether such positive attitudes about one's activity membership are associated with academic outcomes. In the current study, analyses focused primarily on those who were in at least one activity ($n = 109$), who reported on friendships within their activity, perceptions of interdependence among members, and collective self-esteem within their activity, as well as their feelings of belonging on campus and grade point average. Regression analyses suggested that having friends in one's activity ($\beta = .33, p = .001$) and higher interdependence ($\beta = .51, p < .001$) predicted higher collective self-esteem, with a total adjusted $R^2 = .44$. In turn, greater collective self-esteem was associated marginally with higher feelings of belonging ($\beta = .20, p = .07$, adjusted $R^2 = .07$) and grade point average for those in fraternities or sororities (interaction $\beta = .34, p = .006$; adjusted $R^2 = .17$; simple slope for Greek organizations: $\beta = .42, p = .07$). These findings underscore the importance of considering different dimensions of extracurricular involvement (i.e., both whether one is involved, as well as positive feelings about one's activity), and provide recommendations to student affairs professionals as to how activities may be structured to promote optimal outcomes during college.

Keywords: extracurricular activities, collective self-esteem, belonging, grade point average, college students

Participating in university-sponsored extracurricular activities (e.g., fraternities/sororities, campus organizations, or sports) can play an important role in college students' connectedness to their university, peer relationships, and ultimately, their academic success (Astin, 1984; Stevenson & Clegg, 2011; Stuart et al., 2011). A majority of studies on extracurricular participation have focused on dimensions related to the number of activities, hours spent in a typical week, or duration of involvement, among other measures (e.g., Knifsend, 2018). Less understood, however, is how a student's attitudes and feelings toward their extracurricular activity

affect psychosocial and academic outcomes. The current study is one of few to address this dearth of knowledge by investigating the predictors and outcomes of *collective self-esteem* (i.e., the degree of positivity regarding membership, feelings, and attitudes about one's social group; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) associated with one's extracurricular activity group. Greater understanding of this topic will contribute to recommendations for student affairs professionals as to how to structure activities and programs to promote academic success in higher education, as well as for emotional wellness professionals on campuses to gain insight into a source of student psychosocial wellness.

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Benefits of Extracurricular Participation

In general, participating in extracurricular activities during college has been linked with positive academic-related outcomes, such as feelings of belonging on campus and academic performance. For instance, frequent involvement has been associated with positive perceptions of the campus community, including connectedness with one's peers and faculty (Elkins et al., 2011). Similarly, college students participating in activities for a greater number of hours per week report a greater sense of belonging on campus (Knifsend, 2018). Benefits of activity involvement also extend to academic performance. Involvement in Greek fraternities or sororities may benefit students' academic performance, especially for those later in their academic careers (Pike, 2003). In yet other studies, participating in activities for a greater number of days per week has shown to be linked with better grades (Stuart et al., 2011; Webber et al., 2013), as long as one is not involved for too many hours per week (Zacherman & Foubert; 2014). One potential explanation for these findings is that activity contexts can promote skill building (e.g., time management, emotion regulation) in ways that are linked with academic success (Clark et al., 2015). Although activity settings are outside of the classroom, such participation likely represents a contribution to the education of the whole student in ways that affect academic outcomes.

Collective Self-Esteem in Extracurricular Activities

Once college students are involved in activities, they may have different experiences, whether positive or negative, that affect the outcomes of being involved. Therefore, one question to ask is, do all students benefit from extracurricular activity participation, or do students need to derive positive collective self-esteem from their activities? Understanding this question is critical given that students may have limited time to engage on campus outside of the classroom, especially those who have nontraditional college experiences (e.g., older students, those who work full-time), and thus less time for impactful activities that may benefit well-being.

