

## Annotated Bibliography on the Retention of College Students

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Allen, J., Robbins, S. B., Casillas, A., & Oh, I. (2008). Third-year college retention and transfer: Effects of academic performance, motivation, and social connectedness. *Research in Higher Education*, 49(7), 647-664.

The purpose of this study was to determine the roles of motivation and social connectedness in third-year retention. The researchers also investigated the relationship of first-year achievement with motivation and social connectedness. As part of a larger study, 14,464 students at 48 institutions took the Student Readiness Inventory survey at the beginning of their first year of college in the fall of 2003. Two years later, 23 institutions and 6,872 participants remained in this study. The researchers compiled GPA's along with demographic information for control variables from the fall of 2003 and 2004, along with enrollment data from the fall of 2005. They compared this data with the results of three sections of the SRI: academic discipline, commitment to college, and social connection. Those that remained at their original institution had higher average scores on all three measured sections of the SRI and a higher average GPA. The researchers concluded that social connectedness slightly influenced third-year retention, while academic discipline had a very small effect specifically on third-year retention.

Danbert, S. J., Pivarnik, J. M., McNeil, R. N., & Washington, I. J. (2014). Academic success and retention: The role of recreational sports fitness facilities. *Recreational Sports Journal*, 38(1), 14-22.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of the relationship between recreation center membership and academic success and retention. The participants included 4,843 first-time freshmen at a large Midwestern university that enrolled in the fall of 2010. The researchers acquired data from the institution at the end of two semesters and again at the end of four semesters. They looked at high school GPA, college GPA, number of completed college credits, one and two year retention, and class standing. The researchers tracked the usage of the campus fitness center based on who bought memberships in their first year, totaling 1,138 of the participants. The researchers discovered that those who were members of the fitness center had higher GPA's and more college credits than those who were non-members. Additionally, members had a higher retention rate after one year, and again after two years. The researchers concluded that while membership in a fitness center could have played a role in retention, the study did not consider other variables, such as educational history or motivation.

Dennis, J. M., Phinney, J. S., & Chuateco, L. I. (2005). The role of motivation, parental support, and peer support in the academic success of ethnic minority first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(3), 223-236.

doi:10.1353/csd.2005.0023

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of motivation, family support, and peer support on the academic outcomes and commitment of ethnic minority students. The researchers administered a pilot tested survey to 856 students in a required freshman course in the fall of the participants' first year at an urban institution on the West Coast. One hundred students met the researchers' criteria and agreed to take a follow-up survey in the fall of the following year. Of the students who met the criteria, but could not participate in the follow-up survey, 39% had left the institution. The survey contained questions that measured the independent variables: motivation, family support, and peer support, while the follow-up survey measured commitment, one of the dependent variables. The other dependent variable, academic outcomes, was collected from the institution. The researchers concluded that personal and career motivation had the most influence on academic outcomes and commitment, while a perceived lack to peer support had the most negative effect on commitment.

Johnson, D. R., Wasserman, T. H., Yildirim, N., & Yonai, B.A. (2014). Examining the effects of stress and campus climate on the persistence of students of color and white students: An application of Bean and Eaton's Psychological Model of Retention. *Research in Higher Education, 55*(1), 75-100.

The purpose of this study was to compare the persistence of students of color to the persistence of White students at a predominantly White institution by factoring in the effects of campus climate and various kinds of stress. A survey was distributed to 1,837 first time freshmen at a selective research institution. In order to create the two desired groups, students of color and White students, some participants were omitted from the study based on self-reported ethnicity, creating a final sample size of 1,491. The survey included topic areas that covered campus experiences, interactions with peers, perceptions, institutional practices, internal motivations, and sources of stress. The researchers also used data from the institution including GPA's after the first and second year, entry information, and retention. The researchers concluded that stress related to the academic environment, including perceived racism, affected students of color more, while White students were more affected by social stress.

Kampf, S., & Teske, E. J. (2013). Collegiate recreation participation and retention. *Recreational Sports Journal, 37*(2), 85-96.

The purpose of this study was to determine if, and to what degree, a relationship exists between retention and participation in club sports, use of the campus recreation center, and student employment in the campus recreation department. The researchers obtained data from the institution for one class of first-time, full-time students at a large, residential, research institution totaling 3,809 students. At the end of the one-year study, 69.5% of the class remained at the university. The data compared was demographic information as a control variable, academic and retention information as dependent variables, and participation in club sports, number of card swipes into the recreation center, and campus employment as the independent variables. The researchers concluded that there was no significant relationship between club sport participation and academic performance, but it did increase the odds of retention. All recreation center employees were retained; however, the statistical correlation was weak. Additionally, usage of the fitness center was positively correlated with retention.

