8-1-2009

An Investigation of Parents' and Children's Perceptions about Their Participation in a Community-Based Swim Team Program

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Why are young swimmers smiling after two hours of intense, daily swim team practices filled with swimming countless laps and focusing on improving their various swimming strokes? What drives parents to willingly transport their children to and from their local YMCAs for swim team practices? Why are swim team participants willing, and even eager, to sit in steamy, hot swimming pool areas and watch or swim in competitive events that last for hours and hours? These are simply a few questions one might have when considering the amount of time, involvement, and commitment required while participating in a community-based YMCA swim team program. This study investigated the perceptions of parents and children about their participation in such a program.

The researchers grouped YMCA swim team participants into three categories: parents of swimmers, 13–17 year-old swimmers, and 6–12 year-old swimmers. Participants were asked to identify the physical, social, emotional, and educational advantages and disadvantages of swim team organizations. The extrinsic and intrinsic motivating factors were researched, compared, and contrasted among these three groups. The goal was to understand the motivating factors that facilitate participation in youth competitive swimming. The results of this study are shared to promote and enhance community-based swimming team experiences for others.

Questions addressed in this study included the following:

- What were the social, emotional, physical, and educational advantages and disadvantages of participating in community-based swim team programs, as perceived by parents and children?
- Why did parents and children participate in community-based swimming team organizations?

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Theoretical Framework for Study

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene "Two-Factor Theory" (Herzberg, 1968). The original participants in Herzberg's studies were from the business field; however, the researchers of this study applied the concepts in the educational arena. The Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between motivating and hygiene factors. Examples of motivating factors included being recognized for achievement, being given responsibility, or being challenged to develop personal growth and to provide positive satisfaction arising from intrinsic conditions. Hygiene factors are extrinsic in nature and although they do not give positive satisfaction, they are necessary because dissatisfaction occurs when they are absent. A few examples of hygiene factors include working conditions, policies, practices, and compensation. This study identified motivating and hygiene factors as they related to the sport of competitive swimming and were included in the survey and interview tools. Motivating factors included interest of participant ("I am interested in the sport"); team participation, goal getting-achievement, membership ("My friends are going"); chance to be successful at a competition/self-esteem builder; building block for future competition; chance for socialization and improving relationships; enjoyment/love of the swimming sport; building of confidence; family time; and exercise.

Hygiene factors included facility and location; quality of awards presented; efficiency of how well the meet is organized; importance of meet, meet history, tradition; suggestions and recommendations provided by other coaches and/or parents; annual repetition ("We come every year"); and time of year/come to meet when offered.

Literature Review

Swim Teams: An Organized Sport

Recreational practices of swimming have been around since ancient times. As early as the sixteenth century, books were written regarding the topic of swimming. In 1538, Nicolas Wynman wrote the first book specifically about swimming (Terret, 2005). Everard Digby wrote another about 50 years later; the book included illustrations of different swimming stroke techniques (Terret, 2005). It was not until three centuries later that swimming transitioned into a recognized, competitive sport. According to Thierry Terret (2005), competitive swimming originated in England sometime during the 1830s and 1840s. Plenty of professional swimmers existed during that decade, so in 1837 a National Swimming Society was created to accommodate them. Often swimmers competed in outdoor bodies of water, and more indoor pools began to be constructed as a result of an increasing concern for safety. This led to the organization of meets between schools and universities, along with public events where spectators were charged admission.

Terret (2005) describes competitive swimming as a sport that consists of traveling a certain distance at the water's surface without material aids and in a more or less stabilized environment, in accordance with specified technical conditions

and in the shortest time possible. Many milestones and years have passed before arriving at this definition. During the 1880s, athletic swimming was finally distinguished from amateur swimming with the creation of 59 articles to define it as such. These became the foundation for international regulations, which determined details of competitive swimming such as distance of events, size and height of the starting block, approved pool length, modesty of bathing suits, how to keep contestants from getting in each other's way, the proper starter order, and rights and powers granted to officials, just to name a few. Since then, competitive swimming has evolved into an international sport and one of the most widely practiced sports in the world.

