

2012

Effectiveness of High School Fashion Courses in Preparing Students for Fashion Courses in College

Jade Bolling
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects

Recommended Citation

Bolling, Jade, "Effectiveness of High School Fashion Courses in Preparing Students for Fashion Courses in College" (2012). *OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers*. 14.
http://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects/14

This Master's Project is brought to you for free and open access by the STEM Education & Professional Studies at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

EFFECTIVENESS OF HIGH SCHOOL FASHION COURSES IN PREPARING
STUDENTS FOR FASHION COURSES IN COLLEGE

A RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF STEM EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES AT OLD
DOMINION UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF SCIENCE

BY
JADE BOLLING
AUGUST 2012

SIGNATURE PAGE

Jade Bolling prepared this research paper under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in SEPS 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the graduate requirements for the degree of the Masters of Science.

Approval by: _____ Date: _____

Dr. John M. Ritz

Advisor and Program Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SIGNATURE PAGE	i
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
CHAPTERS	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	2
Research Hypothesis	2
Background and Significance	2
Limitations	3
Assumptions	3
Procedures	4
Definition of Terms	4
Overview of Chapters	5
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	7
Fashion Merchandising Program at Old Dominion University	7
The Fashion Merchandising Program and Careers	8
Preparation of Fashion Merchandising Professionals	9
From High School to College Graduates	9
Summary	11
III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES	13
Population	13

Research Variables	13
Instrumental Design	14
Methods of Data Collection	14
Statistical Analysis	15
Summary	15
IV. FINDINGS	16
Results	16
Hypothesis 1 Analysis	18
Summary	21
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	22
Summary	22
Conclusions	23
Recommendations	24
REFERENCES	25
APPENDICES	28
APPENDIX A, Sample of Survey	29
APPENDIX B, Sample Cover Letter	30
APPENDIX C, Sample Follow-up Letter	31

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. t-test	20
Table 2. Pearson's r	20

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1, Overall GPA Comparison	19
Figure 2, Comparison of Grades	19

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many students aimlessly continue through high school without a plan for life after graduation. The career and technical education program, otherwise known as CTE, provides a career ladder for high school students by transferring general industry knowledge to them so they may advance to a higher educational institution and eventually attain a career in their chosen field. According to Brewer (2004), “Challenging even the most gifted students, CTE gives all students rich educational opportunities, equipping them for the dramatic transition from high school to postsecondary education and career options” (p. 15). The CTE program creates the opportunity for students with specific interests to participate in classes that excite and drive them. They are given the benefit of learning about their industry of choice before they move ahead to postsecondary education or into the workforce.

High school fashion marketing courses are classified under the career and technical education program. The objective of these courses is to prepare students with general fashion industry knowledge they will utilize in a fashion merchandising program in college or into the workforce.

This study investigated if the fashion marketing courses from high school were adequately preparing students who continued with postsecondary education at Old Dominion University majoring in Fashion Merchandising to be academically successful. The study helped determine if those students who took fashion marketing in high school had an advantage over those students who did not.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine if Old Dominion University Fashion Merchandising students earned a higher GPA if they had taken fashion marketing courses in high school to determine the added value of those courses.

Hypothesis

This study was completed in order to answer the following research hypothesis:
H₁: Fashion merchandising students receive higher university grades if they have taken fashion marketing courses in high school.

Background and Significance

The career and technical education program in high schools has many benefits. It gives students options for their future, and in the case of fashion and marketing students, it allows them to choose to pursue a career in the field or to continue to a postsecondary education in fashion. Moore (2007) reports the following:

CTE develops a student's ability to become multiskilled, multicultural, and have multiple ways of accomplishing success. Career and technical programs have the ability to enhance a student's concept of self-worth. A student may decide to participate in the CTE program of marketing and the CTSO of DECA. The success at the secondary level may encourage the student to attend a four-year university and major in business management with a concentration in marketing.
(p. 49)

According to Gray (2004), almost every high school student takes at least one CTE course, and as many as 25% of students have concentrated studies in CTE. Stitt-Gohdes (2001) states that out of 212 business education students, 47.4% were seeking a

standard academic diploma alone; 18.5% of students were seeking both an academic and a career and technical education diploma; and 31.3% of students were seeking a career and technical diploma alone. With this many students taking CTE courses, and specifically fashion marketing, the question must be raised as to whether or not the program is making a difference. Are students who have taken these courses at an advantage when they begin their fashion courses in college?