Understanding of students' activity-based, collective self-esteem has been guided by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and by research on collective self-esteem in general (e.g., Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). A social identity is comprised of one's self-concept characterized by their knowledge of membership, feelings, and attitudes about their

social group (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identities can be based on groups related to sex, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, as well as other group memberships (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) like the clubs or extracurricular activities one may join. Although adolescence is often considered the formative period for identity development (Harter, 2012), social identity development is ongoing during college due to new contexts, experiences, and a need to fit in among one's peers on campus (Stevenson & Clegg, 2011; Stuart et al., 2011). Given that many young adults explore and refine their identities into emerging adulthood (i.e., typically, 18–25 years old; Arnett, 2000), questions of collective self-esteem during this period may be especially relevant.

In addition to exploring and establishing social identities, those belonging to a group can feel positively (or negatively) about their social identity. Collective self-esteem represents the degree of positivity regarding membership, feelings, and attitudes about one's social group. That is, if a student is a member of a soccer team, how do they feel about their social identity related to being part of the soccer team? Importantly, collective self-esteem is derived primarily from group memberships, whereas personal self-esteem captures feelings about one's individual attributes. Collective and personal self-esteem are moderately correlated, but are considered to reflect distinct dimensions of self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Measures of collective self-esteem include four dimensions related to membership (i.e., perceptions of being a good member of one's social group), public regard (i.e., perceptions of others' feelings about one's social group), private regard (i.e., one's own feelings about one's social group), and importance (i.e., the personal importance of one's social group to self-concept; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Having high collective self-esteem is associated with positive outcomes among college students, including psychological well-being, with small effects found with personal self-esteem accounted for in the models (e.g., Crocker et al., 1994).

Collective self-esteem related to extracurricular activity participation is of interest in the current study given the salience of activities during college (Stevenson & Clegg, 2011; Tieu et al., 2010), and how such self-esteem may affect academic outcomes. Activity settings may be an optimal group context in which to develop positive collective self-esteem, due to opportunities for self-exploration and connecting with peers (Stevenson & Clegg, 2011; Stuart

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et al., 2011). For instance, a retrospective study of college alumni suggested themes related to self-confidence, networking, making friends, and the development of social skills within activity settings, all of which are factors that may promote identity development and positive self-esteem (Stuart et al., 2011). In turn, collective self-esteem related to one's extracurricular activity is likely to affect academic outcomes. Although few studies have examined this association directly, research on collective self-esteem within specific, out-of-class contexts (e.g., first year residence halls) has revealed associations with academic success, measured by a higher grade point average (Bettencourt et al., 1999). Further, in a study of Canadian college students, greater quality of involvement (i.e., affect, meaning, and relationships) in one important university program, outside of structured academic requirements and paid employment, was linked with positive academic, social, and emotional adjustment (Tieu et al., 2010). Although this study did not examine collective self-esteem per se, positive feelings toward a salient group context, such as programs or activities outside of the classroom, may generalize to adjustment in college more broadly.

Predictors of Collective Self-Esteem in Extracurricular Activity Settings

If having high collective self-esteem about one's place in their extracurricular activity is linked with positive outcomes, it would then be critical to understand the factors that strengthen collective self-esteem. In the current study, we examined relational factors within extracurricular activities (i.e., friendships within the activity, and the degree of interdependence of activity members), which are likely to foster positive evaluations of one's social identity. Within a group setting, the nature of interactions among group members can influence one's social identity. For instance, dyadic interactions (e.g., among supervisor-supervisee, or among peers) within work settings affect one's identification with the organization as a whole. Potentially, positive affect about one's relationships transfers to feelings about the organization in general (Sluss & Ashforth, 2008). In settings of higher education, friendships within activities may play a similar role in heightening a strong activity-based social identity.

In addition to friendships, the degree of interdependence of group members may affect identification with the larger group. In highly interdependent activities, group members must

collaborate to reach a common goal, whereas in less interdependent activities, activity members can operate largely independently to reach a common objective, if sharing a common objective at all (Van Der Veegt et al., 1998). Shared goals, characteristic of highly interdependent activities, are likely to amplify one's group-based identification (Hogg, 1996). Extracurricular activities may bolster performance in higher education through building a more salient identity connected to those activities, through mechanisms like activity interdependence. Thus, we also presume that greater perceptions of interdependence among the members of students' campus activities will promote identification with one's activity or group.