Physical Growth and Development

An extensive and exhaustive literature review revealed very few methodologically sound, research-based studies related to the sport of youth competitive swimming. It is commonly noted that swimming is a healthy way to exercise and is a lifelong sport for many people. Skoffer and Foldspang (2008) organized a study to determine which forms of physical exercise would decrease occurrence of lower back pain in school children. After studying numerous sports, it was determined that swimming was one of two sports that was truly associated with a decreased lower-back pain in school children. The number of hours one played soccer was also found a contributing factor to decreased lower back pain.

Social Perspective

The influence of peer models on swimming skill performance is significant (Weiss, McCullagh, Berlant, & Smith, 1998). Weiss et al. concluded that peer coping models on self-efficacy were effective in changing the behavior of fearful children. The study noted that the use of peer models is an easy, inexpensive, and naturally built-in intervention to swimming lessons, which teachers can use to meaningfully contribute to the psychological and physical development of their students.

Emotional Advantages

Much evidence points to emotional benefits of swimming. Not only does it affect swimmers physically, but it also influences many aspects of emotional health (Nessel, 2000). Those who swim, work out regularly, and/or train for competition understand that exercise is good for physical conditioning. Many have learned from magazines and health newsletters that the same devotion to exercise can have a positive impact on promoting emotional well-being. Several emotional factors, such as reduced anxiety and depression, lower blood pressure, weight loss, increased self-esteem, enhanced physical strength and regulated sleep patterns are all influenced in a positive manner by exercise. Swimming is certainly one of the most overall beneficial activities that contributes to these added benefits. Six studies were conducted between 1960 and 1991 that examined the relationship between exercise and anxiety reduction. Three findings emerged from the six studies reviewed:

- The most substantial effects of exercise on anxiety reduction were seen with aerobic (swimming, running, cycling) as opposed to anaerobic (handball, strength-flexibility) training activities.
- The most effective length of an aerobic training program was a minimum of 10 weeks and preferably greater than 15 weeks.
- Subjects entering the study initially with lower levels of fitness or higher levels of anxiety (such as coronary and panic disorder patients) had the most beneficial results (Nessel, 2000).

In addition, postexercise anxiety reduction times ranged somewhere between four to six hours before anxiety returned to preexercise levels.

Educational Benefits

When researching the academic benefits, it was determined that male and female high school athletes who participated in organized sports are more likely to attend and/or remain in college and earn higher grades from those teens who don't participate in organized sports activities (Billie, 1998). Parents play a role, as well. Woolger and Power (2000) surveyed 135 mothers and fathers of 9–12-year-old competitive swimmers through the use of questionnaires. The focus of the questions was about their child's swimming abilities and about their current parenting practices. After children provided information about their swimming motivations, it was determined that mothers' not fathers' parenting practices predicted children's intrinsic motivation.

As noted above, a thorough literature review on this topic revealed very few research-based, methodologically-sound studies documenting the social, emotional, physical, and educational aspects of the sport of swimming. Therefore, the researchers believe that this study was very important and adds significantly to the research fields of health, physical education, and education, in general.

Method

This research study was conducted at a rural, western Pennsylvania YMCA. The researchers collected qualitative and quantitative data in three formats: survey appropriate for parents and 13–17-year-old children (see Appendix A) and interviews for 6–12-year-old children (see Appendix B).

Participants

Specific inclusion criteria for this study included all parents and children who were participants in a rural, western-Pennsylvania YMCA swim team organization as of September 30, 2008. Approximately forty families were involved in the program at this time. Thirty-seven parents completed the survey instrument. Ages of parents ranged from 28 to 68+. Twenty-seven female and 10 male parents completed the survey instrument. In addition, fourteen 13–17 adolescent minor participants completed surveys. Nine were male and five were female. Twenty-seven minor participants between the ages of 6 and 12 were interviewed in this study. Fifteen of these minor children were female and 12 of these minor children were

male. Parental permission forms were obtained for all minor participants. The majority of the participants were Caucasian, and there were no penalties to those who selected not to participate.