By comparing the GPA's of Fashion Merchandising students at Old Dominion University who were CTE fashion marketing completers in high school to those students who were not assisted in determining if the high school courses helped prepare them for college. The data also helped determine whether high schools and postsecondary schools should encourage students considering the Fashion Merchandising program at Old Dominion University to take the CTE high school fashion marketing courses that are offered to them.

Limitations

This study was limited to the responses from the fashion merchandising students at Old Dominion that replied to the survey. The data were limited to sophomore-standing fashion merchandising students. The data were also limited to the students correctly reporting their accumulated grade point average in fashion merchandising courses.

Assumptions

The results of this study were based on the assumption that high school fashion marketing programs are aimed at preparing students with knowledge that will help them succeed in the fashion merchandising program at Old Dominion University. It was

assumed that a correlation between the objectives of high school and college fashion marketing courses existed.

Procedures

This study was conducted by using a survey that consisted of three questions. The first question was whether or not the student was a fashion marketing program completer in high school. The second question was their current fashion merchandising grades. The third question was their high school GPA. The survey was conducted by Survey Monkey™ and a hyperlink to the survey was emailed to all sophomore-standing fashion merchandising students at Old Dominion University. The surveys were emailed to students at the end of their sophomore year. This was done to attempt to receive a more accurate cumulative GPA and to allow the students to take enough fashion courses at Old Dominion University to acquire enough data about their GPA. The surveys were sent to all students, and then resent two weeks later to obtain a sufficient amount of data. Completed surveys were analyzed to determine the correlation between students' GPA's who took fashion marketing in high school and those who completed their sophomore year at Old Dominion University.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined to clarify their meaning as they relate to this study:

Career and Technical Education: The abbreviation is CTE. High school courses that provide skills and knowledge to students. Fashion Marketing is part of the CTE category of education.

Grade point average: The abbreviation is GPA. The cumulative average of a student's

grades.

Career and technical student organizations: The abbreviation is CTSO. Vocational education organizations that support CTE learning.

Distributive Education Clubs of America: Abbreviation is DECA. Organization that prepares students in CTE high school and college programs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management.

Fashion marketing course: In reference to the high school courses, fashion-related courses in marketing education that provide skills and knowledge to students to encourage their further education or entry into careers in marketing and management.

Fashion Merchandising program: In reference to college programs, a fashion-related course program in which students learn about the apparel industry in the concentrations of manufacturing, buying, selling, and promoting, as well as textile knowledge (Old Dominion University, 2012).

Overview of Chapters

Chapter I introduced the fashion marketing program. It also introduces the study, which aimed to determine if the fashion marketing program benefited students who became fashion majors at Old Dominion University. The study was important because it helped establish whether or not the goal of the fashion marketing course was met by preparing students for college.

Chapter II contained a review of literature. This included readings pertaining to the fashion merchandising program at Old Dominion University, fashion merchandising careers, the preparation of fashion professionals, and the high school to college transition for fashion students. Chapter III described the methods for obtaining the data. It also

described the procedure for analyzing the data. Chapter IV details the findings of the analysis of data that were collected from the fashion merchandising students at Old Dominion University. Chapter V contained the summary of the research, provided conclusions for the study, and offered recommendations for improvement and future use of the fashion marketing courses.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study was conducted to determine if the Old Dominion University Fashion Merchandising students earned a higher GPA if they had taken fashion marketing courses in high school to determine the added value of those courses. A review of literature was conducted on the fashion merchandising program at Old Dominion University and the preparation for careers. Research was conducted on the transition from high school to college, and the fashion marketing course's added value to the transition.

Fashion Merchandising Program at Old Dominion University

According to Old Dominion University, the undergraduate fashion merchandising program is part of the STEM Education and Professional Studies Department. It is a 120-hour program aimed at preparing students for careers in the fashion industry. It focuses on careers such as merchandise managers, buyers, and fashion coordinators, and the curriculum is specific to the marketing of fashion (Old Dominion University, 2012).

