



Youth sport participation as a result of social identity theory

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Abstract

The rate of children who are considered overweight has been increasing in the United States, which can be attributed to a number of factors. One of the components influencing the phenomena is a lack of physical activity among youth. This investigation uses a survey created through the review of literature to look at the influence of social identity theory on the choice of activities by children ages 9-13. The investigation was administered in a city of 300,000 individuals. In particular, the examination analyzes the decisions of physical activities of minority youth and the influence of a number of societal variables (family, playmates, and top athletes) have on those decisions. Seven hundred and fifty children of five diverse youth sport associations completed questionnaires which were analyzed using linear regression and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The findings from the study illustrated that youth are profoundly impacted by social factors more so than environmental or external factors such as availability, distance, expense or facility.

Keywords: youth sport, sport motivation, sport choice, minority participation, sport participation

Introduction: Presentation

Since the 1950's, the participation rates of children in sports has been increasing Horne (2006) ^[6]. The pattern can be credited to changes in the structure of families and how American's view the significance of family involvement. Horne (2006) ^[6] credits the pattern to five changes in family culture. To start with, the quantity of families that have the two guardians working has steadily increased since the 1950's. Families with kids where the two parents were working represented 59.0 percent of married-couple families in 2012 ("US Dept. of Labor," 2013) ^[20]. Because parents' time is limited during the working day as well as afterschool, the need for structured programs for youth continues to increase. Second, social acknowledgment for what comprises a 'decent parent' has changed. Society requests that guardians be responsible for their children's supervision. Structured activities such as sports provides a means for youth responsibility. Third, organized games enable kids to remain active while being constructively monitored. Fourth, organized games are viewed as positive elective outlets as opposed to unstructured or unsupervised activities. Finally, the athletes who perform at the highest levels of their sport provide motivation for young athletes that desire to imitate them.

During adolescences, individuals are engrained with playing sports. Kids are encouraged that sport shows life lessons, discipline, diligent work, morals, and so on. One thing that professionals administering youth sports must consider is not only participation rates but also choice of sport and why. There are over 21.5 million children between the ages of 6 and 17 years of age who take an interest in structured athletic activities in the United States yearly (Kelley and Carchla, 2013) ^[7]. Youth who take an interest in youth sports can possibly start good nutritional diets and create positive healthy behaviors that can contribute to improved self-esteem. Sports interest in youth of minority ethnicities and races will in general be influenced to participate

in specific games because of a couple of key components. Frequently, socioeconomic factors, for example, family's financial status, parent's occupation, and where they live are all influential factors in determining the sport or sports a child participates in.

The primary purposed of this article are: a) to inspect the degree to which the different financial factor impact sport interest decision in youth and b) to test whether there is a correlation among race and choice of activities among youth. Leaders in the community, recreation programs, and other youth sport associations will be able to utilize the outcomes of this research by understanding the various factors that affect sport participation, specifically focusing on socioeconomic and racial factors. Using the study, they can apply the outcomes to develop an increasingly comprehensive program that engages youth of all backgrounds.

Literature review

Sport participation motives

There have been various investigations that have focused on youth in athletic programs and their relationship to an assortment of positive formative results, for example, development of life skills and character improvement (Penner, L. A., Dovidio, J. F., Piliavin, J. A., & Schroeder, D. A. 2005; Tracy, A. J., & Erkut, S., 2002.; Tammelin, T., Nayha, S., Hills, A.P., & Jarvelin, M-R. 2003) ^[14, 19, 18]. There are various reasons why youth choose to take an interest in games. The literature concerning the advantages for those engaged with extra-curricular games or exercises is as wide as it is profound (Mahoney J, Harris A, Eccles J., 2006; USTA Serves Special Report, 2013; Wimer, C., *et al*, 2006) ^[11, 21, 23]. Merkel (2013) ^[12] inspected an assortment of issues that spurred youth to take an interest in game. Everything from fun, remain fit, and be a social interaction were incorporated