Procedure

With permission of the Indiana County YMCA Director and support of the Parent Swim Team Organization (PSTO), personal contacts with parents and children were made at the local YMCA before, during, and after swimming practice sessions. Willing parents completed the survey instrument and returned it to the drop box located at the front desk of the YMCA. No identifying information was requested on this survey tool. Parents of children ages 6–17 were provided a letter that outlined the research study and included a consent form. When parents granted approval, 13–17-year-old children completed the survey with the assistance of the researchers, as deemed necessary. Six to 12-year-old children were personally interviewed by the researchers. Children were provided a letter that outlined the study and asked for their assent, in addition to the permission of their parents. There were no known risks to the human participants. The names of individuals were not important in this study, and anonymity was protected by asking parents and 13–17-year-old minors to complete the surveys without writing their names. In addition, when the researchers interviewed the minor children, no names were written on the interview tool to maintain their confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

A significant amount of data were collected and analyzed to address the two research questions of this study: What are the social, emotional, physical, and educational advantages and disadvantages of participating in community-based swim team programs, as perceived by parents and children? Why do parents and children participate in community-based swimming team organizations?

Discussion of Surveys Completed by Parents

Thirty-seven parents participated in the survey: 73% were female ($n = 27$) and 27% were male ($n = 10$). Sixty percent of the respondents were between the ages of 38 and 47 years old. Sixty-two percent of the parental participants responded that they had zero to five years of experience in the swim team organization. Ninety-two percent of the respondents stated that they were actively involved in transporting their children to and from daily practices and competitive swim team meets. Parents were asked, "Why do you participate in the swim team organization?" Seventy percent of those parents surveyed responded to the question with comments about how exercise benefits their child(ren). The following most popular response was that the swim team program is enjoyable, family and team-oriented, and provides an opportunity for children to be involved. Less common responses included, helps my child develop swim skills, encourages participation in a community activity, provides a positive influence (on child), provides opportunities for success, builds self-esteem, gives opportunities to socialize and build relationships.

Participants were asked, "What are the advantages of participating in a community-based swim team program?" Sixty-two percent of the participants' responses specifically identified that this opportunity encourages meeting other children, making friends, and building relationships. Approximately 20% of those surveyed also noted the advantages of improving health through exercise, swimming with others (team-oriented), and community-building. Other advantages listed included emphasizes values, good location, develops good self-image/attitude/achievement, develops time management skills, and supports competitiveness.

Participants were asked, "What are the disadvantages of participating in a community-based swim team program?" Thirty-two percent stated that there were no disadvantages. Sixteen percent of the participants mentioned transportation and travel issues, 13% noted the time requirements involved, and 10% stated that there were limited volunteers and that more volunteers were needed. Five percent of the participants mentioned that they were unable to keep up with all the program requirements, 5% mentioned cost, and 5% stated dissatisfaction by noting that opportunity for advancement within the organization is not objective and that there was favoritism. Single comments state that there was pressure to be involved, it is not year-round, friendships are outside of school, meets do not go smoothly, there are diverse experience levels, parents are too involved and too critical, there is limited coaching philosophy/experience, limited competition, and limited financial support.

Approximately 50% of the parents stated that they had no suggestions for improvement when asked about the quality of the swim team organization. Eight percent suggested an incorporation of a peer-mentoring program, more volunteers, and to provide a rule pamphlet or nominate a parent/coach liaison. Comments from two individuals stated that they favored a continuation of dedicated and skilled coaching and maintenance of open communication with parents. They also stated that when lanes are crowded, the quality of instruction is reduced. Single individual comments suggested providing an incentive method, working more on starts, providing a sign-up for snacks/drinks, making it more game-oriented swimming for little kids, making it year-round, providing motivators for small kids, working on child's strengths, and providing optional practice times and bigger lanes.

Table 1, Results of Parent Surveys, displays the precise numerical results of the data collected from parents. As discussed above and supported in Table 1, readers can see that when one applies Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, parents were less interested in hygiene factors (low-level) and more responsive to motivation factors (high level). Herzberg (1968) states, "Adults look for gratification at higher-level psychological needs having to do with achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and the nature of the work itself" (p. 53). The results of this study demonstrate that parents hold these high level motivation factors, and these beliefs support their actions when enrolling and supporting their children in the YMCA swim team program.