Students begin the fashion merchandising classes at the freshman level, with basic courses about the fashion industry and advance to courses in personal selling, advertising, buying, and personal management. In addition to fashion courses, students are required to complete basic general education courses in mathematics, English, science, social studies, informational literacy, and communications. When students enter their junior year, they begin taking advanced fashion and marketing courses. Students are also required to complete a summer internship between their junior and senior years. The internship is meant to give them practical experience in the fashion field. Students have the option to

study abroad in London, England, to complete their internship (Old Dominion University, 2012).

Students in the fashion merchandising program are also offered opportunities to participate in trips to major fashion centers. The program coordinates fashion market trips to Italy and Las Vegas for the MAGIC trade show. During these trips, students are able to observe people working in the field and gain insight into what it is like to be a part of the fashion industry.

The Fashion Merchandising Program and Careers

The goal of the Old Dominion University fashion merchandising program is to prepare students for the workforce in the fashion industry. The fashion industry is large and contains many diverse career paths. The Old Dominion University's fashion merchandising program presents graduates with broad knowledge about the skills they will need to obtain one of the diverse fashion careers offered in the industry.

Through the mandatory internships, students are able to experience real situations in the industry and make connections with those who have already attained employment in careers in the fashion field. They may meet mentors who can help them and give advice about their futures in the industry.

Old Dominion University offers information about which employers are hiring. The university also states that graduates have attained careers as buyers, fashion coordinators, visual merchandisers, marketing coordinators, and fashion writers (Old Dominion University, 2012).

Preparation of Fashion Merchandising Professionals

Fashion industry employers are searching for specific qualities when hiring professionals. According to a study performed by Hyman-Parker (1993), a four year college degree combined with work experience in the field are influential in obtaining a career as a fashion merchandising professional. Work experience could come in the form of internships, which Old Dominion University offers to its students. Hyman-Parker suggests that in order to create prepared fashion professionals, fashion merchandising education should put more emphasis on “developing students’ skills in the area of human relations, communications, decision-making, problem solving, and critical thinking” (1993, p. 108).

From High School to College Graduates

Fashion marketing courses in high school are considered part of the career and technical education program. The goal of fashion marketing in the CTE program is to educate students about the fashion industry in meaningful and effective ways so that they encourage students’ success in college.

Formerly known as vocational education, career and technical education was once considered an alternative option for those students who did not plan to continue with a postsecondary education. It received a reputation for being the track that uninspired or unmotivated students took when they did not want to attend college. High school CTE courses that cater to those students are a thing of the past. Today, CTE has evolved into a program that spans across curriculums, and it has increased its emphasis on academic preparation and advanced skills required to help students transition to college-level technical and professional studies (Dare, 2006). CTE is now recognized because of its

importance to students' advancement in college at this time. The program has developed many curriculum strategies to reach both students who are exploring their interests in high school and intend to develop those interests into a career after college, as well as students who identify CTE courses as their career pathway directly after high school.

Those who attain a postsecondary degree have been proven to earn a higher income than those who do not. In fact, those who earn an associate's degree earned an average of \$8,460 per year more than those who have only earned their high school diploma (Hischy, Bremer, & Castellano, 2011). CTE programs acknowledge the significance of a college degree and have addressed the issue. They have modified the courses at the high school level to ensure that they are adequately preparing students for a postsecondary education. The program aims at teaching its students information and skills that they may utilize to succeed in college.

There are a number of curriculum strategies that career and technical education programs have applied to ensure students' success and to deter past speculations about the program as it pertains to advancement to college. The programs do this through blended curriculums of some type. The goal is for students to receive a foundation of the standard academics coupled with the focused interest of specific CTE courses. In the case of this study, those CTE courses were fashion marketing. According to Plank (2001):

If high-quality preparation in core academic subjects can be coupled with a strong foundation in work skills and applications, it is hoped that upon high school graduation individuals will have attractive options available in multiple arenas: in two- or four-year colleges; within the paid labor force; or in pursuing postsecondary education and paid employment simultaneously. (p. 12)

Studies have shown that students who took career and technical education courses in high school perform better in college. A study performed by the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education on Information Technology/Computer Information Sciences (IT/CIS) students, a career and technical education program, found that those CTE students felt more prepared than their non-CTE counterparts to transition to college and careers. The study stated that CTE students were significantly more likely to report that high school provided them with more information on college programs and courses that follow high school course-taking. The CTE students were also significantly more likely than non-CTE students to identify with a clear career goal and academic goals. CTE students were more likely than the non-CTE students to report that they had developed problem-solving, project completion, time management, and critical thinking skills in high school (Lekes et al., 2007).

