TAKING A TIME-OUT

A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE "GAP-YEAR" ON ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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LITERATURE

- UNITED KINGDOM
- AUSTRALIA

- Gap-year phenomenon began around 1960's, exclusively for upper-class
- Used by students to become more well-suited for college
- More than 11% of population in two above places takes gap year
- Primarily qualitative research up until this point
- Shows benefits and consequences of gap-year participation in terms of perceived growth by students in interviews (mixed results)
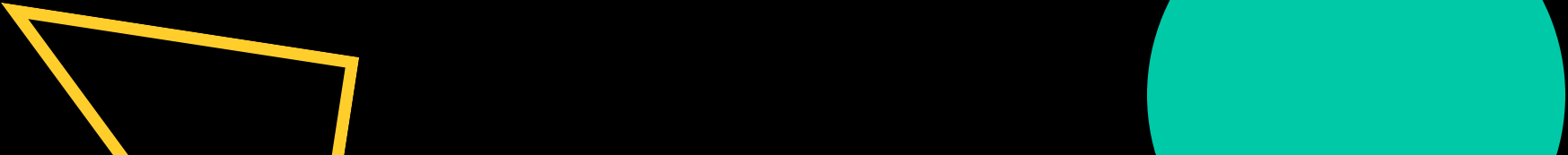
RESEARCH QUESTION & HYPOTHESIZED FINDINGS

Q Is there a difference in freshman year academic success, including GPA and graduation rates, between students who elect to take a gap-year and those who do not?

HF Yes, there will be a strong positive relationship between a gap-year and academic success.
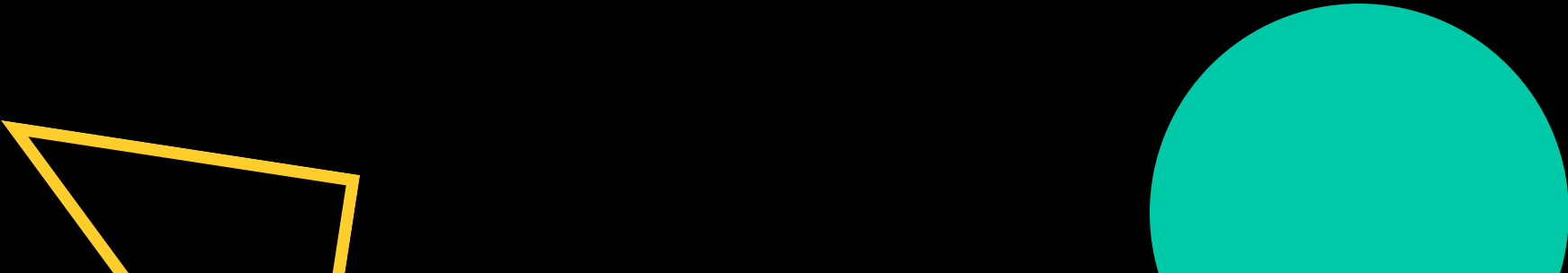
METHODS

- Non-experimental, causal-comparative design.
- Census survey sent out to entire freshman population at Auburn University. Students asked to self-report.
- Non-random, convenience sampling.
- Independent variable: gap-year participation; dependent variable: academic success (GPA, test scores, class withdrawal, pass/fail, etc.)

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

- Check for reliability and validity through pilot testing, readability test and IRB review
- One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical test

"compares group means to determine the probability of beingwrong in rejecting the null hypothesis" - McMillan, 2016

- Means of academic scores of two groups compared (gap-year and non gap-year)
- Significance level (p-value) <0.5 (level which indicates how often the results would be obtained by chance)
- Higher significance level does not indicate good research

LIMITATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- Data only drawn from students at one university- expand research to other universities in the future
- Future research should follow students throughout their undergraduate academic career, to graduation
- Continue research with future incoming populations
- Stratify data on how student gap-years are spent (ex: to work, to travel, for leisure, etc.)
- Future research should study other aspects than just academic success (ex: maturity, socialization, independence, etc.)

QUESTIONS?