Table 1 Results of Parent Survey

No.	Factors Relevant to your Participation in YMCA Swim Team Organization	5	4	3	2	1	NA
1	Facility quality and location	41% (15)	41% (15)	16% (6)	3% (1)		
2	Quality of awards presented	16% (6)	16% (6)	27% (10)	27% (10)	11% (4)	3% (1)
3	Efficiency of how well the meet is organized	32% (12)	43% (16)	16% (6)	5% (2)		3% (1)
4	Importance of meet, meet history, tradition	22% (8)	35% (13)	24% (9)	5% (2)	3% (1)	3% (1)
5	Suggestions and recommendations provided by other coaches and/or parents	22% (8)	46% (17)	19% (7)	5% (2)	5% (2)	3% (1)
6	Interest of participant (child's interest)	65% (24)	30% (11)	5% (2)			
7	Team participation, goal setting, achievement, membership ("My friends are going.")	38% (14)	19% (7)	32% (12)	3% (1)	3% (1)	5% (2)
8	Chance to be successful at a competition ("doing well")-self-esteem builder	51% (19)	41% (15)	11% (4)	3% (1)		
9	Annual repetition ("We just come every year")	22% (8)	14% (5)	27% (10)	24% (9)	11% (4)	3% (1)

(continued)

Table 1 *(continued)*

10	Building block for future competition	30% (11)	38% (14)	24% (9)	8% (3)	
11	Chance for socialization w/ other people (both teammates, other teams, coaches, and parents)	30% (11)	51% (19)	8% (3)	5% (2)	
12	Fun/child enjoys swimming/For the love of the sport	65% (24)	24% (9)	11% (4)		
13	Instill confidence in children	59% (22)	38% (14)	3% (1)		
14	Family time	27% (10)	22% (8)	30% (11)	16% (6)	5% (2)
15	Exercise	68% (25)	27% (10)	5% (2)		
16	Time of year/come to meet when offered	32% (12)	22% (8)	32% (12)	8% (3)	5% (2)

n = 37

Discussion of Surveys Completed by 13–17-Year-Old Swimmers

Fourteen of the 13–17 year-olds participated in the survey: 64% were male ($n = 9$) and 36% were female ($n = 5$). Forty-three percent ($n = 6$) responded that they had zero to five years of competitive swimming experience; 43% ($n = 6$) stated that they had six to ten years of experience; and 14% ($n = 2$) had 11 to 15 years of experience. The common theme in answer to the question, "Why do you participate in the swim team organization?" centered on having fun, spending time, and exercising with friends, as evidenced by 71% of the students' responses. Fourteen percent ($n = 2$) replied that they liked to compete and 14% ($n = 2$) stated that they loved the swimming sport. Participants were asked, "What are the advantages of participating in a community-based swim team program?" The responses correlated highly with their answers to why they participated on the swim team. Seventy-one percent of the students replied that advantages included making and maintaining friendships, exercising, and having fun.

Likewise, 14% of the responses focused on the sport of swimming and 14% mentioned scholarship opportunities, which corresponded with their answers of engaging in competition when describing their purpose for swimming. Additional advantages mentioned included that it is not connected to school, it is family oriented, it is for all ages, it leads young ones, it helps members know the community, and it opens doors.

A few disadvantages were mentioned when asked, "What are the disadvantages of participating in a community-based swim team program?" Half of the respondents indicated that swimming is time-consuming, 36% stated that the lanes were crowded, and 14% did not identify any disadvantage. One respondent mentioned that he/she disliked negative criticism and a teammate. Participants were asked, "Do you have suggestions to improve the quality of the swim team organization?" Forty-three percent ($n = 6$) addressed the actual facility, i.e., a bigger pool, new blocks, less chlorine, better facility. Forty-three percent ($n = 6$) had no suggestions for improvement. Additional suggestions included more games and pizza parties, don't make practice every day, more commitment, and better organization. Table 2 highlights the results of the additional information gleaned from the surveys.

When comparing the parents versus the 13–17-year-old children, the most significant areas of agreement included the following: how well the meets were organized, child's interest, team participation, chance to be successful —"doing well," self-esteem builder, chance for socialization with others, fun, exercise, added confidence for children, time of the year it is offered. Areas of disagreement included, facility quality, annual repetition, building blocks for competition, and quality of awards. The 13–17-year-olds appreciate the quality of awards, annual repetition, and building blocks for future competition. Parents want a better quality of swimming facility.