into the reactions. Winning was positioned low on the rundown by student-athletes and not referenced by non-athletes. Moreover, this statement of various pervasive reasons was bolstered in an investigation of 55 secondary school students engaged with extracurricular and community-based activities (72% were associated with sport). Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., *et al.* (2005)^[9], found that these children saw extracurricular exercises as a significant factor in the development of mental aptitudes, for example, objective setting, time management, and psychological control. According to Mahoney J, Harris A, Eccles J. (2006)^[11] time spent in youth sports is the most reliable indicator of youth flourishing. The exploration further elucidated this declaration by clarifying that the advantages of taking an interest in youth sports included elevated confidence, better grades, a more noteworthy yearning to go to school, readiness to participate in endeavors to help other people, improved initiative aptitudes, great physical wellbeing, and a more noteworthy inclination to be associated with political and social exercises later on in adulthood (Borden, L. M., *et al.*, 2006)^[1]. Various different researchers have contended that the advantages of organized afterschool exercises for youth members far exceeded any predictable disadvantage that could exist (Mahoney J, Harris A, Eccles J., 2006; Metsäpelto, R., & Pulkkinen, L., 2014; USTA Serves Special Report, 2013; Wimer, *et al.*, 2006)^[11, 23, 13].

Dawes, N. P., & Larson, R. (2011)^[4], analyzed why minorities take an interest or not to take an interest in sport. Among the appropriate responses given, they saw "similarities" among ethnic groups. The broad reactions included "staying off the streets," "adapt new aptitudes," "keep engaged in physical activity," and "trying fun activities." When fragmenting the gatherings dependent on sex, the reactions shifted based on the groupings. African American females expressed that the persuasive elements for them taking an interest in sport incorporated the following: "to prove themselves, to interact with other females, and to develop significant connections." African American guys' reactions were not at all like their female partners as their reactions included: "venturing away from home, being engaged with something positive, being regarded highly by younger children, and increasing self-assurance." Dawes & Larson, (2011)^[4] concluded from the examination that staying off the streets and out of trouble was the most significant purpose behind involvement.

Preference of Sport

A number of researchers have concluded that specific ethnic groups are progressively inclined to take an interest in specific games. Lerner, J. V., Phelps, E., Forman, Y., & Bowers, E. P. (2009)^[10] examined the connection between ethnic groups and choice of sporting activity. They determined that African American boys are 1.6 times more apt to take an interest in interscholastic football and 2.5 times more apt to play interscholastic basketball. They additionally found that Caucasian boys are 1.3 times more apt to take an interest in other interscholastic games, for example, baseball, soccer, tennis, etc. While there are various motivations to clarify the distinctions in the participation of specific sports among ethnic groups, for example, family foundation, peer impact, and area, Lerner, J. V., Phelps, E., Forman, Y., & Bowers, E. P. (2009)^[10], presumed that the essential explanation was because of a disparity in resources.

Family resources, as Lerner, J. V., Phelps, E., Forman, Y., & Bowers, E. P. (2009)^[10], expressed, is comprised of guardians, pay and level of education family members. Most Caucasian boys, 60%, originated from two parent homes instead of their African American partners where just 40% originated from two parent homes. Homes comprising of two guardians will, in general, have higher family salary levels and expanded family time. The study illustrates that males who are "socially burdened" tended to gravitate towards basketball and football. Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., *et al.* (2005)^[9] examination showed significant evidence that socially distraught youth were bound to take an interest in football and basketball. Socioeconomic status is frequently described as a blend of education, salary, and occupation. Besides, financial status regularly uncovers disparities in access to assets, and on account of youth sports, capability of diminished youth sports activity. Another factor of importance is the place most of minority groups live. As per the United States Census (2010), 45.8 million of the absolute 111.9 million minorities live in the Southern region of the mainland United States. In the South, the temperature is for the most part that of a warm climate atmosphere, not helpful for keeping up ice that is important to play hockey outdoors. Furthermore, hockey arenas are not commonly situated in downtown metropolitan zones where a bigger level of African Americans and Hispanics dwell, rather in rural areas and provincial regions. Taking into account that most of minorities live in urban zones, it is hard for them to make a trip to suburbia to partake in hockey, as certain economically disadvantaged minorities might not have a vehicle to do as such. Besides, hockey is an over the top expensive game to take part in. Not exclusively does the individual need to buy hockey gear, but they need to pay affiliation charges and travel costs (transportation, food, and hotel) for games and competitions. Wulf, (2013), gauges that the expense of youth hockey investment throughout the most recent 10 years is roughly \$48,850 for one youth athlete. Most families, particularly financially burdened families, would have a troublesome time spending this sum on participating in a sport.