Current Study

Our main objective was to investigate how positive collective self-esteem related to one's activity is associated with academic-related outcomes. Four main research questions guided our study. To preface our main analyses, the first two questions explored the predictors and outcomes of extracurricular participation (i.e., whether one is involved or not) at a four-year university in the United States. Our first question was: What are the demographic predictors (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, and class level) of extracurricular participation? Given this question was largely preliminary to describe participation across our sample, we did not articulate specific hypotheses. Our second question, in turn, asked: How is extracurricular participation associated with academic-related outcomes? We examined grade point average, in addition to feelings of belonging, as theoretically important variables affecting retention in college (Hoffman et al., 2002). We hypothesized that participating in at least one activity would be associated with greater feelings of belonging and a higher grade point average (e.g., Knifsend, 2018; Pike, 2003).

Given our primary focus on collective self-esteem in one's extracurricular activity, the last two questions explored the predictors and outcomes of collective self-esteem. Our third question asked: What are the predictors of positive activity-related, collective self-esteem? For this question, we tested demographic predictors, as well as the relational predictors of friendships in one's activity and perceived degree of interdependence of activity members (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Van Der Veegt et al., 1998). Based on prior research (e.g., Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), we predicted that more friends in one's activity and greater activity

interdependence would be linked with higher collective self-esteem. In turn, our fourth question asked: Is positive collective self-esteem in one's extracurricular activity associated with academic-related outcomes? We hypothesized that those with high collective self-esteem would report greater feelings of belongingness on one's campus and a higher grade point average (e.g., Bettencourt et al., 1999). Exploratory analyses tested the type of activity (i.e., Greek organization, sport, or other campus organization) as a moderator of these associations, given research focusing on the type of activities and academic outcomes.

Method

Participants

The sample was comprised of 298 college students from California State University, Sacramento, a large, diverse public university in the western United States. Based on self-report data, the sample (79% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.39$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.60$, age range: 18–63) was 26% Mexican/Mexican American, 24% White/European American, 11% Southeast Asian, 6% East Asian, 5% Pacific Islander, 4% Latinx/other country of origin (i.e., non-Mexican origin), 3% Black/African American, 3% South Asian, 1% Middle Eastern, 0.3% American Indian, with an additional 13% classifying themselves as Other or Multiethnic, and 4% omitting racial-ethnic group membership data. For analyses focusing on collective self-esteem in an extracurricular activity, our main analyses, a subsample of 109 college students involved in extracurricular activities was analyzed. This subsample (72% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 19.87$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.12$, age range: 18–28) was 29% Mexican/Mexican American, 24% White/European American, 10% Southeast Asian, 10% East Asian, 4% Pacific Islander, 4% Latinx/other country of origin, 4% South Asian, 1% Black/African American, 1% Middle Eastern, with 8% identifying themselves as Other or Multiethnic, and 6% omitting racial-ethnic group membership data.

The university from which the sample was drawn serves mainly undergraduate students, and approximately one-third of its students are first-generation college students (i.e., student is first generation to attend college; California State University Enrollment Dashboard, n.d.). Most students live off-campus and commute to school (84% of current sample). Its intercollegiate athletics compete in Division I of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Measures

Extracurricular Participation

Students listed the university-based clubs they participated in during the academic year. Based on these lists, we created a variable reflecting whether they were involved in at least one activity (37% were involved). Of the activities listed, 28% were sports/recreation (i.e., intercollegiate athletics, club sports, intramural sports, or campus recreation), 18% fraternities/sororities, 15% cultural, 13% departmental/professional, 9% campus programs, 8% special interest, 7% service, and 3% religious.