Additionally, The National Center for Education Statistics (2008) reported that students who had completed career and technical education courses earned higher postsecondary GPAs than those students who did not complete CTE courses, and this was true at the certificate, associate's degree, and bachelor's degree levels. These results can be translated to fashion marketing, which is also a CTE course in high school.

Summary

Chapter II covered the topics of the fashion merchandising program at Old Dominion University, the relation of fashion to careers, preparedness of fashion merchandising professionals, and the transition from high school to college. The fashion industry is broad and encompasses many types of careers. In order for students to be prepared to enter the industry, they must acquire a diverse set of skills and knowledge,

which includes knowledge about the industry as a whole, communication skills, critical thinking, and human relations skills. These skills must be coupled with work experience of some kind in order for the students' to be successful in transitioning to a career.

Chapter III discussed the methods and procedures used to collect the data for this study. It will describe the population, research variables, the instrument design, the method of collecting data, and the statistical analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter III of this study sought to determine the effectiveness of the fashion marketing courses from high school in adequately preparing students who continued with postsecondary education at Old Dominion University majoring in Fashion Merchandising. This chapter includes a description of population, the instrument design, and the methods used to collect data. It also stated the statistical analysis to be used to compare data.

Population

The population of this study consisted of 32 sophomore-standing Fashion Merchandising students at Old Dominion University in 2012. The population was comprised of undergraduate degree seeking students. No names were obtained. Email addresses for the students were obtained from an Assistant Professor in the STEM Education and Professional Studies Department of Old Dominion University. Sophomore-standing students were surveyed to allow the students enough time to have taken fashion merchandising courses at the university.

Research Variables

The study was completed in order to answer the following research hypothesis:
H₁: Fashion merchandising students receive higher university grades if they have taken fashion marketing courses in high school.

The independent variables included the sophomore-standing of the students at Old Dominion University, and the fashion merchandising program that they were enrolled. The independent variables were also whether or not the students were fashion marketing

completers in high school. The dependent variables were their grade point average in the fashion merchandising program at Old Dominion University.

Instrument Design

A questionnaire containing three questions was designed to gather the data. It was based upon the variables set forth in the study's hypothesis. The survey was sent to all Fashion Merchandising students at Old Dominion University. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey. Question 1 was developed to indicate whether or not the student took fashion marketing in high school. The question will be used to compare the completers to the non-completers. Question 2 was developed to compare the Old Dominion University Fashion Merchandising grades that the student received in university fashion courses. These grades will be tallied to obtain the cumulative Fashion Merchandising GPA, and then the GPAs will be compared between completers and non-completers. Question 3 was developed to observe if the students' high school GPAs were comparable to the college GPAs.

Methods of Data Collection

The surveys were deployed using Survey MonkeyTM to sophomore-standing fashion merchandising students at Old Dominion University at the end of their sophomore year. This was done to attempt to receive a more accurate cumulative GPA and allow the students to complete sufficient fashion courses at Old Dominion University to acquire enough data about their GPA. The surveys were sent to all students, and then resent two weeks later to attempt to obtain the most accurate data. Completed surveys will be analyzed to determine the relationship between students' GPAs who took fashion

marketing in high school to those who did not. See Appendix B for a copy of the cover letter.

Statistical Analysis

The answers to the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if the students who were fashion marketing completers in high school earned a higher GPA than those who were not fashion marketing completers. The data were tabulated and a t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between the two sample means of the GPAs. A Pearson's r test was also performed to determine if there was a statistical correlation between program completers' high school GPAs and Old Dominion University GPAs.

Summary

Chapter III detailed the methods and procedures used to decide the effectiveness of the fashion marketing courses from high school in adequately preparing students who continued with postsecondary education at Old Dominion University majoring in Fashion Merchandising. The population was described, as well as how the participants' contact information was obtained. The instrument design was discussed, and the methods of data collection were described in this chapter. Chapter IV detailed the findings related to the data collected.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study examined the effectiveness of the fashion marketing courses from high school in adequately preparing students who continued with postsecondary education at Old Dominion University majoring in Fashion Merchandising. This chapter details the data that was collected from the surveys. It includes tables to display the data.