There are a number of reasons, other than finances, for the low participation in rates among minority youth in sports such as tennis, golf and hockey. A large amount of minorities live in overwhelmingly urban zones where the "country club" sports are simply not offered. Tennis courts will in general be found either at country clubs, facilities specific for tennis, or in suburban areas of metropolitan regions where there is some fees associated with participation. In the event that tennis courts are situated inside city limits, odds are they won't be kept up by the city and are run-down. Golf can be very costly and require the member to buy golf clubs and pay green expenses. Green expenses vary in cost and are required each time an individual plays golf. Golf club membership are also an expensive endeavor requiring yearly fees. Yearly golf club fees might be close to outlandish for a family who might not have additional extra cash. Frequently, kids from Caucasian middle-class populaces are highly represented in these sports. This phenomenon is to some extent is because of social customs and affiliations, and to some extent to the way that investment requires sufficient discretionary cashflow to pay for charges, gear, and transport to practice and compete. The perspective on the sport of golf was recently seen by numerous individuals as a selective and elitist hobby selected by well-off

Caucasian middle-class individuals. In 1997 perspectives started to change with assistance from The World Golf Association by setting up the "First Tee" Program. The First Tee Program gave youth between the ages of 8 to 18, from all foundations, a chance to create life-improvement values through golf (Reis, Helena, and Antonia Correia., 2013) ^[16]. The First Tee Program is a case of one program intended to open minority youth to predominately white games. Regularly, golf, tennis, and hockey are costly and must be played on specific courses, courts, or hockey arenas that are situated in suburban and rural zones, not within proximity to where most of minority people live.

Minority youth sport interest basically includes sports that are effectively available to where individuals dwell. Additionally, numerous minorities have alternate points of view on which sports they take an interest as they might be impacted by the elite athletes they see on TV or basically what their playmates are participating in. As per Hewitt, J.P., & Shulman, D. (2011) ^[5], the extent of African American competitors in professional level revenue producing sports contrasted and the very nearly thirteen percent of African Americans in the United States populace is incredibly high. Moreover, the high extent of African American competitors taking an interest in games, for example, football and basketball in the NBA, NFL, and NCAA ranges from about 47-77% of the total number of participants. Because of the size of fascination that sport seem to produce for some youthful African American competitors, the awareness of an athletic identity paralleled with a racial character might be very unique. Not many minority elite competitors are noticeable in tennis, golf, or hockey when contrasted with those in football or basketball, making it fairly hard for minority youth to identify with such sports. Another reason concerning why certain games are picked over others is that sports, for example, football and basketball are for the most part connected with school interest where there is restricted equipment required for play, and as a general rule, gear is given by the organization. Minimal effort of investment is likewise another significant trademark with respect to why minorities lean toward playing sports, for example, football and basketball; family income of those that live in urban zones may not be as high as that of different regions. Social stratification gap ought to likewise be considered as a factor as to why urban youth are not developing the skills needed to participate in sports that require expensive equipment and facilities (Bush, A.J., Martin, CA., & Bush, V.D., 2004) ^[2].