Collective Self-Esteem in Extracurricular Activities

Those who were in extracurricular activities ($n = 109$) selected the one activity in which they spent the most time, on average. Those in multiple activities ($n = 35$) reported on the activity in which they spent the most time given that time spent is a critical dimension of extracurricular involvement (e.g., Knifsend, 2018), yet is conceptually distinct from our measure of collective self-esteem in activities. Sixteen items were adapted from the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) tapping dimensions related to membership esteem (e.g., "I am a worthy member of this activity"), private (e.g., "In general, I am glad to be a member of this activity"), and public (e.g., "In general, others respect this activity") collective esteem, and importance of the activity group to the student's self-concept (e.g., "The activity I belong to is an important reflection of who I am"). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and was averaged to reflect collective self-esteem ($\alpha = .89$).

Relational Characteristics of Extracurricular Activities

Relational characteristics of activities were assessed in two ways: extracurricular friendships and extracurricular activity outcome interdependence. To test extracurricular friendships as a predictor of collective self-esteem, students estimated the proportion of members (in their one activity) who were their friends. For the one activity in which they spent the most time, students also rated six items reflecting the degree of extracurricular activity outcome interdependence (Van Der Vegt et al., 1998) of members on a 5-point Likert scale (e.g., "In my activity, the things other activity members want to accomplish and the things I want to accomplish are compatible"; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*), which were averaged to reflect extracurricular activity outcome interdependence ($\alpha = .71$).

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Academic-Related Outcomes

Academic-related outcomes included feelings of belonging (Anderman, 2002) and grade point average. Four items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (e.g., "I feel like I am a part of my university"; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*), with the composite of these items measuring sense of belonging at one's university ($\alpha = .82$). Grade point average was measured by having students self-report their grade point average at their current university.

Demographic Variables

Students reported their age, ethnicity, and gender. Based on University classifications, ethnicity was grouped as underrepresented (i.e., American Indian, Black/African American, Mexican/Mexican American, Latinx/other country of origin, and Pacific Islander) versus all other groups, which was necessary due to small *ns* in some groups. Students also responded to several other items, including their class level (i.e., grouped as first year or sophomore versus upper division students; 33% were upper division).

Procedure

Students were included in the psychology research participant pool as part of lower or upper division psychology courses and earned course or extra credit for their participation in the study. All students enrolled in these classes were eligible to sign up for the research study and were asked to do so as part of the course requirement or extra credit. The campus Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento approved the study prior to recruitment. Students filled out a paper packet of survey measures in groups of 20 during 1-hour sessions. Paper dividers blocked views of neighboring participants to provide a sense of confidentiality. Trained researchers, who were graduate or undergraduate research assistants, were present to address any questions that arose during data collection. Upon completion of the

study, participants were given a debriefing form with additional information about the study, as well as contact information for campus resources (e.g., counseling services).

Results

The results section consists of two main parts. The main goal of this study was to examine the predictors and academic-related outcomes of collective self-esteem in one's extracurricular activity. To preface our main analyses, the first part describes analyses of the demographic predictors of extracurricular participation (i.e., if the student participated in at least one activity), and in turn, the link between extracurricular participation and academic-related outcomes ($N = 298$). The second, and main, part describes analyses of the predictors and outcomes of collective self-esteem in one's extracurricular activity for those involved in at least one activity ($n = 109$). We examined demographic and contextual predictors of collective self-esteem in one's extracurricular activity, and in turn, how such self-esteem is associated with academic-related outcomes. For all analyses, listwise deletion of data was used. Correlations and descriptive statistics (*Ms*, *SDs*) of main model variables are provided in Table 1.

Extracurricular Participation

Predictors of Extracurricular Participation

Predictors of extracurricular participation were tested using a logistic regression model, examining the odds that students were involved in at least one activity. Demographic variables, including age, ethnicity, gender, and class level, were entered simultaneously, but none were found to be significant predictors of extracurricular participation, $ps > .05$.

Outcomes of Extracurricular Participation

Controlling for age, ethnicity, gender, and class level, as demographic variables that may be linked with academic outcomes, two linear regression models investigated the link between extracurricular participation and academic-related outcomes. The model predicting feelings of belonging was significant overall, $F(5, 287) = 2.34, p = .04$, adjusted $R^2 = .02$. Extracurricular activity participation was linked with greater feelings of belonging ($b = .23, SE = 0.10, \beta = .14, p = .02$). The model examining the link between extracurricular participation and grade point average did not reveal a significant association, $F(5, 261) = .65, p = .66$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$.

