

MIDDLETON, WILLETTE T., Ph.D. Community Recreation's Role in Pre-Adolescent Girls' Participation and Retention in Youth Sports. (2019)
Directed by Dr. Tom Martinek. 187 pp.

Community recreation facilities are an important resource in closing programming and participatory gender gaps often seen in youth sports. Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to examine the motivational climate of community recreation centers in the participation of pre-adolescent girls in youth sports. In doing so, six pre-adolescent girls participation rates in youth community recreation sports can be specified. Lastly, this research aims to use principles highlighted in Self Determination Theory (SDT) to demonstrate a link between participation of pre-adolescent girls' in youth sports and motivational climate. SDT considers the motivational climate of facilities, participants' sense of freedom of choice in activity preference, and participants' skill proficiency as factors associated with continued sport/physical activity participation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A multiple-case design was implemented to understand this phenomenon.

Conclusions

Based on this study's findings in terms of the six participants, the following conclusions can be made:

- a) Overall, it was found that the pre-adolescent girls experienced autonomy, relatedness and competence in their sports practice environment at a local community recreation center.
- b) Coaches had a direct influence on the autonomy within the sports practice environment experienced by the pre-adolescent girl participants. When coaches

practice schedule and structure was rigid and uniformed, it lessened the perception of autonomy. When coaches minimized control over the practice schedule, and gave participants choices, participants' perception of autonomy intensified.

- c) Participants' connection within the sports practice environment was linked to receiving praise and positive feedback from teammates and coach. Participants acknowledged that physical displays of praise, high-fives, and handshakes reinforced their sense of belonging to the team.
- d) Most of the participants felt competent in their skill level in youth basketball. Participants acknowledged feeling challenged by teammates and coach to perform skills. The challenges that participants experienced in their practice environment, aided in their perception of competency. Participants viewed criticism from coaches and teammates as helpful and a way to strengthen the team and increase individual competencies.
- e) All participants acknowledged they would like to continue playing youth basketball after this current season at their local community recreation center.
- f) Most of the participants considered their family and local recreation staff as a source of encouragement to continue participating in youth basketball, either at a local community recreation center or at their local school.
- g) Some of the participants acknowledged having a desire to play other sports besides youth basketball. Participants posed questions about how to sign up for other sports at their community recreation center. Many of the participants felt limited in the sports that are offered at their community recreation center.

- h) The sports practice environment at each local community recreation center, provided participants with a setting to experience self-determination and nurtured motivation to continue participating in youth sports.

COMMUNITY RECREATION'S ROLE IN PRE-ADOLESCENT GIRLS'
PARTICIPATION AND RETENTION IN YOUTH SPORTS

by

Willette T. Middleton

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
2019

Approved by

Committee Chair

This dissertation is dedicated to
Willie T. & Chastys B. Middleton
for never limiting my heights.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Willette T. Middleton has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thought is powerful in all phases.
Even in my career, even in my life,
Things end up exactly how I visualized them.
– Ermias Asghedom

The Most High Provides. First, I want to acknowledge every little girl that uses sports, leisure or recreation as an outlet. My passion for working with youth is fueled by the very idea that sport has the ability to encourage, motivate and shape the character of young girls. I learned about my greatest strengths on a softball field. I also learned about my greatest weaknesses. Playing sports, learning how to perform intricate movements, and bonding with people who loved sports just as much as me, is an essential part of my development. So, I hope this work is a small indication of the power of sports, the beauty of play and the benefits of recreation.

This is a tough journey and this process is definitely not an accomplishment that you can get through alone. Therefore, I want to say thank you to my family and friends, who pushed me throughout the entire doctoral process. I am forever indebted.

I would like to thank the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department for supporting my desire to learn more within the field of community sports. Thank you to my colleagues that provided access to their facilities and participants to make this possible.

A special thank you to Dr. Tom Martinek, I appreciate the wisdom and guidance you have provided. I appreciate you agreeing to take me on as a student. When I told you

that I worked full-time, you acknowledged, it would be tough to complete the doctoral process and work a full time job. You followed that statement up with telling me, I looked capable of completing the process, although it would be hard. Now here we are. Thanks for believing that I was capable of reaching this point.

Thank you to my committee members for agreeing to aid me in this process. Dr. Bedini, the field of recreation is better for having you as a proponent. Dr. Etnier, I appreciate your love of sport psychology and its infinite benefits in sports. Dr. Cureton, I hope you can now see how your sociological perspective was crucial to observing a marginalized population. Each of you possess intangible knowledge and I aspire to be just as passionate as you are within your respective fields.

I want to extend a special thank you to Dr. Catherine Ennis. Four years ago, in my first ever qualitative research course, Dr. Ennis sparked the thought/idea that became this dissertation. I wish I was able to tell you Thank you in person and let you know; how grateful I am for that moment in your course.

Lastly, I want to thank my fiancée, Jazmine. Your support is astounding. Thank you for motivating me to write, rewrite and write some more. Thanks for your words of affirmation. Thank you for encouraging me to prioritize writing, knowing I have a tight schedule. Your encouragement motivated me and kept me focused. I think you have looked forward to this day just as much as I have and that is the true testament of a partnership.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of this Study	8
Limitations/Delimitations	9
Assumptions.....	10
Definition of Terms.....	10
Significance of this Study	11
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Youth Development and Community Agencies	14
Social Structures and Sport Climate	20
Sport and Gender Theories	27
Social Cognitive Theory	27
Role Conflict Theory	28
Self Determination Theory	30
III. METHODOLOGY	35
Positionality	36
Educational Background.....	36
Experiential Background	37
Research Design.....	38
Context of the Study	39
Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department	39
Harris Community Recreation Center Profile.....	42
Cole Community Recreation Center Profile	43
Simmons Community Recreation Center Profile	45
GSO Parks and Recreation Basketball Structure	47
Participants.....	48
Procedures	48
Data Collection	49
Observation.....	50

Interviews.....	52
Data Analysis	54
Threats to Trustworthiness.....	56
 IV. INDIVIDUAL CASE FINDINGS.....	 58
Case 1 – Dominique.....	59
Dominique’s Background	59
Dominique’s Perception of Autonomy	60
Dominique’s Perception of Relatedness	62
Dominique’s Perception of Competence	64
Dominique’s Continued Participation and Motivation	66
Case 2 – Rosa.....	68
Rosa’s Background	68
Rosa’s Perception of Autonomy	69
Rosa’s Perception of Relatedness	71
Rosa’s Perception of Competence	73
Rosa’s Continued Participation and Motivation	76
Case 3 – Nicole	78
Nicole’s Background	78
Nicole’s Perception of Autonomy	79
Nicole’s Perception of Relatedness	81
Nicole’s Perception of Competence.....	83
Nicole’s Continued Participation and Motivation	85
Case 4 – Mary	87
Mary’s Background	87
Mary’s Perception of Autonomy	88
Mary’s Perception of Relatedness	89
Mary’s Perception of Competence.....	92
Mary’s Continued Participation and Motivation	94
Case 5 – Ethel	96
Ethel’s Background.....	96
Ethel’s Perception of Autonomy.....	97
Ethel’s Perception of Relatedness.....	99
Ethel’s Perception of Competence.....	101
Ethel’s Continued Participation and Motivation.....	104
Case 6 – Pearl.....	106
Pearl’s Background.....	106
Pearl’s Perception of Autonomy.....	107
Pearl’s Perception of Relatedness.....	109
Pearl’s Perception of Competence	112
Pearl’s Continued Participation and Motivation.....	114

V. CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	117
Participant Autonomy Factors and Influences	118
Feelings Associated with Autonomy	118
Influences on Basketball Participation.....	120
Perceived Factors Limiting Autonomy	122
Observations of Autonomy	123
Participant Perception of Relatedness.....	123
Feelings of Connection to Team	124
Feelings of Connection to Coach.....	125
Sources of Encouragement to Play	127
Observations of Relatedness	129
Participant Perception of Competence.....	130
Learned Through Participation	130
Team and Coach Contributions to Confidence.....	132
Other Contributions to Participant Confidence.....	133
Observations of Competence	135
Discussion: Research Question 1	136
Sport Program Environment and SDT	136
Sport Program Environment and Autonomy	137
Sport Program Environment and Relatedness	138
Sport Program Environment and Competence	140
Discussion: Research Question 2	142
SDT and Participation.....	142
SDT and Sports Program Environment	142
SDT and Continued Participation	143
VI. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	146
Implications for Youth Sport Program Implementers	146
Implications for Methodology	151
Conclusions and Recommendations	152
Conclusions.....	152
Recommendations for Future Research	154
REFERENCES	155
APPENDIX A. UNGC IRB APPROVAL LETTER.....	171
APPENDIX B. RECREATION CENTER SITE IRB APPROVAL	173
APPENDIX C. PARTICIPANT RECRUITING SCRIPT	177

APPENDIX D. PARENT CONSENT FORM	178
APPENDIX E. YOUTH ASSENT FORM.....	181
APPENDIX F. OBSERVATION CHECKLIST	182
APPENDIX G. YOUTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	184
APPENDIX H. COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER PROFILE.....	187

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1 Youth Basketball League Specifications	47
Table 3.2 Data Collection Steps.....	49
Table 3.3 Data Analysis Process.....	55
Table 5.1 Feelings Associated with Autonomy	118
Table 5.2 Influences on Basketball Participation	120
Table 5.3 Perceived Factors Limiting Anatomy	122
Table 5.4 Connection to Team.....	124
Table 5.5 Connection to Coach.....	126
Table 5.6 Sources of Encouragement	127
Table 5.7 Learned through Participation	131
Table 5.8 Team and Coach Contributions to Confidence.....	132
Table 5.9 Outside Contributions to Confidence	134

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 3.1. Harris Youth Basketball Participants	43
Figure 3.2 Cole Youth Basketball Participants	44
Figure 3.3 Simmons Youth Basketball Participants	46

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

If a girl does not participate in sports by the time she is 10, there is only a 10% chance she will participate when she is 25 (Bunker, 1988). It is well known that sport participation rates increase during childhood, but subsequently decline during the transition into adolescence-at about 12 to 13 years of age (Malina, Bouchard, & Bar-Or, 2004).

This research is an exploration of how principles of Self Determination Theory (SDT) play a role in participation and retention rates of pre-adolescent girls. SDT is commonly associated with behavioral change in physical activity. Self-determination theory examines human motivation and behavioral self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT considers the motivational climate of facilities, participants' sense of freedom of choice in activity preference, and participants' skill proficiency as factors associated with continued sport/physical activity participation.

Important issues influencing gender in sport once revolved around the distribution of athletic budgets, practice times, playing fields, and media recognition. However, these debates are increasingly informed by broader considerations relating to health, psychological well-being, academic achievement, and educational and career mobility (Sabo, Miller, Melnick, & Heywood, 2004). While data exist on female participation

rates in sport, research concerns have turned to what catches and maintains girls' interest in sports and physical activity.

Discussions regarding adolescent girls' withdrawal from sport engagement has been described various ways. Mary Pipher (1995), in *Reviving Ophelia* seeks to understand how confident nine year olds transform into self-destructive fourteen-year-olds with "no inner direction". This statement by Pipher demonstrates the difficulties girls face as they enter adolescence. Participation in athletics is perhaps the only viable broad-spectrum answer to a whole range of problems confronting our daughters (Zimmerman & Reavill, 1999). Research conducted by the Women's Sports Foundation and National Collegiate Athletic Association (2004) shows that girls who play sports are likely to do better in school and have higher self-esteem than are those who don't, yet there is still a decline in female athletic participation during adolescent years.

Legislation, such as Title IX, has aided in creating avenues for females to participate in sport competition. As a result of Title IX, as well as the fitness movement of the eighties, more women and girls play sports, including highly competitive sports, than ever before (Nelson, 1991). Sports are a health and educational asset for U.S. girls and boys. Organized sports are associated with children's general health and body esteem, healthy weight, popularity, quality of life, and educational achievement.

Female athletes often derive greater benefits from athletic participation than their male peers do (Women's Sport Foundation, 2008). Girls who do not currently participate in a team sport are less content with their lives than girls involved with sports (Sabo and Veliz, 2008). Sport involvement enhances the quality of life for girls. Many of the social,

educational, and health benefits linked to sports participation begin during the elementary school years (Sabo et al, 2004). Staurowsky, Miller, Shakib, Desouza, Ducher, Genter, & Williams (2009) and Sabo and Veliz (2008) confirmed that regular physical activity and sport provides the critical foundation, in no small part, that allows girls and women to lead healthy, strong, and fulfilled lives. Interest in sports and exercise among girls and boys is about opportunity and encouragement, not biology. Because the primary data, from Sabo and Veliz (2008) came from a nationwide survey of students in schools, it is worthwhile to investigate youth girls' participation decline from a community agency lens.

A clear gap in knowledge exists relative to community programs and their promotion and practices to retain girl participants. Out-of-school time settings are important venues for helping youth successfully navigate their adolescent years and develop the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors they will need to be fully functioning adults. In particular, there is strong evidence that out-of-school time activities and contexts are significant contributors to the promotion of youth development (Witt, 2001).

Community recreation departments are key resources for providing the supports, opportunities, programs, and services to facilitate this process through recreation. The unique programs and contexts offered by park and recreation departments contribute to the larger effort to promote youth development in out-of-school time (Witt & Caldwell, 2010).

The status quo as it pertains to sport participation by young girls operates on a social and educational equity premise. Lubans, and Morgan (2009) and Mitchell, Gray, and Inchley (2015) look at the physical education (PE) setting and how girls' participation in the PE class setting impacts self-esteem. Observing physical education participation and school sport interest with girls has been of particular interest because schools are identified as central institutions for the promotion of physical activity among youth (Lubans & Morgan, 2009). However, one in five U.S. schools do not offer physical education (PE) at all, and despite Centers for Disease Control recommendations, only a handful of elementary, middle, and high schools offer daily PE classes (i.e., 4%, 8% and 2%, respectively) (Sack, 2007). Subsequently, recreation services are important in providing access to physical activity and sport, filling the gap left by the school system.

Recreation services provide opportunities for physical activity during leisure time, and recent research shows that leisure is now the part of life where the most physical activity occurs (Godbey, Mowen, & Ashburn, 2010). Recreation offers the opportunity to “hook” participants into sport because recreation tends to be enjoyable. The recreation center is a venue that can allow a transfer of principles and ethics from the gym to home in everyday living environments. Recreation facilities are community based and provide the necessary motivational, communal push young girls require when developing an interest in sport. Using recreation facilities, its community ties, easy access, and promotion of lifespan activity is a new horizon to promoting and supporting girls' interest in sport. Community recreation facilities are important resource in closing

programming and participatory gender gaps often seen in youth sports and physical activity.

Sabo, Miller, Melnick, and Heywood (2004) highlights the nationwide gender gap in physical activity and sports involvement between girls and boys. The size of the gender gap, however, does not stretch uniformly across the country and age brackets. In many communities, girls show similar levels of athletic participation and interest as boys. In other communities, however, access to sport and physical activity for girls appears to be thwarted by economic disadvantages and inadequate resources. Sabo et al, resolved that many young girls lack access, particularly girls of color and girls from low-income communities, and addressing the disparities that exist amongst economic status and race is an important research perspective.

Young urban girls, have a narrower window of opportunity for becoming involved with sports than their male counterparts and girls from suburban and rural communities. In urban communities, only 59% of third- to fifth-grade girls were involved with sports, compared to 80% of boys. Almost twice as many daughters as sons in urban schools were not involved with any sports (55% and 26%, respectively), and similarly, sons outnumbered daughters as both moderately involved and highly involved athletes (Sabo and Veliz, 2008). On average girls entered sport at 7.4 years old while boys did so at 6.8 years old. While 47% of girls were involved with organized sport by age 6, 60% of boys were participating at that age (Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Providing girls with access to sports at a younger age is critical to continued sport participation.

Exploring the psychosocial determinants of physical activity that affect girls is important to understanding demographic/biological, psychological, behavioral, social/cultural, and physical environment factors that affect participation and retention in sport (Dishman, Sallis, & Orenstein, 1985).

Interestingly, a common demographic/biological variable that affects participation in sport is gender. Males are more likely to be active than females. Gender socialization towards physical activity and sport plays a role in gender disparities relative to physical activity (Kohl & Hobbs, 1998). Thus, gender acts as an unseen regulator of relationships and opportunities in sport. Hargreaves (1994) argues that individuals understand their gender through reflections of social constructions. The marginalization of girls in sports is a reflection of interactions within society relative to femininity and masculinity (Messner, 2002). Consequently, as children are introduced to sports, their experiences are based on expectations relative to gender (Hargreaves, 1994; Nilges, 1998).

Another determinant of physical activity of girls is age. Generally, adequate physical education class times (at least an hour of physical activity) do not begin until middle school. By this time a decline in girls' physical activity participation has already begun (Sabo et al, 2004). Conversely, children have access to sport, physical activity and play within the recreation setting at younger ages than school age. Utilizing community recreation to introduce physical activity/sport to girls at a young age could aid in curving this age gap.

Psychological factors that act as determinants to physical activity for girls are attitudes, enjoyment, and self-efficacy for being physically active. The belief in one's

own ability to engage successfully in a task, or self-efficacy, is critical in physical activity participation. Self-efficacy influences choice of activity, effort, and persistence (Sallis, Haskell, Fortmann, Vranizan, Taylor, & Solomon, 2000).

By providing girls with opportunities to be successful in physical activity settings, self-efficacy will be enhanced. Enhancing physical activity self-efficacy is a strategy to affect behavior change (McAuley, Courneya, Rudolph, & Lox, 1994). Community recreation agencies can promote self-efficacy by encouraging girls to choose activities of choice in which to engage. Breaking away from traditional sports that may be male dominated and creating programs that are gender neutral or allow success for girls would enhance self-efficacy (Weinberg & Gould, 2011).

Coincidentally, social/cultural determinants like social influence in the form of social support or social stigma have a significant association with physical activity participation rates in girls (McAuley et al, 1994). Erasing gender roles and bias that are commonly attributed to active females is a hefty task for community recreation agencies. If young girls are able to see themselves in coaches, mentors, and/or reflected in programming activities, it will increase connectivity to the sport (Bandura, 1986(2)). Recreation directors need to match girls' determination; they need to demonstrate as much heart as they do. Recreation directors need to provide the mentoring and coaching that will enable girls to thrive, the role models and mentors to encourage and guide them (Zimmerman & Reavill, 1999). Community recreation agencies can do this by ensuring girls have models/images that are reflective of active women that girls can aspire too or

gain motivation through. This concept of relatedness is important in breaking through gender roles and biases.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this research study is to examine the motivational climate of community recreation centers in the participation of pre-adolescent girls in youth sports. In doing so, pre-adolescent girls participation rates in youth community recreation sports can be specified. Additionally, this research study observes community recreation agencies' role in providing programming for youth girls. Lastly, this research aims to use principles highlighted in Self Determination Theory to demonstrate a link between participation rates in pre-adolescent girls' youth sports and motivational climate.

Self-determination theory defines intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation in social development and in individual differences. Self-determination theory focuses on how social and structural factors facilitate or undermine an individual's sense of choice and initiative, in addition to their welfare and the quality of their performance (Epstein, 1998).

Motivation is a critical component of self-determination theory. Deci and Ryan (2000) highlight that motivation is sometimes treated as a singular construct although that is not valid. They go on to note that people can be motivated because they value an activity or because there is strong external pressure. Deci and Ryan essentially relate intrinsic motivation to an abiding interest and extrinsic motivation to a bribe.

Self-determination theory examines an individual need for competence (Harter, 1978), relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and autonomy (deCharms, 1968; Deci,

1975). Competence refers to an individual need to master a task. Relatedness refers to an individual need to be connected to others. Autonomy refers to an individual need to self-govern (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-Determination theory focuses on the degree of independence in participants' behaviors (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007).

Maintenance of intrinsic motivation occurs when sporting experiences address competence and autonomy (White, 1959). Furthermore, the support of competence and autonomy in environmental conditions facilitates intrinsic motivation. When competence and autonomy is undermined so is intrinsic motivation, theoretically (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007). Intrinsic motivation is entrenched in participants feeling connected and feeling like they belong, the essence of relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, this research study is directed by the following questions:

1. What is the perception of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in the youth sport program environment by six pre-adolescent girl participants?
2. To what extent do six pre-adolescent girl participants perceive autonomy, relatedness and competence as being important for their continued participation in youth sports?

Limitations/Delimitations

Limitations:

This study was limited to a small number of participants who have participated in a community recreation sport program. Due to the number of participants within this study, generalizability is limited.

Delimitations:

This study is restricted to youth girl participants ages 9-11 at three local community recreation centers located in the 3rd most populous city in North Carolina. The results may not be generalizable to other participants and community recreation agencies in other moderate/large cities within the United States.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are made by the investigator:

1. During the interviews, it was assumed that all participants understood the questions and were able to elaborate during their responses.
2. It was assumed that all participants responded honestly.
3. Since majority of the data collection process consisted of interviews, it was assumed that the researcher was able to obtain rich and meaningful information from the interviewee responses.

Definition of Terms

1. Autonomy: Autonomy refers to the freedom from external control or influence; independence (Deci & Ryan, 1985).
2. Community Recreation: Community recreation is an agency that operates to increase the quality of life for all citizens within a community through a wide variety of recreation opportunities (NRPA, 2018).
3. Competence: Competence is the ability to do something successfully or efficiently (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

4. Implementer: An implementer is someone whose job is to put a plan or system into action (Merriam-Webster, 2017).
5. Motivational Climate: Motivational climate refers to the environment created by coaches, parents, umpires, and administrators that affects athletes' behaviors and achievement strategies (Boixados et al, 2004).
6. Pre-Adolescence: Pre-adolescence is the period of human development just preceding adolescence; specifically: the period between the approximate ages of 9 and 12 (Merriam-Webster, 2017).
7. Relatedness: Related is being connected; associated (Deci & Ryan, 1985).
8. Retention: Retention relates to sustained participatory involvement, defined as continued participation in the sport through the next year (Calvo et al, 2010).
9. Self Determination Theory: Self Determination is a theory that examines human motivation and behavioral self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Significance of this Study

As a recreation practitioner, it is important to exam participation motives and understand theoretical determinants of behavioral change in physical activity/sport for girls prior to entering adolescence to encourage retention.

Fox (2000) urged for leisure practitioners to challenge and change the role of power and dominant structures in leisure. Fox describes these pre-existent structures as ordered evil, a term coined by Orlie (1997), in which leisure practitioners comply with acceptable rules and practices of recreation and leisure and behave predictably.

When examining the hegemonic cultural practices relative to girls in sports, cultural dynamics and societal frameworks exist. Often girls' interest in sport declines due to lack of access (facilities or programs), safety and transportation issues, social stigma, decreased quality of experience, cost, and lack of positive role models (Staurowsky, Desousa, Miller, Sabo, Shakib, Theberge, Veliz, Weaver, & Williams, 2015). Lack of access to programs (activities) is a significant disparity that prevents youth girls from remaining engaged in sport.

Subsequently, program structures such as access acts as an ordered evil by creating barriers of opportunity due to economic or social status. Young girls having access to more "girl-sensitive" programs might get the attention of parents, schools, and community recreation agencies, which may help, recruit and retain younger girls (Cooky, 2006). Hence, community recreation agencies should embrace the social nature of sport.

Programmers can do this by encouraging students to choose activities that they can participate in with their friends. Cooky (2009) stresses the importance of community recreation agencies finding a balance between providing youth with enjoyable active opportunities and creating a social environment that will increase participant's levels of intrinsic motivation to enhance future participation. This premise highlighted by Cooky (2009) encompasses the theoretical perspective of self-determination, echoing the importance of the motivational climate created by community recreation agencies.

Lastly, the pre-adolescent girl participants and community recreation program implementers have provided a critical viewpoint of motivational climate and the significance of sport participation. Although this study is distinct to participants in

community recreation youth basketball programs, the findings may provide suggestions for future sport programming for youth girls.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a recreation specialist with a concentration in youth development, I find it intriguing to understand how sport can help motivate young girls prior to the adolescent years. “For a female, the passage into adolescence is not just marked by menarche of a few new curves. It is marked by a loss of confidence in herself and her abilities” (Orenstein, 1994, p. xvi).” The research that follows addresses the role of youth development in sport interventions throughout history, the role of social structures in sport environment, and the effects of self-determination in sport participation.

Youth Development and Community Agencies

Youth development emerged in the late mid-1800s to the early 1900s due to the society transformation from rural to urbanization (Witt & Caldwell, 2005). As America began to undergo massive structural and economic changes due to immigration and industrialization during this time, the way youth were viewed and treated began to change. During this time, an influx in population and more people moving from rural areas and occupying cities led to many displaced youth (Havighurst, 1952). As depicted by Nasaw (1985), industrialization led to overpopulation, lower class delinquency, child labor, and minimal amount of time for leisure. Youth began working in factories and were often influenced by adults and their behaviors. Addams (1972) relates the

availability of urban pleasures to the negative impact on youth during this time. The increased involvement of youth in immoral and illegal behaviors led to social reform (Brace, 1852). The reformers' efforts resulted in the institutionalization of the term "adolescence" (Hall, 1904). Kett (1977) labeled adolescence as a time of "storm and stress", to highlight being suspended between childhood and adulthood. Reformers such as Stanley Hall recognized that adolescents needed the time and opportunity to develop their potential and need help in avoiding negative or deviant behaviors. An ideology of protection emerges that included state and other organizational interventions to encourage the appropriate growth of adolescents into acceptable adults (Acland, 1995). Due to the ideas of reformers, there was an emergence of child labor laws, extension of age for schooling, development of curfews, creation of a juvenile court system, and organization of spare time activities (Addams, 1972).

Youth development is the center of the reform detailed by Acland (1995). Youth development can be defined as "purposefully seeking to meet youth needs and building youth competencies relevant to enabling them to become successful adults", according to National Assembly (1994). Youth service organizations were created to organize young people's free time and help curb youth social issues. The early youth development organizations included: boys' clubs, YMCAs, settlement homes, 4-H, and playgrounds (Witt & Caldwell, 2005).

Female volunteers in Connecticut (Nasaw, 1985) established boys clubs, which is what we now call the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, in 1860. Attendance at the clubs were on a drop-in basis and the clubs were designed to serve large numbers of boys. The

clubs made efforts to enroll boys before they became teens, hoping to build habits and interest that would prevent them from getting into trouble on the streets (MacLeod, 1983). The boys clubs operated on a premise of prevention wherein other early youth development organizations focused on character building agendas (i.e. Boy Scouts, YMCA) (Witt & Caldwell, 2005).

Lord R. Baden Powell, who was dismayed that his soldiers did not have basic elementary survival skills (Scouting for Boys, 1908), founded youth organizations like the Boy Scouts in England in 1908. Organization leaders such as William Boyce incorporated the organization in America and the organization became the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) (Rosenthal, 1986). Boyce provided organizational structure and recruited professionals to design and implement the program (Boy Scouts of America National Council, 2004). Similar to the boy scouts, organizations like the YMCA centered on character building (Witt & Caldwell, 2005). YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) was founded in 1844, in London. George Williams organized the first YMCA with the goal of substituting bible study and prayer for life on the streets (YMCA, 2017). The main focus of the YMCA shifted to meeting the needs of young working and middle class boys, rather than focusing on the poor like the Boys Club (MacLeod, 1983). The goals of the YMCA became character formation and prevention of negative behaviors, rather than reformation and rescue of at-risk youth (MacLeod, 1983). YMCA's were responsible for the invention of several sports. Sports were seen as a means to promote middle-class values (YMCA, 2017). James Naismith invented basketball in 1891 at the request of Luther Gulick who directed a training school for

YMCA professionals. Volleyball, football, softball, and racquetball were all sports created in YMCA programs (Witt & Caldwell, 2005).

