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ATTITUDES OF PARTICIPANTS TOWARD THE BROOKINGS MIDDLE
SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM

BY

BENDA LOU BERSETH

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Master of Science, Major in Health
Physical Education and Recreation
South Dakota State University

1977

ATTITUDES OF PARTICIPANTS TOWARD THE BROOKINGS MIDDLE
SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirement for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

/ ' Thesis Advisor / Date

Head, Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Department, Date

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BLB

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The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of participants toward their experience in the interscholastic athletic program at the Brookings Middle School, in Brookings, South Dakota. This involved a comparative analysis of reactions to questionnaire items to determine the influence of sex and grade level on attitudes toward the athletic program. The questionnaire was designed to investigate attitudes in three areas: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) ways in which the actual athletic experience coincided or contrasted with the student's expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system. In general, members of both sexes and grade levels reacted positively to statements which were supportive of the program, and negatively to those statements which were critical of the program. A high percentage of students (approximately 70%) indicated that their parents encouraged them to participate in athletics, and that they believed that their parents were proud of them because they were in athletics. Peer group pressure and popularity were found to have little influence on the level of athletic participation. Females and seventh grade students did not feel that their experience or their performance in athletics paralleled their pre-season expectations to the degree that it did for the males and eighth grade students. In the eyes of the students, participating in athletics enabled them to feel better about themselves. A large

percentage of students believe that athletics was an important part of their educational experience and would continue to have high priority throughout their adult life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

Females are rapidly entering all phases of sport, from little league baseball to women's football teams. With this surge in interest, there has emerged a corresponding influx of programs designed for females, primarily in local recreation and public school athletic programs. This growth in women's sports has affected all aspects of athletics, including programs for males. This revolution presents a timely opportunity to re-evaluate the objectives of the middle school athletic program in light of the needs and values of the population it claims to serve.

Gerber amplified this concept when she reported:

Sport for women in the United States is a fast-growing, fast-changing element of our culture. Decisions are being made by teachers, coaches, athletic directors, recreation leaders, athletic associations, and the courts, among others. Yet valid information on which to make good judgements is often lacking. Those who are now concerned with conducting and administering sport programs for women, as well as those who will be involved, have a responsibility to study and understand the uniqueness and similarities of sport for women and for men. (4)

Before one can engage in the development of guidelines for the planning and administering of an athletic program at the middle school level, it would be necessary to survey male and female athletes during their first athletic experience. This survey could be used to analyze differences and similarities in the reactions of program participants according to sex and grade level.

The survey would include these areas: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) ways in which the actual athletic experience coincided or contrasted with the student's expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system. The results of this study would hopefully lead to a clearer understanding of the needs and interests of the male and female athlete. It might also serve to suggest possible modifications in the existing Brookings Middle School Athletic Program.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of participants toward their experience in the interscholastic athletic program at the Brookings Middle School, in Brookings, South Dakota. A comparative analysis was conducted to determine whether certain attitudes were unique for a specific group of students. More specifically, the present researcher attempted to determine the influence of sex and grade level on attitudes toward the athletic program in the Brookings Middle School.

Limitations and Delimitations

1. Only Brookings Middle School athletes who participated during the 1975-76 seasons were surveyed.
2. This study was limited to seventh grade males who participated in A, B, basketball; varsity and preliminary wrestling; or track. Eighth grade males were limited to those who participated in A, B, football; A, B, basketball; varsity and preliminary wrestling; or track.

3. This study was limited to seventh and eighth grade females who participated in A, B, basketball; gymnastics; or track.

4. Female and male reactions may have varied because of a lesser number of competitive opportunities in the sports programs for females.

5. The total number of sports in which a student participated may have affected his or her reactions.

Definition of Terms

Attitude. The sum total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudices or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified topic. (20)

Brookings Middle School. For the purpose of this study, the term, Brookings Middle School, referred to only the seventh and eighth grades within the Brookings Independent School District, Brookings, South Dakota.