Morrow, J. A., & Ackerman, M. E. (2012). Intention to persist and retention of first-year students: The importance of motivation and sense of belonging. *College Student Journal*, 46(3), 483-491.

The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of belongingness and motivation to the retention of college students. Using these two factors, the researchers sought to determine if either could be a predictor of first-year to second-year retention. The independent variables were motivation and sense of belonging while the dependent variable was retention. The study was conducted at a PhD granting institution, with 156 students completing a web-based survey in the summer following their first year of college. The survey consisted of questions regarding sense of belongingness, attitudes toward higher education, and intention to persist. The researchers concluded that student motivation, including personal goals, was more significant than the sense of belongingness in the participants' intention to persist. Additionally, students who are motivated by specific goals tend to persist more than those with undefined educational goals do.

Purdie II, J. R., & Rosser, V. J. (2011). Examining the academic performance and retention of first-year students in living-learning communities and first-year experience courses. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 29(2), 95-112.

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of participation in First Year Experience (FYE), Academic Theme Floors (ATF), and Freshmen Interest Groups (FIG) on the retention and academic performance of first-year college students. The FYE is a college course, while ATF and FIG are both types of living-learning communities. The participants included all first-time freshmen at a public university in the Midwest that enrolled in one of three consecutive fall semesters creating a sample of 13,932 students. The dependent variables were academic performance and retention, and the independent variables were participation in FYE, ATF, or FIG. The researchers used multiple regression to determine the effect of the three programs on the participants' GPA, and then used logistic regression to determine the effect on retention. The

researchers concluded that those who participated in FIG had a higher GPA and increased rates of retention, but participation in FYE or ATF did not affect GPA or retention. The most significant predictor of retention was the first-semester GPA.

Robbins, S. B., Allen, J., Casillas, A., Peterson, C. H., & Le, H. (2006). Unraveling the differential effects of motivational and skills, social, and self-management measures from traditional predictors of college outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*(3), 598-616. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.98.3.598

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of motivational, academic skill, self-management, and social factors in college performance and to determine if, and to what degree, these factors can predict college outcomes. The participants included 14,642 incoming freshmen from 48 different two-year and four-year institutions starting in the fall of 2003. The participants completed the Student Readiness Index survey within the first six weeks of enrolling. This index measures 10 scales that influence retention. The researchers collected data from the institutions on the participants including fall 2003 GPA, course grades and first semester retention in the spring of 2004. They collected a second set of data in the fall of 2004 including spring 2004 GPA, course grades, and first year retention. High school GPA had the strongest correlation with retention, though the coefficient was not large enough to be statistically significant. Students with higher ACT scores showed a positive relationship between social connection and retention.

Thompson, L. R., & Prieto, L. C. (2013). Improving retention among college students:

Investigating the utilization of virtualized advising. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, 17*(4), 13-26.

The purpose of this study was to determine which facets of the current, face-to-face academic advising system at a historically black institution played the biggest role in retention, and if these facets could be effectively converted to a virtual advising system. Questionnaires were completed by 121 students in the College of Business at one historically black institution. These surveys measured advisor satisfaction, motivation, advisor knowledge, advisor availability, university satisfaction, and financial strain. The study showed that advisor knowledge and availability positively contributed to motivation to finish a degree, while financial strain diminished motivation to finish a degree. Also, students who were less motivated to finish sought motivation from face-to-face advising. The researchers concluded that while many components of effective advising, such as availability, could easily convert to a virtual advising system, those institutions that have a large amount of students suffering from a lack of motivation would not benefit from the loss of face-to-face advising in terms of retention.

Turner, P., & Thompson, E. (2014). College retention initiatives meeting the needs of millennial freshman students. *College Student Journal*, 48(1), 94-104.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of current freshmen, upper classmen, and non-returning freshmen about the struggles they face, as millennials, during their freshman year of college and how these struggles influence their decision to persist. The researchers gathered data from formal interviews with 10 freshmen, 10 upperclassmen, and 10 non-returning freshmen at one public, research institution. The researchers used 23 systematically constructed interview questions regarding the freshmen experience. They maintained validity by checking the data with the participants. The researchers identified four core themes: freshmen activities and events, development of effective study skills, instructor-student relationships, and academic services and support. These core themes are what contributed to the participants' decision to persist at the institution. Additionally, freshmen activities and events was the strongest encouragement, while the development of effective study skills was the biggest challenge the participants' faced during their freshman year.