Among the reformers, girls aroused less alarm than boys did, and thus work with girls began after work with boys had already begun (MacLeod, 1983). Consequently, girls' work was heavily influenced by the work of boys. Differing expectations for each gender led to the organization and conceptualization of youth organizations for girls (Girl Scouts of the USA, 2017). In 1912, Juliette Low started the Girl Scouts, which operated on similar principals of the BSA (Rosenthal, 1986). Other organizations also emerged to service the development of youth girls during this time, such as, Campfire girls of America, YWCA, and Girls, Inc. Luther Guilick, a prominent contributor to the YMCA founded the campfire girls with his wife. The Campfire girls' premise derived from boy scouting organization goals (Camp Fire USA, 2017). The YWCA began as a movement, as a means to make life better for other women (Witt & Compton, 2005). In 1907, the YMCA was incorporated in the state of New York (YMCA, 2017).

Additional youth development organizations designed to serve both boys and girls were created. Organizations like 4-H clubs organized free time activities for rural youth both boys and girls (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Another approach to the youth movement was the development of recreation programs and play spaces (Witt & Caldwell, 2005). The concept of using play spaces with adult leaders to provide leadership and guidance to youth sparked the playground movement (Hall, 1904). Playground enthusiasts like Joseph Lee (1915) emphasized the importance of prolonging children development through playing and having fun.

Youth development has grown into an empirical field of study (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). National Assembly (1994, p. 22) defined youth development as “purposefully seeking to meet youth needs and building youth competencies.” Youth development advocates and scholars have now developed models and theories to support youth development principles (Delgado, 2002). Werner and Smith (1982) are credited for the foundation of youth development as it is theorized and practiced today. Werner and Smith stressed the importance of resiliency and environmental protective factors. Environmental protective factors act as barriers for youth living in non-optimal surroundings, wherein family, school, and community aid in the youths’ development (Delgado, 2002).

In 1995, Hellison created a responsibility model that aimed at providing teachers, coaches and youth development advocates with a model of character building for youth. The model consisted of five stages: respecting others, self-motivation, self-direction, helping others, and outside the gym. Level zero is irresponsibility; denial of behaviors and blaming others for behaviors. Level one is respect; although the student doesn’t participate in all activities, the student doesn’t interrupt any of their peers from participation either. Level two is participation; the student at this level participates and respects other in participation. Level three is self-direction; the student participates, respects others and does not need nonstop supervision from teacher or counselor. Level four is caring; students are respectful, participants, self-direct and also show concern for others and are helpful. Level five is outside the gym; which is simply using all the tools learned in the gym, outside the gym at home, at school, or in the community. Each stage

is designed to encourage youth to find value in their self and others through character development. Hellison (2000) discussed several goals of youth development programs, highlighting the need to empower youth, respect individuality, provide clear expectations, provide safe environments, and provide contact with caring adults.

Just as Hellison used responsibility to promote life skills in community youth programming, Sprouse and Klitzing (2005) highlighted the growing need of recreation programs and just how recreation is often used as a prevention tool in the lives of at-risk youth. Because significant amounts of youth spend their free time in recreation settings, playing sport or just participating in non-organized physical activity; recreation centers can be a safe place for youth and adolescents. With the recreation center having the potential of being safe and also fun, recreation programmers began to implement behavior modification programs to help the youth it serves.

Youth development has slightly evolved over time from a means of reform to a means of development. The core principles and ideologies are still relevant in today's communities (Delgado, 2002). Youth development was created on the foundation of the importance of adults in youth lives and how providing meaningful experiences and activities can be preparatory for adulthood (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Nel Nodding's (1992), who created the term "care ethic", captures the essence of youth development best as she reiterated the importance in caring about youth as people and being sensitive to all their needs (emotional, social, cognitive, physical).

Social Structures and Sport Climate

Community organizations, which claim to embrace the values of equity and inclusiveness, cannot afford to disregard structural inequalities or refuse to recognize their own part in preserving them (Sage, 1998). The research that follows demonstrates the importance of social structures and sport climate in the promotion and retention of girl sport participants.

Cooky (2006) addressed social structures that aid in maintaining and encouraging girl sport participation. Cooky introduces Giddens' theory (1984) of structuration and explains a link between agency and structure and its relationship in sport. To explore Giddens' theory, Cooky conducted observations at GPLA (Girls Play Los Angeles) a recreation sports program. Cooky observed a basketball program at two separate locations. The two facilities, Fairview and Centerville had girl participants that were primarily Latina.

Cooky found that sport was socially constructed in three ways: the scheduling of games and practices, the marketing of the program and recruitment of girl participants, and the organization of awards ceremonies and "outside" events. Fairview displayed consistency with scheduling and games. Fairview had several banners marketed outside of the facility to encourage participation and registration. Fairview also rewarded participants and those who showed interest with trips, team pictures and banquets. Centerville games and practices were often rescheduled or cancelled, which reflected minimal observation notes of participants. Centerville's banner was located inside the gymnasium to promote basketball program, which means only current participants were

able to view the banner. Centerville basketball participants were also not provided an adequate end of season banquet.

The social structures within both facilities determined the interactions by the girl participants. Cooky highlights that simply creating a space, program, or facility for girls to participate in sport/activities doesn't necessarily garner participation from girls. Cooky encourages facilitators to explore how structure, culture and agency constrains sport participation for girls.

The lack of girls' participation in sport is often explained as girls not being interested in sports or physical activity. This notion is not true and has repeatedly been dismissed in the literature (Cooky, 2006). The girl sport decline phenomena has been viewed from every angle; coach, parent, participant and even activity. However, structural implications and organizational/agency practices are rarely considered as more than a footnote to potential decline in participation. So it is important to look at the way sport programs are designed, marketed, and implemented as causation for participation and retention.

Similar to Cooky (2006), Svender, Larsson, and Redelius (2012) highlight that gender inequity represented in the literature is often constructed as an issue that requires fixing women or girls. Svender et al, (2012) explore previous gender equity research and its effects on programming to set the tone for common solutions to the perceived girl/women problem in sport. One way literature attempts to fix the gender equity issues is by creating girl only programs, which is described as marginalizing women/girls. Secondly, Svender et al (2012) state that previous literature describes the way women

perform sports as something opposite of men. Svender et al, (2012) then discusses how Foucault theory (1980) relate to sport and programming.

The Foucault theory emphasizes how power is working in different practices and how we are being governed through programs. Svender et al, (2012) introduced Foucauldian terms like, governmentality where in government policy is given to spaces or bodies. Normalization is also introduced as a way to describe social contexts. To explore these ideologies, Svender et al (2012) analyzed 215 sport club applications for funding.

Svender et al, (2012) reviewed applications from three female-dominated sports, equestrian, figure skating and gymnastics to find commonalities for desiring external funding. The categories that were described centered on the teenage girl dropping out of sport, the teenage girl being at risk, the teenage girl as non-competitive, the teenage girl in need of empowerment, the teenage girl as a potential coach, and the teenage girl wanting more than sport. Svender et al (2012) stated that these themes portray two images of girls, (1) girls are capable and (2) girls are at risk. Svender et al (2012) considers these themes as an attempt to normalize girls as unhealthy. Foucault would argue that gender equality work is not the solution to the problem but the problem itself. Perhaps looking at sporting practices rather than girls would be a more viable approach, which Svender et al, (2012) ultimately concludes.

Fraser-Thomas, Cote, and Deakin, (2008) explored dropout and participation in adolescent swimmers. Fraser-Thomas et al, (2008) discuss current youth sport dropout research and the use of motivation theories to explain withdrawal from competitive sport.

These theories, as described by Fraser-Thomas et al, do not objectively answer dropout questions. The purpose of their work is to explain the “why” relative to girls sport dropout. Why do girls lose interest in sport during the onset of adolescence? Why do girls no longer have fun in sport during the onset of adolescence? Fraser-Thomas et al (2008) uses the DMSP (Developmental Model of Sport Participation) (Cote’ et al., 2003) to provide a framework to explore some of the physical and psychosocial factors that may influence youths’ sport participation patterns. The DMSP was used to examine training patterns and significant others influence.

The DMSP emerged from interviews with athletes who were participants in a variety of sports; the DMSP suggests athletes have three stages of sport development. The three stages of sport development are sampling, specializing, and investment years. The sampling years are pre-adolescence ages 6-12, wherein youth are beginning to be engaged in a variety of sports but are not yet fully committed long term. The specializing years are adolescence ages 13-15, wherein some youth begin to dropout of sport participation. The investment years are ages 16 and up, wherein those participating in sports have fully committed to being involved. The DMSP also highlights the importance of a youth athlete’s support system. Fraser-Thomas et al, (2008) cite the role of coaches, parents and siblings in creating an environment that encourages, challenges and supports continued sport participation. Their sentiments are especially vital when considering the social support needed by girl participants to maintain participation in sport.

Fraser-Thomas et al (2008) used three criteria to select youth swimmers as participants for this study. The criteria for the swimmers were that the swimmers must be

within the ages of 13-18, competitively swimming for four years, and involved in 10+ hours of training a week. The study included 10 dropout and 10 engaged swimmers. Swimmers were matched evenly in other demographic variables including age, gender, and years of experience, ability, family structure, and parent education. The average age of drop out participants was 16 years of age. The average age of engaged participants was 18 years of age. Each participant was interviewed and responses were transcribed to be themed and coded following the interviews. The interview questions were centered on training patterns, parent influences, coach influences, peer influences and sibling influences.

Results unveiled several themes that were relative to both dropout, and engaged participants. Dropout swimmers discussed early peak performances instead of a development over time approach that engaged swimmers noted. Engaged swimmers highlighted one-on-one coaching and coaching favoritism whereas dropout swimmers felt coaches only gave time to more experienced swimmers. Parental, sibling and peer influence was favorable for engaged swimmers as well. Swimmers who remained engaged had positive support from significant others and felt challenged and encouraged. Dropout swimmers noted parental pressure, peer group differences, and sibling rivalry. Fraser-Thomas et al, (2008) concluded that focusing on the physical and psychosocial development of individuals renders retention in sport participation. This concept is especially important when considering pre-adolescent girls' withdrawal from sport.

Common determinants in girl participation in sport/physical activity has been the environment or motivational climate of the facilities. If younger sport participants are

groomed and encouraged to participate in sport, this idea can carry on into adulthood. Prior research has also examined the role of the sport climate and its relation to participant withdrawal. Winning as a motivational tool for youth sport participation was examined by Cummings, Smoll and Smith, in 2007. They attempt to answer an age long question within sport; is winning the greatest factor for participation in youth sport? The purpose of their study was to examine the main and interactive effects of motivational climate and won-loss percentage upon young athletes' evaluation of their coach, enjoyment of their team experience, and perceived parental liking for the coach. The two concepts of winning and motivation were highlighted and investigated within the study. Smoll and Smith found that although winning is a valuable concept in sport participation, fun is the most significant factor that intrigues youths to get involved in sport.

For example, Butcher, Lindner, and Johns (2002) conducted an extensive study in the promotion of longevity in sport participation. Butcher et al's, ten year retrospective study had the primary purpose of seeing what causes athletes to withdraw from competitive youth sports. Butcher et al, highlighted the difference in sport specific withdrawal versus permanent dropout in sport. The most important reason for withdrawal was "lack of enjoyment", followed by "other non-sport activities" and "other sports". Conducting a ten-year study is beneficial to learning tactics about keeping youth involved in sport. As previously referenced, fun is the first stage in getting youths to participate in sport.

Ullrich-French and Smith (2009) approached motivational climate from a unique perspective when they examined youth soccer relationships with parents and peers. The

purpose of their study was to understand motivational predictors in youth for long-term participation in sport. Ullrich-French and Smith describe commonly used motivation frameworks that study competence, control, affect, and intrinsic motivation as factors that predict participation. Frameworks such as these have highlighted the importance of social relationships in motivation. Ullrich-French and Smith note that typically social agents associated in motivational theories relative to sport are coaches, this study seeks to take on another approach.

Ullrich-French and Smith (2009) looked at the role of parents and peers in the decision of youth soccer participants to continue to participate or dropout of the sport. The importance of psychosocial development is an important concept within their research to understanding social relationships. Ullrich-French and Smith (2009) used the Sport Motivation Scale, Social Acceptance Scale, Perceived Stress Scale and the Sport Friendship Quality Scale to understand youth sport participants' motivation, peer acceptance, stress and parental relationships. The findings showed correlation between positive parental/peer relationships and continuation in youth soccer. Social variables were shown to have a direct relationship with individual participant motivation as well. Youth participants continued to participate in soccer when these social variables were of high interest. This is particularly important when considering social variables and its effect on girl participant in sport. The socialization of girls toward sport is a central determinant of participation (Kohl and Hobbs, 1998).

Sport and Gender Theories

Various theories are used to explain the participation and retention in youth sport. These theories allow us to develop interpretations about what influences participant behaviors. The research that follows explains commonly used frameworks that are used to describe theoretical influence on physical activity/sport participation.

Social Cognitive Theory

One theory that is commonly associated with behavior change relative to physical activity is social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory proposes that the majority of behaviors are learned through social interaction (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory uses behaviors in social interactions to explain human action, emotion, and motivation (Buckworth & Dishman, 2002). Social cognitive theory operates on the premise that behavior is founded in cognitive action and individuals are capable of self-reflection and self-regulation (Epstein, 1998). Self-reflection refers to the ability to anticipate and plan for future events. Self-regulation refers to how people change their behaviors (Buckworth & Dishman, 2002). Goal setting, efficacy expectation and outcome expectations and values are all variables of self-regulation (Bandura, 1986). Goals represent valued and desired objectives, efficacy determines the degree to which one believes he can achieve that goal (Sallis et al., 2000).

Self-efficacy is learned through modeling and experiences. It includes three domains; strength, generality, and level. Strength refers to the perception of ability to overcome barriers. Generality is the ability to simplify the behavior to alike behaviors.

For example, one could generally state, if I can play racquetball, I can play tennis. Level refers to the degree or intensity of a behavior while having success. (Epstein, 1998).

Outcome expectation revolves around the perception that a behavior will enable an outcome. Outcomes are a result of a behavior. Value of the outcome is relative to self-esteem and individual sense of welfare (Buckworth & Dishman, 2002). Social cognitive theory's central concept is that an individual can influence the environment and the social interaction influence is bidirectional (Sallis et al., 2000). Triadic reciprocity ((Buckworth & Dishman, 2002) explains the relation between the person, the environment and the behavior. These three variables act as a determinant to participation.

Role Conflict Theory

Allison (1991) examined role conflict theories in sports. Allison provided a historical reference to empirical inquiry surrounding role conflict and its effects on female athletes. Role conflict has been used as a conceptual framework in sport research since the 1970s. The conflict or struggle between femininity and athleticism is a central concept of the theory. In early literature, the female athlete was portrayed as individual that suffered due to conflicting expectations.

Despite the notion that female athletes struggled with their femininity, most studies in the 1970s and 1980s highlighted low perception of role conflict. Allison uses this research to give life to a lifeless theory.

Allison believes that role conflict has remained prevalent in the literature along with the social roles assigned within sport. The association of masculinity with

athleticism and femininity with grace has created the role conflict construct. Role conflict was utilized to deal with societal stereotyping.

Allison introduced the work of Sage and Loudermilk (1979) which was the first group of sport psychologists who assessed role conflict amongst female athletes (looking at college athletes). Sage and Loudermilk's methodological approaches were duplicated several times in later literature, which made their work significant in later role conflict theory inquiries. Their questionnaire distinguished between perceived conflict and experienced conflict in sport. Sage and Loudermilk's findings led to the idea that role conflict led to disengagement in sport for females.

Following the work of Sage and Loudermilk, several researchers attempted to understand role conflict in female athletes by modifying different variables. Since Sage and Loudermilk utilized college athletes in their study, the next phase of researchers used younger participants (high school aged), yielding similar results, wherein, females experienced low perception of role conflict. Research then attempted to explain role conflict by the type of activities that girls participated in, attempting find role conflict in more "aggressive activities" versus "female appropriate activities". The results for this approach of research rendered the same results since both groups of athletes reported low perceived and experienced role conflict.

Allison highlighted that three ideologies emerged from this empirical pursuit of role conflict, (1) role conflict was blindly accepted, (2) the lack of willingness to give up on the role conflict construct is associated with traditional images of female athletes, (3) the persistence masks the nature of social roles in women's lives.

Allison ultimately concludes after breaking down the direction of role conflict that perhaps researchers should examine other factors such as motivation, anxiety and stress as factors that lead to disengagement in sports for girls. Secondly, Allison feels that attributing decrease in sport performance to role conflict is a disservice to the female. Thirdly, researchers are urged to explore their own bias and assumptions that have led to reinforcing stigmas. Lastly, Allison encourages researchers to seek alternative models to understand the problems that confront the female athlete.

Self Determination Theory

Generally, researchers also utilize principles in self-determination theory to understand sport participation and dropout. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is concerned foremost with the motivation behind individual choices. Research using the self-determination theory highlights the significance of three basic psychological needs; which are autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Autonomy discusses the need for individuals to make their own choices. Competence discusses the need for individuals to feel capable in abilities. Relatedness discusses the need for individuals to feel linked or connected. When these needs are fulfilled it leads to a range of motivation extending from amotivation to extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation (Weinberg and Gould, 2011).

Calvo, Cervello, Jimenez, & Murcia, (2010) examined how motivational characteristics influence adolescents to continue pursuit of a sport or drop out. In doing so, self-determination theory and its concepts were used as a theoretical framework. They questioned if sport retention was influenced by individuals' self-determined motivation

and by satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

They established that SDT differentiates between three types of behavioral regulation that are linked with varying levels of self-determined motivation. One type of motivation is intrinsic motivation, which refers to those circumstances in which participants freely engage in activities spark interest, are enjoyable and allow the participant to learn. A second type of motivation is extrinsic motivation in which participants engage in activities that associate outcomes with public recognition, praise and rewards. A third type of motivation is identified as amotivation. Amotivation focuses on a participant's lack of efficacy and control to attain an anticipated outcome (Chirkov, Kim, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2003).

Calvo et al's (2010) sample consisted of four hundred and ninety two soccer players ages 13-17. The sample was administered a questionnaire referred as the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS). The SMS is a 28- item inventory comprised of seven subscales that assess the multifaceted dimensions inherent within self-determination theory (Pelletier, Fortier, Tuson, Brière, & Blais, 1995). Questionnaires that measured autonomy, competence and relatedness were also used (Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985).

Calvo et al (2010) ultimately concluded that of the three essential basic needs; autonomy and relatedness were substantial predictors of sport persistence. However, perceived competence did not have an influential role in explaining this result.

Relatedness, as evaluated through feelings of group cohesion, was particularly influential in describing sport continuance (Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon, 2003).

Conversely, amotivation was the single motivational perspective to understand adolescent sport dropout (García, Calvo, Leo, Martín Sanchez, 2008). Calvo et al (2010) subsequently relates coaches, and people in charge of implementing programs that train or teach young athletes, of having a direct influence on participants increased motivation or decreased self-determination in sport practice. This research is concluded with one final thought regarding the prevention of sport dropout for adolescence. Calvo et al (2010) summarizes, promoting positive motivational climate, improving the fulfilment of basic psychological needs would minimize a lack of motivation and increase intrinsic motivation.

Gagne, Ryan and Bargmann (2003) examined the motivation and well-being of female gymnasts at daily practice over a four-week period. The gymnasts demonstrated that their motivation and well-being were directly related to basic need satisfaction. The female gymnasts displayed more positive affect when supports for their basic psychological needs were met. When the gymnasts felt connected to coaches/peers it aided in proficiency of skill ability aiding in increased motivation to participate in practice. Gagne, Ryan and Bargmann concluded that a SDT approach resulted in increased motivation.

Similarly, Kowal and Fortier (2000) tested intrinsic and extrinsic motivation based on SDT examining youth swimmers. Kowal and Fortier used elite swimmers to examine situational social factors (perceptions of success and perceptions of the

motivational climate), situational motivational mediators (perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness) to explain how satisfaction of all three basic needs in SDT contributed to motivation and flow. Studies such as these aid in demonstrating the importance of environments that facilitate positive experiences. Kowal and Fortier (2000) added that when youth feel support in their social environments they will sustain participation in sport. The concept of feeling support in social environments speaks to the psychological need of relatedness. This premise is especially important in the case of girls, which are often an afterthought in programming considerations and programming access.

Self-determination theory is often used in studies that classify goals through intrinsic and extrinsic focal points. For example, Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon and Deci (2004) studied high school aged youth in a physical education setting. The students were introduced to a new sport activity, which was framed as a sport activity having intrinsic goals (health/fitness) or extrinsic goals (attractiveness). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors in SDT were used to understand sport participation and sport goals. Vansteenkiste et al (2004) found that intrinsic framing of goals positively affected effort in physical education class. Wherein, extrinsic goal framing undermined outcomes with the physical education class.

Sebire, Kesten, Edwards, May, Banfield, Tomkinson, Blair, Bird, Powell and Jago (2016) used SDT methods as an intervention in an adolescent dance program. Concerned with the inactivity of adolescent girls they emphasized autonomy, relatedness, and competence in the dance program. The activity of dance was chosen because it is

considered a popular activity amongst girls (O'Donovan & Kay, 2005). Dance is also an alternative to traditional/competitive sports offered to girls (Australian Women Sport and Recreation Association, 2010).

Participants were observed by researchers and interviewed to understand their feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Instructors were provided dance curriculum materials that emphasized a motivational climate that encouraged independence, learning and fostering positive relationships. Sebire et al then derived themes from interviews, the themes highlighted the programs instructor knowledge, participant perceived value within the program and the dance programs overall motivational climate.

Therefore, this current research aims to build on previous research using youth development principles, to understand the role of community recreation agencies' programming objectives for pre-adolescent girls in youth sports. Secondly, the aim of this research is to explore existing social structures/dynamics within a community recreation agency and understand how these established social structures affect pre-adolescent girls' participation in sport and continuation of participation in youth sport. Lastly, the aim of this research is to recognize how sport theory serves as a basis for understanding pre-adolescent girls' youth sport participation and retention. Hence, this research examines motivational climate in community recreation centers using concepts of self-determination as perceived by pre-adolescent youth girl participants.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study is to explore the sport program environment of community recreation centers and the effects autonomy, competence, and relatedness has on the participation and retention of pre-adolescent girls in the community recreation centers program. The community recreation centers are a part of the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation department. The City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation department consist of ten total community recreation centers, three centers were profiled for this study.

In addition, this study aims to understand pre-adolescent girls' perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in continued participation in community recreation sport programming. Youth basketball was the community recreation sport that was examined to understand participant perceptions.

Lastly, recreation center directors/staff will provide a community recreation profile based on their community recreation center location, youth basketball program and youth basketball participation numbers. Therefore, this research study is directed by the following questions:

1. What is the perception of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in the youth sport program environment by six pre-adolescent girl participants?

2. To what extent do six pre-adolescent girl participants perceive autonomy, relatedness and competence are important for their continued participation in youth sports?

Positionality

I'm not saying, I'm going to change the world, but I guarantee that I will spark the brain that will change the world. And that's our job, to spark somebody else watching us. -Tupac

Educational Background

As a former athlete, sport has been crucial in developing my character and work ethic. I played softball in middle school and high school. Playing sports has always provided me with great experiences and friendships. When considering a career path to choose, I initially wanted to work in physical education, in the school system.

I pursued my physical education degree at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Although, I loved working with students in a school setting, after spending one great summer working as a camp counselor at a local recreation center, I fell in love with the community recreation environment. I began to look at leisure, play and recreation from a different lens. I changed my major from physical education to leisure studies and received a B.S. in Sport Science.

Upon completion of my bachelor's degree, I returned back to a North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and received a Master's of Science in Sport Psychology. I found so many similarities of working in recreation and learning the

intricacies of sport psychology. I believed, learning concepts and tools of sport psychology made me a better coach and recreation program implementer.

Experiential Background

I aim to serve as a catalyst in an ever growing, ever changing, ever evolving field of play. As a recreation specialist with over fifteen years of community recreation experience, I have developed a passion for youth development and educating the community on motivation, responsibility and integrity through sport.

I have worked in several different capacities within community recreation. Currently, I am directly responsible for providing programs that serve the entire community. As a Recreation Center Director, one of my many roles is programming. Programming involves the process of planning, implementing and evaluating activities offered within the recreation center. Recreation planning involves several components, such as targeted demographics, staffing needs, budgeting concerns, risk management and marketing. Implementation involves carrying out the actual program or execution of the planned activity. Evaluation allows the implementer to get an idea of any changes that are necessary to ensure the program is effective.

While working in a recreation center as a program implementer, I have seen a noticeable decline in female participants in community recreation sports. This is disheartening to me as a former athlete as well as a proponent for physical activity. I know personally how much a positive sport experience can aid the development of a young girl. As a Recreation Center Director, I have direct knowledge of community recreation practices and a direct understanding of recreation program implementation. I

wanted to learn how young girls perceive motivation, participation and retention in community recreation sports program. In lieu of my educational background and experience in community recreation, I felt compelled to carry out this research. I want to be able to service girls' more efficiently within the community recreation center.

Research Design

Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated, "Qualitative interviewing is both an academic and practical tool. It allows us to share the world of others to find out what is going on, why people do what they do, and how they understand their worlds. With such knowledge you can help solve a variety of problems" (p. 5).

This qualitative ethnography approach to research provides a holistic and scientific description of systems, processes, and phenomena within their specific contexts. Ethnographic research focuses on organizations or communities that consist of defined groups of people who interact in regular and structured ways (Wiersma and Jurs, 2009).

In the current study, the researcher was interested in the extent pre-adolescent girl participants perceived autonomy, relatedness and competence as important for their continued participation in youth sports. Perceptions from pre-adolescent girl participants provided information related to autonomy, relatedness, and competence in the community recreation youth sport program environment specifically youth basketball.

For this study, observations of pre-adolescent girl participants during youth basketball practice were used to generate ethnographical descriptions of three community recreation sport program structures. Individual semi-structured interviews were also

conducted between each participant and the researcher to assess communal responses relative to motivational and participatory views. Using this method, individual interviews assisted in providing information affecting participants' specific experiences in community recreation youth sports. The procedures section provides a more in-depth description about the study design.

Context of the Study

The community recreation centers in the current study is directly connected to a public recreation organization in Greensboro, North Carolina. In order to recognize the distinctiveness of these community recreation facilities in their totality, this section opens with a brief portrait of the city of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, the structure and facility processes of three community recreation centers and shifts into the mechanisms and description of the community recreation center youth basketball sport program.

Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department

The Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department is located in Greensboro, NC. The city of Greensboro was founded in 1808 and is the third most populous city in the state of North Carolina. The Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department (GSO P&R) was founded over 108 years ago. The GSO P&R department began with a sole playground in 1910. The GSO P&R mission is to provide professional and diverse leisure opportunities through inclusive programs, facilities, parks and open space, ensuring that Greensboro is a desirable place to work, live and play. The GSO P&R department is a

three-time winner of the National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Parks and Recreation Administration (GSO P&R Department, 2019).

The GSO P&R department consist of several different divisions, which include; lakes, trails, athletics, youth services, adaptive and inclusive recreation, senior/active adult centers and community recreation centers (GSO P&R Department, 2019). There are ten community recreation centers within the GSO P&R department. Each community recreation center hosts a variety of programs, which could include but are not limited to school-aged camps, sport programs, arts and crafts, meeting spaces and serve as a voting location. Each community recreation center is managed by a Recreation Center Director.

The job description of the Recreation Center Director within the GSO P&R department is as follows:

The recreation center director will be responsible for managing the overall operations of a city operated recreation center. These responsibilities include but are not limited to: developing, marketing, organizing, implementing, directing, and evaluating all programs as well as interacting with the public, addressing various concerns and questions while providing excellent customer service to all patrons of the recreation center.

The center director will also be responsible for supervising and scheduling all full time and part time employees, volunteers, interns, and instructors in addition to program registration and fee collections, deposits and budgets and record keeping, and enforcement of center policies, practices, and procedures. The center director will need to interact to with other departments, businesses, and community groups to secure grants,

donations, while maintaining a high standard of professionalism (iApply Greensboro, 2019).

Furthermore, the job description for recreation center directors details that a center director must have extensive knowledge and background in the leisure service delivery & program planning process (assessing, marketing, implementing, evaluating). The center director must possess the ability to coordinate, plan, and implement recreation programs suited to the needs of the community. This may include, eliciting community and organizational support for recreation programs. The community recreation director will also prepare a variety of promotional material including flyers, brochures, schedules and press releases. One of the major responsibilities of the center director, is to plan and instruct recreation programs (iApply Greensboro, 2019).

The succeeding community recreation center profiles were composed from semi-structured conversations with three Recreation Center Director relative to their specific community recreation center location (Appendix H). These conversations were only used to develop demographical and structural profiles of the individual community recreation center setting. Each community recreation center location has been given a pseudonym name to aid in protecting the identity of recreation center personnel as well as youth sport participants.

These sites were selected because I have direct access to the facilities, which was a great benefit to access program demographics, program participants and program implementers. This access also made current youth basketball program participation

numbers available. This will be helpful in highlighting a clear variance in youth basketball participation relative to gender.

Participant demographics and participation numbers for youth sport programs are accessible through a City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation database referred to as RecTrac. RecTrac is a parks and recreation management software that aids in efficiency and productivity, while providing management with extensive reporting and statistical data (Vermont Systems, 2018). The statistical data such as participation numbers will be used to chart participation of pre-adolescent girls within the youth basketball program at three community recreation centers.

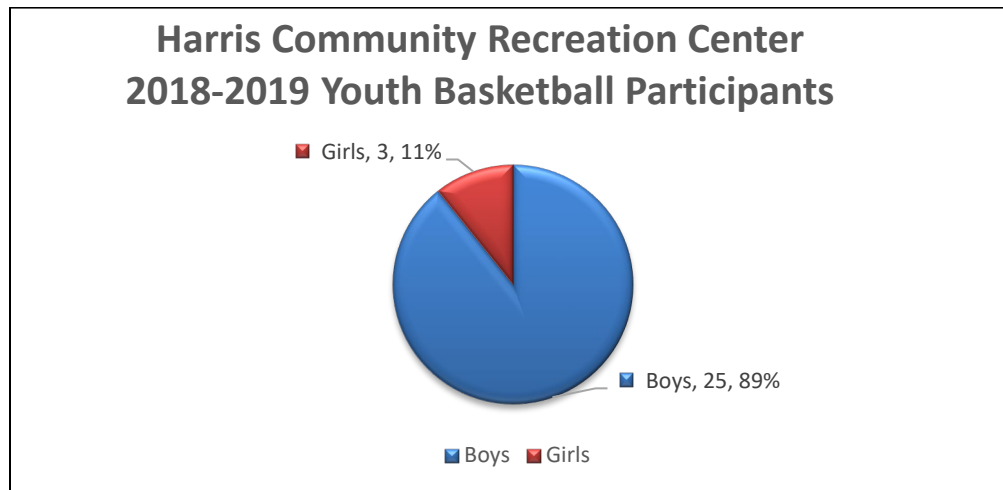
Harris Community Recreation Center Profile

The Harris Community Recreation Center Director has been working in the parks and recreation field for over fifteen years. The center director has been the manager of Harris Community Recreation Center for six years. Harris is located in a lower socioeconomic area and is considered a high crime, high risk area. The Harris center director stated, “Despite the previous description, if you look closer at the kids and adults in this area, there are a lot of hidden gems.” Harris was built in 1972. Harris recreation center current programs include teen enrichment programs, dance programs, and sports (basketball and football) programs and this facility also has a swimming pool onsite. This research will focus on the youth basketball program.

The Harris community recreation center objectives for their youth basketball program is to make the participants better people on and off the court. “I try to get coaches that embody that same philosophy”, states the Harris center director. In the 2018-

2019 Harris youth basketball program, the community recreation center had a total of 28 participants. Figure 3.1 highlights the percentages of participants relative to gender.

Figure 3.1 Harris Youth Basketball Participants



The Harris center director attributed low girl participation numbers in youth basketball at Harris community recreation center to lack of women role models and the areas socioeconomic status. The Harris center director stated, “When girls look at sports, they don’t see themselves. So because they don’t see themselves, they don’t get involved.” In reference to socioeconomic status, the Harris center director mentioned girls growing up in lower socioeconomic statuses having other primary responsibilities, such as baby sitting siblings and helping out in the household. These other primary responsibilities may take precedent over sport participation.

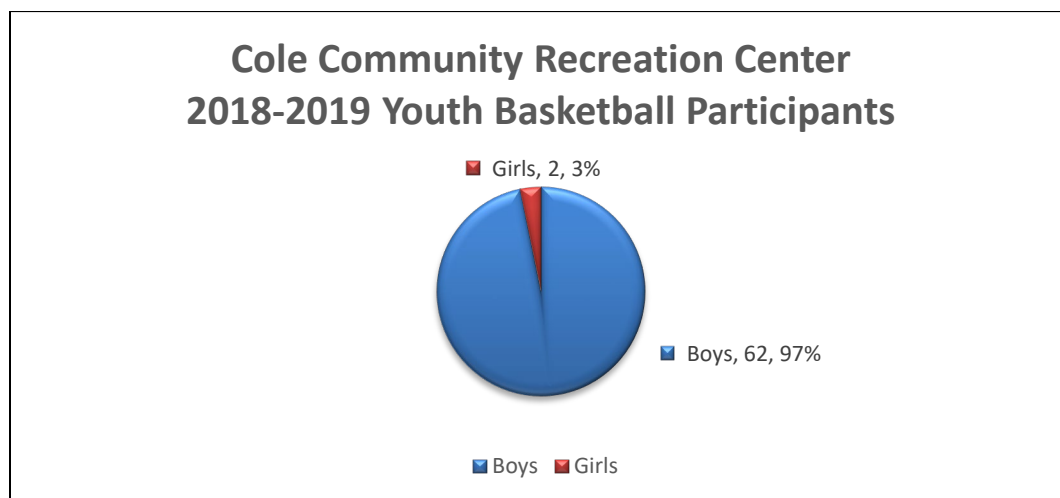
Cole Community Recreation Center Profile

The Cole Community Recreation Center Director has been working in the parks and recreation field for fifteen years. The center director has been the manager of Cole

Community Recreation Center for six years. Cole is located in an area that has a tremendous amount of traffic from college students. Cole is located near a college campus and most of its participants are young adults. The facility was built in 1976. Cole recreation center current programs include school aged programs, Zumba, sport (basketball) program, an established boxing club, and a swimming pool onsite. This research will focus on the youth basketball program.

The Cole community recreation center objectives for their youth basketball program is encourage and motivate participants to love basketball. “I think it’s important to give kids every opportunity to participate in basketball, not just with the league. One of the reasons I started basketball clinics here is to help encourage kids to learn the sport and like it”, stated the Cole center director. In the 2018-2019 Cole youth basketball program, the community recreation center had a total of 62 participants. Figure 3.3 highlights the percentages of participants relative to gender.

Figure 3.2 Cole Youth Basketball Participants



The Cole center director attributed low girl participation numbers in youth basketball at Cole community recreation center to program structure. The Cole center director stated, “A lot of times, girls do not want to play with boys or parents don’t want their daughters being the only girl on the team.” The Cole center director mentioned distinct conversations with parents whom unenrolled their daughters, once they realized their daughter would be playing with boys on their team.

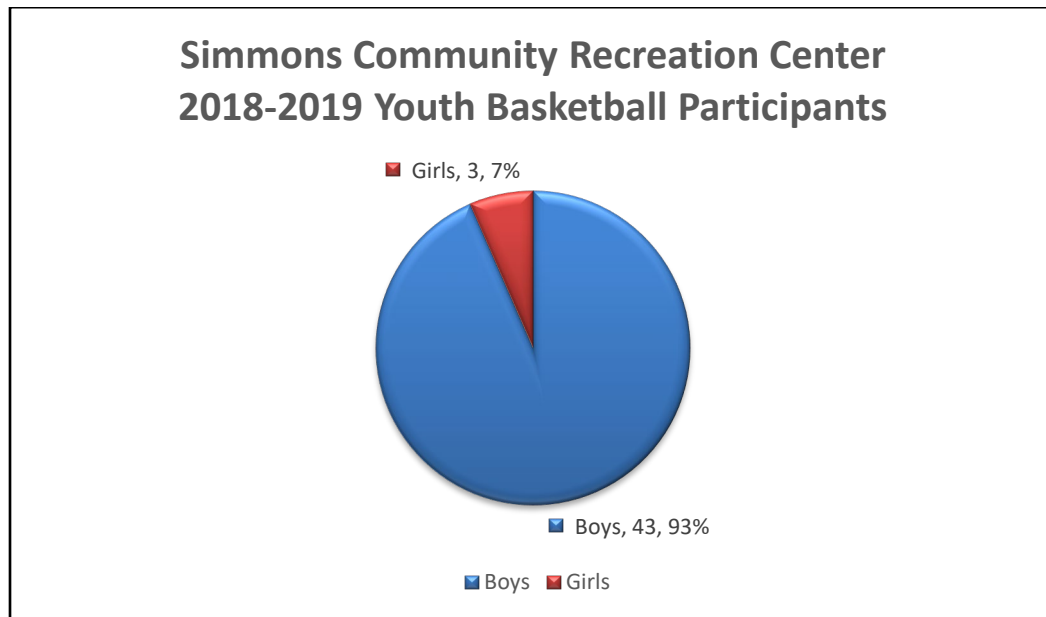
Simmons Community Recreation Center Profile

The Simmons Community Recreation Director has been working in the parks and recreation field for twelve years. The center director has been the manager of Simmons Community Recreation Center for four years. Simmons is located in an area that is considered middle class within the city. Simmons is in an area that serves a large amount of residents that do not stay within the city limits of Greensboro. Simmons serves residents from Jamestown, NC and High Point, NC. Simmons is the newest recreation center built within the GSO P&R department. The facility was built in 2014. Simmons recreation center current programs include school aged camps, martial arts programs, dance programs, and sports (basketball, football, volleyball) programs and this facility also has a fitness room onsite. This research will focus on the youth basketball program.

The Simmons community recreation center objectives for their youth basketball Program, focuses on promoting development in participants due to the community center being newly built. “I want the kids in this area to just have an opportunity to play”, stated the Simmons center director.

In the 2018-2019 Simmons youth basketball program, the community recreation center had a total of 46 participants. Figure 3.2 highlights the percentages of participants relative to gender.

Figure 3.3 Simmons Youth Basketball Participants



The Simmons center director attributed low girl participation numbers in youth basketball at Simmons community recreation center to marketing. The Simmons center director stated, “As a department I don’t think we do a good job of stating that our youth basketball program is co-ed. I mean we all know it’s co-ed but I don’t think we market that well enough, so girls may not feel like they can sign up too.” In a co-ed league both boys and girls can be a part of the sport team. The community recreation youth basketball program is structured as a coed league. Continuing thoughts on low participation numbers, the Simmons center director accounts that young girls must be pushed to

participate or be involved in the youth basketball league. The next section will highlight the GSO P&R youth basketball program structure as outlined in youth basketball by-laws written by GSO P&R personnel.

GSO Parks and Recreation Basketball Structure

The mission of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department is to create a positive environment for youth and adults: by emphasizing each individual’s right to participate, teaching life skills, good sportsmanship and game fundamentals, stressing fun and enjoyment above all else, and coaches and parents are urged to teach players good sportsmanship. The purpose of the community recreation basketball league is to provide a positive and competitive opportunity for youth ages 5-16 to play basketball on an organized team in a structured program. Our goal is to emphasize fun, fundamental skills, teamwork, and fair play (GSO Youth Basketball, 2019). The youth basketball league operated from December 2018 to March 2019. Table 3.1 highlights the league age divisions and an overview of each age division rules.

Table 3.1 Youth Basketball League Specifications

Leagues Age Divisions	Overview
5-7 years	Score not kept, 27.5-inch ball, one official
8-10 years	Score kept, 28.5-inch ball, two officials
11-13 years	Score kept, regulation size ball, two officials
14-16 years	Score kept, regulation size ball, two officials

Participants

Rubin and Rubin (2012) explained, qualitative interviewing is used to explore various perspectives towards a problem. In this research, the participants selected have a firsthand account of the community recreation center and the youth basketball program.

The participants in this study, were six pre-adolescent girl participants. Two participants were selected from each of the three community recreation centers profiled previously in this section. Due to the limited amount of girl participants, participants were selected by community recreation past participation. The six participants that were chosen for the study, have established community recreation participatory ties, meaning, each participant has participated in two or more community recreation programs at their specific community recreation center and were currently enrolled in the youth basketball program.

The participants' ages ranged from 9-11. These ages were chosen because when children are in their preliminary stages of adolescence, it can be a difficult time of facing new roles and identities. Exploring the perspectives from pre-adolescent girls at this stage will benefit future research in community recreation program implementation practices relative to gender. Individual participant information can be found in the succeeding chapter relative to case findings.

Procedures

The researcher received approval from the UNCG Institutional Review Board (Appendix A) and three GSO Parks and Recreation community recreation center site supervisors (Appendix B) before beginning this study. After receiving site approval, the

researcher used a recruiting script (Appendix C), to inform parents of pre-adolescent girls of the purpose of the study and research design. The researcher then contacted parents or caregivers of each pre-adolescent girl to ask for consent of their child to participate in this study (Appendix D). Following parental consent each pre-adolescent girl completed an assent form to participate in the study (Appendix E).

After participants were selected, the researcher was given the participants practice schedule at each respective community recreation center. The participants practice schedule was used to organize observation data collection.

Data Collection

Upon IRB approval, data was collected through observation of youth participants during practice time and semi-structured interviews. Table 3.2 highlights the data collection steps taken by the researcher.

Table 3.2 Data Collection Steps

Order of Data Collection	Data Collection Steps
1	Obtain UNCG IRB approval and Community Recreation Center Site Approval.
2	Obtain parental consent and participant assent.
3	Observation of Participant 1 and 2 (Harris) -Observed each participant for three practices (6 hours x 2 participants=12 hours of observation at Harris) -Completed Observation Checklist for each practice. -Transcribe notes from observation.
4	Observation of Participant 3 and 4 (Cole) -Observed each participant for three practices (6 hours x 2

	<p>participants=12 hours of observation at Cole) -Completed Observation Checklist for each practice. -Transcribe notes from observation.</p>
5	<p>Observation of Participant 5 and 6 (Simmons) -Observed each participant for three practices (6 hours x 2 participants=12 hours of observation at Simmons) -Completed Observation Checklist for each practice. -Transcribe notes from observation.</p>
6	Meet with Recreation Center Supervisors for Center Profile Information
7	<p>Interview participants 1 and 2 separately using semi-structured interview questions (Harris) -Transcribe Interviews</p>
8	<p>Interview participants 3 and 4 separately using semi-structured interview questions (Cole) -Transcribe Interviews</p>
9	<p>Interview participants 5 and 6 separately using semi-structured interview questions (Simmons) -Transcribe Interviews</p>
10	Conduct Member Checks
11	Using information from Observation Checklist and Interviews -Open Code Data for single case findings
12	Triangulation and Cross Case Analysis

Observation

Each pre-adolescent girl was observed during youth basketball practice at their respective site. Observations were conducted during month two of a three month season, therefore participants were in the middle of their basketball practice season. The researcher used an Observation Checklist (Appendix F) to notate the motivational climate of practice as well as autonomy, relatedness and competence of participants.

Observations were used to notate participant independence in activity/program choice, demonstration of skill knowledge and relatedness to peers and program implementers. Youth basketball practice was observed over the course of three practice periods per pre-adolescent girl participant. Each practice period lasted two hours. Therefore, each participant was observed at practice for a total of six hours.

The researcher sat at the top of the gym bleachers and observed participants. Using the Observation Checklist, the researcher focused on coach to participant interaction, participant to peer interaction, overall engagement in practice, participant body language and social cues displayed by pre-adolescent girl participants. The observation checklist that follows incorporates components of self-determination theory and were utilized to understand the recreation center sport program basketball practice environment. A complete list of observation checklist components are provided in Appendix F. Observation checklist included the components below but are not limited to these sample checklist items:

1. Autonomy:

- Participant made choices during basketball practice.

Types of choices:

- Coach allows players to make choices.

Type of choices:

2. Relatedness:

- Participant appeared comfortable with team.

Examples:

- Participant socialized with peers.

Examples:

3. Competence:

- Participant articulated/demonstrated her strengths.
- Participant articulated/acknowledged her weaknesses.

The researcher jotted down notes on the observation checklist form. The notes encompassed observations that were not specified by the checklist template. Using the observations checklist notes, the researcher interpreted displays of autonomy by the participants' ability to make choices in practice, and working independently. Displays of relatedness were interpreted by the participants' communications with team/coach, and participants' body language when interacting with team/coach. The researcher interpreted displays of competence by the participants' articulation of strengths/weaknesses, articulation of basketball activity knowledge and demonstration of basketball skills. Following the observations, the researcher transcribed field notes from observation checklist and jottings. The field notes were used in triangulation with interviews to aid in data analysis.

Interviews

Individual interviews were used to gauge SDT concepts, to understand the youth basketball climate and participants perspectives on autonomy, relatedness and competence. Interviews were used to determine internalized feelings and ideas towards

community recreation motivational climate, youth basketball program structure and individual participation. Interview questions were framed around the components of SDT; ensuring participants are actively engaged in discussing feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Each interview was conducted in the same manner; participants were separated from their peers to be interviewed alone. Participants were made aware that the interview was recorded and would only be shared for program evaluation purposes. Each interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner with the same interview questions for each participant. The interview questions that follow incorporate components of self-determination theory and were utilized to guide the interview conversation. A complete list of the interview questions are provided in Appendix G. Interviews included the questions below but are not limited to these sample questions:

1. **Autonomy:**

- What kind of sports do you participate in at the community recreation center? Why have you selected these sports to participate in?
- Are there any sports or activities you would like to participate in that you do not participate in at the community recreation center? If so, what would they be?

2. **Relatedness:**

- Describe your relationship with the people on your team (teammates). How does everyone get along?
- Do you feel connected to your basketball team? What makes you feel connected (or why don't you feel connected) to your team?

3. **Competence:**

- What are some of the things you are good at, when playing basketball? How do you contribute to your team?

- What are some of the things that challenge you, when playing basketball? How do you respond to these challenges?

Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder *Sony ICD-BX 140*. The voice recorder was stored in a locked file cabinet to ensure participants' identity remained anonymous. The recordings were transcribed verbatim using *Otter.ai*, a transcription software. After transcribing, each transcription was read by the researcher for accuracy. Transcriptions were then uploaded in MaxQDA for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Gerring (2007) explicates that analytic data in case studies, describes the part to bring understand to the whole. Within this study, the investigator uses two approaches for case study analysis of the sport program climate; observations of individual participants at youth basketball practice and individual semi-structured interviews. Observation checklist and interview questions were structured and designed to incorporate the concepts of self-determination theory (autonomy, relatedness and competence).

Table 3.3 Data Analysis Process

<p>Individual Case Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">∇ Use practice observational checklist to create codes.∇ Read individual participant interview to create a case biography and codes.∇ Perform previous steps with remaining case.∇ Interpret findings for each individual case based on self-determination theory components. <p>Conduct Cross-Case Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">∇ Use codes from observation checklist and individual interviews within individual cases to create common themes and categories.∇ Compare themes and categories across all pre-adolescent girl interviews with each research variable.∇ Interpret overall findings based on each research question.

Field notes from observation checklist and interview transcriptions were used in triangulation to formulate youth basketball program participant perceptions of self-determination. Observation checklist notes were utilized to formulate ideas about participants' relationships with teammates and coaches, participants' self-determination and participant's willingness to engage in continued youth basketball participation. Field notes were transcribed from observatory jottings for coding.

Interviews encompassed pre-designed questions based on field observations, relative to research inquiry and theoretical framework. Interviews were transcribed the same day they were recorded to maintain individuality of participant responses for later analysis. Discussion and unstructured dialogue was permitted allowing natural conversation, during interview sessions. After interview transcription, a member check

was performed to ensure participants findings were accurate and captured their individual accounts of their sports program environment. Interviews were used to structure each individual case design. Transcriptions from interviews were open coded. Transcriptions were uploaded for open coding into MaxQDA; MaxQDA is qualitative analysis software (produced by Verbi GmbH in Germany).

Open coding is utilized to describe the detailed ideas described by participants in interviews. Codes were placed into categories; these categories represent phenomena, problems, issues or happenings transcribed through observation and interviews. For protection of the participants in transcription, pseudonyms were given to preserve participants' identity; the participants' age was provided for analytical purposes only.

Threats to Trustworthiness

Having a personal relationship with observed and interviewed participants could be viewed as a threat to research trustworthiness. I have worked with in this setting for a number of years and have built a rapport with participants that exceed the scope of observer and participant. Because my role within the setting requires interaction with the participants, the participants have a great deal of respect for my opinions and expectations. The familiarity of the setting and participants, although serving as an accessible site, has the potential to be too conversant. Participants seeking approval, altering behaviors during observation, and responding in interviews in a manner of appeasement has the potential to serve as a major threat to research authenticity. To combat this potential threat, it was necessary to make participants aware that observation and interview transcriptions were only utilized for research purposes and have no effect

on day-to-day relational interactions. In doing so, I will be able to protect the integrity of the research.

CHAPTER IV

INDIVIDUAL CASE FINDINGS

The following chapter provides individual case findings for six participants. These individual case findings were structured to analyze five key points regarding the sport program environment of each participant. The first point of analysis provides participant background information relative to community recreation sport program participation. A brief background of each participants' coach, is included in this point of analysis as well. Coaches' information is included in this section for the purpose of contextuality; due to the coaches' impact on the practice environment.

The second point of analysis explains participant perceptions of autonomy in sport program environment. The third point of analysis explains participant perceptions of relatedness in sport program environment. The fourth point of analysis explains participant perceptions of competence in sport program environment. The fifth point is structured to interpret participant perceived motivation towards current participation and to understand whether participants plan to continue sport participation at the community recreation center or with other youth sports program agencies.

The individual case findings represent the perception of each participant concerning sport program environment using the components of self-determination theory, motivation and thoughts on continued participation. To protect the identity of the participant, participants were assigned a pseudonym name. Some of the participants

selected a pseudonym or pseudonyms were provided for those participants who did not select a pseudonym.

Case 1—Dominique

Dominique’s Background

Dominique is a ten years old and attends Harris community recreation center. Dominique is in the fifth grade. Dominique has played basketball and soccer in the past. Dominique has been a participant at Harris for three years. Dominique has participated in two programs at Harris, the dance program and youth basketball program. Dominique has participated in the dance program at Harris for three years. This will be Dominique’s second year playing basketball at Harris. Dominique participated in the 8-10 year old age division for the 2018-2019 youth basketball season. During observations, the investigator notated that Dominique was the only girl participant on a basketball team comprised of nine participants. When asked what made Dominique begin playing basketball at Harris community recreation center, Dominique stated, “I started playing basketball at Harris because my cousin played at Harris. He liked it, so I thought I would give it a try. Now I like it.”

Coach Background: Dominique’s coach is a male and has been a volunteer coach within the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department for four years. He has coached basketball and football at Harris. He has received NAYS (National Alliance of Youth Sports) training, as well as a site-specific training held at Harris, prior to becoming a coach for this upcoming basketball season. This will be his third season

coaching in the 8-10 year old age division in basketball. In the past, he has coached the 11-13 year old age division in basketball.

Dominique's Perception of Autonomy

The researcher examined Dominique's perception of autonomy in her sports program environment. Dominique was observed making several choices during practice observation as notated with the use of an observation checklist. The researcher checked off displays of autonomy from the observation checklist on three occasions. On day one of practice observation, Dominique was observed choosing which basketball drills the team would complete first. The coach stated to Dominique, "What drill can we do today, to work on dribbling?" Dominique was observed demonstrating the drill and having teammates follow her actions. On the second day of practice observation she was able to separate her teammates and choose the members of her team, for the two teams to scrimmage each other in a rehearsal game. During the third day of practice observations, Dominique chose to pick out practice jerseys to administer to her teammates. She handed out either blue or red jerseys to her teammates. Once she was done handing out practice jerseys, the team began to scrimmage.

Interview questions related to autonomy centered on sport choices, reason for choosing basketball participation, perception of practice choices, and coaches' role in providing participant opportunities of autonomy. Dominique was asked what kind of sports she has participated in at the recreation center. She acknowledged that she has participated in the sport of soccer and basketball. She spoke of choosing to play basketball at the community recreation center because she has a family member who has

played basketball before at the community recreation center. When speaking on why she chose to play at Harris, she stated, “My cousin played here when he was younger. And so, did some other people in my family.”

Dominique chose to play basketball at Harris because her parents were familiar with the center and because she has tried other programs at the facility. Dominique elaborated on playing at Harris, she stated, “I played here {referring to Harris}, because at first I was just doing dance. So when I wanted to try basketball, I just did it here too.”

Dominique expressed wanting to play volleyball at the community recreation center. She explained that her recreation center did not offer the sport of volleyball, so she hasn’t played yet but would like to in the future. Although Dominique was able to highlight opportunities to make choices during practice time, she could not articulate any feelings associated with being given a choice at practice. In regards to having opportunities of autonomy/making choices during practices, Dominique stated:

Sometimes we have to follow the coaches’ schedule, so we don’t get to make choices. I do get to pick my own team to play with and decide what type of exercises to do that will make us better players.

In summary, Dominique expressed an appreciation for making choices during practice. She was also able to talk about choices she makes within her life, such as choosing sports she would like to participate in at the recreation center. Dominique’s participation at Harris was tied to her knowledge of existing programs at the facility.