Interscholastic athletics. Team or individual contests in games or sports, the players representing elementary or secondary school and recognized and managed by school authorities. (5)

Peer relationships. Relationships with individuals of one's own group; commonly used to indicate especially relationships with a child's or youth's own age group. (5)

Questionnaire. A scientific instrument for measurement and for collection of particular kinds of data. (13)

Self-concept. Those parts of the phenomenal field which the individual has differentiated as relatively stable and definite parts or characteristics of himself. (5)

Survey. A form of planned collection of data for the purpose of description or prediction, as a guide to action, or for the purpose of analyzing the relationships between certain variables. (13)

Value system. An inclusive set of deep lying attitudes and beliefs that tend to direct the person's habitual responses in various situations. (5)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The present researcher conducted a search of the related literature in three areas: (1) socio-psychological development in early adolescence; (2) research related to attitudes toward physical activity; and (3) principles of questionnaire construction.

Socio-psychological Development in Early Adolescence

The present researcher isolated four areas of socio-psychological development which influence the adolescent. They were (a) family expectations, (b) peer pressure, (c) self-concept, and (d) social conformity.

Frey stated that it would be impossible to enumerate all of the factors that influence the behavior of an adolescent. He attempted, however, to identify those which he believed to be of greatest importance. He mentioned the family, particularly parental attitude, as being important, along with peer pressure. He questioned which of these had the most influence, family or peers. Frey also stated that the self-concept, or attitude toward himself, can influence the adolescent's behavior immensely. (3)

Family expectations. Snyder and Spreitzer reported that there was a positive relationship between parental encouragement and a youth's participation in sports. This level of sports involvement began at an early age and was reinforced by parental countenance. (19)

Singer and Singer identified a negative aspect of parental influence when they stated that, ". . . parents may have in mind

certain ways that they want their children to behave and the parents may then try to make the children behave that way." (16)

Strang also observed that if children are encouraged by parents to hold unrealistic aspirations, and they are not appraised realistically with respect to abilities and achievements, they will suffer intense disillusionment. (19)

Peer pressure. Kagan noted that the adolescent wants many friends,

. . . for he needs peers to help him sculpt his beliefs, verify his new conclusions, test his new attitudes against an alien set in order to evaluate their hardiness, and obtain support for his new set of fragile assumptions. (10)

Horrocks agreed that it was a characteristic attribute of adolescence to depend on and conform to the opinions and behavior of the peer group. He reported that an adolescent typically complies with the views, activities, and appearance of other adolescents. (7)

Strang concluded that in the time between the worlds of childhood and adulthood, the peer culture plays an important role. She observed that the peer group has shown increasing influence in shaping adolescent's interests, attitudes, and behaviors. (19)

Self-concept. Singer and Singer referred to the self-concept as all the attitudes and cognitions a person has about himself. These cognitive conceptions collectively form a self-concept. Self-esteem is the negative or positive value which the person places on what he believes about himself. (16)

Singer and Singer stated that one's identity is acquired through learning what others attribute to him and what he learns about

himself through experience. They advanced the idea that identity is related to how a child feels about himself, when they stated, "Children act in accordance with the attributes which they accept about themselves and consequently those cognitions partly regulate the child's behavior."

(16)

In explaining the importance of self-concept, Horrock stated,

. . . the task of building, rebuilding, revising, and finally of integrating a concept of self is the chief and most important business of the adolescent period. An individual's self-concept is pervasive throughout all his behavior. (7)

Social conformity. Blos observed that adolescence doesn't occur in a "social vacuum." Society bestows its impressions on adolescents which can obliterate previous influences of the family. The adolescent is experiencing a period of disengaging from the family and entering the wider context of society. (20)

Singer and Singer stated:

The child's acquired ability to behave in ways generally rewarding in the segment of the culture in which he lives is an outcome of the socialization processes. Socialization processes refer to the actual learning of behaviors and performances through experiencing positive or aversive outcomes dependent on the child's acts. (16)

Hurlock agreed that socialization involved learning to conform to standards, mores, and customs, and that adolescents strive to do what is acceptable according to social expectations. (9)