The USTA tried to answer the question as to why minorities are not taking part in tennis; and what sports are they really playing. The last question perceives that their association's participants didn't sufficiently speak to the demographics of the population in the United States (USTA, 2013) ^[21]. In their report, they fragmented participation in sport into three classifications: physical games, noncontact sports, and tennis. While recognizing that minorities were underrepresented in tennis, they found, conversely, that minorities will in general be overrepresented in physical games like football and basketball, and similarly represented in noncontact sports like baseball, volleyball, track, and cross country running (USTA, 2013) ^[21]. In light of the USTA's examination, seemingly minority youth are taking an interest in more contact arranged activities than noncontact sports, and absolutely more than in tennis. A general deficiency of their investigation was that it didn't represent hockey in their list of physical sports or golf in their noncontact sports

classification. As expressed before, hockey's minority investment levels, especially among African American and Hispanic minorities are very low. A similar affirmation can be made for the game of golf. African Americans represent five percent of every single golf player, with Hispanics representing under four percent (Reis, *et al.* 2013) ^[16]. In view of the examination of Reis, *et al.* 2013 ^[16] and the USTA, it is clear that minority youth, when given the chance, would prefer to partake in either contact, or noncontact sports barring ice hockey, golf, and tennis. For golf and tennis, ostensibly, and as the examination recognizes, they are generally elitist, country club sports with a select group within proximity of the activities (USTA, 2013; Reis, *et al.* 2013) ^[16]. They are costly to play for individuals, and for some lower financial families, these consumptions are just beyond what they can bear. The explanations behind the low participation rate in ice hockey stretch out past the budgetary constraints on families to enable their child to partake. Ice hockey isn't a club driven game, nor is it seen as elitist. The explanation minorities are not playing hockey, contends Tanner (1995) ^[17], are that most minorities don't live in territories that ice hockey is a predominant game. Citing O'Rhee in Tanner's article, "You must experience childhood in a territory where there is hockey. You must jump on the ice and get some exposure" (Tanner, 1995) ^[17]. Also, similar to golf and tennis, ice hockey is a costly game to take an interest in. Ice skates, a hockey stick, and additional equipment are not financially feasible for low income families. Additionally, ice rinks should either be privately or publically supported, and in financially impeded territories, this is just not liable to occur. Finally, and maybe most basically, every one of the three games do not have any genuine good examples that minority youth can see themselves admiring; making the games commonly less enticing to these children (Tanner, 1995) ^[17].

Methodology

Quantitative Research

Research Question

There are two purposes for this examination. First, the examination analyzes the connection between race of youth and their decision of sport they take an interest in. The second reason for this examination is to enhance the literature of youth sport choice. In particular, the investigation adds to the current literature committed to race and socioeconomic relationship to youth sport choice. The research question in this investigation was "Is there a connection among race and youth sport decision. The discoveries from this investigation used quantitative strategies to analyze the research question. In this examination, youth is characterized as kids between the ages of 9 to 17. The examination, additionally, researches the relationship of sport choice and factors such as proximity, family structure, financial status, peer impact, and elite athletes.

A populace of around 385,000 occupants in South Florida was chosen for this investigation in light of the fact that the region had a large population of youth in the African American and Hispanic groups. Additionally, the local parks and recreation approached the researcher to conduct this study for the purpose of developing better sport programming.

African American and Hispanic ethnic groups represented the biggest minority segments in the area (U.S. Evaluation Bureau, 2010). In the wake of distinguishing the different ethnicities, the investigator recognized youth sport associations in the area. In

particular, the investigator reached out to the neighborhood parks and amusement association, which provide the majority of sporting activities for youth in the area. Experts from the nearby recreation department gave timetables of all schedules of sport programs for the fall of 2016. The investigator further recognized other youth sport associations that were highly represented by the two minority groups. The non-profit and private youth associations included sports, such as, football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and kickball. A sum of five youth sport associations were included in this study. Every one of the five associations started in the area, despite the fact that their geographic territories have expanded over time. For instance, a portion of the associations are extremely nearby to specific neighborhoods or parts of town in which cases the majority of their childhood members are close to the field/court of play. On the other hand, an association, such as, parks and recreation takes into account the whole city and, now and again members may make a trip to various neighborhoods or parts of town so as to take part in sport. For the purpose of this investigation, the investigator did exclude travel groups. Generally, members will have a higher motivator and interest in their game. The exclusion was done so as to inspect the contrasts between youth of comparative interest in their preferred game or sports. Every one of the organizations that are taking part in the study received the results of the report.