Dominique's Perception of Relatedness

The researcher used the observation checklist and interview questions, to examine Dominique's perception of relatedness in her sports program environment. Dominique's connectedness to her teammates and coach was observed during three practice observation. The researcher checked off displays of relatedness from the observation checklist on five occasions. The researcher noted that Dominique appeared comfortable with her team, during the first practice observation, Dominique high-fived several teammates before beginning a drill. During that same practice observation, the researcher noted her smiling and laughing with her teammates. During the second practice observation, the researcher heard Dominique offering words of encouragement to a teammate, after the teammate missed a shot. She clapped towards her teammate, walked towards him, she then stated, "Hey it's okay. Just keep shooting."

During the third practice observation, the researcher observed Dominique talking with her teammates on the sideline in between practice drills. Dominique was observed having a strong rapport with teammates and her coach. Several times during practice observation, the coach called Dominique "Nique". Nique is Dominique's nickname and this communication between her and her coach demonstrates familiarity and connectedness.

Dominique was asked interview questions about her relationships with her teammates, connection to the team, relationship with coach, and feelings of encouragement, these questions were relative to her relatedness within her sport program environment. Dominique felt like she got along with her teammates and was connected to

the team. She expressed a positive relationship with her team. When talking about her team connection, Dominique stated, “We have fun together. I like coming to practice and being around them. We tell jokes a lot and laugh. It’s fun.”

She mentioned joking and laughing with her teammates on the sidelines as positive attributes to her team connection. She explained that the team got along pretty good and they helped each other out during practice times. Dominique’s’ feelings of connectedness with her teammates came from receiving positive encouragement when she makes a mistake. She feels like her coaches and teammates believe in her. When describing her coach, Dominique stated, “My coach is tough but nice. He puts pressure on us to be leaders. Especially me.”

Dominique liked that the coach puts pressure on her to be a leader and show others what to do during practice. She feels like this added pressure makes her feel more connected to the team because she has a role on the team. Dominique did not highlight any things she would change about her relationship with coaches and teammates. Dominique feels encouraged to play sports by her mom, aunt and cousin. She explained feeling motivated when she sees her cousin in the stands at games and during practice. When asked about her feelings toward the encouragement she receives from her family about playing basketball, Dominique stated, “I think it’s cool when my family comes and watches me play. I want to be like my cousin, so when he encourages me to play, I feel good.”

Overall, Dominique demonstrated a connection with her teammates. She described her sports program environment as fun. She liked the support she received from

her teammates and understood the importance of positive encouragement. Dominique and her coach also had a positive relationship. She expressed understanding the player and coach dynamic that is exhibited in sport relationships. Lastly, Dominique's family serve as the main source of encouragement for her when playing basketball.

Dominique's Perception of Competence

Dominique's perception of competence in her sports program environment was observed, over the course of three practice observations. Using observation checklist, the researcher noted six moments Dominique displayed competence in basketball practice. On day one of observation, Dominique demonstrated knowledge of the game of basketball and was comfortable performing movements associated with the sport. During day two of observations, she was overheard by the researcher, talking with a teammate about breaking a consecutive layup record, which was previously held by another teammate. Dominique stated:

I know I can hit at least ten in a row if Kevin was able to hit nine in a row. Cause one time at my friend's house, I did like twelve layups. So, I can hit ten here.

On the last day of practice observations, Dominique was observed articulating her strengths within the basketball practice drills. She appeared boastful at times when speaking with teammates and did not shy away from practice drills. Dominique was observed talking to teammates and stated, "Let me show you how to do it. You know, I know how to do it. I'm pretty good at shooting anyway."

Dominique was asked interview questions about her competence, the questions were relative to her contribution to the team, her perceived self-confidence, and if her coach/teammates played a role in her confidence within her sport program environment. Dominique believed one of her best contributions to the team was being good at defense. She feels that her team relies on her to defend players on the opposing team. Dominique highlighted her need to work on shooting three pointers, but feels confident with layups. When discussing the challenges, she faces with shooting long shots, Dominique stated:

I mean that's why we practice right? To get better. So I don't feel bad that I'm not that good at it [three pointers]. I just keep practicing. I'll get better. Coach says, just keep shooting. So, that's what I do.

Dominique feels like playing basketball at the community recreation center has helped her with not being shy. In reference, to some of the things she learns about herself while playing basketball, Dominique stated:

I was super shy before I began playing basketball. But I like having people count on me to do things. I may not be the best shooter, well three pointers, but I know I am one of the best players on the team. It feels good to be a leader and to be counted on during the game.

Dominique feels like her teammates and coach contribute to her confidence in a positive way and make her feel like she is capable of performing drills during practice. She noted that teammates always say positive things to her, even when she makes a mistake. Dominique believes that a team should be supportive and believes her coach has

created an environment that promotes support and encouragement. Dominique talked about team support by stating:

My coach tells us to clap for each other or cheer for each other, no matter what. He says that's important to winning, believing in each other. They make me feel like they believe in me.

Lastly, Dominique mentioned that her family has aided in her confidence in basketball. She highlighted that her family coming to practices and games helps her to feel confident in her basketball skills. Describing her feelings towards her family she said, "I like looking in the stands and seeing family cheering or even telling me things I should do. I don't want to let them down. So it makes me try harder."

In short, Dominique articulated strengths and weakness in basketball. She was very confident when speaking with teammates and wanted to demonstrate her skill level. She discussed skills she would like to work on during practice. She had a clear understanding of how parental support, coaching feedback and team dynamics affects her confidence.

Dominique's Continued Participation and Motivation

During interviews, Dominique was asked about continuing to play basketball at the community recreation center in the future. She acknowledged that she would like to continue playing basketball at the recreation center if she does not play at her local middle school, stating:

I never thought I love playing basketball as much as I do. I can't wait to play basketball in middle school next year. But if I can't play at school, I'll play at the rec.

She continued to express her desire to play basketball and acknowledged she would also like to try other sports once she is in middle school. Dominique's continued interest in sports were displayed in her inquiry into becoming a two-sport athlete, she stated:

Maybe I'll be good enough to play volleyball at school too. My school has a volleyball team, so I think I want to play both. Volleyball and Basketball. Do you know if I can play both at school?

Dominique's perceived motivation was assessed using the observation checklist, the researcher checked off displays of motivation on three occasions during the three practice observations. During the second practice observation, the researcher noted that Dominique appeared motivated to participate in youth basketball by her acknowledgement of wanting to get better at the sport. She was observed articulating ways she could get better at different skill sets. She explained that she wanted to become a more efficient shooter. She also acknowledged that she needed to work more on dribbling with her non-dominant hand (left hand).

During the third practice observation, the researcher noted Dominique telling a teammate that she wanted to learn how to rebound better. She was also observed by the researcher shooting with her mom after practice time. Dominique and her mother

remained in the gym, fifteen minutes at the end of practice working on dribbling and free-throws.

Overall, Dominique expressed a motivation to attend basketball practice at the Harris community recreation center. She practice after the allotted practice time and set goals for herself at practice. Dominique articulated a desire to continue playing basketball at Harris or at her middle school next year. Dominique would also like to play other sports once she is in middle school.

Case 2—Rosa

Rosa's Background

Rosa is eleven years old and attends Harris community recreation center. Rosa is in the sixth grade. Rosa has been a participant at Harris for four years. Rosa has participated in two programs at Harris, the dance program and youth basketball program. Rosa has participated in the dance program at Harris for two years. This will be Rosa's fourth year playing basketball at Harris. Rosa has not participated in any other organized sports. Rosa participated in the 11-13 year old age division for the 2018-2019 youth basketball season. In previous seasons, Rosa participated in the 8-10 year old age division. During observations, the investigator notated that Rosa was one of two girl participants on a basketball team comprised of ten participants. When asked what made Rosa begin playing basketball at Harris community recreation center, Rosa stated, "I watched basketball with my dad. I just always wanted to play, once I started, I just didn't stop. It's something I'm good at."

Coach Background: Rosa's coach is a male and has been a volunteer coach within the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department for two years. He has only coached basketball at Harris. He has received NAYS (National Alliance of Youth Sports) training, as well as a site-specific training held at Harris, prior to becoming a coach for this upcoming basketball season. This will be his second season coaching in the 11-13 year old age division in basketball. He has not coached any other youth sports at community recreation centers or other agencies.

Rosa's Perception of Autonomy

Using an observation checklist, the researcher checked off displays of autonomy on three occasions during the three practice observations. There were no notated displays of autonomy on day one of Rosa's practice observation. On day two of practice observation, Rosa assisted the coach in demonstrating practice drills. She was given the choice of assisting the coach to show teammates how to properly perform the drill for warm-up purposes. She chose to assist her coach. On the third day of practice observations, Rosa chose which practice drills the team would complete. The coach was observed providing positive reinforcement to Rosa's drill choice. She suggested to the coach that they work on defensive slides, stating, "I think we need to work on defense. Last week, we loss, because we didn't play good defense."

At the close of the third practice observation, Rosa suggested the team create a practice ending cheer. Rosa was observed talking with the coach, saying the team they played last week had a cheer and their team needed a cheer. She huddled up with her teammates and they placed their hands in a circle, she then stated, "At the end of practice

or in a huddle at a game, one of us should say hard work on three and then count to three. I'll start it today.”

Rosa was asked interview questions about her perception of being provided opportunities of autonomy in her sport program environment. Rosa acknowledged that the sports she has chosen to play were dance and basketball. When urged to elaborate on her sport choices, Rosa stated, “I like to dance because it’s fun and a lot of my friends are with my dance group. I play basketball too with some of my friends.”

She did not mention any other sports or activities she wanted to participate in at Harris community recreation center. She has chosen to play basketball at the community recreation center because she always watches basketball with her father. While elaborating about watching sports with her father, Rosa stated:

My dad always watches basketball. So I sit with him and watch. So then I thought about playing, and my parents signed me up when I was young. So I’ve been playing ever since.

Rosa highlighted she likes being able to help in practice and make decisions regarding practice drills. She feels like the coach views her as a leader, which is why she gets the opportunity to make decisions during practice. When talking about her coach providing opportunities of autonomy in practice, Rosa stated, “I get to show my teammates how to do things because coach trust me and thinks I’m a leader. Well, he wants all of us to be leaders.

She articulated that some of the choices she makes during practice include practice drill demonstrations and closing out practices with a cheer. Concerning having opportunities of autonomy/making choices during practices, Rosa stated:

I know sometimes we just have to follow what coach says, but he gives me a lot of freedom to decide things in practice. I like having freedom in practice; sometimes practice is really hard, so having choices makes it easier.

Overall, Rosa has a great sense of autonomy within her sports program environment. She has the opportunity to make decisions that affect the team and takes initiative when given choices. Rosa relates freedom of choice to her being a leader. Rosa's participation at Harris stemmed from her father's connection to the sport.

Rosa's Perception of Relatedness

The researcher observed Rosa's connectedness to her team and coaches during three-practice observations. The researcher jotted down four displays of relatedness from the observation checklist. During the first practice observation, Rosa displayed a very good rapport with teammates and coaches. Several times during the first practice observation, Rosa communicated positive reinforcement to peers, encouraging peers. She approached a teammate on the sidelines in between practice drills and was heard by the researcher telling a peer, "It's okay to make a mistake. Just don't quit."

During the second observed practice, Rosa received praise for her efforts during practice by her teammates and coach. She smiled and continued the practice after receiving compliments. On the last practice observation, Rosa frequently laughing with peers and sharing stories about games and practices the previous season. Rosa had a

noticeable positive bond with her coach. She was observed high-fiving her coach during practice observations and giving her coach a side hug.

During interviews, Rosa was asked about her connection to her team and coaches within in sports program practice environment. Rosa felt connected to her team. When asked to elaborate on the ways she feels connected, she mentioned supporting each other during practice and laughing with teammates. Her feelings of connectedness stem from her receiving teammates' praise and positive reinforcement of her skills during practice. Rosa described her relationship with her peers by stating, "We help each other and try to involve everyone. We get along good. I mean sometimes we say silly stuff about each other but nothing serious."

When asked to elaborate on how she feels when she receives verbal praise from teammates, Rosa stated:

I feel like I have done something good. It makes me want to keep making good plays or doing what coach ask. Cause my teammates see the good stuff.

Rosa has established a great relationship with her coach. She mentioned that this was her second year with this coach and she really likes his coaching style. She feels like her coach relies on her to be leader and she likes to live up to the responsibility. She feels like her coach trust her and believes in her, which is why he gives her so many responsibilities during practice time, "I like how coach ask me to do things during practice. I know coach. If he asks me to do something, it will only make me better."

Rosa did not highlight any things she would change about her relationship with coaches and teammates. She feels like her teammates and her coach have a good relationship. Rosa elaborated on her positive relationship with her teammates and coach, she stated, “We all vibe. We want the best for each other. Like even if we are losing. Everyone is still encouraging each other and like saying we can do it.”

When asked about who has encouraged her to play basketball, Rosa feels encouraged to play sports by her dad. When asked about how her family encourages her to play basketball, Rosa stated:

My dad loves basketball. He used to play when he was younger. He pushes me to get better, so I keep trying to be better. I love playing because of him. He made me love to play basketball.

In summary, Rosa connection with her coach is linked to her familiarity with his coaching style and having success with him from a previous season. Rosa described her experience with her teammates as a positive relationship, where she feels useful in team dynamics. Rosa’s father was highlighted as a central piece to her feelings of encouragement.

Rosa’s Perception of Competence

Rosa’s perception of competence in her sports program environment was observed by the researcher using an observation checklist. During three practice observations, the researcher jotted down three moments Rosa displayed competence in basketball practice. During the first practice observation. Rosa was observed being a leader by verbally encouraging teammates to watch her perform specific drills in attempt

for the team to master the drills. She would run through a drill and then point out intricate parts of what she did during the drill in an attempt for teammates to replicate the movement. During the second practice observations, she was noticeably excited to show her skill level to teammates and coach. She was observed telling her coach:

I like when we try to do a figure eight passing. I know not everyone knows how to do it but I could show them where to be so they could learn how to do it.

During the third practice observation, while the team was on a water break, Rosa went to the end of the gym and began working on left-handed layups. Her coach noticed her working on the movements and came over to provide some quick pointers to aid in her perfecting the movement. Before returning to the regular practice with her teammates, Rosa quickly acknowledged to her coach, “Give me like a week; I will be able to get it.”

Interview questions related to competence centered around Rosa’s perceived contributions to the team. Rosa believed the way she contributes most to her team is by scoring the most points on her team. She mentioned trying to get her team more involved when they had games, but seemed comfortable with scoring most of her points for her team. When elaborating on the things that she is good at when playing basketball, Rosa stated, “I feel like I’m good at shooting and scoring. I make good passes to my teammates and I play good defense.”

Rosa mentioned that one thing she considers a challenge while playing basketball using her left hand more often. She acknowledged that it’s difficult to perfect dribbling and shooting with her left because she is right handed. When asked about how she

responds to the challenge of using her left hand more often, she stated, “I practice. I sometimes dribble alone with just my left. I mean that is the only way I can get better at it. So, whenever I can I work on it.”

Rosa believes that when she is playing basketball, her family cheering for her and her teammates relying on her has helped her confidence. She likes hearing people shout her name in the crowd and she mentioned basketball making her likeable with people. She feels like playing basketball at the community recreation center has made her more popular at school and in her neighborhood with friends. When discussing how basketball has helped her popularity, Rosa stated:

A lot of people come out to the games and watch. So the next day, people talk about it at school. And even I may meet people and they have seen me play before. One guy talked to my dad about playing AAU because he saw me play before.

When asked what she has learned about herself while playing basketball, Rosa stated:

I started playing basketball when I was 7 or 8 years old, so I have learned a lot while playing basketball. I learned how to be a leader and how to learn small skills and get better by doing the small things.

Rosa expressed that her teammates and her coach help her confidence by giving her praise and criticisms. She elaborated on this thought by stating, “Even if I mess up, my coach tells me ways I can get better. My team does the same. So, I know they believe in me, that makes me confident.”

Lastly, Rosa communicated that her dad has helped her confidence. She articulated that he gives her pointers and records her games, they watch the videos, and they see things she was good at during the game. She likes her parents to be at games and practices because it makes her feel like they are proud. Rosa articulated her feelings of confidence further by stating, “It helps to know my dad believes I can do it. I hear him calling my name. I hear him telling me good job.”

Overall, Rosa exhibited competence in the sport of basketball. She was able to describe her strengths and weaknesses, she expressed that she uses practice as a way to work on things she wants to correct. Rosa specified that basketball has taught her how to be a leader. Rosa’s confidence is fueled by her fathers’ support. She identified her coach and teammate’s positive reinforcement as reasons she continues to maintain confidence when playing basketball.

Rosas’ Continued Participation and Motivation

During interviews, Rosa was asked would she like to continue playing basketball at the community recreation center or at another location. Rosa was very clear in her future playing plans. She would like to play basketball at her middle school but feels that the community recreation center has prepared her for that journey, stating:

I was kind of nervous to play basketball at my school this season but playing here at Harris one more year has helped me to see that I am ready to play school ball.

She articulated and demonstrated a like for playing basketball and has built a positive relationship with her coach. Rosa will continue participating in basketball and

doesn't have interest in any other sports. Rosa expressed her desire to play basketball well beyond the community recreation center, Rosa stated:

I seriously want to play in the WNBA one day. So that's why I'll be playing school basketball. Cause you got to play school basketball to go to college. And you can't play in the WNBA unless you go to college.

Rosa's perceived motivation towards participation was examined using the observation checklist and her desire to continue participating in sports at the community recreation center was assessed by interview questions. During the three practice observation, the researcher notated daily that Rosa entered practice upbeat and enthusiastic. On the second day of practice observation, Rosa articulated a desire to play basketball and was verbally expressive about learning new skills to teammates and coaches. Rosa was observed speaking to her coach and teammates, she stated, "I saw a dude on YouTube doing a euro step, why don't we work on those. Like when we do layups."

During the third day of practice observation, she exhibited a desire to perfect skills and drills she found difficult, which was demonstrated by her using downtime during practice to work on left-handed layups. Rosa communicated feelings of happiness and comfort during practice and was engaged in practice the entire time. During a conversation with a teammate, Rosa expressed, "I could not wait to leave school today, to come here. Where you ready for practice too? Or is it just me?"

During interviews, Rosa was asked would she like to continue playing basketball at the community recreation center or at another location. Rosa was very clear in her

future playing plans. She would like to play basketball at her middle school but feels that the community recreation center has prepared her for that journey, stating:

I was kind of nervous to play basketball at my school this season but playing here at Harris one more year has helped me to see that I am ready to play school ball.

She articulated and demonstrated a like for playing basketball and has built a positive relationship with her coach. Rosa will continue participating in basketball and doesn't have interest in any other sports. Rosa expressed her desire to play basketball well beyond the community recreation center, Rosa stated:

I seriously want to play in the WNBA one day. So that's why I'll be playing school basketball. Cause you got to play school basketball to go to college. And you can't play in the WNBA unless you go to college.

In short, Rosa demonstrated motivation to continue participation in basketball at the middle school level. She doesn't have plans of playing at Harris the next season, although she thinks playing at Harris has been beneficial to her development. Rosa doesn't have interest in playing any other sports besides basketball. She also has future aspirations of playing basketball professionally.

Case 3—Nicole

Nicole's Background

Nicole is a nine year old and attends Cole community recreation center. Nicole is in the fourth grade. Nicole has been a participant at Cole community center for three years. Nicole has participated in three programs at Cole, the after-school, summer day

camp program and youth basketball program at Cole. Nicole has participated in afterschool/summer day camp programs at Cole for three years. Nicole has not participated in any other sports. This is Nicole's first year playing basketball at Cole. Nicole participated in the 8-10 year old age division for the 2018-2019 youth basketball season. The investigator observed Nicole to be the only girl participant on her youth basketball team, which was comprised of eight participants. When Nicole was asked, why she chosen to play basketball at Cole community recreation center, Nicole stated:

I wanted to try something new. I never played any other sports here but one of my after-school counselors' coaches, and I wanted to be on her team.

Coach Background: Nicole's coach is a female and has been a volunteer coach within the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department for six years. She works as an afterschool counselor at Cole and has coached basketball. She has received NAYS (National Alliance of Youth Sports) training, prior to becoming a coach for this upcoming basketball season. This will be her fifth season coaching in the 8-10 year old age division in basketball. In previous seasons, she has coached the 5-7 age division in basketball. She has also coached at other youth sports program agencies.

Nicole's Perception of Autonomy

Nicole's perception of autonomy was observed by the researcher in her sports program environment. During the three practice observations, the researcher checked off displays of autonomy from the observation checklist on one occasion. There were no jotted down displays of autonomy on day one of Nicole's practice observation.

During day two of practice observations, the coach gave Nicole the choice of which team she would like to be on the scrimmage. She picked her team and after making the choice there were no more instances during that practice period where Nicole or her teammates were given any choices. During the last day of practice observations, the researcher notated that Nicole's coach followed a routine with each practice with little deviation from the coaches' script. This script provided Nicole and her teammates with structure and a clear practice routine but did not incorporate individual opportunities to choose practice activities.

The researcher asked Nicole interview questions about receiving opportunities of autonomy in her sport program environment. This was Nicole's first time playing any sport at the community recreation center. She attributed her choosing to play basketball at the community recreation center because of a familiar relationship with recreation center staff. When asked about her familiarity with the recreation center, she stated, "I've been coming here since I was little. So I know most of the staff. When Ms. Dana said to try basketball, I decided to try it."

There was only one other sport Nicole would like to play. She expressed wanting to play soccer but has not played in an organized setting. Nicole acknowledged that she does not get to make choices during practice time. She believes her lack of making choices or not having the opportunity to make decisions is due to practice structure. In regards to having opportunities of autonomy/making choices during practices, Nicole stated, "We pretty much do what coach tells us to do during practice."

The researcher asked Nicole, to elaborate on her thoughts of not making choices during practice and how does it make her feel, Nicole stated, “I don’t mind not making choices. I just listen to the coach.”

In summary, this was Nicole’s first time playing organized basketball in a league. Nicole expressed she had a limited amount of autonomy in her sports program environment. The program practice structure affected the amount of opportunities Nicole and her teammates had to make choices. Nicole’s coach determined most practice activities and drills.

Nicole’s Perception of Relatedness

The researcher used the observation checklist, to assess Nicole’s relatedness to her teammates and coach during three practice observations. The researcher checked off displays of relatedness from the observations checklist on three occasions. During the first practice observation, the researcher notated that Nicole appeared well connected to teammates and coach. She was observed laughing with teammates and coach throughout practice. On the second day of observations, Nicole laughed whenever she made an error, teammates laughed along with her. She was also observed giving support to a teammate that made a mistake, by stating:

It’s okay, we all make mistakes. Keep trying. Did you see me just mess up but I just kept trying. And I got it. So it’s okay to make a mistake, just don’t quit.

On the third day of practice observations, the researcher jotted down that Nicole had a positive rapport with her coach, often performing a creative handshake with her

coach after a successful drill/activity. She was observed seeking validation from her coach, looking for reassurance at performing task. Nicole was observed pulling the coach to the side and stating, “Am I holding the ball right? I just want to make sure I hold it right, so my shot looks good.”

Nicole was asked interview questions relative to her relatedness within her sport program environment. Nicole articulated having a positive relationship with her teammates and coach. She felt like her team was positive towards one another and made everyone feel comfortable. She acknowledged being nervous when she first started playing on the team, stating:

I didn't know what to think at first when we had our first practice but now I'm not scared. It was something new, so I just didn't know how it would be.

Nicole described her relationship with her coach as being positive and fun. Nicole's feelings of connectedness to her coach stem from their close relationship within another program held at Cole community recreation center. Nicole's basketball coach is also her after-school counselor, so they have known each other for three years. When talking about her coach, Nicole expressed, “Coach D is the best. I'm glad I'm on her team.”

She likes the time she spends with her coach and teammates and referred to practice time as “important”. When elaborating on her relationship with teammates and coach, Nicole stated, “I think what we work on in practice is important and we put a lot of work into it.”

Nicole likes that her teammates support her when she makes mistakes. Nicole highlighted the only change she would make about her relationship with her coach and teammates is that they get more time to practice together. She feels the practice time is short and she wishes she could be around her teammates for longer than two hours a practice day. Nicole feels encouraged to play sports by her coach and mom.

When asked how she feels when she is encouraged by her coach to play basketball, Nicole stated, "I think it's cool she wanted me to play basketball. She mentioned it to a bunch of us one day but not everyone wanted to try it. I'm glad I tried it."

When asked about how her family encourages her to play basketball, Nicole stated, "My mom lets me try new things. So when I told her I wanted to try basketball, she bought me new shoes and a basketball. That made me want to play even more."

Overall, Nicole is connected to her teammates and coach. She feels connected to her teammates through verbal praise and reassurance. Nicole's relationship with her coach extends beyond the basketball court, she views her coach as a mentor and a source of encouragement. Nicole's mother is also an encouraging factor in her participation.

Nicole's Perception of Competence

Nicole's perception of competence in her sports program environment using a observation checklist. Over the course of three practice observations, the researcher notated three moments Nicole displayed competence in basketball practice. On day one of observation, Nicole was observed by the researcher as being unsure and hesitant when performing drills and learning new skills. Several times during that practice observations, Nicole asked the coach, "Is this right? Am I doing this right? Or is it wrong?"

The researcher attributed this lack of confidence to Nicole's novice experience to the sport of basketball. On the second day of practice observations, the researcher jotted down Nicole's willingness to learn despite her inexperience with the sport. Nicole repeated drills on her own without direction from the coach and counted aloud the amount of times she successfully completed the drills. She even asked teammates to complete the drills with her. During the last practice observation, Nicole was heard telling a teammate, she wanted to be able to dribble behind her back. She and the teammate then playfully attempted dribbling behind their backs but neither were able to successfully complete the movement. Nicole laughed with her teammate after failing to grasp the skill, stating, "We're going to get it. {Laughing} One day."

Nicole was asked about her competence within her sport program environment, using interview questions. When asked about her contribution to the team, Nicole discussed wanting to learn more about playing basketball, stating, "I'm still learning. I just try to do what coach ask and cheer for my team. I feel like sometimes I can't help much but I do try my best."

Nicole expressed an appreciation for the things she has learned from her teammates. She acknowledged that playing has been a challenge but she is glad that she has started playing basketball. Nicole feels learning to play basketball has taught her the following about herself:

I feel like basketball has made me talk more to people. I didn't like talking to people before, but on a team, you have to talk. I like playing because now I have new friends.

Nicole thinks her coach and teammates have really helped her be confident and have given her great support. When discussing ways her coach helps her confidence, Nicole stated:

She tells me the things I need to do to get better. She actually walks me through the steps of doing things. And if I mess up she says it's okay. So, it makes me want to keep trying.

Lastly, when asked who else contributes to her confidence in basketball, Nicole mentioned the recreation center director. Nicole was encouraged to elaborate on how the center director helps her confidence and Nicole stated:

Sometimes even outside of practice he comes in the gym and helps me practice. I think it is pretty cool that he helps me. So it makes me feel like she believes in me too.