Not surprisingly, there was agreement among many parents' and 13–17-year-olds' responses regarding high-level and low-level motivator ratings. It is important to recognize the cognitive development of young adolescents as they move from the concrete operational stage to the formal operational stage (Piaget, 1952b). Many of the 13–17-year-old participants have transitioned, or are in the

Table 2 Results of 13–17-Year-Old Swim Team Participants' Survey

No.	Factors Relevant to Your Participation in YMCA Swim Team Organization	5	4	3	2	1
1	Facility quality and location	21% (3)	36% (5)	21% (3)	21% (3)	0
2	Quality of awards presented	43% (6)	36% (5)	14% (2)	7% (1)	0
3	Efficiency of how well the meet is organized	29% (4)	57% (8)	7% (1)	0	7% (1)
4	Importance of meet, meet history, tradition	36% (5)	14% (2)	21% (3)	14% (2)	7% (1)
5	Suggestions and recommendations provided by other coaches and/or parents	43% (6)	29% (4)	14% (2)	14% (2)	0
6	Interest of participant (I am interested in the sport)	64% (9)	36% (5)	0	0	0
7	Team participation, goal setting-achievement, membership (My friends are going)	36% (5)	43% (6)	14% (2)	0	0
8	Chance to be successful at a competition (doing well) self-esteem builder	57% (8)	29% (4)	14% (2)	0	0
9	Annual repetition (I just come every year)	79% (11)	14% (2)	7% (1)	0	0
10	Building block for future competition	50% (7)	14% (2)	36% (5)	0	0
11	Chance for socialization w/other people (both teammates, other teams, coaches, & parents)	50% (7)	29% (4)	7% (1)	0	0
12	Fun (I enjoy swimming)/for love of the sport	57% (8)	7% (1)	29% (4)	7% (1)	0
13	Instills confidence	64% (9)	14% (2)	14% (2)	7% (1)	0
14	Family time	14% (2)	21% (3)	29% (4)	21% (3)	14% (2)
15	Exercise	71% (10)	7% (1)	7% (1)	0	7% (1)
16	Time of year/come to meet when offered	29% (4)	36% (5)	21% (3)	0	7% (1)

$n = 14$

process of transitioning, into the formal operational stage of thinking, which is consistent with their parents' thought processes. At this stage, adolescents are able to analyze and synthesize information similar to the cognitive abilities of their parents; however, there are still indicators of low-level factors such as the quality of awards, which are tangible, concrete, and important to adolescents, but not so much to parents.

Discussion of Interviews of 6–12-Year-Old Swimmers

Twenty-seven 6–12-year-olds participated in the interviews; 56% were female ($n = 15$) and 44% were male ($n = 12$). Years of swim team experience ranged from zero to six years, with the majority of respondents having less than two years of experience. The common answer to "Why do you participate in the swim team organization?" was . . . "It's fun!" Ninety-three percent mentioned that it was either fun or they loved it. Family influence was addressed as 10 swimmers made statements, i.e., Mom made me and/or my sister (dad, brother) do it. Five children said that swimming was good exercise. Additional comments included that the coaches are nice, they liked getting medals and taking risks, friends swim, and they want to improve strokes. Swimmers were asked, "What do you like about being on the swim team?" Forty-one percent ($n = 11$) mentioned that they liked being with friends and making new ones. In addition, 41% ($n = 11$) of the remarks were made about the general sport of swimming, i.e., being in the water, improving strokes, diving, working hard, liking challenges, improving times, pushing oneself, and being competitive. Twenty-two percent ($n = 6$) of the swimmers mentioned that they enjoyed the pizza parties on the swimming practice sessions before a meet and that swimming was fun. Two swimmers mentioned that they liked the actual meets as well as riding the buses to the various locations and stopping at McDonalds.

A few disadvantages were mentioned. They were asked, "What, if anything, don't you like about being on the swim team?" Fifty-six percent of those interviewed stated, "nothing." Two children said that the lanes were crowded and two children said there were mean kids. Additional one-time comments included not liking the flip turns, waiting a long time at meets, getting hungry, not liking when they get beaten, and swimming many laps.