Questionnaire

The survey used for this examination was divided into three areas. The primary segment of the survey concentrated on the kinds of activities played and how regularly the adolescent took an interest in the game. Some youth took an interest in more than one game instead of single sport members. Some adolescent were fledglings, while others have been playing their games for two or three seasons. An open-ended inquiry posed to members regarding why they picked their sport of choice to take an interest in. The second piece of the poll concentrated on the impacts for taking an interest in the game. Significant factors that were important to the examination included friends, guardians, other relatives, personality, and elite athletes. Youth were additionally questioned about their insight into different games, for example, tennis, golf, and hockey. The last piece of the survey concentrated on socioeconomics. The demographic questions were taken from the 2010 U.S registration. Family unit salary was prohibited from the poll as respondents in all likelihood would not be conscious of that data.

Procedures

A pre-test of the questionnaire, comprising of three likert scales, was administered. Because of the age of the participants, a lengthy questionnaire was deemed unfeasible. Fifteen youth between the ages of 9 and 17 finished the study with the authorization of their parents. The respondents were asked if the questions were clear and understandable. A number of minor changes were made so as to give accurate information collection as well as ensure the validity of the study. Before meeting with the young members, parental consent forms and an informative letter (in English and a subsequent language: Spanish) were

circulated to the coaches of each team. Coaches were asked by the investigator to disperse the consent forms to each parent and retrieve the completed consent forms. After retrieving the completed consent forms, the researcher planned a date and time with each coach to meet with the youth whose guardians agreed to the investigation. The meetings with each group occurred toward the start of practice sessions so as to have the respondents' full attention. A sum of five surveyors were used so as to administer the questionnaires. Because of the solid plausibility of respondent error due to the age of the youth, every surveyor was told to verbally ask the questions and record the responses. In the wake of directing the reviews, the surveyors transferred the finished questionnaires to the investigator for information analysis.

Review of Analysis

The investigation looks at the connection between racial personality and young people's decision of sport to take part in. Youth is characterized as participants between the ages of 9 to 17. Two ethnic groups were distinguished for participation in the examination. Those ethnic groups were African American and Latino. A 30 question study was created based on the review of literature concentrating on youth sport choice. A pre-test was directed to guarantee legitimacy. Surveyors were given explicit guidance on overseeing the reviews so as to reduce bias.

Results

Participants' profile

The investigation comprised of members who were youth between the ages of 9 and 17. Every youth were active participants with at least one of the five youth sport organizations. In particular, the investigation analyzed the choice of sport for African American and Latino youth members. A majority of the members were between the ages of 9 to 13 as the data shows that 82% of the youth were in this age range. Moreover, there was a uniqueness between the participation rates of youth based on gender. Sixty-five percent of the youth reviewed were male rather than the 35% shown by their female partners (see Appendix, Table 1). Surveyors gathered an aggregate of 820 questionnaires in which 211 respondents showed this was the first occasion when they take part in sport. These respondents were essentially in the 9 to 10-year range. Youth were, additionally, approached to express their preferred elite athlete. An investigation of the racial breakdown of the respondents when contrasted with their preferred elite athlete demonstrated that 92% of the respondents' preferred athlete was of a similar race.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Youth Participants

	Male	Female	African American	Hispanic
	Sport			
Football	178	0	82	120
Volleyball	0	52	5	35
Basketball	72	38	83	21
Soccer	228	74	18	305
Kickball	28	124	38	108
Total	506	288	226	568