In summary, Nicole is able to articulate her strengths and weaknesses. She feels like she needs to learn more about the sport but she is willing to learn more. Basketball has helped Nicole feel less shy. Nicole specifically named the recreation center director as one of the people that makes her feel confident in basketball.

Nicole's Continued Participation and Motivation

During interviews, Nicole was asked about continuing to play basketball at the community recreation center or with another organization. Nicole articulated a desire to continue playing basketball at the recreation center. She expressed a genuine like for learning to play basketball. She mentioned her teammates as a reason for liking basketball, stating, "I'm glad I tried playing basketball because I enjoy being around my

teammates.” When elaborating on why she would like to continue playing basketball at Cole community recreation center, Nicole stated, “I’m glad I started playing basketball. I want to keep playing and hopefully keep the same coach.”

Nicole would also like to learn how to play soccer. One of her teammates plays soccer and that has sparked her interest in playing soccer as well. Nicole seemed unsure if she would play soccer at Cole community recreation center, stating: “I don’t think we have soccer here but I still want to play.”

Nicole’s perceived motivation towards participation was assessed using the observation checklist. On the first day of observations, the researcher notated Nicole seemed eager to learn and expressed a desire to know more about the sport. During day two of observations, Nicole was observed looking for her mother in the stands for validation of her efforts during practice. Whenever Nicole would perform a skill accurately, she would give her mom a thumbs up. Nicole communicated feelings of uncertainty regarding drills but displayed eagerness to learn, stating, “So do I need to step off my left foot or right foot when I shoot it. Because it does not feel right the way I’m doing it now, I just want to do it right.”

In short, Nicole would like to continue playing basketball at the community recreation center. Although, she is new to playing the sport in an organized setting, she has a desire to learn more about the mechanics of the sport, which speaks to her desire for competency. She also expressed a connection to her coach and teammates. Nicole would also like to play soccer but was unclear if Cole offered soccer at its location.

Case 4—Mary

Mary's Background

Mary is a ten year old and attends Cole community recreation center. Mary is in the fifth grade. Mary has been a participated at Cole community center for two years. Mary has participated in two programs at Cole, the summer day camp program, and youth basketball program at Cole. Mary has not participated in any other sports at Cole. This will be Mary's second year playing basketball at Cole. Mary participated in the 8-10 year old age division for the 2018-2019 youth basketball season. The researcher observed Mary to be the only girl participant on her youth basketball team, which was comprised of nine participants. When Mary was asked, why she chose to play basketball at Cole community recreation center, Mary stated, "Both my brothers played here. My brother has a lot of trophies and he said the only way I can get trophies is by playing sports."

Coach Background: Mary's coach is a male and has been a volunteer coach within the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department for nine years. He has only coached basketball at Cole, and ran offseason clinics in basketball. He has received NAYS (National Alliance of Youth Sports) training, prior to becoming a coach for this upcoming basketball season. This will be his third season coaching in the 8-10 year old age division in basketball. In previous seasons, he has coached the 11-13 age division in basketball and the 14-16 age division. He is a parent coach; his son is also on the team with Mary.

Mary's Perception of Autonomy

The researcher checked off displays of autonomy from the observation checklist on three occasions. On day one of practice observation, Mary was given the opportunity to choose teammates for scrimmages. Mary and another teammate were selected by the coach to pick teams. During the second day of practice observations, the coach handed Mary a list of drills on a piece of paper for her to decide which drill would be completed first. Mary looked over the list for a couple of minutes before making a selection. The researcher observed Mary pointing at the list and asking the coach for clarity, stating, "So I can I only pick from this list? Because we haven't played knockout in a while. I want to do that."

Mary selected from the list provided, but later in the practice the coach did allow the team to play knockout (an elimination shooting game). During the third day of observation, Mary volunteered to shoot free-throws to determine if the team would run one laps at the close of practice. Mary was successful in hitting two free-throws, so her team did not have to run anymore at the end of practice.

Mary's opportunities of autonomy were assessed during an interview about her sport program environment. Mary has played two sports. She has played soccer with her church organization and basketball at Cole community recreation center. She compared playing basketball and soccer expressing the differences in the sport is the reason she chose to continue playing basketball instead of soccer. When talking about the differences between playing soccer and basketball, Mary stated:

I hated running in soccer. I mean its fun but it's a lot of running. In basketball you have to run but not as much. And I like the smaller team. I know everyone on my team.

Mary expressed wanting to play tennis. She discussed an organization coming to Cole recreation center during the summer day camp program and teaching everyone tennis. She demonstrated a like for the sport, by stating:

In camp we played tennis and that was pretty cool. A few of us were really good at it. But they only came like three times. I'd like to try it more. But I can't think of it anything else I'd want to play or try.

Mary feels like she gets the opportunity to make choices in practice by choosing teams whenever the team scrimmages and giving input into the practice schedule. In regards to making choices during practices, Mary stated, "Our coach gives everyone a chance to make choices. I like picking my team and choosing the stuff we do in practice. It's cool."

Overall, Mary has a great sense of autonomy within her sports program environment. Mary began playing basketball because of her connection to her brothers and the sport. She gets to make choices regarding drills, activities and team scrimmages. Mary exhibited interest in tennis but has yet to play in an organized setting. She would like to play at Cole, if it were offered.

Mary's Perception of Relatedness

The researcher observed Mary's relatedness to her team and coach during three practice observation. The researcher jotted down seven displays of relatedness from the

observation checklist. On the first day of practice observations, Mary exhibited a positive relationship with teammates. She frequently laughed with teammates and held conversations with her coach. During the second day of practice observations, Mary patted a teammate on the back after the teammate scored a point in a scrimmage game. The researcher observed Mary giving teammate encouraging words, stating, “That’s my boy right there. That was a nice shot.”

On the third day of practice observations, Mary was observed by the researcher performing creative handshakes and placing her arm on her teammate’s shoulders. She walked up to three different teammates and they each performed individually unique handshakes. Mary shook hands with one of her teammates and stated, “That’s my little brother. I mean, not really but he act like my little brother. {Laughing} Right?!”

At the close of the third practice observation, Mary placed her arms on the shoulders of a teammate that was sitting alone on the bench. After a brief conversation, Mary and the teammate joined the rest of the team to complete the last drills of practice. She also appeared comfortable with her coach throughout practice observations. Mary high-fived her coach several times during observed practices.

During interviews, Mary described her relationship with her teammates by referring them as family, stating, “I’m like the little sister on the team. So we all like being on a team together.”

Mary noted that the team has come up with handshakes for each other to build team chemistry. She feels that the handshakes are a way that the team connects to one another and makes everyone feel like they belong. Mary elaborated about the team handshakes, stating:

We all have different handshakes that we do. It just looks cool. So sometimes we do them in practice or games. And we look like we ready to play because we know how to pump each other up.

Mary pointed out that the coach suggested they come up with a way to bond and the team liked the idea of having handshakes. She feels connected to her coach and says the coach makes everyone feel like they are important to the team. When describing her relationship with her coach, Mary stated:

He knows what your good at and he puts you in the right spot. He tries to make sure everyone scores a basket in games and we all cheer for one another.

Mary did not have anything she would like to change about the relationship with her coach or her teammates. She repeatedly described their team dynamic as a family, stating, "I really like how our team plays together and practices together. I mean we argue sometimes but we're still a team, we're still family."

Mary feels encouraged to play sports by her brothers and mom. She referenced her brothers as the reason she began playing and likes to impress her brothers. Mary discussed her relationship with her family, by stating, "I like when they come to watch

me play. I know they want me to be good like them. It makes me keep going and I don't quit."

In short, Mary is connected to her teammates and coach. She views her team dynamics as that of a family. She feels supported by her teammates through team rituals like creative handshakes and verbal praise. Mary feels that her coach has her best interest in mind. Mary's source of encouragement comes from her older brothers. She likes when they attend her games and cheer for her.

Mary's Perception of Competence

Mary's perception of competence in her sports program environment was observed by the researcher using an observation checklist. During three practice observations, the researcher jotted down four moments Mary displayed competence in basketball practice. On the first day of practice observations, Mary entered practice eager and very vocal with teammates and coach. She entered the gym and approached her coach, Mary stated, "So what we got today? We starting with running again or layup lines?"

After receiving direction from her coach, Mary urged peers to start layups. While completing layups, she encouraged teammates with verbal praise. During the second day of practice observations, Mary displayed competence by asking for clarification if she did not understand what her coach was asking of her. When the coach began giving out instructions to the team, Mary raised her hand to get the coaches attention, Mary stated, "Are we all going to be on this part of the court or are will half of us go on the other end of the court?"

Once the coach provided more detailed, Mary completed the drills. On the third day of practice observations, Mary repeatedly gave her teammates verbal praise during practice drills.

During interviews, Mary articulated a strong connection to the team and considered herself the best free-throw shooter. When Mary was asked to elaborate on some of the things she feels good at within basketball, Mary stated:

I'm kind of short but I'm quick and I'm the best at free throws. I always hit my free throws. And sometimes when there is a foul, I have to shoot the free throws for the team.

Mary described her challenges in basketball as learning how to rebound better. She mentioned that because of her height it is sometimes harder to rebound over taller players. When asked how she responds to the challenges of being a shorter player, Mary stated, "I don't know. I guess just try my best. I can't help being short {Laughing}."

Mary feels that when her brothers tell her she is doing well it helps her self-confidence. She likes knowing they believe in her and it motivates her to try harder when they are at games or at practice. Mary conveyed playing basketball has taught her a lot about herself, Mary stated:

I have learned how to be a good teammate. I know how to work with others and feel like a team and it's just like being with my brothers. We have to look out for each other.

Mary feels like her teammates and coach contribute positively to her self-confidence. She feels her teammates and coach give great feedback and they do not say

anything that will hurt her feelings or confidence. Mary discussed her team and coaches role in her confidence, by stating:

My team helps me out a lot. They help me make good choices. And my coach is the same. He helps me be better. He tells me things that can help me learn more about playing basketball.

Mary feels her family helps her confidence when they come to games and practice. She feels like her parents support her and want her to do well at basketball. The researcher asked Mary to elaborate on ways she feels supported by her family and how does it help her confidence, Mary stated:

When my parents where my name on a shirt or come dressed in all green to the games, it makes me feel special. It makes me feel like they believe in me.

In summary, Mary is knowledgeable of the sport of basketball. She is aware of her strengths and weakness and was able to clearly define them. Mary has learned to be a good a teammate while playing basketball and relates it to her relationship with her brothers. Mary's parents help her confidence by attending games and dressing in her uniform color or wearing customized shirts.

Mary's Continued Participation and Motivation

During interviews, Mary was asked would she like to continue playing basketball at the community recreation center or in general. Mary expressed a desire to continue playing basketball. Mary feels connected to the community recreation center because of her familial ties. Mary wants to continue playing basketball at Cole recreation center,

Mary stated, “I want to continue to play at Cole, because my brothers played here and I want to play here like them until I get older.”

Mary expressed that the only other sport she would want to play is tennis. She admitted that she did not know much about the sport but the couple times she tried it, she felt like it was fun. Mary articulated her desire to play tennis at the community center, Mary stated, “I wish we had tennis more often here. I think if I practiced at it, I could be good at it. So that’s why I want to keep trying it.”

In short, Mary will continue to participate at Cole community recreation center. She feels a connection to the recreation center because of familial ties and wants to play because of those ties. Mary would like to play tennis and is inquisitive about finding a location she can play tennis.

Mary’s perceived motivation towards participation was examined, during three practice observations. The researcher notated Mary was observed entering practice cheerful and prepared to complete activity drills when assigned by the coach. The researcher notated on six occasions that Mary asked the coach questions about how to complete a drill. Mary’s inquisitive nature with her coach displays her motivation to learn more about the sport of basketball.

During interviews, Mary was asked would she like to continue playing basketball at the community recreation center or in general. Mary expressed a desire to continue playing basketball. Mary feels connected to the community recreation center because of her familial ties. Mary wants to continue playing basketball at Cole recreation center,

Mary stated, “I want to continue to play at Cole, because my brothers played here and I want to play here like them until I get older.”

In short, Mary will continue to participate at Cole community recreation center. Mary’s primary reason for continuing to participate at Cole, is because she feels a connection to the recreation center because of familial ties. Mary’s strong relationships with the center and the staff at the center is a central component of her continued participation. Mary has a desire to learn other sports and expressed a desire to play tennis. Mary was inquisitive about finding a location she can play tennis, since tennis is not offered at Cole on a regular basis.

Case 5—Ethel

Ethel’s Background

Ethel is an eleven year old and attends Simmons community recreation center. Ethel is in the sixth grade. Ethel has been a participant at Simmons community recreation center for four years. Ethel has participated in the after-school program, summer day camp program, karate and youth basketball program at Simmons. This will be Ethel’s third year playing basketball at Simmons. Ethel participated in the 11-13 year old age division for the 2018-2019 youth basketball season. In previous seasons, Ethel participated in the 8-10 year old age division. The researcher observed Ethel to be the only girl participant on her basketball team, which was comprised of ten participants. When Ethel was asked, why she chose to play basketball at Simmons community recreation center, Ethel stated, “I like playing basketball and I like being here. I like the stuff we do here. That’s why I keep playing.”

Coach Background: Ethel's coach is a male and has been a volunteer coach within the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department for three years. He has coached football and basketball at Simmons. He has received NAYS (National Alliance of Youth Sports) training, prior to becoming a coach for this upcoming basketball season. This will be his third season coaching in the 11-13 year old age division in basketball. He has not coached at any other youth sports organizations prior to volunteering at Simmons.

Ethel's Perception of Autonomy

The researcher observed Ethel's autonomy during three practice observations. The researcher checked off displays of autonomy from the observation checklist on two occasions. On day one of practice observations, the researcher did not notate any demonstrations by Ethel or her teammates. During the second day of observations, Ethel volunteered to demonstrate practice drills. The coach asked for volunteers six times throughout the practice, Ethel chose to volunteer to demonstrate practice drills five times out of the six. On the third day of practice observations, Ethel set up practice materials at three different activity stations. She put out cones at the first station, the cones were used for the team to practice dribbling. She put down foot place markers at the second station, the foot place markers were used for a lay-up drill. Lastly, she set up a clock on a scores table, the clock was used to time the scrimmage game between her team.

During interviews, Ethel highlighted her sport choices include participating in karate and playing basketball. She expressed interest in one other sport, football. When asked to elaborate on sports choices, Ethel stated:

I haven't tried many things. I like karate and basketball but I haven't really played anything else. I do like football though. We play sometimes in afterschool but that's the only time I play.

She spoke of choosing to play basketball at Simmons because she likes it and expressed a connection to the center as the reason she chooses to play basketball. When speaking about her connection to the center, Ethel stated:

The staff is super cool and I just like being here. I always have fun here, in camp and in basketball or even karate. It's fun making friends and hanging with the counselors and coaches.

Ethel feels like her coach gives her and her teammates the opportunity to provide input into practice and she likes having the ability to choose. In regards to making choices during practices, Ethel stated:

My coach asks us do we want to help with practice stuff and gives the chance to do different stuff. Sometimes we set up for practice or choose teams. I picked my team in a game a couple times too.

Overall, Ethel feels like she has opportunity to make choices in her sports program environment. Ethel expressed a connection to the recreation center staff as the reason for her participation in basketball. She feels like her coach lets her choose teams in practice and help out with drill demonstrations. Ethel articulated interest in playing football. She mentioned playing for fun during other programming at Simmons and would like to try it out in an organized setting.

Ethel's Perception of Relatedness

Ethel's relatedness to her teammates and coach was observed during three practice observations. The researcher checked off displays of relatedness from the observation checklist on five occasions. During the first practice observation, Ethel was observed joking with teammates during practice drills. She laughed frequently and horse played with teammates. On the second practice observation, the researcher observed Ethel on the sidelines in between practice drills dancing with her teammates. The researcher heard Ethel encouraging teammates to continue dancing, Ethel stated, "Who can do this? {Completed a dance} My cousin showed me how to do it. It's hard, it took me a long time to get it {Laughing}."

On the last day of practice observations, the coach was observed patting Ethel on the back when she made a good pass during practice. She was observed talking to her coach throughout practice observations and laughing. Ethel demonstrated support for her teammates throughout practice. The researcher notated Ethel cheered for her teammates while completing various drills and activities. She would shout constructive sayings towards her teammates as a form of encouragement. The researcher jotted down the exclamations from Ethel to her teammates, Ethel shouted to her teammates, "Good job. That's how you score. Keep on going."

Ethel was asked interview questions about her relationships with her teammates, Ethel felt connected to her team and articulated a positive relationship with her teammates. When elaborating on her connection to her teammates, Ethel stated, "We get

along on the team. We don't really argue. We help each other and tell each other stuff to do to make us all better."

Ethel described her connection to the team makes her feel important. She feels like a valuable member of her team and mentioned her teammates consider her a leader. She talked about her relationship with her teammate, stating:

I feel like I belong to the team because my teammates always say I do good and they like to follow what I do. So I feel important on the team, like I have a place.

Ethel's feelings of importance to the team extends beyond her teammates on to her coach. Ethel articulated a positive relationship with her coach, she stated:

My coach relies on me to do stuff for the team. He ask me to step up and complete drills and that makes me feel like coach trust me and believes in me.

Ethel did not say she would like to make any changes about her team dynamics. She feels like her team and coach make her feel like she belongs to the team and referenced to ways she contributes to the team, she stated:

If it's not a lot of time on the clock and we need a three pointer to win or tie, I know my team will expect me to shoot. To be looked at as the person to hit the game winner makes me feel like they trust me.

Ethel feels encouraged to play basketball by her family, coach and recreation staff. In reference to her family's encouragement, Ethel stated:

My mom always tells me I'm pretty good at playing basketball. She takes me to most of my practices and games. She encourages me by just being there for me.

In reference to her coaches' encouragement, Ethel stated, "My coaches have always helped me get better and tell me things that would help me. It pushes to me to be a better player." She mentioned recreation staff were the first to tell her to try playing basketball when she was young. When speaking about recreation staff, Ethel stated:

The rec staff always try to get us to do different stuff. When I was young they told me to just try basketball. So I feel like they have been encouraging me, ever since.

In summary, Ethel exhibited a connection with her teammates and coach through playful banter and verbal praise. She feels like a valuable part of her team and expressed her team relies on her. She likes to joke with her teammates and dance. Ethel feels encouraged to play by her coach, mom and recreation center staff.

Ethel's Perception of Competence

During three practice observations, the researcher notated four moments Ethel displayed competence in basketball practice. On the first day of practice observations, Ethel demonstrated confidence in her basketball skills and leadership with her teammates. She was observed by the researcher, helping a teammate who was having difficulty with a basketball drill. The researcher observed Ethel speaking to a teammate about practicing the drill, she stated:

It was hard for me to make a layup a couple years ago, you just have to keep practicing. Just remember to do a step hop at the end. I can show you a couple times in slow motion. Watch my feet.

During the second practice observation, Ethel demonstrated her knowledge of the sport of basketball by leading practice drills. She was observed volunteering to assist the coach with practice activities, which confirms her confidence in her basketball skill ability. On the third practice observation, Ethel playfully laughed when she could not keep her teammate from scoring. After her teammate scored, Ethel stated, “You got me. I know what I did wrong, shouldn’t have let you go right. Because I know you can’t dribble left. You got me though.”

Ethel returned to playing defense against her teammate and adjusted her defensive stance towards her teammate. When her teammate attempted to cut to the basketball hoop this time, Ethel stayed in front of him, denying him access to the basket. The teammate and Ethel ended their game smiling and laughing with one another.

Ethel was asked interview questions about her competence within her sports program environment. Ethel feels like she contributes to her team by being a good shooter and a leader. When discussing the things, she is good at in basketball, Ethel stated, “I’m one of the best shooters on the team. One game I hit four three pointers. And whenever coach ask for us to step up, I always step up and try to keep my teammates focused.”

Ethel mentioned wanting to work on playing defense more consistently. When discussing the things that challenged her in basketball, Ethel stated:

I really need to work on my defense. I know how to play defense but sometimes it’s hard because I be tired. So I don’t put in a lot of effort. I know I can’t do that though. I have to play hard the whole game.

Ethel feels like playing basketball at the community recreation center has made her more helpful. In reference to things she has learned about herself while playing basketball, Ethel stated:

Basketball has made me more helpful. Coach said we should be leaders on and off the court. So that's what basketball has taught me about myself. Like even at home. I help my mom with my brother and sister. I try to be a leader at home too. And be helpful.

Ethel expressed her teammates help her confidence by having high expectations of her when they are at practice and games. She talked about the pressure of playing with older boys and them relying on her during games. Ethel discussed how her teammates contribute to her confidence by stating:

My teammates makes me feel like I'm the best shooter ever. They always want me to shoot the ball in tough situations. And that's pretty cool but a lot of pressure. I'm younger than most of them but they still trust me. Some people can't believe that a girl like me can shoot over tall boys, but I do and my teammates know I can.

Ethel acknowledged her coach contributes to her self-confidence in a positive way by urging asking to demonstrate practice drills and giving her helpful hints that will make her a better basketball player. Ethel elaborated on how her coach helps her confidence, she stated:

My coach tells me I shouldn't be shy to show stuff I can do. Like, if it will help my team get better. I should step up and show my team things that will help them. And they can show me stuff I don't know. So when he thinks I can help my team in practice by doing a drill. I do it. Because it helps us all.

Lastly, Ethel mentioned that her family has aided in her confidence by making sure, she practices and goes to camps. She highlighted that her mom paid for a basketball camp being held at a local university, which was operated by college coaches and players. Describing how her family helps her confidence, Ethel stated:

My mom helps my confidence because she wants me to get better at basketball. She paid for me to attend basketball camp and at the basketball camp we worked on things I had never even worked on. So the fact she thought I'd be good at it, made me feel good. There were so many people there, like college people and famous people.

Overall, Ethel was able to express her strengths and weakness in basketball. Ethel articulated growths she has made in skill development with teammates. She wants to work on her defensive skill set and acknowledged that it was one of her weaknesses. Ethel feels like basketball has helped her leadership skills and made her more helpful to others. Ethel's mother helps her confidence by signing her up for basketball skill development camps.

Ethel's Continued Participation and Motivation

During interviews, Ethel was asked about continuing to play basketball at the community recreation center or anywhere else. Ethel talked about continuing to play basketball at her middle school and at the Simmons community recreation center. Ethel articulated learning a lot at the recreation center and wanting to continue getting better at basketball. Ethel discussed playing at Simmons recreation center, Ethel stated, "I like playing here. I learned a lot. Feels like I've been playing forever. I want to be like my coach one day and coach here at Simmons."

The researcher asked Ethel did she have interest in playing other sports at the center or her school. Ethel mentioned liking football but quickly referenced to girls not playing football at the center or at her school. Ethel elaborated on her continued interest in sports by stating, “I wouldn’t mind playing football but I don’t know any other girls playing. But I like football. So I would try that if I could.”

Ethel’s perceived motivation within her sports program environment was observed. During the first observation, the researcher notated Ethel displayed a positive attitude during practice and seemed excited to be at practice with her teammates. She was involved in all the practice drills and communicated repeatedly with coaches and teammates.

During the second practice observation, Ethel exhibited motivation to be at practice by following the coaches’ instructions and she also asked for feedback during practice drills. She asked for feedback on movement execution to ensure she was completing task properly. On the last day of practice observations, Ethel talk to a teammate about there is no place she wanted to be on that evening except the gym, she was heard stating:

I didn’t want to go to the school skate night tonight, because we had practice. My mom asked did I want to miss practice and go but I was like, nope.

In summary, Ethel would like to continue playing basketball at her community recreation center or at her local middle school. She expressed a genuine desire to be at practice. Ethel talked about becoming a basketball coach when she gets older and

wanting to coach at Simmons. She also expressed a desire to play football, she noted that she didn't know of many female football players.

Case 6—Pearl

Pearl's Background

Pearl is an eleven year old and attends Simmons community recreation center. Pearl is in the fifth grade. Pearl has been a participant at Simmons community recreation center for three years. Pearl has participated in the summer day camp program, karate and youth basketball program at Simmons. This will be Pearl's third year playing basketball at Simmons. Pearl participated in the 11-13 year old age division for the 2018-2019 youth basketball season. In previous seasons, Pearl participated in the 8-10 year old age division. Pearl has also played basketball in a special travel league referred to as AAU (amateur athletic union). In AAU, Pearl plays on an all-girl team. At Simmons, the researcher observed Pearl to be the only girl participant on her basketball team, which was comprised of nine participants. Pearl talked about why she chose to play basketball at Simmons community recreation center, Pearl stated, "Mom and my dad played basketball. My mom played at Elon. I want to be like her and play at Elon."

Coach Background: Ethel's coach is a male and has been a volunteer coach within the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department for five years. He has only coached basketball at Simmons. He has received NAYS (National Alliance of Youth Sports) training, prior to becoming a coach for this upcoming basketball season. This will be his fourth season coaching in the 11-13 year old age division in basketball. In previous

seasons, he has coached within the 8-10 age division. He has also served as a referee (game official) within youth sports, particularly basketball for three years.

Pearl's Perception of Autonomy

The researcher checked off displays of autonomy from the observation checklist on four occasions during the three practice observations. On the first day of practice observation, Pearl was observed during practice volunteering to demonstrate activity drills. The coach asked the team who would like to show the group how to set a pick. Pearl raised her hand and demonstrated the drill. Before the close of practice during the first practice observation, Pearl selected four teammates to be on her scrimmage team. She asked another teammate, who she choose after selecting him. The researcher observed Pearl discussing team selection, Pearl stated, "I think Chris would be good. He's tall and we are going to need a rebounder."

During the second day of practice observation, Pearl set up practice stations before the start of practice. Pearl entered the gym spoke with the coach briefly and entered a side closet. When she exited the closet she had several items in her hands; four cones, practice pinnies, and two basketballs. She set the cones up on one end of the court. She placed one cone on the three-point line, one cone at the free throw line and two cones on each side of the foul line blocks. She gave the pinnies to each teammate that was present. She kept one ball in her hand and tossed the other ball to her coach. The coach blew the whistle and practice began.

On the third day of practice observations, the coach asked Pearl and her teammates in what order did they want to complete practice drills. Pearl was very vocal

when the coach asked a question, Pearl stated, “After warm-ups we should go right into the scrimmage because if we wait to scrimmage, some people might leave early and we won’t get to play.”

Pearl was asked interview questions about her opportunities of autonomy in her sport program environment. Pearl expressed that the sports she has chosen to play basketball, softball and karate. Pearl discussed why she has chosen to play these sports, she stated:

My mom signed me up for softball to keep me busy. I participate in karate because we have one here {referring to Simmons}. And I want to be able to defend myself. I play basketball because like everyone in my family plays, so I wanted to play too.

Pearl did not want to try any other sports or activities. Pearl has chosen to play basketball because she feels connected to the sport through her family. When discussing her reason for choosing to play basketball, she stated, “My mom plays. My dad plays. My cousins play. I like playing and everyone in my family plays. It’s something we all like to do.”

Pearl likes to be helpful during practice time and feels like she gets the opportunity to choose different types of activities in practice. When asked to elaborate on how she feels about getting to make choices in practice, she stated:

I think it’s cool we get to have a say so in how practice goes. It shows that coach trust us. I like getting to help with practice.

