The Effect of Academic Rigor on Sociometric Status and Subjective Well-Being

DeGravina, Aundrea

Van Slyke, Shea

The purpose of this experiment was to determine the correlation between a high school senior's academic rigor (number of AP/IB courses) and subjective well-being (the overall satisfaction with life and experience of positive and negative emotions) and sociometric status (the respect and admiration one has in face to face groups). With the recent increase in competition for college-bound seniors, due to a high demand for admission, and a lack of response to this demographic change from universities, as reported by Bound, Hershbein, and Long, students may feel more obligated to take a heavier course load in high school. The insights on the teenage mind will benefit a variety of groups: teachers, counselors, parents, and the subject. In order to test this, a survey was created that consisted of a compilation of scales—all indices of sociometric status and subjective well-being. The data supports the fact that the number of AP classes a student takes has no effect upon the student's SWB, PANAS, and Sense of Power scores until they reach the level of "6 or more" AP classes. According to the results, the optimal number of AP classes is two, a trend apparent in all the scales. An interesting finding was presented with question from the Big Five Inventory. Only nine respondants selected "Disagree Strongly" to the question, "I see myself as someone who is relaxed, handles stress well." Of those nine respondents, five are taking 5 AP classes, and two are taking 6 or more. This evidences that students who are not handling stress well are the same students taking high amounts of AP classes.

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