TABLE 1

Pearson's Correlations of Main Model Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	<i>M(SD)</i>
1. Friends in activities	–					0.48(0.40)
2. Activity interdependence	.24*	–				4.13(0.53)
3. Collective self-esteem in activities	.38***	.60***	–			4.14(0.52)
4. Belongingness	.20†	.16	.20†	–		3.53(0.81)
5. Grade point average	–.10	.00	.05	.07	–	3.11(0.58)

Note. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Collective Self-Esteem in One's Extracurricular Activity

Predictors of Collective Self-Esteem

Hierarchical regression models tested the role of age, ethnicity, gender, and class level in collective self-esteem in Step 1, followed by type of activity (i.e., Greek organizations, which comprised 26% of the sample; sports, 26%; or other campus clubs, grouped due to a small n , 49%) and relational characteristics of the activity (i.e., friendships in the activity and activity interdependence) in Step 2. The model at Step 1 was not significant, $F(4, 76) = 2.06, p = .09$, adjusted $R^2 = .05$. Adding variables in Step 2 significantly improved the prediction of collective self-esteem, $F(4, 72) = 14.29, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .44, \Delta R^2 = .40$. A greater proportion of extracurricular friendships ($b = .43, SE = 0.12, \beta = .33, p = .001$) and higher extracurricular activity outcome interdependence ($b = .50, SE = 0.09, \beta = .51, p < .001$) were associated with higher collective self-esteem. Type of activity was unrelated with collective self-esteem (comparing sport to campus clubs: $b = .07, SE = 0.11, \beta = .06, p = .57$; comparing Greek organizations to campus clubs: $b = -.14, SE = 0.12, \beta = -.11, p = .25$).

Outcomes of Collective Self-Esteem

Lastly, the links between collective self-esteem and academic-related outcomes were tested using linear regression models, controlling for age, ethnicity, gender, class level, and type of activity. The model predicting feelings of belonging was marginally significant, $F(7, 80) = 1.88, p = .08$, adjusted $R^2 = .07$. Higher collective self-esteem was associated marginally with greater feelings of belonging on campus ($b = .31, SE = 0.17, \beta = .20, p = .07$). The model predicting grade point average was significant, $F(7, 76) = 2.38, p = .03$, adjusted $R^2 = .10$; however, collective self-esteem did not significantly predict grade point average, $b = .08, SE = .11, \beta = .08, p = .48$. Instead, participant age ($b = -.10, SE = 0.05, \beta = -.37, p = .04$) and type of activity (i.e., Greek organizations versus other campus organizations; $b = -.35, SE = 0.14, \beta = -.29, p = .01$) were significant predictors, suggesting that older students and those in Greek organizations had a lower grade point average than their peers.

Interactions of collective self-esteem and type of activity on academic outcomes were also tested. As shown in Table 2, a significant interaction was found when comparing those in fraternities or sororities with those in other campus organizations, in terms of grade point average. Testing the

interaction, analyses of simple slopes showed that for those in fraternities or sororities, collective self-esteem associated with the student's activity was marginally linked with a higher grade point average ($b = .46, SE = 0.23, \beta = .42, p = .07$), but this association was not significant for students in other campus organizations ($b = -.14, SE = 0.12, \beta = -.18, p = .25$). However, given a small n for fraternities and sorority members with complete data ($n = 22$), we consider these analyses largely preliminary.

In sum, collective self-esteem related to one's activity was marginally associated with feelings of belonging overall—over and above merely participating. Collective self-esteem was also linked marginally with grade point average for those in fraternities/sororities, compared to other campus organizations. Peer interactions within the activity, such as friendships and outcome interdependence, were predictive of higher collective self-esteem.