Research Related to Attitudes Toward Physical Activity

Webb surveyed students in Battle Creek, Michigan with respect to the initiation of a new physical education curriculum. In this study he attempted to rank three items of importance in play activity:

skill, fairness, and victory. His findings revealed that victory became more significant for the boys after sixth grade, but declined in importance for the girls as they matured. As both sexes matured, skill became more important than fairness. He attributed the emphasis on skill to the change in attitude toward play. (12)

Alderman tested the attitudes of 136 athletes representing Canada in ten different athletic events. He used an attitude inventory to measure their reactions toward physical activity. There were six dimensions included in the inventory. He was interested in (1) the differences between the male and female responses, (2) the distinction between the attitudes of the various athletic groups involved, and (3) an overview of attitudes of the total group toward each of the six dimensions. He reported three conclusions: (1) male and female athletes' attitudes toward physical activity were very similar, (2) male athletes showed a strong attitude toward physical activity as an aesthetic experience, and (3) there was a weak response toward physical activity as an ascetic experience. (1)

Simon and Smoll tested 992 children, grades four to six, in an attempt to construct a valid testing instrument toward measuring attitudes about physical activity. They combined two methods: a multidimensional attitude scale, and an inventory and semantic differential attitude scale. The instrument measured six areas including: (1) social experience, (2) health and fitness, (3) pursuit of vertigo, (4) aesthetic experience, (5) catharsis, and (6) ascetic experience. The subjects responded to statements on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The attitude assessment was

based upon the meaning that the individual gave to a particular word or issue. These researchers reported that the instrument was appropriate for testing fourth through sixth grade children. (15)

Buchanan, and others examined the attitudes of elementary school children toward athletic success, academic achievement, and popularity. They surveyed 422 boys and 380 girls in grades 4-6 to determine whether they preferred to excel at sports, make good grades, or be popular. Both sexes expressed preference toward good grades. When outstanding students, athletes, and student athletes (outstanding academically and athletically) were compared as to popularity, it was found that among boys, athletes were somewhat more popular, while among girls, student-athletes seemed to be slightly more popular. When asked to rank four factors as contributors to popularity, boys ranked sports as most important while girls ranked grades first. (2)

Smoll, Schutz, and Keeney examined the nature and degree of relationships among children's attitudes, involvement, and proficiency in physical activities. The subjects were 127 boys and 137 girls in grades 4, 5, and 6. Data were collected representing the subject's attitudes toward physical activity, degree of primary involvement in various forms of physical activity, and level of performance in running, jumping, and throwing. The results revealed a strong relationship between the attitude domain and a combination of the involvement and performance domains. Further analyses yielded the findings that the source of strength in this relationship was between the attitude and involvement domains and that the attitude and performance domains were virtually unrelated. (17)

Harres surveyed 284 undergraduate students to ascertain and analyze the attitudes of men and women concerning interscholastic competition for girls and women. The attitude inventory consisted of 38 statements divided into four categories; social-cultural, mental-emotional, physical, and personality. The findings of this study indicated an acceptance of athletic competition for girls and women. A majority of the respondents indicated that the opportunities for athletic competition for girls and women should be provided for those who desire such activity. (6)

Selby and Lewko measured grade school children's attitudes toward female involvement in sports and their relationship with frequency of participation, sex, and grade level. They administered a questionnaire to 106 girls and 264 boys in grades 3-6 who were participating (P) in a sports program. Three hundred and forty-four girls and 287 boys who did not participate (NP) in a sports program were also administered the questionnaire. The groups were retested 5 months later to determine whether an attitude change had occurred. The results indicated that females at all grade and participation levels had significantly more favorable attitudes than the males. At grades 3 and 4, male P and NP were quite similar in attitudes, as were female P and NP. At grades 5 and 6, male NP were more positive than male P, while female NP were less positive than female P. Overall, the groups became more positive toward female involvement in sports from the time of the pre-test to the post-test. (14)