Pearl thinks her coach is supportive in giving her and her teammates the opportunity to have input in to the practice routine. When Pearl was asked about specific choices she makes during practice, Pearl stated, “I get to set up for practice and get my teammates together to run drills. The coaches ask us what we want to do in practice and we get to tell him.”

Overall, Pearl's perception of autonomy in her sports program environment is high. She was able to make choices and aided in practice demonstrations. Pearl has chosen to play basketball because her mom and dad played the sport when they were younger. She also plays softball and participates in karate.

Pearl's Perception of Relatedness

The researcher observed Pearl's relatedness during three practice observations. The researcher jotted down five displays of connectedness from the observation checklist. During the first practice observations, Pearl appeared comfortable with her teammates and coach. She frequently smiled while in conversation with her teammates. The coach gave Pearl a fist bump as she exited practice at the close of day one of practice observation.

On the second day of practice observations, Pearl wrapped her arms around the shoulders of one teammate and walked down the court to the next drill. She was very playful with teammates and horse played on the sidelines in between practice drills. Pearl approached a teammate from behind and plucked his ear. When the teammate turned around he briefly chased her, the two laughed while playing tag until the coach called the group back to begin practice activities. During the third practice observation, Pearl was

observed by the researcher giving teammates verbal praise. When her teammates would make a good decision during practice drills, she would shout out positive exclamations. The team in return also provided Pearl positive statements whenever she made a good choice in practice.

During interviews, Pearl was asked about her relationships with teammates in her sports practice environment. Pearl referred to her teammates as friends. When asked to describe her relationship with her teammates, Pearl stated:

I think we are all friends. We laugh and joke and help each other during practice time. Some of my teammates go to my school, so we see each other at school too.

Pearl articulated feeling connected to her teammates and coach. When describing her relationship with teammates, Pearl stated:

We are like a family. They act like my brothers and my coach acts like my dad. We argue sometimes, but we always support each other. My teammates tell me things I need to do better and that's just like family.

Pearl expressed a positive relationship with her coach. She feels like her coach helps her improve her basketball skill and knowledge. She continued to discuss her relationship with her coach, she stated:

My coach listens to us whenever we say different things at practice and he always show us he cares. He laughs with us and makes us feel like we are doing good.

Pearl mentioned her teammates cheering for her during practice and games as ways her teammates make her feel like she belongs to the team. She continued talking about ways she feels like she belongs, she stated:

I like when we laugh with each other and we talk about things that has happened at school or in practice or games. It makes me feel like we are all a team because we can laugh with each other and help each other out.

When asked about anything she would like to change about her relationship with her teammates and coach, Pearl did not have anything she would like to change. She expressed that she liked how they interacted as a team, she further stated, “I wouldn’t change anything. I think we all get along. Coach is pretty cool too. So I can’t think of anything.”

Pearl’s has been encouraged to play basketball by her family. She recalls playing with basketballs at a young age and always being exposed to the sport. She has watched both of her parents play in the past and she talked about playing basketball around her house. When discussing ways she has been encouraged to play basketball, Pearl stated:

My parents buy the stuff I need to play, like shoes and they bought me a basketball to practice with at home. I have a goal outside of my house I shoot on too. They just make sure they have the things I need to be good at playing.

Pearl elaborated on how she feels when her parents encourage her to play, she stated, “I feel like they believe in me. It makes feel good. I like that they push me and want me to do my best.”

In short, Pearl's connection to her teammates and coach stem from their fun team environment. She mentioned laughing with her teammates and coach as ways she feels like she belongs to the team. Pearl is encouraged to play basketball by her parents. She recalls her parents introducing her to the sport at a young age. Her desire to play basketball is connected to learning skills in the sport when she was younger.

Pearl's Perception of Competence

During three practice observations, the researcher jotted down five moments Pearl displayed competence in basketball practice. During the first practice observation, the researcher noted that Pearl participated in all practice drills. She was observed asking the coach for clarification when she did not understand the coach's directions. During the second practice observation, Pearl acknowledged basketball skills she would like to get better at during practice. She was observed speaking to a teammate discussing having better cardio, she stated, "Every time we run. I be so tired. I need to run more or something because I shouldn't be breathing this hard {both laughed}."

On the last practice observation, Pearl made confident statements regarding her performance. She boastfully spoke with her coach about a movement she made while dribbling, she stated, "You didn't know I could do that did you. You see that? You like that didn't you?"

Pearl also was able to acknowledge weakness in her basketball skill development. Pearl was observed by the researcher talking to a teammate, Pearl stated, "I can hit the shot, sometimes I don't hold my hands right on the ball but I can hit the shot."

During interviews, Pearl discussed her competence within basketball. When describing things that Pearl felt like she was good at in the sport of basketball, she highlighted her game knowledge and preparation. She elaborated on her strengths in basketball, by stating:

When I come to practice I feel like I'm able to complete all of the drills and I'm always ready for whatever we have to do. I also know a lot about the game. I like watching it, so I feel like I know how to look for things on the court.

When discussing challenges, she faces while playing basketball, Pearl acknowledged she would like to work on being a better dribbler. She referenced future goals as the reason for wanting to work on dribbling, Pearl stated, "To be a good point guard, you have to be able to dribble good. I want to play point guard in college. So, I know I got to work on that."

Pearl's self confidence in basketball comes from her helping her team. When asked to elaborate on ways she helps her team, she stated:

I try to be a consistent shooter and I'm vocal with my teammates on the court. So I tell them the things we need to be doing, pointing out defenses and making sure we rotate the ball. I know they rely on me to do that.

Pearl feels like basketball has helped her learn to be perseverant. She discussed her feelings towards what she has learned by playing basketball, she stated, "I've learned to keep trying. Like even if you lose or something happens and you make a mistake. I've learned to just keep going and do my best."

Pearl feels like her coach and teammates have contributed to her confidence in basketball in a positive way. She feels that her teammates helps her confidence by relying on her offensively. She admits that this adds pressure on her to keep a good shooting form and be a consistent scorer. In regards to her coach, Pearl talked about how her coach helps her confidence, she stated:

He tells me to just keep shooting. Even if I miss like ten times, he looks at me and he's like, keep shooting it's going to fall. That pumps me up to do it.

Pearl expressed that her parents and other family members also make her feel confident in basketball. She talked about the things they do that helps her confidence, she stated:

My family help my confidence by coming to my games and cheering for me. My mom stands on the sidelines sometimes and I can see her when I'm about to shoot. That helps me.

In short, Pearl identified her strengths as her shooting ability. She expressed learning to dribble better as one of the goals she has set for herself. Pearl feels supported by her coach and feels like he believes in her shooting ability. Pearl is knowledgeable of basketball mechanics and is able to breakdown skill components required to be successful. Pearl's confidence is fostered by her family's support.

Pearl's Continued Participation and Motivation

During interviews, Pearl was asked would she like to continue playing basketball at the community recreation center or at any other location. Pearl openly discussed future

aspirations of playing basketball collegiately. Pearl will continue to play at Simmons community recreation center and believes playing at Simmons is a good way to prepare to play in school and college. Pearl believes the challenge of being the only girl on her team now will benefit her later, Pearl stated:

My mom says playing with boys makes me better. I believe that. So I want to keep playing with boys, cause when I play with girls in school or like in college, I'll be the best. Playing here has challenged me and it prepares me. So I want to keep playing here.

The only other sport Pearl would like to play after this season is softball. She discussed why she will play softball, she stated, "I think I stick with softball. It's not as fun as basketball but it keeps me active and in shape. So that would be the only other sport."

Utilizing the observation checklist, the researcher observed Pearl's motivation within her sport program environment. During three practice observations, the researcher notated three moments Pearl displayed motivation to be at practice. On the first day of practice observations, Pearl arrived to practice early and began shooting around before the coach arrived. Pearl's mom would sometimes join her on the court and they would shoot together. During the second day of practice observation, the researcher jotted down that Pearl displayed engagement in practice and provided optimistic feedback to teammates, after one teammate seemed discouraged during lay-up drills. The researcher observed Pearl talking to teammates, she stated, "We can get it. I think we should keep doing layups until we all get it. That way we all feel comfortable."

On the last practice observation, the researcher notated Pearl expressed her motivation to be at practice, Pearl stated, “Let’s get it going. We know we got to run, we might as well go ahead and start running. The sooner we get it done, we can get to the real fun stuff.”

In summary, Pearl expressed a motivation to be at practice by exhibiting leadership and taking initiative in practice drills. Pearl would like to continue playing at Simmons. She feels like playing with and against boys has made her a better basketball player. She would like to continue playing both basketball and softball. Pearl also mentioned wanting to play basketball in college when she is older like her mother.

These individual case findings were generated from the use of observation checklist and participant interviews, the individual findings were coded and analyzed, the open coding resulted in themes relative to self-determination theory components. The succeeding chapter includes thematic codes relative to autonomy, relatedness and competence, cross case analysis of participant findings and research question based discussion.

CHAPTER V

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand the extent to which the perception of autonomy, relatedness and competence in a youth sport environment impact the continued sports participation of six pre-adolescent girls in community recreation. Specific questions that guided the research were: (a) What is the perception of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in the youth sport program environment by six pre-adolescent girl participants? (b) To what extent do six pre-adolescent girl participants perceive autonomy, relatedness and competence as being important for their continued participation in youth sports? Cross-case findings and discussion regarding the two research questions are presented in this chapter.

This chapter is organized in five sections. The first section provides emerging themes of autonomy within the sports program environment as experienced by six pre-adolescent participants and as observed by the researcher. The second section provides emerging themes of relatedness within the sports program environment as experienced by six pre-adolescent participants and as observed by the researcher. The third section provides emerging themes of competence within the sports program environment as experienced by six pre-adolescent participants and as observed by the researcher. The remaining two sections provide discussions that emerged for each research question.

Participant Autonomy Factors and Influences

The purpose of this first section is to describe perceived factors and influences experienced by participants in a youth basketball sports program environment. This section is presented in three segments; (1) Feelings associated with autonomy within the sport program environment, (2) influences on basketball participation, and (3) participant perceived factors that limited autonomy in the sports program environment. These segments represent themes that effected participant perceived autonomy in a youth basketball program.

Feelings Associated with Autonomy

Throughout the six case studies, the participants discussed their perceived feelings towards autonomy in their basketball practice environment. The perceived feelings associated with autonomy in participants basketball practice environment resulted in the emergence of three themes (see Table 5.1): (1) having autonomy made participants feel *trusted or like a leader*, (2) having autonomy gave participants a *sense of freedom*, (3) having autonomy rendered *no feelings* towards their practice environment.

Table 5.1 Feelings Associated with Autonomy

Participant Name	Trust/Leadership	Freedom	No Feelings Perceived
Dominique			x
Rosa	x	x	
Nicole			x
Mary		x	
Ethel		x	
Pearl	x		

Participants expressed feelings towards autonomy in the practice environment based on opportunities to choose activities during practice and their coaches' allowance of decision making within practice. Participants articulated that having choices in their program environment made them feel trusted (Rosa, Pearl) by the coach. In this instance, autonomy or choice in the practice schedule or activities provided participants with feelings, that the coach had a sense of dependability on the participant. This sense of reliability fostered feelings of leadership and led to accountability during practice. For example, Pearl stated "I think it's cool we get to have a say so in how practice goes. It shows that coach trust us."

In addition, three of the participants (Rosa, Mary, Ethel) expressed having a sense of freedom in their basketball practice when given choices or autonomy in the practice environment. Participants being able to act independently in a team setting, nurtured feelings of control within their basketball practice environment. For instance, Rosa stated "I like having freedom in practice, sometimes practice is really hard, so having choices makes it easier."

Two participants (Dominique, Nicole) expressed having no feelings towards the autonomy within their practice environment. Dominique provided examples of making choices in her basketball practice, however she had no feelings towards being given opportunities to make choices. Nicole believed her autonomy in her basketball practice environment was limited, yet she did not express any discourse towards limited choices in practice. For example, Nicole stated "I don't mind not making choices. I just listen to the coach."

Influences on Basketball Participation

Throughout the six case studies, the participants discussed their autonomy in sport choices and why they have chosen to participate in basketball. The perceived autonomy in sport choices and choice in basketball participation resulted in the emergence of two themes (see Table 5.2): (1) autonomy in sport choices and choosing to play basketball was influenced by their *family* and (2) autonomy in sport choices and choosing to play basketball was influenced by familiarity with the *recreation center or recreation center staff*.

Table 5.2 Influences on Basketball Participation

Participant Name	Family	Recreation Center/Staff
Dominique	x	x
Rosa	x	
Nicole		x
Mary	x	x
Ethel		x
Pearl	x	

Participants expressed influences towards sport choices and choosing to participate in basketball. Two participants, (Rosa, Pearl) acknowledged that the reason they have made current sport choices or are playing basketball at the community recreation center is because of familial influence. Parents or extended family members either played the sport of basketball or encouraged the participant to play basketball. This association with sport led to the participant participation. Rosa and Pearl mentioned watching the sport of basketball with family members which ultimately led to their

participation. When talking about her parental influences on her basketball choice, Rosa stated: “My dad always watches basketball. So, I sit with him and watch. Then I thought about playing.”

In addition, two participants (Nicole, Ethel) were influenced by their connection to the recreation center or recreation center staff. Participants were influenced to participate because they were familiar with recreation programming at the center location or an actual staff member encouraged them to participate in basketball. For example, Nicole stated “When Ms. Dana said to try basketball, I decided to try it.” Nicole is referencing to a staff member at her particular site location as being the reason for her participation in basketball. Additionally, Ethel communicated her connection to the center as an influence on her participation, she stated “The staff is super cool and I just like being here.”

Furthermore, two participants (Dominique, Mary) expressed influences to participate in basketball by both familial suggestion and connectivity with the recreation center or staff. For example, Dominique stated: “My cousin played here when he was younger. And so, did some other people in my family.” She also acknowledged her familiarity with the programs at Harris recreation center, Dominique stated “I played basketball here, because at first I was just doing dance.” Mary displayed similar sentiments of Dominique, articulating that her brother participated at Cole recreation center and she wanted to follow in his footsteps.

Perceived Factors Limiting Autonomy

Participants expressed perceived factors that limited their autonomy in their program environment. The perceived factors that limited autonomy in participant program environment resulted in the emergence of two themes (see Table 5.3): (1) autonomy was limited by *program structure* (2) autonomy was *not limited* at all.

Table 5.3 Perceived Factors Limiting Autonomy

Participant Name	Program Structure	No Limitation Perceived
Dominique	x	
Rosa		x
Nicole	x	
Mary		x
Ethel		x
Pearl		x

Participants expressed factors that limited their perceived autonomy in their basketball practice environment. Two participants, (Dominique, Nicole) articulated that the coach limited their autonomy in their practice environment. The coach limited autonomy by providing limited opportunities for participants to make independent choices regarding practice schedule, practice drills or practice activities. For example, Nicole stated “We pretty much do what coach tells us to do during practice.” Similarly, Dominique stated “Sometimes we have to follow the coaches’ schedule, so we don’t get to make choices.” The coaches’ control over the program structure directly influenced participants’ sense of autonomy in their basketball practice environment.

In addition, four participants (Rosa, Mary, Ethel, Pearl) did not perceive any limitations to their autonomy in their basketball practice environment. These participants

expressed a strong sense of autonomy within their basketball program environment. For example, Mary stated “My coach asks us do we want to help with practice stuff.”

Observations of Autonomy

Although, all of the participants practice environments incorporated some form of autonomy, it important to assess the researchers’ perspectives through observations. When given opportunities of autonomy, participants appeared excited to lead practice drills or perform skill demonstrations. This excitement was notated by the researcher, by participant stating verbally they liked making choices while communicating with teammates/coach or through non-verbal cues, high-fiving coach or smiling when given choices.

Opportunities of autonomy, were solely determined by the structure of the practice environment which was determined by the coach. Limited autonomy was observed with two participants (Dominique, Nicole), when the coach practice structure was rigid and didn’t permit room for alterations or changes. Participants in these two practice environments asked fewer questions to coaches relative to choices. In practice environments with stronger perceived autonomy, coaches sought out task volunteers and skill demonstrators more often. Participants were asked for their opinion regarding practice drills and given choices in the order of skill development in the practice schedule.

Participant Perception of Relatedness

The purpose of this second section is to describe perceived experienced feelings towards connection and encouragement of six pre-adolescent participants in a youth

basketball sports program environment. This section is presented in three segments; (1) feelings of connection to their team in the sports program environment, (2) feelings of connection to their coach in the sports program environment, and (3) participant perceived source of encouragement to play youth basketball. These segments represent themes that affected participants' perceived relatedness in a youth basketball program.

Feelings of Connection to Team

Throughout the six case studies, the participants discussed their perceived feelings towards relatedness in their basketball practice environment. The perceived feelings of connection to their team within participants basketball practice environment resulted in the emergence of two themes (see Table 5.4): (1) having relatedness made participants feel connected to their team through *having fun*, (2) having relatedness made participants feel connected to their team through *verbal praise*.

Table 5.4 Connection to Team

Participant Name	Laughed/Had Fun	Received Verbal Praise
Dominique	x	
Rosa		x
Nicole		x
Mary	x	
Ethel		x
Pearl	x	

Participants expressed feelings of connection to their team in the practice environment based on socialization with team, comfort level with team and behaviors exhibited by teammates that contributed to participant sense of belonging. Three

participants (Dominique, Mary, Pearl) felt connected to their team because the team had fun together by laughing and joking. For example, when referring to her connection to her team, Dominique stated “We have fun together. I like coming to practice and being around them.” Similarly, Pearl referred to her teammates as her friends, “I think we are all friends. We laugh and joke and help each other during practice time.” Mary also expressed a connection to her team by having fun with one another. She described creating individualized handshakes as a way the team felt connected and had fun together.

Three participants (Rosa, Nicole, Ethel) felt connected to their team because they received verbal praise and positive reinforcement from their teammates. For example, when receiving verbal praise from teammates Rosa stated “I feel like I have done something good. It makes me want to keep making good plays.” Receiving verbal praise for Ethel made her feel connected to the team as a leader. Similarly, to Rosa, Ethel stated “I feel like I belong to the team because my teammates always say I do good and they like to follow what I do.” Nicole expressed that the verbal praise she received from her teammates made her comfortable in her new practice environment. Nicole stated, “I didn’t know what to think at first when we had our first practice but now, I’m not scared.”

Feelings of Connection to Coach

Within the six case studies, the participants expressed their perceived feelings towards connection with their coach in their basketball practice environment. The perceived feelings of connection to their coach within participants’ basketball practice

environment resulted in the emergence two themes (see Table 5.5): (1) a connection with the coach made participants feel like they *had a role/place on the team*, (2) a connection with the coach made participants feel like *the coach trusted them*.

Table 5.5 Connection to Coach

Participant Name	Established a Role	Demonstrated Trust
Dominique	x	
Rosa		x
Nicole		x
Mary	x	
Ethel		x
Pearl	x	

Participants expressed feelings of connection to their coach in the practice environment based on interactions with coach, and behaviors exhibited by the coach that contributed to participant sense of belonging. Three participants (Dominique, Mary, Pearl) felt their connection with their coach fostered an establishment of a role on the team. This role on the team gave participants a sense of duty and belonging to the team. For example, Dominique stated “My coach puts pressure on us to be leaders.” Also, Mary described her relationship with her coach by stating “He knows what your good at and he puts you in the right spot.” Pearl agreed with those sentiments by stating, “My coach listens to us whenever we say different things at practice.” This interaction with the coach nurtured participant sense of belonging.

Three participants (Rosa, Nicole, Ethel) felt their connection with their coach demonstrated trust from their coach. Participants felt their coach trusted in their abilities

to complete assigned task and make proper decisions in practice. For example, Rosa stated “I like how coach ask me to do things during practice.” Similarly, Ethel stated “My coach relies on me to do stuff for the team, it makes me feel like coach trust me and believes in me.” Also, because of the trust established between Nicole and her coach, Nicole felt a part of the team.

Sources of Encouragement to Play

Throughout the six case studies, the participants expressed their perceived sources of encouragement in their basketball practice environment. The perceived feelings about source of encouragement within participants’ basketball practice environment resulted in the emergence of three themes (see Table 5.6): (1) participants felt encouraged to play basketball because of *family* influence (2) participants felt encouraged to play basketball because of a *coaches* influence (3) participants felt encouraged to play basketball because of *recreation staff’s* influence.

Table 5.6 Sources of Encouragement

Participant Name	Family	Coach	Recreation Staff
Dominique	x		
Rosa	x		
Nicole	x	x	x
Mary	x		
Ethel	x	x	x
Pearl	x		

Participants expressed their source of encouragement for playing basketball in their sports program environment. Four participants (Dominique, Rosa, Mary, Pearl) articulated that their family was the sole source of encouragement for them playing basketball at their respective community recreation centers. Family encouragement to participate helps the participant's connection to the sport. For example, Dominique stated "I want to be like my cousin, so when he encourages me to play, I feel good." Rosa's source of encouragement is her father. Rosa's relationship with the sport of basketball is cultivated by her father's love of the sport. When speaking of that connection, Rosa stated "My dad loves basketball, I love playing because of him." Mary's source of encouragement is linked to her brother's previous participation in basketball. Mary's view of her brothers' achievements in basketball foster her participation. When talking about how her brother encourage her, Mary stated, "I know they want me to be good like them. It makes me keep going." Pearl's source of encouragement is her parents. Pearl's parent collegiate participation in basketball encourages her to play and work on her basketball knowledge. Pearl described their encouragement, by stating "I like that they push me and want me to do my best".

Two participants (Nicole, Ethel) expressed her source of encouragement for playing basketball was her family, coach, and recreation staff. Nicole credited her coach, who also serves as a recreation staff. Nicole's coach encouraged her to try learning something new and that encouragement, resonated with Nicole. Nicole stated "I think its cool she wanted me to play basketball." Nicole's other source of encouragement is her mother. Nicole felt encouraged by her mom's agreeance in allowing her to try a new

sport. Nicole mentioned her mom buying sporting equipment and attending her practices as ways she encourages her to play basketball.

Like Nicole, Ethel's sources of encouragement to play basketball come from recreation center staff, coach and her parents. Ethel also recognizes recreation staff as the first source of encouragement. Ethel recalls recreation staff introducing the sport of basketball to her when she first began attending the community recreation center. Ethel felt her coaches encourage her by helping her skills and knowledge of basketball. When speaking on her coach's encouragement, she stated "It pushes me to be a better player." Ethel feels encouraged by her mother as well, her mother acts as a source of encouragement by verbal praise and commitment to practices and games. Ethel summarized her mother's encouragement by stating, "She encourages me by just being there for me."

Observations of Relatedness

All of the participants exhibited a connection to their teammates and their coach, the following is an assessment of the researchers' perspectives through observations. The researcher notated participants used creative ways to display their connection to their team. For example, two participants (Nicole, Mary) performed handshakes with their teammates and coach. The handshakes were creative exhibitions of camaraderie and connection. Other demonstrations of relatedness observed by the researcher included participants high-fiving and hugging coaches and teammates, laughing with teammates and even horse playing with teammates during idle practice time.

Playful communication was a key source of participants' displays of relatedness with their team and coach in the practice environment as noted by the researcher. Three participants (Dominique, Ethel, Pearl) frequently told jokes with their teammates and communicated in a playful manner to establish a relationship. Joking and laughing during practice time was observed as a major part of how participants communicated with teammates and coach.

Participant Perception of Competence

The purpose of this third section is to describe perceived feelings of capability and confidence of six pre-adolescent participants in a youth basketball sports program environment. This section is presented in three segments; (1) feelings towards what they have learned about themselves from playing basketball, (2) how their team and coach helped their confidence in basketball, and (3) how other sources help their confidence in basketball. These segments represent themes that affected participant perceived competence in a youth basketball program.

Learned Through Participation

Throughout the six case studies, the participants used self-reflection to express what they learned about themselves from participating in basketball. From self-reflections of learning through participation, resulted in the emergences of four themes (see Table 5.7): (1) how participants felt basketball participation has taught them about *leadership*, (2) how participants felt basketball participation has taught them about *their self-esteem*, (3) how participants felt basketball participation has taught them about

teamwork, and (4) how participants felt basketball participation has taught them about their perseverance.

Table 5.7 Learned through Participation

Participant Name	Leadership	Self-Esteem	Teamwork	Perseverance
Dominique		x		
Rosa	x			x
Nicole		x		
Mary			x	
Ethel	x			
Pearl				x

Two participants (Dominique, Nicole) articulated that playing basketball helped them learn about their self-esteem. Participants used introspection to articulate what they have learned about their individual self through basketball participations. For example, Dominique stated, “I was super shy before I began playing basketball.” Likewise, Nicole stated, “I feel like basketball has made me talk more to the people. I didn’t like talking to people before, but on a team, you have to talk.”

One participant (Mary) learned that playing basketball has made her better at teamwork. “I have learned how to be a good teammate”. She explained further, “I know how to work with others and feel like a team.”

Two participants (Rosa, Ethel) have learned leadership through basketball sport participation. For example, Ethel stated, “Basketball has made me more helpful. Coach says we should be leaders on and off the court. So that’s what I learned.” Rosa also learned leadership skills while participating in basketball. Rosa elaborated, I started

playing basketball when I was 7 or 8, so I've learned a lot while playing basketball. I learned how to be a leader.”

One participant (Pearl) learned perseverance through participation in basketball. Pearl stated, “I've learned to keep trying. Like even if you lose. I've learned to just keep going.” Similarly, Rosa mentioned learning to be persistent while playing basketball. Rosa stated, “I learned to get better by doing the small things.”

Team and Coach Contributions to Confidence

Within the six case studies, the participants expressed how their team and coach contributed to their self-confidence within their basketball program environment. The perceived feelings about team and coach contribution to confidence, resulted in the emergence of two themes (see Table 5.8): (1) participants feel their team and coach enhanced their confidence in basketball by *believing in* them, (2) participants feel their team and coach enhanced their confidence in basketball by *providing support*.

Table 5.8 Team and Coach Contributions to Confidence

Participant Name	Belief	Support
Dominique	x	
Rosa	x	
Nicole		x
Mary		x
Ethel	x	
Pearl		x

Three participants (Dominique, Rosa, Ethel) expressed that their team and coach helped their confidence by believing in their ability. Dominique mentioned her coaches

encouraged the team to clap for one another and cheer for one another. She elaborated stating, “He (coach) says that’s important to winning, believing in each other. They make me feel like they believe in me.” Rosa echoed the same sentiments as Dominique, Rosa stated, “Even if I mess up, my coach and team tell me ways I can get better. So, I know they believe in me, that makes me confident.” Ethel articulated that her teammates and coach had high expectations for her during game situations. These expectations made her feel that her team and coach believe in her ability. Ethel stated, “My teammates make me feel like I’m the best shooter ever. “

Three participants (Nicole, Mary, Pearl) articulated that their team and coach helped their confidence in basketball by being supportive. For Nicole, who has only played basketball for one season, found that reassurance from her coach and teammates helped her confidence tremendously. Nicole stated, “She (coach) tells me the things I need to do to get better. She actually walks me through the steps of doing things.” Mary also felt supported by her teammates and coach with positive feedback. For example, Mary stated, “My team helps me out. They help me make good choices. My coach is the same way.” Pearl also talked about the reassurance she receives from her coach and team. She expressed that the team and coaches support heightened her confidence. For example, Pearl stated, “Even if I miss like ten times, my coach looks at me and says keep shooting. That pumps me up to do it.”

