

SEU Link: Measuring Gains in Independent Living and Self-Advocacy Skills

AUTHORS

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AFFILIATIONS

SEU Link is housed in the College of Education at Southeastern University. The program is funded by a grant from the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

INTRODUCTION

SEU Link is a two-year program for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The program was started in 2018 in order to meet the need for inclusive post-secondary education opportunities. Program goals include improving employment, independent living and self-advocacy outcomes. Support is primarily provided through three types of peer mentors: residential, academic, and social.

OBJECTIVE

To determine perceived gains in independent living and self-advocacy skills, as well as overall program efficacy.

METHODOLOGY

- 5-point Likert-type researcher-created instrument validated using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .92$).
- Administered at outset and the conclusion of the school year.
- 3 groups studied (students, parents, mentors) in a pre-test/post-test fashion.
- Descriptive techniques used: Mean, standard deviations, standard errors of the mean (SEM), and data normality (skew; kurtosis).
- Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to evaluate the statistical significance of the mean score perception change in stakeholders for student performance within the three environments (campus; job; community).

ANALYSIS

Figure A illustrates Link Program effect upon stakeholder perceptions in the three environments and overall.

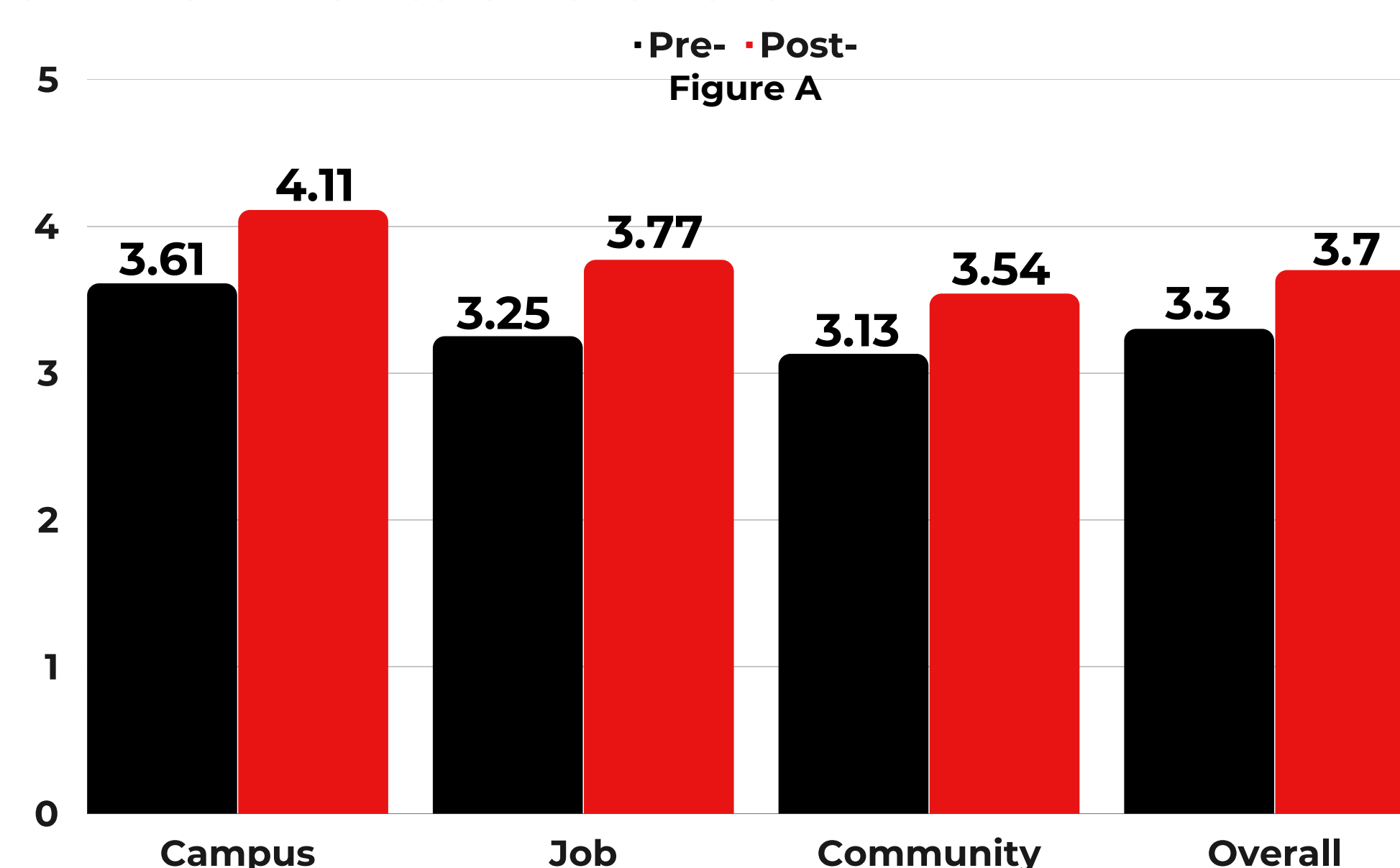


Figure B illustrates the mediation paradigm involving student perceptions of efficacy between the three environments.