Principles of Questionnaire Construction

Oppenheim reported that the layout, printing, choice of paper, spacing, and so forth should be carefully considered in written questionnaires. The method of answering should be consistent; either circling, checking, or underlining. He also stated that every effort should be made to save the respondent's time by the use of lines, insets, different type-forms, headings, and boxes. (13)

Oppenheim observed that some survey workers prefer to start each question sequence by asking a few factual questions about the respondent's own background or experience, or to begin with open-ended questions. These are followed with structured questions concerning the respondent's attitudes. (13)

Hubbard stated that a questionnaire is a prepared series of questions whose answers could not be obtained from any other source. The questionnaire should not be too long and should not expose the investigator's opinions. It should not reveal any clues as to which responses might be expected. It should be brief and concise and clear to the least informed or least intelligent of the subjects. (8)

Kenyon developed attitude scales representing each of the dimensions of a multidimensional model for characterizing physical activity. He stated that attitude scales are developed most often by (a) specifying the domain of the psychological object in question, and defining its universe of content, (b) selecting or developing stimuli (usually verbal) to represent the domain, and (c) formulating scales, using either judgment or response methods with an appropriate sample. (11)

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Organization of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes of participants toward their experience in the interscholastic athletic program at the Brookings Middle School, and to analyze differences and similarities of the athletes' attitudes according to sex and grade level.

To achieve this purpose, the present researcher investigated the following areas: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) ways in which the actual athletic experience coincided or contrasted with the student's expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system.

The survey method, using a questionnaire consisting of 37 statements describing selected aspects of the Brookings Middle School Interscholastic Athletic Program, was employed. The questionnaire was distributed to all male and female athletes who had participated in competitive sports at the Brookings Middle School during 1975-76. The survey was conducted on May 15, 1976.

Source of the Data

The questionnaire was administered to all the seventh grade males who competed on any of the following teams, after final squads had been selected: A, B, basketball; varsity, and preliminary wrestling; and track. Eighth grade males, who were administered the

questionnaire, competed on any of the following teams, after final squads were chosen: A, B, football; A, B, basketball; varsity and preliminary wrestling; and track. It was distributed to all seventh and eighth grade females who participated after final squad rosters had been determined in: A, B, basketball; gymnastics; and track. The sample included 84 males and 75 females. Table I lists pertinent data for the students surveyed.

Table I
Characteristics of Questionnaire Recipients

Grade	Female Participants	Male Participants	Total Number of Participants by Grade Level
7	33	43	76
8	<u>42</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>83</u>
Total Number of Participants by Sex	75	84	159

Collection of the Data

After visiting with fellow coaches at the Brookings Middle School, the present researcher developed the statements for the questionnaire. She then met with her advisor for refinement of the questionnaire. Statements included in the survey were categorized into three major categories: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) ways in which the actual athletic experience coincided or contrasted with the student's

expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system. The statements were randomly ordered in the questionnaire according to the method and table described by Hubbard. (8) The following statements in the questionnaire pertain to the first category: 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 19, 20, 23, and 27. Statements 3, 6, 17, 21, 24, 25, 26, 30, 32, 34, and 37, are in category two. Category three includes the following statements: 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 16, 18, 22, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, and 36.

The questionnaire was distributed to a group of Brookings Middle School teachers with the request that they review it for clarity and appropriateness of word usage for the middle school level student. A pilot study was conducted at the Sioux Valley Junior High School, in Volga, South Dakota, for the purpose of determining clarity and understanding. Additional adjustments were made, and the final draft of the questionnaire, which appears in Appendix A, was printed.

The survey was conducted on Friday, May 15, 1976, during home room periods. The present researcher had distributed the correct amount of copies to the home room teachers. The home room teachers had been instructed to remove the student's name tag from his/her questionnaire prior to the distribution of it to each student. By doing this, the students were assured of anonymity, and students who were absent could be given the questionnaire at a later date. The home room teachers read the instructions, as provided by the present researcher, and distributed the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected by these teachers and were returned to the researcher. The procedure was

repeated during the following week for any students who had been absent on May 15.