Results

The findings were compiled from surveys emailed to the 32 sophomore-standing Fashion Merchandising students at Old Dominion University. There was a 37.5% (12 student) response rate to the survey. All questions in the survey were designed to answer the research goals in determining whether or not fashion merchandising students receive higher university grades if they have taken fashion marketing courses in high school.

Question 1 asked, “Were you a fashion marketing program completer in high school?” Of the 12 respondents, seven respondents, 58 %, were fashion marketing completers in high school. The other five respondents, 42%, were not fashion marketing completers in high school.

Question 2 asked, “What grades did you earn at Old Dominion University in the following courses? Please indicate if they were pluses (+) or minuses (-).” The first course listed was SEPS 100, Sales Techniques. Of the five completer respondents, four received an A and one received a B. Of the five non-completer respondents, one received an A and four received a B.

The second course listed was SEPS 102, Advertising & Promotion. Of the six completer respondents, three received an A, one received a B, and two received a C. Of

the five non-completer respondents, two received an A , one received a B, and two received a C.

The third course listed was ACCT 201, Accounting. Of the two completer respondents, one received an A, and one received a C. One non-completer responded and received a C.

The fourth course listed was SEPS 208, Buying. Of the three completer respondents, three received an A. Of the three non-completer respondents, three received a B.

The fifth course listed was SEPS 220, Fashion Industry. Of the six completer respondents, five received an A, and one received a C. Of the five non-completer respondents, three received an A and two received a B.

The sixth course listed was SEPS 234, Survey of Dress and Costume. Of the four completer respondents, three received an A, and one received a C. Of the two non-completer respondents, two received an A.

The seventh course listed was STEM 251, Computer Literacy. Of the six completer respondents, four received an A, and two received a B. Of the four non-completer respondents, three received a B, and one received a C.

The eighth course listed was SEPS 302, Workforce Supervision. One completer responded; the responder received an A. None of the non-completers responded for this course.

The ninth course listed was SEPS 303, Social Aspects of Clothing. Of the three completer respondents, two received an A, and one received a B. Of the three non-completer respondents, two received a B, and one received a C.

The tenth course listed was SEPS 350, Communication Tech Process. One completer responded and received an A. One non-completer responded and received a C.

The eleventh course listed was STEM 370T, Technology and Society. Of the two completer respondents, one received an A, and one received a B. Of the two non-completer respondents, two received an A.

The twelfth course listed was MKTG 311, Principles and Problems. Of the two completer respondents, one received an A, and one received a C. None of the non-completers responded.

The thirteenth course listed was MGMT 325, Contemporary Organizations and Management. One completer responded and received an A. None of the non-completers responded.

Question 3 asked, “What was your final high school GPA?” The average GPA of the seven completer respondents was 3.13. The average GPA of the five non-completer respondents was 3.0.

Overall, of the completer respondents, the total university grade point average was 3.42. Of the non-completer respondents, the total university grade point average was 3.13. Figure 1 displays these results. Of the program completers, collectively they reported receiving 30 As, six Bs, and six Cs. Of the non-completers, collectively they reported receiving 10 As, 15 Bs, and six Cs. Figure 2 displays these results.

Hypothesis 1 Analysis

A t-test was performed to compare the sample means, and Table 1 displays the results. By performing the t-test, t was found to be 0.83. A Pearson’s r test was also performed to determine if there was a statistical correlation between program completers’

high school GPAs and Old Dominion University GPAs. Table 2 displays the results, which indicated that $r = +0.34$.