Table 2: Participation Influence Factors

	Mean	SD	Range	Min	Max
1. Location	5.77	1.32	7	1	8
2. Parents	7.27	1.35	7	1	8
3. Professional athlete	7.11	1.30	7	1	8
4. Siblings	6.26	1.25	7	1	8
5. Friends	6.84	1.13	7	1	8
6. TV/Media	6.34	1.98	7	1	8

Table 3: Correlation of Participation Influence Factors on Youth Sport Participation Choice

	Choice of Sport	
Location Pearson correlation Significance (two-tailed) <i>N</i>	0.04 794	0.396
Parents Pearson correlation Significance (two-tailed) <i>N</i>	0.089* 794	0.01
Professional athlete Pearson correlation Significance (two-tailed) <i>N</i>	0.080* 790	0.01
Siblings Pearson correlation Significance (two-tailed) <i>N</i>	0.032 486	0.566
Friends Pearson correlation Significance (two-tailed) <i>N</i>	0.102* 794	0.001
TV/Media Pearson correlation Significance (two-tailed) <i>N</i>	0.081 794	0.762

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Participation influence index

In the analysis of means for participation influence index items, three out of six factors received the highest mean scores. The three factors with the highest mean scores were: (1) “Parents” (2) “Professional athlete” and (3) “Friends” (see Appendix, Table 2).

Participation Influence

The analysis of the linear relationships for each of the participation influence index items shows that there are some significant relationships. Therefore, as reported in Appendix, Table 3, there is a direct correlation between each of the participation influence factors and youth sport participation choice. However, the following correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed): (1) Influence of parents (0.01), (2) Influence of professional athlete (0.01), and (3) Influence of friends (0.004).

The data from the analysis of the influence factors on the preferred sport along with the high percentage of identification with elite athletes of the same race can be explained through social identity theory. Based social identity theory, there is a tendency for individuals to identify themselves with specific social groups such as organizational membership, religion, gender, race, and peers (Whittaker, L., & Gillepsie, A. 2013) [22]. Social identification is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate. Parents, friends (who may be from the same neighborhoods and race), and favorite athlete (who tend to be of the same race according to analysis) are influential as children develop their social identity which can then relate to the sport, they choose to take part in.

Discussion

The analysis of the data demonstrate that the essential factor in picking which game to take part in among kids ages 9-13 can be ascribed to various social components. Guardians who are increasingly aware and educated around one game over another may urge their child to take an interest in the parent’s preferred sport. Cohorts or peers who take part in a particular activity might be compelling in a child’s choice to partake in a similar game. The admiration of elite athletes of a similar race may likewise influence which sport a child participates in. There are constantly different variables that may impact the choice, for example,

proximity, access, and cost. Generally, youth endeavor to take an interest in a sport as a result of social impacts and are not successful or as skilled at playing the sport as their peers. The absence of success or aptitude may deter the youth from proceeding to take an interest in the sport and consequently may pick increasingly inactive exercises, for example, sitting in front of the TV and playing computer games.

One of the shared objectives of youth sport associations is to better the lives of individuals in the community, particularly those in lower income areas. Professionals working in the community can use this result of this study to identify the social components that impact a youth's choice of sport. There are various results that can be accomplished by concentrating on the variables affecting youth choice. To start with, professionals can create programs to teach guardians on other sports offered to their children and try to influence the parents to get their children involved in different sports. Second, they can offer an assortment of progressively available sports that are unique in relation to the community offering of youth sports. Third, they can make a social atmosphere through these changes where youth are not afraid to try new activities that are not commonly offered.

There still should be more research directed race and sport participation. Socioeconomics and psychographics of kids in the 9-13year range are continually changing, consequently investigation into the choice of sport needs to continue to evolve. This examination has various impediments. Initially, the examination incorporates one location which is primarily Hispanic. Second, the quantity of sport opportunities in the region is constrained and may vary in other communities that may have more sport offerings and resources. Third, the examination was a one-study which needs to extend to a longitudinal report so as to develop a better understanding of participation rates and trends.

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