In addition to general questions, children were asked to provide ratings, as follows: "When you swim your best, who do you do it for (on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the greatest)?" One hundred percent of the swimmers scored coaches with a numerical score of 5 or 4; 85% rated their parents with a numerical score of 5 or 4; 78% scored their team mates with a numerical score of a 5 or 4; and 100% of those interviewed scored themselves as a 5 or 4 (85%-5 and 15%-4).

The results for the question, "Who teaches you how to swim?" (on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the greatest) revealed the following information: 85% of the coaches received a numerical score of 5 or 4; 41% of the parents received a numerical score of 5 or 4; 44% of the team mates the same age with a numerical score of 5 or 4; 59% of the older team mates scored 5 or 4; and 81% of the interviewed participants believed they also taught themselves.

They were asked, "Do you see yourself swimming next year?" Ninety-six percent (26) of the swimmers responded "yes." They were then asked, "for how

long?" The majority of the participants responded for a length of time exceeding three years. Specific answers included, "'til I can't anymore," "'til I get old," "forever," "a long time," "'til graduation," "when I get to high school or college," or "until I'm 17."

In comparing the interview and survey data, recurring themes were identified among 6–12-year-olds during the interviews, which correlated with the information collected from the 13–17-year-olds and parents. Survey instruments revealed that child's interest, team participation, chance to be successful "doing well," self-esteem builder, chance for socialization with others, fun, and exercise were important.

Children also recognized the importance of their coaches by highly rating them when they were asked, "Who teaches you to swim?" Additionally, a few participants stated that their coaches were nice and that they liked the awards. Awards were motivating incentives for children, particularly younger ones. Generally speaking, 6–12-year-olds were motivated by more lower-level motivators, i.e., going to McDonalds, pizza parties, and awards than were the 13–17-year-old participants, according to this study. This information is consistent with Piaget's theory that most young children are at the concrete operational stage wherein tangible rewards and outcomes are important (Piaget, 1952b). As young adolescents begin to move from Piaget's concrete stage to the formal operations stage, they begin to think more abstractly and synthesize information. Swimming motivators become more intrinsic than extrinsic in nature.

Limitations

Limitations of this research study included a relatively small sample size. On the other hand, 37 parents did respond out of approximately 40 families who were involved in the program at the time of the data collection process. We do not know whether one or two parents of the same family responded to the survey instrument. Limitations of the study also included participants' shared understanding of vocabulary terminology, as written on the survey instruments, and 6–12-year-old participants' abilities to express themselves verbally during interview sessions.

Implications for Further Research

Implications for further research include adding surveys of the coaches' perspectives. Increased numbers as well as different ages, skill, and experience levels of swimmers could be surveyed, including intercollegiate swimmers (collectively or within the NCAA divisions), national qualifiers, international swimmers, or "high-end" (high school state qualifiers, or YMCA junior national qualifiers) participants.

Conclusions

The physical, social, emotional, and educational advantages of participating in a community-based swim team organization are numerous, and community members should be encouraged to become actively involved in their local YMCA swim

team organizations. It should be noted that parents and many teenagers are inspired by high-level motivating factors; however, the majority of the younger swimmers are encouraged by low-level hygiene factors. Therefore, it is important for coaches to understand that younger swimmers are enthused by extrinsic motivators, such as parties and games, and that swimming practices and competitions should be fun for them.

The concept of swimming being good exercise was a common trend among the participants of this study. Perhaps swimming may be one avenue in which to pursue when addressing obesity. Nationally, overweight and obese adults and children are at an all-time high. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.), roughly two-thirds of Americans are overweight, and nearly one-third are obese. Since 1980, obesity rates for children have tripled and these rates have doubled for adults. Much has been written about how our nation's obesity epidemic is fueled by the nature of our society, due to fast-food restaurants, sedentary entertainment, and unhealthy foods, and many efforts are being made to address this important health issue. For example, many school boards and local governments are improving public school lunch offerings, enhancing physical education programs, removing snack and soda machines, and creating safe areas for walking and biking (Hassink, Klish, & Robins, 2005). More effective methods to decrease these high percentages of overweight citizens must be identified and owned by the broader public, and swimming may be one step toward addressing this issue, particularly with 6–17-year-old children.