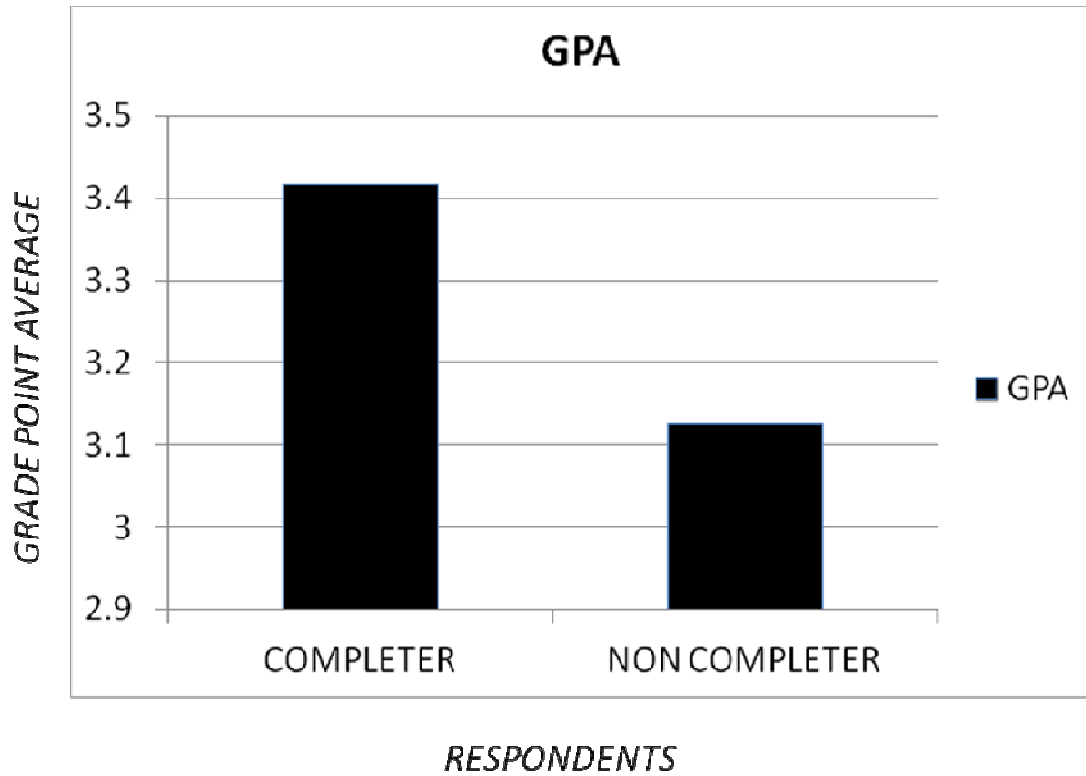


Figure 1. JPEG image of the GPA comparison of program completers to non-completers.

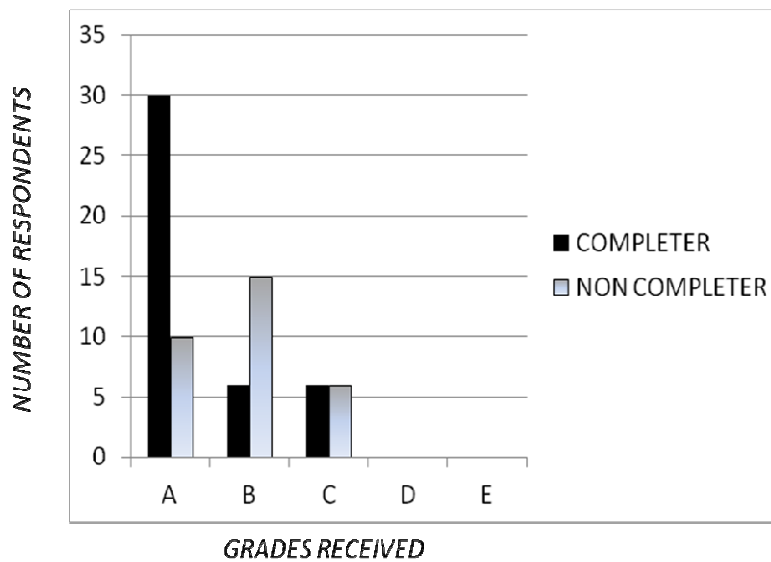


Figure 2. A JPEG image of the comparison of number of respondents to grades received.

Table 1

t Calculation

COMPLETER GPA	d ¹	d ²	NON COMPLETER GPA	d ¹	d ²
4.00	0.58	0.34	3.52	0.39	0.15
3.96	0.54	0.29	3.40	0.27	0.07
3.83	0.41	0.17	3.27	0.14	0.02
3.43	0.01	0.00	2.97	-0.16	0.03
3.10	-0.32	0.10	2.47	-0.66	0.44
3.00	-0.42	0.18			
2.60	-0.82	0.67			
X= 3.42		$\sum d1=$ 1.75	X=3.13		$\sum d2=$ 0.71

$$t = 0.83$$

$$df = 10$$

$$.05 \text{ level} = 1.812$$

$$.01 \text{ level} = 2.764$$

Table 2

Pearson's r calculation

Completer #	x (High School GPA)	x ²	y (College GPA)	y ²	xy
Completer #1	4.00	16.00	4.00	16.00	16.00
Completer #2	2.60	6.76	3.96	15.68	10.30
Completer #3	3.30	10.89	3.83	14.67	12.64
Completer #4	2.70	7.29	3.43	11.76	9.26
Completer #5	3.45	11.90	3.10	9.67	10.70
Completer	3.30	10.89	3.00	9.00	9.90