Other Contributions to Participant Confidence

Throughout the six case studies, the participants articulated other sources that contributed to their self-confidence within their basketball program environment. The

participants' feelings towards other sources of confidence, resulted in the emergence of two themes (see Table 5.9): (1) participants felt their *family* contributed to their self-confidence while participating in basketball, (2) participants felt the *recreation center staff* contributed to their self-confidence while participating in basketball.

Table 5.9 Outside Contributions to Confidence

Participant Name	Family	Recreation Staff
Dominique	x	
Rosa	x	
Nicole		x
Mary	x	
Ethel	x	
Pearl	x	

Five participants (Dominique, Rosa, Mary, Ethel, Pearl) expressed that their families were factors in helping their self-confidence in practice and basketball games. Their family being present at games or at practices seem to heighten participant confidence. For example, Dominique stated, "I like looking in the stands and seeing family cheering or even telling me things I should do." She continued discussing how her families present made her feel, stating "I don't want to let them down. So, it makes me try harder." Similarly, Pearl mentioned that the presence of her family served as a confidence booster. Pearl stated, "My mom stands on the sidelines sometimes and I can see her when I'm about to shoot. That helps me." Rosa also talked about how the presence of her father helps her confidence. For example, Rosa stated, "I hear him calling my name. I hear him telling me good job." Mary discussed her parent's dedication to her

at games, helps her feel more confident. She addressed her parent's dedication, by stating, "When my parents where my name on a shirt to the games, it makes me feel special. It makes me feel like they believe in me." Ethel expressed that her family helps her confidence because they invest in her skill development in basketball. Ethel elaborated, "My mom paid for me to attend basketball camp and at the camp we worked on things I'd never even worked on."

One participant (Nicole) articulated that the recreation center director has enhanced her confidence in basketball. Nicole expressed excitement in the facility supervisor helping her at practices. For example, Nicole stated, "I think it's pretty cool that he helps me." Nicole attends other programs at her recreation center, and she expressed that even in general programming the recreation center director shows interest in her basketball skill development. Nicole stated, "Sometimes even outside of practice he comes in the gym and helps me practice."

Observations of Competence

All of the participants displayed competence in their practice environments, the following is an assessment of the researchers' perspectives through observations. The researcher noted participants were able to verbalize their strengths and weaknesses during observations. Three participants (Dominique, Rosa, Pearl) were observed making boastful statements regarding their performance in practice. In their cases, they displayed competence through confidence in their skill abilities. Participants also acknowledged weakness in their skill set. Two participants (Pearl, Ethel), verbally recognized mistakes during performance of skills and talked with their coach or teammates on ways to limit

making errors. Acknowledgement of errors in performance demonstrates the participants' knowledge of the skills required for proper execution, therefore their competence in the sport.

One participant (Rosa) was observed talking to her coach during practice and asked to be challenged by the coach. Rosa, asked her coach to work on a passing drill that the team struggled with in the past. Two participants (Rosa, Nicole) were observed using idle time during practice, to work on basketball drills. Rosa worked on making left-handed layups while her teammates were getting water. Nicole worked on dribbling behind her back and asked a teammate to come dribble with her after working solo for two minutes. Working independently is an indication of participant desire for competence.

Discussion: Research Question 1

Sport Program Environment and SDT

The purpose of the first research question was to explore the impact of self-determination theory components on participant sport program environment. The participants autonomy, relatedness and competence, were examined in a youth basketball practice environment. The cross-case analysis of these three components generated the following summarization relative to research question 1: (a) participant's perceived autonomy was tied to program/practice structure (b) participants perceived relatedness was elevated with verbal praise and feelings of belonging and (c) participants perceived competence was fostered by having team and coach support.

Sports Program Environment and Autonomy

The participant's perception of autonomy was tied to the practice structure created and implemented by the coach. In this instance the coaches' control over practice structure can impede or promote freedom of choice. To gain the most from the practice experience, it is important that participants perceive that they have options and choices in the sport program environment. These options and choices encourage the participant to explore and progress in their own personal sport development experience (Rossman & Schlatter, 2000). Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber (1991) suggest autonomy experienced in this way, produces the means for an optimal, authentic experience to occur. Wherein, participants are given the opportunity to act independently, add input and experience freedom within the practice environment. For example, four participants (Rosa, Mary, Ethel, Pearl) acknowledged the coach provided opportunities for autonomy by asking participants for practice schedule input and practice activity demonstration. Rosa expressed her coach gave her freedom to decide things in practice. Pearl discussed her opportunities of autonomy in practice, made her feel like she was trusted by her coach. Acknowledgments such as these, demonstrate participants felt empowered by the flexibility in practice structure created by the coach.

In contrast, by providing too much structure within a sport program environment, it would leave the participant few or no choices. Having a lack of opportunities to choose, inhibits the participants' freedom to act independently and autonomously. Relatedly, this may destroy the very experience the coach is trying to empower (Busser, 1993). For example, two participants (Dominique, Nicole) expressed feeling limited autonomy due

to the coaches practice structure. Both girls highlighted autonomy within the practice environment centered on their coaches' respective schedule. When discussing her opportunities for decision making and choice in practice, Nicole stated, "I just listen to coach." Similarly, Dominique articulated, participants were given opportunities to make choice if the coach allowed changes in his schedule. In these two cases, participants were able to acknowledge and recognize limitations to their freedom of choice and decision making in their practice environment due to the imposed practice structure created by their coach.

Ultimately, when participants spoke of their autonomous experience, the practice structure was the main indicator of perceived autonomy. Participants were able to articulate their opportunities of autonomy and were expressive of how the practice structure implemented by the coach, may have affected that autonomy. Therefore, the coach's implementation methods during practice, influenced the participant's perception of autonomy in their basketball program environment.

Sports Program Environment and Relatedness

The participants' perceived relatedness was elevated with verbal praise and feelings of belonging. When coaches and teammates attempted to develop a supportive relationship with the participant, displaying connectedness through carefully considered criticism and praise, the basic needs of the participants were seemingly met and it aided in an affective experience. For example, three participants (Rosa, Nicole, Ethel) expressed that verbal praise from either coach or teammates, enhance their connection to their teams. For a first-time basketball player like Nicole, the verbal praise she received

from her teammates aided in her comfortability in the basketball practice environment. Ntoumanis (2001) suggests that individuals need to feel they have enough social support from others in their environment if they are to experience relatedness. Verbal praise acted as positive reinforcer for participants and aided in their perception of relating to the team and belonging to the team.

The relatedness component of self-determination theory implies that social-contextual factors influence a participant's motivation towards a particular activity (Perlman and Goc Karp, 2010). Wherein, the motivation to play or participate is affected by a participant's comfortability or connection to their physical and social setting. For example, three participants (Dominique, Mary, Pearl) expressed their sense of belonging to the team and viewed their teammates as friends/family. Dominique, described her fun practice environment as a reason for feeling so connected to her teammates. She discussed laughing and joking with teammates, and creating friendships through their interactions at practice. When described in this manner, the practice environment had a level of comfort to it, which signifies the participants' connection to her coach and teammates.

Therefore, the social setting created by coaches and teammates is important to the motivational climate of the practice environment. Participant's acknowledgement of feeling like they belong and have a role on the team, because of verbal praise and positive feedback elevates feelings of relatedness. Therefore, participant's feelings of connection to teammates and coach engender a positive practice environment and the establishment of friendships in basketball practice.

Sports Program Environment and Competence

The participant's perceived competence was fostered by having team and coach support. The socioenvironment serves an important role in nurturing the perceived competence of youth sport participants (Horn & Lox, 1993). Within these individual cases, the feedback the participants received from coaches and teammates aided in participants perceived competence. Participants notated verbal praise and reassurance as ways they felt supported by teammates and coach and it helped their confidence. For example, three participants (Dominique, Rosa, Ethel) confidence in their practice environment was tied to their coach and teammates believing in their ability to perform certain task or demonstrate particular basketball abilities. Rosa acknowledged that even when she made mistakes, her teammates giving constructive criticism helped her believe she was capable of performing well. She would use her teammate's criticisms and reassurance as motivation to continue trying and do better at a task or skill.

Therefore, the feedback or support received in the sports program environment becomes critical in the dissection of perceived competence. When dissected, a major segment of perceived competence, is tied to participant motivation to participate in sport (Smoll & Smith, 1996). Thus youth are unlikely to participate if they feel incompetent. Girls, in particular, are more likely to participate if they feel competent to do so (Duda, 1995). Which is why the support given by the coaches and teammates was so important to participants feeling confident and motivated to participate in practice and games.

For example, Pearl expressed she felt motivated by her coach to keep shooting even when she had missed shots in the past. Pearl described her coach telling her to keep

shooting after her misses and how the simple phrase, “keep shooting” ignites a desire in her to continue shooting. Understanding the connection between confidence and motivation is important when considering participants perceived competence in their practice environment. Ultimately, participants felt competent in their practice environment because the environment aided in their confidence and their motivation to learn or get better was high. Hence, participant’s perceived competence was tied to the support they received and the manner in which coaches and teammates generated feedback.

Overall, the six pre-adolescent girl participants’ perception of autonomy, relatedness and competence in their youth sport program environment was positive. The participants’ perception of limitation to autonomy in their practice environment varied depending on practice structure. Nonetheless, each participant was observed having autonomous experience in practice and each participant was able to account opportunities of choice. In addition, participants feelings of relatedness and connection to the team, derived from positive reinforcement which fostered feelings of belonging. Observations of relatedness, further depicted caring practice environments where participants were supported by coaches and teammates through verbal praise, playful interactions and associative rhetoric. Furthermore, participants’ perceived competence was nurtured by their team reassurance in their abilities. Participants were able to verbally acknowledge strengths and weaknesses. In several occasions, participants were observed working individually away from their team to master particular skills, drills or basketball movements. In all cases, the practice environments encouraged self-determination.

Discussion: Research Question 2

SDT and Participation

The purpose of the second research question was to examine the influence of self-determination theory components had on participant continued participation in sports.

The cross-case analysis revealed two common thoughts with regards to research question 2: (a) all of the pre-adolescent girl participants were self-determined in their sport program environment and (b) all of the pre-adolescent girl participants will continue participating in youth basketball.

SDT and Sports Program Environment

The six pre-adolescent girl participants articulated self-determination in their sports program environment. Participants expressed a sense of autonomy, describing practice environment in a non-controlling way. Participants acknowledged that the coach used the sport program environment to provide some form of choice and coaches were active in recognizing participants' feelings. Standage & Ryan (2012) recognized that coaches having approaches, as the ones described by case study participants, is the most effective method to promote autonomy. Participants having practice environments that are not rigid or uniformed, aids to the ability to make choices. When participants felt the coach provided opportunities to make choices, the participants felt engaged in the practice environment. When participants are more engaged in practice, they are more likely to buy-in to the teams' goals and objectives. Therefore, when participants have opportunities for autonomy, it fosters a connection to the team. This connection is important to establishing a sense of belonging.

Consequently, participants expressed a connection to their team and coaches; this sense of belonging signifies relatedness within the sport program environment. Deci & Ryan (1985) challenged coaches to create environments where coaches displayed authentic interest and interacted with participants in a caring manner. Participants disclosed comfort in their practice environment with teammates and coaches, this comfort echoes the creation of connections while practicing.

Participants acknowledged a perception of competency within the sports program environment. Participants were able to articulate feeling equally challenged and engaged at practice. Standage & Vallerand (2008) suggests that a collaborative effort must occur for sport participants to achieve competency in the sports program environment. This collaboration is one between the coach and the participant, and requires positive feedback and attainable goals. Cross case analysis of participant's competence signified the benefits of positive feedback and being challenged.

SDT and Continued Participation

The six pre-adolescent girl participants all articulated a desire to continue participation in basketball. Continued participation was fostered by participant's fulfillment of the three basic needs within self-determination theory. For example, Pearl discussed being challenged in her sport program environment as one of the reasons she would like to continue playing. Pearl stated, "I want to keep playing with boys, cause when I play with girls in school or like in college, I'll be the best. Playing here has challenged me and it prepares me. So, I want to keep playing here." This statement is a clear indication of Pearl's desire for competency.

Three participants (Ethel, Mary, Nicole), acknowledged a connection to the recreation center or staff as source of continued participation. Ethel stated, “Feels like I’ve been playing forever. I want to be like my coach one day and coach here at Simmons.” Just as Ethel expressed a connection to the center, Mary too acknowledged her continued participation was tied to an established relationship with the sports program facility. Mary stated, “I want to continue to play at Cole, because my brothers played here and I want to play here like them until I get older.” Similarly, Nicole expressed her desire to continue playing at Cole and wanting to keep the same coach. Nicole stated, “I want to keep playing here and hopefully keep the same coach.” The components of self-determination have a clear relationship to participant’s motivation to continue participating in basketball.

Two participants (Dominique, Rosa) articulated a desire to continue playing basketball at their local schools. Dominique and Rosa will both be in middle school and felt their preparation at the recreation center has equipped them to play basketball at their local schools the next basketball season. Rosa stated, “I was kind of nervous to play basketball at my school this season but playing here at Harris one more year has helped me ss that I am ready to play school ball.” Their desire to continue playing basketball at their school, and acknowledgement of the recreation center role in their development, signifies their self-determination.

Therefore, the autonomy, relatedness, and competence experienced in the community recreation center was important to the participants desire to continue playing basketball. The opportunities of choice participants made in their practice environment

was a source of empowerment. The connections and bonds participants made with their coaches and teammates, created familial relationships and friendships. Participants' articulation and demonstration of their abilities and knowledge of basketball, strengthen their competence and capability in the sport. Thus, the practice environment was significant in each participant's motivation and desire to continue participation in youth basketball.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Work on self-determination in sports participation navigates social factors, psychological mediators and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1999; Vallerand & Losier, 1999). Previous research on sports participation and self-determination has focused on adolescent participants within school and organized settings. The current research aimed to explore the motivational climate of community recreation centers in the participation of pre-adolescent girls in youth sports with the use of self-determination theory. Although this qualitative multi-case study focused on practice environments within three public recreation centers, the following implications are possible within other youth development organizations, specifically private and non-profit youth sports programs.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the implications for youth sport program implementers. The second section focuses on methodological implications. The third section includes an explanation of the research's conclusion and the researcher's recommendations for future research.

Implications for Youth Sport Program Implementers

The intent of this study was to explore the impact the motivational climate of a youth sports environment has on the continued participation of pre-adolescent girls in youth sports with the use of self-determination theory. Comprehending motivational

climates, is critical to understanding how others influence others experiences and behaviors in sports program environments (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Self-determination theory is key to exploring motivational process in sport program environments (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007).

The six participants in this study were of variant ages and skill levels, however, all of them articulated connections and a sense of comfort within their sports program environment. A key factor within the six participants perceptions of the motivational climate, rested in the practice environment created by the coach and team. Group dynamics established within the practice environment directly impacted participants ability to feel self-determined. Among the three self-determination theory components, autonomy was the component most fostered by the coach. The pre-adolescent girl participants acknowledged that their coaches practice structure played a major role in their feelings of autonomy.

When the practice environment created by the coach supported choices, and facilitated participant input, the participant was able to articulate a high sense of autonomy. Two participants out of six, articulation of autonomy was staggered due to the coach's control of the practice environment. Participants with staggered autonomy described "doing what the coach ask" as their lens of autonomy in their practice environment. It is important that coach's and recreation center implementers create environments that minimize the need for participants to perform and act in a prescribed manner, in order to create autonomy-supportive environments (Beauchamp & Eys, 2007).

It is also important to consider the interplay of gender within the sports program environment when understanding the perception of autonomy or freedom of choice. Sport hegemonic gender norms stifle the power or control of girl athletes. In this case, limited autonomy exposes a historical approach to maintaining power relations in sport (Messner, 2002). These power relations are amplified by girls and women in sport being portrayed as vulnerable and submissive (Krane, 2001). Limiting autonomy in girl's youth sports practice environments therefore does just that, continue an age-old narrative of gender and social roles. Creating a practice or program environment that promotes independence in sport choice, sport activity and cultivates the participant learning experiences aids continued participation.

In addition, the six pre-adolescent girl participants' relatedness within the sports program environment aligned with their connection to their team/peers. Teammates influenced participants' sense of self-worth, and feelings of acceptance/belongingness to the team. The development of relational bonds promotes motivation and caters to the social need for interpersonal value (Ntoumanis et al, 2007). Participants noted connection to their teammates transcended beyond just co-players and established familial and friendship bonds. These bonds provided participants with comfort in the practice setting.

The climate created by the team undermined internal team competition and conflict, which facilitated a strong sense of connection. The absence of internal team competition further promoted participant sense of self-determination and enjoyment. Particularly when considering girls socialization in traditionally male centered sports, it is important to consider the role competition plays in minimizing feelings of enjoyment

(Armstrong, 1991). Jones (2009) characterizes enjoyment as a central point of motivation.

Feelings of self-worth and enjoyment were highlighted by participants due to their comfortability with teammates, coaches and in their practice environment. Green (2010) notes in most instances, relationships with teammates become more significant for youth in sport than those relationships with adults. These relationships develop participant self-concept and confidence, all six-pre adolescent girls acknowledged how positive social relations with their team aided in overall connection to their team and perceived competence of the sport.

Furthermore, competence in the sports program environment has been argued as an important predictor of sport participation and continuation (Biddle, 2006). The six pre-adolescent girl participants explained their perceptions of competence, by identifying what they can do relative to basketball skill and knowledge. One participant, described herself as a novice, yet was able to express strengths and failures she experienced in her sports program environment. Her ability to express her abilities in basketball, coupled with a desire to get better at the sport, promotes competency and motivation.

Coincidentally, program implementers should place emphasis on youth skill development in sport, to increase competency. Learning fundamental motor skills is importance in two ways; it strengthens competency and also promotes autonomy in youth sports participants (Smith & Smoll, 1996). Participants are able to control the movements they are able to learn which nurtures their skill knowledge and abilities. This is especially important for girls who are on the onset of adolescence. Sport program

environments should reinforce girl's strengths by challenging them as they age and avoid limiting abilities due to gender stereotypes.

Furthermore, youth learn through experiences and competence grows with experiences, providing young girls with opportunities to have sport choice experiences, where socialization is positive and provides enjoyment will strength their overall motivation to participate. When implementers create sport environments for girls that promote independence and freedom, urges positive socialization and fosters skill development, girls' motivation to participate in sport continues. Motivation to continue participation in youth sports is subsequently influenced by the social and situational cues that exist within the sports program environment.

Lastly, program implementers must strive to be change agents. Fox (2000) urges recreation practitioners must recognize and address leisure practices that marginalize and exclude groups within the community. The participants acknowledged minimal sport options as a deterrent from sport participation. Two participants, highlighted a desire to participate in sports not currently offered by their recreation facility. Access is an important determinant of sport participation. Therefore, program implementers should be bold in their consideration of how to catch and maintain the interest of girls in sports. This includes, creating girl centered programs (Cooky, 2006) or being cognizant of the patriarchal practices that limit only offering masculine driven sports in recreation facilities (Fox, 2000) .

Programmers should thoughtfully consider the sport programs that are offered within a community recreation agency and how those programs encourage or discourage

participation based on gender. Recreation implementers have an obligation to consciously avoid reinforcing and promoting dominant structures that are embedded in operation practices.

Implications for Methodology

Three methodological implications regarding the present investigation deserves attention. The first implication for methodology refers to participants' age and interview responses. The participants ages used within the study (9-11) were designed to include participants before the onset of adolescence. However, participants at this age required a lot of probing to answer semi-structured interview questions. Although, all of the participants understood the questions, it seems possible that participants could not fully articulated their feelings towards the interview questions. Therefore, it is important for the interviewer to give prompts and restate the interviewees' responses for clarity. A second interview may be necessary with participants this age, to ensure their feelings and perceptions are fully captured.

The second methodology implication is related to number of community recreation center selected for the study. The pre-adolescent girls selected attended three community recreation centers, it would have been beneficial to increase the number of community recreation centers profiled, in order to increase the number of participants available for selection. It is however important to note, not all of the community recreation centers in the researched area had pre-adolescent girl participants in the (9-11) age range. Yet, increasing the number of community recreation centers profiled could subsequently increase the likelihood of increasing amount of participants.

The final methodology implication involves the need for additional interviews with coaches within the sports program environment. Although, the participants were able to provide important information relative to their perception of autonomy, relatedness and competency in their sports program environment, the coach had a significant influence on participants' perceptions. Therefore, I believe having information from the coach would only enhance the description of the sports program environment and self-determination components.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Based on this study's findings in terms of the six participants, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Overall, it was found that the pre-adolescent girls experienced autonomy, relatedness and competence in their sports practice environment at a local community recreation center.
2. Coaches had a direct influence on the autonomy within the sports practice environment experienced by the pre-adolescent girl participants. When coaches practice schedule and structure was rigid and uniformed, it lessened the perception of autonomy. When coaches minimized control over the practice schedule, and gave participants choices, participants' perception of autonomy intensified.
3. Participants' connection within the sports practice environment was linked to receiving praise and positive feedback from teammates and coach. Participants

acknowledged that physical displays of praise, high-fives, and handshakes reinforced their sense of belonging to the team.

4. Most of the participants felt competent in their skill level in youth basketball. Participants acknowledged feeling challenged by teammates and coach to perform skills. The challenges that participants experienced in their practice environment, aided in their perception of competency. Participants viewed criticism from coaches and teammates as helpful and a way to strengthen the team and increase individual competencies.
5. All participants acknowledged they would like to continue playing youth basketball after this current season at their local community recreation center.
6. Most of the participants considered their family and local recreation staff as a source of encouragement to continue participating in youth basketball, either at a local community recreation center or at their local school.
7. Some of the participants acknowledged having a desire to play other sports besides youth basketball. Participants posed questions about how to sign up for other sports at their community recreation center. Many of the participants felt limited in the sports that are offered at their community recreation center.
8. The sports practice environment at each local community recreation center, provided participants with a setting to experience self-determination and nurtured motivation to continue participating in youth sports.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following ideas are presented for consideration in future investigations. The researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. A study that includes coaches' perception of self-determination in the sports program environment within community recreation center. This will allow the researcher to see if participants and coaches had similar perceptions of the practice environment, to reinforce validity.
2. An expanded study to include all pre-adolescent girl participants that are participants in the community recreation center youth basketball programs. This would give the researcher a bigger sample size to aid in overall perceptions of self-determination.
3. Conduct a study that would look at sports program environment, using SDT perceptions in pre-adolescent girls that dropped-out (had a gap in participation) in community recreation center youth basketball. This would give the researcher a different point of view in regards to retention.
4. A follow-up study with the pre-adolescent girls in this study, to investigate their continued participation in sports beyond adolescence.
5. Conduct a study that includes parental perceptions of the community recreation center sport practice environment use of SDT. This would consider the parental impact on participants' perceptions and continued participation in youth sports.

REFERENCES

- Acland, C. R. (1995). *Youth, murder, spectacle: The cultural politics of "youth in crisis."* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Addams, J. (1972). Recreation as a public function in urban communities. *American Journal of Sociology*, 17 (5), 615-619.
- Ajzen, I., & Driver, B. (1992). Planned behavior and leisure choice. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 24, 207–224
- Allison, M. (1991). Role conflict and the female athlete: Preoccupations with little grounding. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 3(1), 49-60.
- Armstrong, N. (1991). Children's physical activity patterns: The implications for physical education", in N. Armstrong and A. Sparkes (Eds) *Issue in Physical Education* (pp. 9-10). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Bandura, A. (1986). Fearful expectations and avoidant actions as coefficients of perceived self-efficacy. *American Psychologist*, 41(12), 1389-1391.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.
- Baumeister, R., & Leary, M. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-497.

- Beal, D., Cohen, R., Burke, M., & McLendon, C. (2003). Cohesion and performance in groups: A meta-analytic clarification of construct relations. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(6), 989-1004.
- Beauchamp, M.R. and Eys, M.A. (Eds.), *Group dynamics advances in sport and exercise psychology: Contemporary themes* (pp. 179–199). New York: Routledge.
- Biddle, S. (2006). Researching the psycho-social outcomes of youth sport. Paper presented at *Researching Youth Sport: Diverse Perspectives*. Institute of Youth Sport/Institute of Sport Policy Conference, Loughborough University, 20 September, 2006.
- Boixados, M., Cruz, J., Torregrosa, M., & Valiente, L. (2004). Relationships among motivational climate, satisfaction, perceived ability, and fair play attitudes in young soccer players. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 16*(4), 301-317.
- Boy Scouts of America National Council (2017). *Boy Scouts of America National Council*. Retrieved September 25, 2017, from <http://www.scouting.org>.
- Brace, C. L. (1852). Youthful depravity-Home influences. *Common School Journal, 3*, 12.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Buckworth, J., & Dishman, R. (2002). *Exercise psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Bunker, L. (1988, June). Life-long benefits of youth sport participation for girls and women. In *Sport Psychology Conference, University of Virginia, Charlottesville*.

- Busser, J. A. (1993). Leisure programming: The state of the art (Introduction). *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 64 (8), 25, 33.
- Butcher, J., Lindner, K. J., & Johns, D. P. (2002). Withdrawal from Competitive Youth Sport: A Retrospective Ten-year Study. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 25(2), 145-163.
- Camp Fire USA. (2017). *All about us: History*. Retrieved October 8, 2017, http://campfire.org/all_about_us/history.asp
- Calvo, T., Cervello, E. Jimenez, D.I., & Murcia, J.A., (2010). Using Self Determination Theory to Explain Sport Persistence and Dropout in Adolescent Athletes. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 13(2), 677-684.
- Carron, A. V., Widmeyer, W. N., & Brawley, L. R. (1985). The development of an instrument to assess cohesion in sport teams: The Group Environment Questionnaire. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 7(3), 244-266
- Chirkov, V., Kim, Y., Ryan, R. M., & Kaplan, U. (2003). Differentiating autonomy from individualism and independence: A self-determination theory perspective on internalization of cultural orientations and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(1), 97-110.
- Cooky, Cheryl. 2006. "Getting Girls in the Game: A Qualitative Analysis of Girls' Sport Programs." *Dissertations Abstracts International* 61:10A.
- Cooky, C. (2009). "Girls Just Aren't Interested": The Social Construction of Interest in Girls' Sport. *Sociological Perspectives*, 52(2), 259-283.