When considering healthy and life-long activity, attention should be given to the multiple physical, social, emotional, and educational advantages that a sport such as age-group competitive swimming may provide. Swimming is a sport that can be enjoyed and shared by all family members. Based on the results of our interviews, keeping age-group swimming fun is one key that will open the door to a healthy and enjoyable life.

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Appendix A

Survey for Parents and Minor Children, Ages 13–17

The statement, "Your willingness to participate is indicated by completing this survey" was noted at the top of the parents' survey. The survey for 13–17-year-olds did not contain this information, and parental permission was obtained before their survey completion.

Section 1

Age Range: (please check where appropriate)
- 18–27 [ ]
- 28–37 [ ]
- 38–47 [ ]
- 48–57 [ ]
- 58–67 [ ]
- 68 + [ ]

Gender: (please check)
- Male [ ]
- Female [ ]

Participatory roles:
(a) Please check ONE that applies best to your situation:
- Parent [ ]
- Coach and Parent [ ]

(b) Please check ALL that apply to your situation: Provide child transportation [ ]
- PSTPO officer [ ]
- PSTPO Committee Head [ ]
- PSTOPO Member [ ]
- Meet Employee [ ]
- Other: _____

Experience:
(a) Number of years of swimming experience (please check one)
- 0–5 [ ]
- 6–10 [ ]
- 11–15 [ ]
- 16–25 [ ]
- 26–35 [ ]
- 36–45 [ ]
- 46 + [ ]

(b) If a coach, number of years coaching swimming experience (please check one)

- 0–5 [ ]
- 6–10 [ ]
- 11–15 [ ]
- 16–25 [ ]
- 26–35 [ ]
- 36–45 [ ]
- 46 + [ ]

Section 2

1. Why do you participate in the swim team organization?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What are the advantages of participating in a community-based swim team program?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. What are the disadvantages of participating in a community-based swim team program?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Do you have suggestions to improve the quality of the swim team organization?

   _____
   _____
   _____

Section 3

Please indicate by circling one number on the right side of the chart to identify the degree to which you consider the following factors relevant to your participation in the YMCA swim team organization:

    5 To a very high degree

    4 To a high degree

    3 To a moderate degree

    2 To a low degree

    1 Not at all

1.	Facility quality and location	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Quality of awards presented	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Efficiency of how well the meet is organized	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Importance of meet, meet history, tradition	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Suggestions and recommendations provided by other coaches and/or parents	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Interest of Participant (Child's Interest)	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Team participation, goal setting-achievement, membership ("My child's friends are going.")	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Chance to be successful at a competition ("Doing well")—Self-esteem Builder	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Annual repetition ("We just come every year.")	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Building block for future competition	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Chance for socialization with other people (both teammates, other teams, coaches and parents)	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Fun/child enjoys swimming/For the love of the sport	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Instill confidence in children	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Family time	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Exercise	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Time of year/come to meet when offered	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Children, Ages 6–12

(To be completed by one of the researchers after receiving parental consent)

Section 1

Age Range:
8 and under [ ] 9–10 [ ] 11–12 [ ]
Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

Number of years of swim team experience
- 0–2 [ ] 3–4 [ ]
- 5–6 [ ] 7–8 [ ]
- 9–10 [ ] 11–12 [ ]
- 13+ [ ]

Section 2

1. Why do you participate on the swim team?
_____
_____
_____

2. What do you like about being on the swim team?
_____
_____
_____

3. What, if anything, don't you like about being on the swim team?
_____
_____
_____

4. When you swim your best, who do you do it for (on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the greatest)?

(a) Coaches 5 4 3 2 1

(b) Parents 5 4 3 2 1

(c) Team mates 5 4 3 2 1

(d) Yourself 5 4 3 2 1

5. Who teaches you how to swim (on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the greatest)?

(a) Coaches 5 4 3 2 1

(b) Parents 5 4 3 2 1

(c) Team mates

your same age 5 4 3 2 1

(d) Team mates

older than you 5 4 3 2 1

(e) Yourself 5 4 3 2 1

6. Do you see yourself swimming next year? Yes No

If yes, for how long? _____