#6					
Completer					
#7	2.56	6.55	2.60	6.76	6.66
N=7	$\Sigma=21.91$	$\Sigma=70.28$	$\Sigma=23.92$	$\Sigma=83.54$	$\Sigma=75.46$

$r= +0.34$

$df= 5$

.05 level= .754

.01 level= .874

Summary

In this chapter the responses to the questionnaire were reported. The total university grade point average of the program completers was 3.42. The total university grade point average of the non-completers was 3.13. Of the program completers, collectively they reported receiving 30 As, six Bs, and six Cs. Of the non-completers, collectively they reported receiving 10 As, 15 Bs, and six Cs. A t-test was performed to compare the sample means, and the t was calculated to be 0.83.

Chapter V provides a summary of the data reported in Chapter IV, as well as provides conclusions based on the findings of the study. It also states recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the research. It also explains the conclusions that were drawn based on the data collected from the surveys. The chapter answers the research goal of the study. The researcher's recommendations for further study are also included.

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to determine if Old Dominion University Fashion Merchandising students earned a higher GPA if they had taken fashion marketing courses in high school to determine the added value of those courses. The purpose of the study was to identify if the fashion marketing courses from high school effectively prepared students who continued with postsecondary education at Old Dominion University majoring in Fashion Merchandising. This study was completed in order to answer the following research hypothesis:

H₁: Fashion merchandising students receive higher university grades if they have taken fashion marketing courses in high school.

To ensure the reliability of this questionnaire, all sophomore-standing Fashion Merchandising students at Old Dominion University were sent a hyperlink to the survey

on Survey Monkey™. To protect the privacy of the respondents, Survey Monkey™ did not report the names of the respondents.

The population consisted of 32 students who were majoring in fashion at Old Dominion University. Of those 32 students, 12 responded, 37.5%.

The survey used to collect the data consisted of three questions that aimed at answering the research hypothesis. The hyperlink to the questionnaire and a cover letter were emailed to each sophomore Fashion Merchandising student. In addition to the first email, a follow-up email was sent encouraging participating and giving thanks to responders. Once all of the data were received, answers were tallied and analyzed.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study were based on the research findings and would address the research hypothesis. The conclusions help to determine the effectiveness of the high school Fashion Marketing courses in preparing students for the Fashion courses at Old Dominion University.

Overall, the GPAs of the Fashion Marketing completers were higher at Old Dominion University than the non-completers. The program completers received more As than any other grades. The non-completers received more Bs than any other grades. The mean GPA for completers was 3.42, and the mean GPA for non-completers was 3.13.

The t-test was calculated at $t=0.83$. The level of significance was 1.812 at the .05 level, so we must reject the hypothesis. The result indicated that although there was a difference in the mean GPA, the differences in the means of the two sample GPA scores were not significant enough.

A Pearson's r test was performed to determine if there was a statistical correlation between program completers' high school GPAs and Old Dominion University GPAs. The results indicated that $r = +0.34$. The level of significance at the .05 level was .754, so we must reject the hypothesis that there is a correlation between high school GPAs and Old Dominion University GPAs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Further research should be conducted to determine which career paths the students plan to take, as this could affect their performance in specific fashion courses. Also, a study into the high school fashion program could be done to examine if the program attempts to align its curriculum with the college courses.