- Cote, J., Baker, J., & Abernethy, B. (2003). From play to practice: A developmental framework for the acquisition of expertise in team sport. In J. Starkes, & K. A. Ericsson (Eds.), *Recent advances in research on sport expertise* (pp. 89–114). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Kleiber, D. A. (1991). Leisure and self-actualization. In B. L., Driver, P. J. Brown, & G. L. Peterson, (Eds.), *Benefits of leisure* (pp. 91–102). State College, PA: Venture.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Cumming, S. P., Smoll, F. L., Smith, R., & Grossbard, J. R. (2007). Is Winning Everything? The Relative Contributions of Motivational Climate and Won-Lost Percentage in Youth Sport. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 19(3), 322-336.
- Danish, S., Petitpas, A.J., & Hale, B. D. (1993). Life development intervention for athletes: Life skills through sports. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 21, 352-385.
- DeCharms, R. (1968). *Personal causation: The internal affective determinants of behavior*. New York: Academic Press.
- Deci, E. L. (1975). *Intrinsic motivation*. New York, NY: Plenum.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R.M. (1999). The ‘what’ and ‘why’ of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227-268.

- Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.
- Delgado, M. (2002). *New frontiers for youth development in the twenty-first century: Revitalizing & broadening youth development*. New York: Columbia University Press. (2002).
- Dishman, R., Sallis, J., & Orenstein, D. (1985). The determinants of physical activity and exercise. *Public Health Reports (1974-), 100(2)*, 158-171.
- Duda, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Motivation in Sport Settings: A goal perspective approach* (Vol. xii). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Duncan, T., Duncan, S., & McAuley, E. (1993). The role of domain and gender-specific provisions of social relations in adherence to a prescribed exercise regimen. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 15(2), 220.
- Eccles, J. & Gootman, J. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. National Research Council Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Ennis, C. 1999. "Creating a Culturally Relevant Curriculum for Disengaged Girls." *Sport, Education and Society* 4 (1): 21–49.
- Epstein, L. (1998). Integrating theoretical approaches to promote physical activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 15(4), 257-265.
- Fiona Mitchell, Shirley Gray & Jo Inchley (2015) 'This choice thing really works ...' Changes in experiences and engagement of adolescent girls in physical education

classes, during a school-based physical activity programme, *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 20:6, 593-611.

Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/knowledge: selected interviews & other writings 1972–1977*, New York, NY: Pantheon

Fox, K.M. (2000). Echoes of Leisure: Questions, Challenges and Potentials. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32, 32-36.

Fraser-Thomas, J., Cote, J. and Deakin J. (2008) Understanding dropout and prolonged engagement in adolescent competitive sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 9, 645-662.

Gagné, M., Ryan, R., & Bargmann, K. (2003). Autonomy support and need satisfaction in the motivation and well-being of gymnasts. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 15(4).

Gano-Overway, L. A., Guivernau, M. T., Magyar, M., Waldron, J. J., & Ewing, M. E. (2005). Achievement goal perspectives, perceptions of the motivational climate, and sportpersonship: Individual and team effects. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 6(2), 215-232.

García Calvo, T.; Leo, F. M.; Martín, E., & Sánchez Miguel, P. A. (2008). El compromiso deportivo y su relación con factores disposicionales y situacionales contextuales de la motivación. *Revista Internacional de Ciencias del Deporte*, 12(4), 45-58.

Giddens, Anthony. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Gill, D., & Williams, L. (2008). *Psychological Dynamics of Sport and Exercise*. (3rd ed). Chicago, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Girl Scouts of the USA. (2017). *Girl Scouts history*. Retrieved October 12, 2017, from <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-history.html>.
- Godbey, G., Mowen, A., & Ashburn, V. A. (2010). *The benefits of physical activity provided by park and recreation services: The scientific evidence*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.
- Green, K. (2011). *Key Themes in Youth Sport*. New York: Routledge.
- GSO P&R Department. (2019). *City of Greensboro Department Information*. Retrieved April 15, 2019, from <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/parks-recreation>.
- GSO P&R Youth Basketball. (2019). *Youth Basketball Program Design*. Retrieved April 16, 2019, from <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/parks-recreation/sports/youth-sports/basketball>.
- Hagger, M., & Chatzisarantis, N. (2007). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in exercise and sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hall, G. S. (1904). *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education*. (Second Volume). New York, NY: Appleton.
- Hargreaves, J. (1994). *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports*. London: Routledge.

- Harter, S. (1978). Pleasure derived from challenge and the effects of receiving grades on children's difficulty level choices. *Child Development*, 49(3), 788-799.
- Havighurst, R. (1952) *Developmental Tasks and Education*. New York, NY: Longmans, Green.
- Hellison, D. (1995). *Teaching Responsibility Through Physical Activity*. Chicago, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hellison, D. (2000). Physical Activity programs for underserved youth. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*.3 (3), 238-242.
- Hills, L. 2007. "Friendship, Physicality, and Physical Education: An Exploration of the Social and Embodied Dynamics of Girls' Physical Education Experiences." *Sport, Education and Society* 12 (3): 317–336.
- Horn, T. & Lox, C. (1993) The self-fulfilling prophecy theory: When coaches expectations become reality. In J.M. Williams (ed) *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (p. 68-81). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Iapply Greensboro. (2019). *Recreation Job Description*. Retrieved April 15, 2019, from <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/greensboronc/classspecs?keywords=recreation>.
- Jones, G. (2009). *Youth*. Cambridge: Policy Press.
- Krane, V. (2001). We can be athletic and feminine, but do we want to? Challenging hegemonic femininity in women's sport. *Quest*, 53, 115-133.
- Kett, J. F. (1977). *Rites of passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the present*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

- Kohl, H., & Hobbs, K. (1998). Development of physical activity behaviors among children and adolescents. *Pediatrics, 101*(3), 549-54.
- Kowal, J., & Fortier, M. (2000). Testing relationships from the hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation using flow as a motivational consequence. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 71*(2), 171-184.
- Lee, J. (1915). *Play and Playgrounds*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation Association.
- Lubans, D. R., Morgan, P. J., & McCormack, A. (2011). Adolescents and school sport: The relationship between beliefs, social support and physical self-perception. *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy, 16*(3), 237-250.
- Lubans, D. R., & Morgan, P. J. (2009). Social, psychological and behavioural correlates of pedometer step counts in a sample of Australian adolescents. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport, 12*(1), 141-147.
- Macleod, D. I. (1983). *Building character in the American boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and their forerunners, 1870-1920*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Malina, R., Bouchard, C., & Bar-Or, O. (2004). *Growth, Maturation, and Physical Activity*. Champagne, IL: Human Kinetics.
- McAuley, E., Courneya, K.S., Rudolph, D.L., & Lox, C.L. (1994). Enhancing exercise adherence in middle-aged males and females. *Preventive Medicine, 23*(4), 498-506.
- Merriam-Webster (2017). Retrieved on October 11, 2017 from, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

- Messner, M. (2002). *Taking the field: Women, men and sports*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mitchell, F., Gray, S., & Inchley, J. (2015). ‘This choice thing really works...’Changes in experiences and engagement of adolescent girls in physical education classes, during a school-based physical activity programme. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 20(6), 593-611.
- Nasaw, D. (1985). *Children of the city*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- National Assembly. (1994). *Building Resiliency: What Works! A Community Guide to Preventing Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse through Positive Youth Development*. Washington, DC: National Assembly.
- Nelson, M. (1991). *Are We Winning Yet? How Women are Changing Sports and Sports are Changing Women*. New York, NY: Random House.
- NFoSHSA, N. F. H. S. (2009). 09 High School Athletics Participation Survey. *Kansas City, Missouri: National Federation of State High School Associations*.
- Nilges, L. M. (1998). I thought only fairy tales had supernatural power: A radical feminist analysis of Title IX in physical education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 11,112-194.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: an alternative approach to education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ntoumanis, N. 2001. “A Self-Determination Approach to the Understanding of Motivation in Physical Education.” *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 71: 225–242.

- Ntoumanis, N., Vazou, S., & Duda, J. L. (2007). Peer-created motivational climate. In S. Jowett, & D. Lavallee (Eds.), *Social psychology in sport* (pp. 145-156). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Oreinstein, P. (1994). *School Girls: Young Women, Self Esteem and the Confidence Gap*. New York, NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing.
- Orlie, M.A. (1997). *Living Ethically Acting Politically*. London: Routledge Press.
- Papaioannou, A. G., Milosis, D., Kosmidou, E., & Tsigilis, N. (2007). Motivational Climate and Achievement Goals at the Situational Level of Generality. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 19(1), 38-66.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research & Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pelletier, L. G., Fortier, M. S., Vallerand, R. J., Tuson, K. M., Brière, N. M., & Blais, M. R. (1995). Toward a new measure of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation in sports: The sport motivation scale (SMS). *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 17, 35-53.
- Perlman, D., and G. Goc Karp. 2010. "A Self-Determined Perspective of the Sport Education Model." *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 15 (4): 401-418.
- Pipher, M. (1995). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Rosenthal, M. (1986). *The character factory: Baden-Powell and the origins of the boy scouts*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

- Rossmann, J. R., & Schlatter, B. E. (2000). *Recreation Programming: Designing Leisure Experiences* (Vol. 3rd ed). Champaign, Ill: Sagamore Publishing Inc.
- Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Sabo, Don, Kathleen E. Miller, Merrill J. Melnick, and Leslie Heywood. (2004). *Her Life Depends on It: Sport, Physical Activity and the Health and Well-Being of American Girls*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sport Foundation.
- Sabo, D., & Veliz, P. (2008). *Go Out and Play: Youth Sports in America*. Women's Sports Foundation.
- Sack, K. E. V. I. N. (2007). Schools found improving on nutrition and fitness. *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, accessed October, 27, 2007.
- Sage, G. H., (1998). *Power and Ideology in American Sport: A Critical Perspective*, 2nd edition. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- Sage, G., & Loudermilk, S. (1979). The female athlete and role conflict. *Research Quarterly*, 50(1), 88-96.
- Sallis, J., Haskell, W., Fortmann, S., Vranizan, K., Taylor, C., & Solomon, D., Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention, Health Research and Policy Building, Stanford, California 94305 USA. (2000). Predictors of adoption and maintenance of physical activity in a community sample. *Preventive Medicine*, 15(4), 331-341.
- Salter, D. (1996). *Crashing the Old Boys' Network: The Tragedies and Triumphs of Girls and Women in Sports*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Smoll, F., & Smith, R. (1996). *Children and youth in sport : A biopsychosocial perspective*. Madison: Brown & Benchmark.
- Smoll, F. L., Cumming, S. P., & Smith, R. E. (2011). Enhancing coach-parent relationships in youth sports: Increasing harmony and minimizing hassle. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 6(1), 13-26.
- Sprouse, J. K., & Klitzing, S. W. (2005, January). Youth at Risk: Recreation and Prevention. (M. Parr, Ed.) *Parks and Recreation* , 16-21.
- Standage, M., & Ryan, R.M. (2012). Self-determination theory and exercise motivation: Facilitating self-regulatory processes to support and maintain health and well-being. In G.C. Roberts & D.C. Treasure (Eds.), *Advances in motivation in sport and exercise* (3rd ed., pp. 233–270). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Standage, M., & Vallerand, R. J. (2008). Self-determined motivation in sport and exercise groups. In M. R. Beauchamp & M. A. Eys (Eds.), *Group dynamics advances in sport and exercise psychology: Contemporary themes* (pp. 179–199). New York: Routledge.
- Staurowsky, E. J., Miller, K. E., Shakib, S., De Souza, M. J., Ducher, G., Gentner, N., & Williams, N. I. (2009). Her Life Depends on It II: Sport, Physical Activity, and the Health and Well-Being of American Girls and Women. *Women's Sports Foundation*.
- Staurowsky, E. J., DeSousa, M. J., Miller, K. E., Sabo, D., Shakib, S., Theberge, N., Veliz, P., Weaver, A., & Williams, N. (2015). *Her Life Depends On It III: Sport,*

- Physical Activity, and the Health and Well-Being of American Girls and Women.*
East Meadow, NY: Women's Sports Foundation.
- Storm, H., & Jenkins, M. (2002). *Go Girl: Raising Healthy, Confident and Successful Girls through Sports.* Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.
- Svender, J., Larsson, H., & Redelius, K. (2012). Promoting girls' participation in sports: Discursive constructions of girls in a sports initiative. *Sport, Education and Society, 17*(4), 463-478.
- Ullrich-French, S. and Smith, A. (2009). Social and motivational predictors of continued youth sport participation. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 10*, 87-95.
- Vallerand, R.J. (1997). Toward a hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In M.P. Zanna Ed. *Advances in experimental social psychology, 29*, 271-360.
New York: Academic Press.
- Vallerand, R. J and Losier, G. F. (1999). An integrative analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in sport. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 11* 142-169.
- Vansteenkiste, M., Simons, J., Lens, W., Sheldon, K., & Deci, E. (2004). Motivating learning, performance, and persistence: The synergistic effects of intrinsic goal contents and autonomy-supportive contexts. (Author abstract). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*(2), 246.
- Vermont Systems (2018). Retrieved October 15, 2018, from
<https://www.vermontsystems.com/products/rectrac/>
- Weinberg, R. and Gould D. (2011) *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 5th*
Ed. Champagne, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1982). *Vulnerable, but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- White, R. W., (1959). Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. *Psychological Review*. 66, 297-333.
- Wiersma, W. & Jurs, S. (2009). *Research Method in Education*. London, England: Pearson Education.
- Witt, P., (2001). Re-examining the Role of Recreation and Parks in After-School Programs. *Parks and Recreation*, 20-28
- Witt, P., Caldwell, L. (2005). *Recreation and Youth Development*. State College, PA: Venture.
- Witt, P. A., & Caldwell, L. L. (2010). *The rationale for recreation services for youth: An evidenced based approach*. National Recreation and Park Association.
- Witt, P. A., & Crompton, J. L. (2002). *Best practices in youth development in public parks and recreation setting*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.
- Women's Sports Foundation. (2004). *Her Life Depends On It: Sports Physical Activity and the Health and Well Being of American Girls*.
www.womenssportsfoundation.org
- YMCA (2017). *A brief history of the YMCA movement*. Retrieved October 10, 2017, from <http://ymca.net/history>
- YWCA (2017). *YWCA history*. Retrieved October 10, 2017, from <http://www.ywca.org/site/c.cuIRJ7NTKrLaG/b.7515891/k.C524/History.htm>

Zimmerman, J., & Reavill, G. (1999). *How Sports Can Build Self Esteem and Save Girls Lives: Raising Our Athletic Daughters*. New York, NY: A Main Street Book.

APPENDIX A
UNCG IRB APPROVAL LETTER



OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.0253
Web site: www.uncg.edu/orc
Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #216

To: Willette Middleton
Kinesiology, Dept of
800 Greenhaven Drive Apt 1X Greensboro, NC 27406

From: UNCG IRB

Authorized signature on behalf of IRB

Approval Date: 1/24/2019

Expiration Date of Approval: 1/23/2020

RE: Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)

Submission Type: Initial

Expedited Category: 6.Voice/image research recordings,7.Surveys/interviews/focus groups

Study #: 19-0337

Study Title: Community recreation's role in pre-adolescent girls' participation and retention in youth sports.

This submission has been approved by the IRB for the period indicated. It has been determined that the risk involved in this research is no more than minimal.

Study Description:

The purpose of this research study is to examine the motivational climate of three community recreation centers in the participation of pre-adolescent girls in youth sports. Important issues influencing gender in sport once revolved around the distribution of athletic budgets, practice times, playing fields and media recognition. However, these debates are increasingly informed by broader considerations relating to health, psychological well-being, academic achievement and educational and career mobility (Sabo, Miller, Melnick, & Heywood, 2004). While data exist on female participation rates in sport, research concerns have turned to what catches and maintains girls' interest in sports and physical activity.

Study Regulatory and other findings:

- This research, which involves children, meets criteria at 45 CFR 46.404 (research involving no greater than minimal risk). Permission of one parent or guardian is sufficient.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. **Stamped consent forms must be used unless the IRB has given you approval to waive this requirement.** Please notify the ORI office immediately if you have an issue with the stamped consents forms.

Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/research_data/.

APPENDIX B
RECREATION CENTER SITE IRB APPROVAL



University of North Carolina – Greensboro
Institutional Review Board
Agency Permission Letter

Date: 1/19/19

University of North Carolina - Greensboro
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.0253

To the Institutional Review Board,

BRANDON FREE, Recreation Center Director, Lindley Recreation Center, is committed to understanding how motivational climate effects sport participation, and supports interviewing of youth basketball girl participants with each being observed at Lindley Recreation Center site. This letter is to provide permission for Willette Middleton to conduct these interviews, analyze the data, and present the findings in class as well as for a class project or thesis/dissertation. My staff and I are committed to working with the researcher to develop the appropriate instruments and approaches to data collection. I understand the project proposal will be reviewed and approved by UNCG Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Participants prior to data collection.

If you need further information in support of this project please contact me at 336-373-2930.

Sincerely yours,

Brandon Free
Recreation Center Director
Lindley Recreation Center
2907 Springwood Dr, Greensboro, NC 27403



University of North Carolina – Greensboro
Institutional Review Board
Agency Permission Letter

Date: 1/17/19

University of North Carolina - Greensboro
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.0253

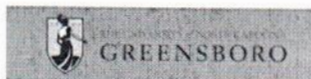
To the Institutional Review Board,

Gina Carmon, Recreation Center Director, Griffin Recreation Center, is committed to understanding how motivational climate effects sport participation, and supports interviewing of youth basketball girl participants with each being observed at Griffin Recreation Center site. This letter is to provide permission for Willette Middleton to conduct these interviews, analyze the data, and present the findings in class as well as for a class project or thesis/dissertation. My staff and I are committed to working with the researcher to develop the appropriate instruments and approaches to data collection. I understand the project proposal will be reviewed and approved by UNCG Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Participants prior to data collection.

If you need further information in support of this project please contact me at 336-373-2928.

Sincerely yours,

Gina Carmon
Recreation Center Director
Griffin Recreation Center
5301 Hilltop Rd, Jamestown, NC 27282



University of North Carolina – Greensboro
Institutional Review Board
Agency Permission Letter

Date: 1/17/19

University of North Carolina - Greensboro
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.0253

To the Institutional Review Board,

Shatrina Smalls, Recreation Center Director, Peeler Recreation Center, is committed to understanding how motivational climate effects sport participation, and supports interviewing of youth basketball girl participants with each being observed at Peeler Recreation Center site. This letter is to provide permission for Willette Middleton to conduct these interviews, analyze the data, and present the findings in class as well as for a class project or thesis/dissertation. My staff and I are committed to working with the researcher to develop the appropriate instruments and approaches to data collection. I understand the project proposal will be reviewed and approved by UNCG Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Participants prior to data collection.

If you need further information in support of this project please contact me at 336-373-5877.

Sincerely yours,

Shatrina Smalls

Recreation Center Director
Peeler Recreation Center

1300 Sykes Ave, Greensboro, NC 27405

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT RECRUITING SCRIPT

Hi my name is Willette Middleton, I am a graduate student at UNCG within the Kinesiology department, and I am also a recreation center supervisor with the parks and recreation department. I am conducting research about why girls lose the desire to participate in sport and what recreation professionals can do to encourage more female participants. I am inviting your child to participate because you/ your child has played youth basketball for at least two years and is ages 9-11.

Participation in this research includes being observed during practice time for a total of three practice sessions, which will take approximately 6 hours. If you/your child agree to participate, there will also be a follow-up interview about your view on motivational climate in youth sports, which will take approximately one hour and thirty minutes. If you/your child participate in both the observation and the interview, your total time commitment will be between 7.5-8 hours.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in the research, I can be reached at 336-317-0449 or wtmiddle@uncg.edu.

APPENDIX D

PARENT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FOR A MINOR TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: Community recreation's role in pre-adolescent girls' participation and retention in youth sports.

Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor: Willette T. Middleton & Dr. Tom Martinek

Participant's Name: _____

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

Your child is being asked to take part in a research study. Your child's participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose for your child not to join, or you may withdraw your consent for him/her to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to your child for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose for your child not to be in the study or you choose for your child to leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship or your child's relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about your child being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?

My research project is geared toward helping keep girls engaged in youth sports. During the onset of adolescence, research has suggested that girls tend to drop out of sports. I am interested in what recreation professionals can do to help create environments that promote positive motivational climates to help keep girls involved in sport.

Why are you asking my child?

I have selected your child because your child is a female participant that has played sports for a minimal of two years and is within the 9-11 age range.

What will you ask my child to do if I agree to let him or her be in the study?

The youth participants involved in this research will be observed during youth basketball practice time for three practice days. The youth participants involved in this research will be interviewed, using a set of pre-designed questions relative to participation in youth sports. The interview process would take about an hour and half. The total time for your child's involvement should total 8 hours (observation and interview time).

Is there any audio/video recording of my child?

There will be audio recording of your child during the interview process. This audio recording will be used to transcribe your child's responses to the pre-designed interview questions. The audio recordings will not be shared with anyone else and will be used for research purposes only. However, because your child's voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, confidentiality for things said on the tape cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described below.

What are the dangers to my child?

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. The risk associated with this research study is limited to actual participation in youth basketball and have no direct association with the research project.

If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Willette Middleton at (336) 317-0449 or email me at wtmiddle@uncg.edu, you may also contact Dr. Tom Martinek at (336) 334-3034 or email him at tjmartin@uncg.edu.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of my child taking part in this research?

A potential benefit to your child's participation in this research study, is a desire to continue sport participation throughout a lifespan. Research suggest sport participation is linked to developing leadership skills, social support and academic success. Therefore, there are several potential benefits associated with participation with this study.

Are there any benefits to *my child* as a result of participation in this research study?

There are no known benefits associated with participation in this research study.

Will my child get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything for my kid to be in this study?

There are no costs to you or payments to you or your child as a result of participation in this study.

How will my child's information be kept confidential?

All participation information will be kept using pseudonyms to not directly associate with the participants given name. Transcribed information will also be kept in a locked filing cabinet in an office where only the PI (Willette Middleton) will have direct access. Electronic data, such as voice recording will be kept on a voice recorder, the voice recorder will be stored in a locked filing cabinet as well, with access only available to the PI (Willette Middleton). All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

What if my child wants to leave the study or I want him/her to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to allow your child to participate or to withdraw him or her at any time, without penalty. If your child does withdraw, it will not affect you or your child in any way. If you or your child chooses to withdraw, you may request that any data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. The investigators also have the right to stop your child's participation at any time. This could be because your child has had an unexpected reaction, has failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness allow your child to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing this consent form, you are agreeing that you have read it or it has been read to you, you fully understand the contents of this document and consent to your child taking part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are the legal parent or guardian of the child who wishes to participate in this study described to you by Willette T. Middleton.

Participant's Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature

Date: _____

APPENDIX E
YOUTH ASSENT FORM

Study Title: Community recreation’s role in pre-adolescent girls’ participation and retention in youth sports.

My name is Willette Middleton.

What is this about?

I would like to talk to you about why you participate in youth basketball. I want to learn about keeping girls involved in sports.

Did my parents say it was ok?

Your parent(s) said it was ok for you to be in this study and have signed a form like this one.

Why me?

We would like you to take part because you have been playing basketball for over two years and you are between the ages of 9-11.

What if I want to stop?

You do not have to say “yes”, if you do not want to take part. We will not punish you if you say “no”. Even if you say “yes” now and change your mind after you start doing this study, you can stop and no one will be mad at you.

What will I have to do?

You will need to be present during youth basketball practice time and be asked a couple of questions about playing sports and being at the recreation center.

Will anything bad happen to me?

There are no risk for participating in my research study.

Will anything good happen to me?

Hopefully after you participant in my research study, you learn why you truly like playing sports.

Do I get anything for being in this study?

No, you will not be given anything for participating in my research study.

What if I have questions?

You are free to ask questions at any time.

If you understand this study and want to be in it, please write your name below.

Signature of child

Date

APPENDIX F
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Autonomy

- Participant made choices during basketball practice.

Types of choices:

- Coach allows players to make choices.

Type of choices:

- Other: _____

Relatedness

- Participant appeared comfortable with team.

Examples: _____

- Participant socialized with peers.

Examples: _____

- Participant interacted with coach.

Examples: _____

- Participant helped (or was helped by) teammate with activity.

Examples: _____

Competence

- Participant articulated/demonstrated her strengths.
- Participant articulated/acknowledged her weaknesses.
- Participant set goals for practice or practice activity.
- Participant demonstrated knowledge of a basketball activity.

Motivation

- Participant articulated a desire to play basketball.

Examples: _____

- Participant followed instructions that required facing challenges.
- Participant continued practicing beyond structured time.

Observation Notes:

APPENDIX G

YOUTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviews will begin with demographic descriptive questions:

1. How old are you?
2. How long have you been playing basketball?
3. What is the name of the center where you play basketball and how long have you been participating at the center?

Autonomy:

1. What kind of sports do you participate in at the community recreation center?
Why have you selected these sports to participate in?
2. Are there any sports or activities you would like to participate in that you do not participate in at the community recreation center? If so, what would they be?
3. Why have you chosen to play basketball?
4. In what ways do you have the opportunity to choose different types of activities during your practices? How do these opportunities make you feel?
5. In what ways does your coach allow you to make decisions during practice or games? What kind of decisions does he allow you to make?

Relatedness:

1. Describe your relationship with the people on your team (teammates). How does everyone get along?

2. Do you feel connected to your basketball team? What makes you feel connected (or why don't you feel connected) to your team?
3. Describe your relationship with your coach. How does he/she treat you during the practices and games? Can you give me examples? Does your coaches' behavior contribute to your sense of belonging to this team?
4. Describe your relationship with your teammates. How do they treat you during practices and games? Can you give me examples? Does your teammate's behavior contribute to your sense of belonging to this team?
5. Is there anything you would change about the relationship between you and your coach or about the relationship between you and your teammates at the community recreation center?
6. Who has encouraged you to play basketball? In what ways were, you encouraged to play basketball. Provide an example of how this was done?
7. How do you feel when you are encouraged by a parent, friend or coach to play basketball?

Competence:

1. What are some of the things you are good at, when playing basketball? How do you contribute to your team?
2. What are some of the things that challenge you, when playing basketball? How do you respond to these challenges?
3. When you are playing basketball what are some of the things that help you feel self-confidence?

4. What kind of things do learn about yourself at basketball practices or during a basketball games?
5. Does your coach contribute positively or negatively to your confidence in basketball? Does the coach say or do things that show confidence in you?
6. Do your teammates contribute positively or negatively to your confidence in basketball? Do they say or do things that show confidence in you?
7. Do others contribute positively or negatively to your confidence in basketball? (Who?) Do they say or do things that show confidence in you?

Participation

1. After this season, do you want to play basketball again at the center or elsewhere? Why or Why not?
2. After this season, do you want to play other sports at the center or elsewhere? Why or Why not?

APPENDIX H

COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER PROFILE

1. Name and Location of Center
2. How long have you worked in recreation?
3. How long have you been a facility manager?
4. Anything significant about the neighborhood or area your center is located.
5. What is the goal or objective of the youth basketball program at your center?
6. How many participants were enrolled in your youth basketball program for the 2018-2019 season?
7. How many of those enrolled participants were girls?
8. In your opinion what are some of the factors that influence the variance in participation numbers by gender?
9. In your opinion, what do you think has a greater impact or influence on whether girls will participate in the youth basketball league?
10. How do you determine what sports or activities are offered at your facility?
11. Are there any sports or activities that you don't currently offer, that you would like to offer at your facility.
12. From your experiential knowledge, what sports or activities have you noticed garner more girl participants?
13. What factors do you believe influence this participation?