Discussion

Extending theory and research on extracurricular participation that has focused mainly on quantitative aspects of involvement (e.g., the number of activities or number of hours one is involved; Elkins

TABLE 2

Final Regression Models Predicting Academic-Related Outcomes

	Belonging			Grade point average		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Intercept	3.70***	0.13		3.14***	0.08	
Age	−0.14 [†]	0.07	−0.35	−0.11 [*]	0.05	−0.39
Male	0.11	0.20	0.06	0.21	0.13	0.17
Junior/senior/super senior	0.34	0.29	0.21	0.23	0.19	0.21
Underrepresented minority	0.19	0.17	0.12	−0.05	0.11	−0.05
Sport	0.10	0.21	0.05	−0.03	0.14	−0.03
Greek	−0.22	0.21	−0.12	−0.33 [*]	0.13	−0.27
Collective self-esteem	0.38 [†]	0.22	0.25	−0.13	0.14	−0.03
Sport x Collective Self-Esteem	0.03	0.46	0.01	0.22	0.29	0.09
Greek x Collective Self-Esteem	−0.31	0.39	−0.10	0.68**	0.24	0.34
adjusted R^2	0.05			0.17		
<i>F</i>	1.52			2.88**		

Note. Covariates included age, gender (with female comparison), class level (with first year/sophomores as comparison), ethnicity (with students not classified as underrepresented as comparison group), and the type of activity (with campus organizations as comparison). Underrepresented students included those self-identifying as American Indian, Black/African American, Mexican/Mexican American, Latinx/other country of origin, and Pacific Islander (38% of sample), consistent with the University's definition of this group.

[†] $p < .10$. ^{*} $p < .05$. ^{**} $p < .01$. ^{***} $p < .001$.

et al., 2011; Stuart et al., 2011; Webber et al., 2013), the current study examined if collective self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) heightens how campus activity involvement is linked with academic-related outcomes. The current investigation is one of few to focus on collective self-esteem related to activity involvement, as well as its predictors and outcomes. Understanding the experience of participating in university-sponsored activities, and what kind of involvement matters, is critical to recommendations to student affairs professionals about how best to foster campus engagement and student success.

Our main analyses investigated how activity-related, collective self-esteem was linked with feelings of belonging on campus and grade point average. Participation in activities was associated with heightened feelings of belonging. Among those involved in activities, links between higher collective self-esteem and academic-related outcomes, including belonging, were not statistically significant. These findings contrast prior research suggesting links between collective self-esteem in out-of-class settings (e.g., residence halls) and academic outcomes (Bettencourt et al., 1999). Interactions by the type of activity, moreover, were significant only for grade point average, suggesting a different pattern of associations for Greek organizations (i.e., positive, but only marginally significant) versus campus organizations (i.e., not statistically significant). Given the small *n* for these analyses, additional research is needed to replicate this finding. Additionally, although we tested for demographic differences in extracurricular participation (which we did not find evidence of in this sample), we could not examine these differences in collective self-esteem due to small *ns*. Examining effects of campus activities across groups (e.g., Do fraternities versus sororities differ in their effects on grade point average?) would contribute to further understanding of these findings. Together, these findings suggest benefits of extracurricular participation on students' sense of belonging during college, although collective self-esteem did not appear to play as much of a role in academic-related outcomes, as predicted based on theory and research (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tieu et al., 2010).

Additionally, one of our main goals was to understand how positive feelings and attitudes about one's activity are fostered. Students' interactions in their activity, including how many friends one has and the degree of interdependence among group members, predicted collective

self-esteem. Collaborating with other activity members to meet a common goal is likely to strengthen identification with the collective group (Hogg, 1996; Van Der Veegt et al., 1998). Consistent with prior research on work-related identities (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), moreover, the extent and quality of peer interactions may heighten a sense of identification and positivity about one's social identity within an activity setting. These findings underscore the need to conduct studies that focus on the experiences that college students have in their extracurricular activity settings, and how those experiences influence identity formation, in turn.