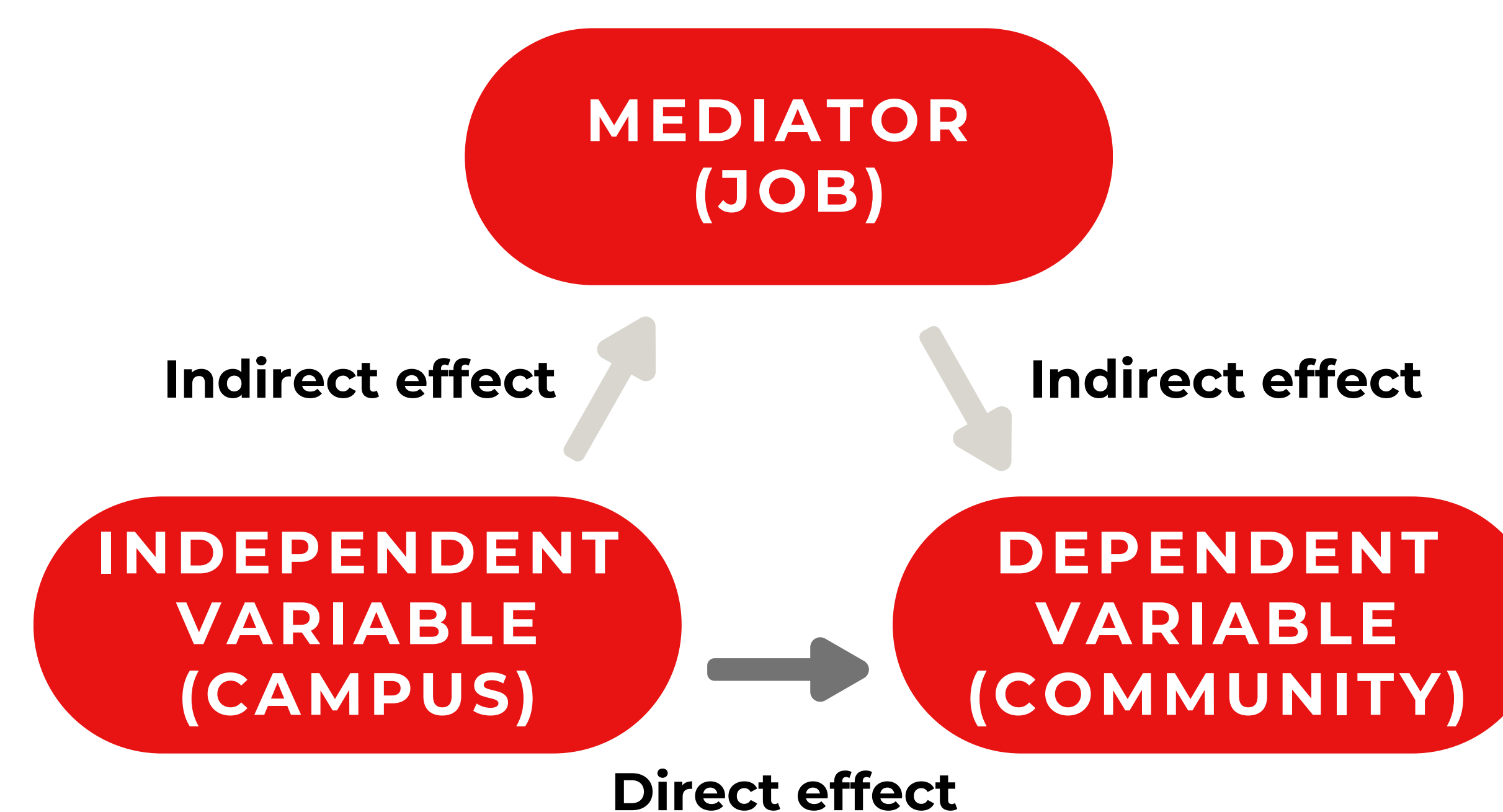


Figure B

RESULTS

Link student efficacy was evident in the perceptions of all three stakeholder groups participating in the Link Program across all three Link Program environments. Statistically significant findings with concomitant large effect sizes for perceptions of student efficacy on campus, on the job site, and within the community were echoed by Link mentors, Link parents, and the Link students themselves. An ancillary analysis using SEM Path modeling reinforced the important role that student efficacy on the job fulfilled in mediating the relationship between student efficacy on campus and within the community.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to assess the efficacy of SEU's Link Program in terms of self-advocacy and independent living skills. Statistically significant findings were reflected in all stakeholder perceptions of Link student performance in the three environments. A mediating effect was reflected in perceptions of student performance at work for the relationship between perceptions of student performance on campus and within the community. Student perceptions were not statistically different than mentor or parent perceptions.