REFERENCES

- Brewer, R. L. (2004). CTE in high schools: the formula for success. *Tech Directions*, 64(5), 15-18. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=106&sid=d978a1ab-6884-437e-9d50-8d2c47baebb5%40sessionmgr10>
- Dare, D. (2006). The role of career and technical education in facilitating student transitions to postsecondary education. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, Fall 2006(135), 73-80. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/detail?vid=2 &hid=104&sid=61fb8cf6-a838-4396-a8f2-70b5d1644aeb%40sessionmgr4&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=22524232>
- Gray, K. (2004) Is high school career and technical education obsolete? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(2), 128-134. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/detail?sid=b622cabf-db3c-44b9-8ec3-faa17174b518%40sessionmgr15&vid=4&hid=107&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=14696807>
- Hirschy, A. S., Bremer, C. D., & Castellano, M. (2011). Career and technical education (CTE) student success in community colleges: a conceptual model. *Community College Review*, 39(3), 296-318. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/detail?vid=2&hid=104&sid=645f0853-bfe6-48f4-8269->

4cce7a54baf6%40sessionmgr110&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d
#db=a9h&AN=67014106

- Hymon-Parker, S. (1993). Bridging the gap between fashion retail education and employment: an assessment of the benefits and limitations of existing practices. Unpublished dissertation. University of Maryland College Park.
- Lekes, N. Bragg, D. D., Loeb, J. W., Oleskiw, C. A., Marszalek, J., Brooks-LaRaviere, M., Zhu, R., Kremidas, C. C., Akukwe, G. Lee, H. J., & Hood, L. K. (2007). Career and technical education pathway programs, academic performance, and the transition to college and career. *National Research Center for Career and Technical Education*, 85. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICEstSearch_SearchValue_0=ED497342&ERICEstSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED497342
- Levesque, K., Laird, J., Hensley, E., Choy, S.P., Cataldi, E.F., & Hudson, L. (2008). *Career and technical education in the United States: 1990 to 2005* (NCES 2008-035). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D. C.
- Moore, L. (2007). Preaching the word: career and technical education. *Techniques*, 82(3), 48-51. Retrieved from http://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_E-Media/files/files-techniques-2007/March07_ReR.pdf
- Old Dominion University. (2012). Fashion merchandising program. Retrieved from <http://education.odu.edu/ots/academics/undergrad/fashion.shtml>
- Plank, S.B. (2001). Career and technical education in the balance: an analysis of high

school persistence, academic achievement, and postsecondary destinations.

National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, 1-49.

Stitt-Gohdes, W.L. (2001). Business education students' preferred learning styles.

Journal of Career and Technical Education, 18, 32-4 . Retrieved from

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JCTE/v18n1/pdf/stitt.pdf>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A Survey Studying Effectiveness of High School Fashion Courses in Preparing Students
for Fashion Courses in College

Directions: Complete the survey by indicating your answers in the blank spaces provided.

1. Were you a fashion marketing program completer in high school? Yes ___ No ___

2. What grades did you earn at ODU in the following courses? Please indicate if they
were pluses (+) or minuses (-)?

SEPS 100 Sales Techniques _____

SEPS 102 Advertising & Promotion _____

ACCT 201 Accounting _____

SEPS 208 Buying _____

SEPS 220 Fashion Industry _____

SEPS 234 Survey of Dress and Costume _____

STEM 251 Computer Literacy _____

SEPS 302 Workforce Supervision _____

SEPS 303 Social Aspects of Clothing _____

SEPS 350 Communication Tech Process _____

STEM 370T Technology and Society _____

MKTG 311 Principles and Problems _____

MGMT 325 Contemp Org & Management _____

3. What was your final high school GPA?

APPENDIX B

Survey Email Cover Letter

Hello,

My name is Jade Bolling and I am a Graduate student at Old Dominion University. I am conducting a survey of all sophomore Fashion Merchandising students at the university to gain insight into the added value of fashion marketing courses in high school in preparing students for fashion classes in college. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my M.S. degree in Occupational and Technical Studies. Receiving your feedback is crucial to the outcome of my study. The information that you could provide me is unique and important. Your privacy will be maintained and your name or any other information that identifies you will never be shared since the service that developed the survey, Survey MonkeyTM does not identify who returned the email. Your participation is voluntary and you will not be penalized by not participating. By you completing the survey you are saying you are willing to participate. Your information will remain anonymous. Please take a minute to complete the questionnaire. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/579Z2VH>

Your Fellow Old Dominion Student,

Jade Bolling

Jboll006@odu.edu

APPENDIX C

Survey Email

Hello,

I would like to follow up to thank everyone who has taken the survey. For those who have not, I would sincerely appreciate your participation, as your answers are unique and valuable. Below is the link to the survey.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/579Z2VH>

Thank you,

Jade Bolling

jboll006@odu.edu