Limitations and Future Directions

Further research is needed to examine other measures capturing the experience of involvement on university campuses. First, the current study asked participants to reflect on interactions and collective self-esteem in the activity in which they spent the most time, if they were in multiple activities. Other criteria, like the relative importance of the activity (Tieu et al., 2010), may also help researchers identify one activity of focus in ways that are more relevant to understanding quality of involvement. Additionally, employing mixed-methods studies to discover other novel measures of the quality of activity involvement could be especially fruitful. Moreover, differentiating further between types of campus programs and organizations may be important to the questions examined in this study. Given our *n*, we were not able to examine the differences between campus organizations that may provide unique experiences, such as cultural, professional, or special interest oriented clubs. Lastly, although collective self-esteem might reflect one aspect of membership in a university-sanctioned activity, other aspects may be more relevant to academic outcomes and well-being. For instance, involvement may also include positive affect, meaning, and relationships regarding one's activity (Tieu et al., 2010), which are presumed to capture the quality or richness of one's experience in their activity. Other research has suggested that personal qualities like optimism may relate to a higher grade point average (Maleva, et al., 2014), and given evidence that personal self-esteem is linked with well-being (e.g., Crocker et al., 1994), it is important to consider these types of variables in future research. Examining the extent to which activities foster these personal qualities, and in turn academic success, would be beneficial.

Future research is also needed to consider indicators of academic success, more objective measures of our variables of interest, and the meaning of extracurricular participation among different demographic groups. Given that our measures of academic success were limited, employing indicators used in prior studies such as motivation, self-efficacy, resilience, critical thinking, retention, and institutional records of grade point average would be more consistent with current research on student success (e.g., Kim, 2015; Martin & Seifert, 2011; Reynolds & Wiegand, 2010). Particularly, all measures employed in the current study were self-reported. Additional measures of our variables of interest (e.g., researcher observations of dynamics within activities; institutional data on grade point average) would lessen bias. Moreover, as this sample was drawn from a participant pool in a predominantly female, undergraduate psychology program, it is unclear how these findings would generalize to college-aged men or nonbinary students. Given that some activities are gender-specific traditionally (e.g., Greek organizations, like fraternities or sororities), there may be differences in how activity-related identities are associated with academic-related outcomes that were unexamined in the current investigation. Future research is also needed to test if, for example, underrepresented students benefit most from being involved with and identifying strongly with campus programs (e.g., Baker, 2008). As the study currently stands with a smaller sample, it is unclear how findings would generalize to other majors or samples with more diverse groups.

Implications for Practice

This research has several important implications for practice. A critical first step is getting students involved in activities. A substantial proportion of college students balance obligations outside of campus, such as work or family responsibilities (Perna, 2010), that can make it difficult to participate. To make activities accessible to all students, it is important to structure them with a variety of opportunities to get involved. For instance, nontraditional students may benefit from club meetings offered at different times, ways to contribute electronically or from a distance, and organizations oriented specifically to the nontraditional student experience (Goncalves & Trunk, 2014). For students who are nontraditional based on their age (i.e., those over age 25), greater communication of opportunities and activities oriented toward the interests of older

students may heighten levels of involvement (Wyatt, 2011). Given greater feelings of isolation or a lack of fitting in among nontraditional students (Goncalves & Trunk, 2014), these efforts oriented toward these groups may be especially important.

Once students are involved in activities, activity leaders may focus on structuring the activity so it is a positive experience for all. In this study, both interdependence and friendships within one's activity were linked with higher collective self-esteem. Having a common project (e.g., painting a mural on campus in an Art Club) where activity members must rely on each other to achieve a goal could promote connectedness and identification among group members (Warner & Dixon, 2013). Recommendations for promoting positive group dynamics in activities, although less studied, are likely to align with research on cooperative learning. For example, activity leaders can structure activities to emphasize collective success, reinforce individual accountability, encourage support and positive reinforcement of other group members, scaffold development of teamwork skills, and facilitate opportunities for group processing (e.g., Smith et al., 2005). Findings of this study highlight the critical role institutions can play in strengthening academic success via additional supports available for extracurricular activities on campus.

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