ANALYSIS OF REACTIONS OF STUDENTS

Organization of the Data for Analysis

The data for this study were compiled from responses received through the use of a 37 statement questionnaire administered to the seventh and eighth grade students in the Brookings Public School. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A. The reactions of the students to these statements were analyzed according to grade level and sex. The questionnaire statements were structured relative to three issues: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) the ways in which the actual athletic experience measured up compared with the student's expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system.

The number and incidents of students showing such responses were recorded. The analysis of the data includes the statement reactions according to grade level and sex.

Analysis of the Data

Table II shows the students' reactions by grade level to the statements pertaining to the initial motivations which led them to participate in athletics.

For statement 1 (my parents encouraged me to participate in athletics), 79.1 percent of the seventh graders and 69.8 percent of the eighth graders were in agreement. Statement 2 (I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics), was

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Organization of the Data for Analysis

The data for this study were compiled from responses received through the use of a 37 statement questionnaire administered to the seventh and eighth grade athletes in the Brookings Middle School. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A. The reactions of the athletes to these statements were analyzed according to grade level and sex. The questionnaire statements were constructed relative to three areas: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) the ways in which the actual athletic experience coincided or contrasted with the student's expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system.

The number and incidence of students choosing each response were computed. The analysis of the data includes the statement reactions according to grade level and sex.

Analysis of the Data

Table II shows the students' reactions by grade level, to the statements pertaining to the initial motivations which led them to participate in athletics.

For statement 1 (my parents encouraged me to participate in athletics), 74.1 percent of the seventh graders and 65.8 percent of the eighth graders were in agreement. Statement 8 (I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics), was

Table II

Statements Related to Motivation for Athletic
Participation According to Grade Level

Statement	N	Grade	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree and Agree
1 (My parents encouraged me to participate in athletics.)	77	7	5(6.5%)	15(19.5%)	57(74.1%)
	82	8	10(12.2%)	18(22.0%)	54(65.8%)
2 (I participate in athletics because athletes are more popular than other students.)	77	7	51(66.3%)	19(24.7%)	7(9.1%)
	82	8	56(68.2%)	21(25.6%)	5(6.1%)
8 (I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics.)	77	7	2(2.6%)	16(20.8%)	59(76.6%)
	82	8	4(4.9%)	26(31.7%)	52(63.4%)
9 (One of the reasons I am in athletics, is because my coach encouraged me to "come out.")	77	7	28(36.4%)	25(32.5%)	24(31.2%)
	82	8	34(41.5%)	23(28.0%)	25(30.5%)
10 (One of the reasons I decided to participate in athletics was because most of my friends do.)	77	7	37(48.1%)	24(31.2%)	16(20.8%)
	82	8	37(45.1%)	22(26.8%)	23(28.0%)
11 (I participate in athletics because we get dismissed early from school for athletic contests.)	77	7	58(75.4%)	11(14.3%)	8(10.4%)
	82	8	65(79.2%)	16(19.5%)	1(1.2%)
12 (Participation in athletics will make me a "better citizen.")	77	7	7(9.1%)	23(29.9%)	47(61.1%)
	82	8	19(23.2%)	25(30.5%)	38(46.3%)

Table II (Continued)

Statement	N	Grade	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree and Agree
15	76	7	11(14.4%)	27(35.5%)	38(50.0%)
15	82	8	7(8.5%)	30(36.6%)	45(54.9%)
(I participate in athletics because it is something I can do well.)					
19	77	7	2(2.6%)	9(11.7%)	66(85.7%)
19	81	8	0(0.0%)	10(12.3%)	71(87.6%)
(Being an athlete makes me feel better about myself.)					
20	77	7	39(50.7%)	27(35.1%)	11(14.3%)
20	82	8	44(53.7%)	31(37.8%)	7(8.6%)
(I am an athlete because that is one way of receiving a free college education--athletic scholarship.)					
23	77	7	31(40.3%)	15(19.5%)	31(40.3%)
23	82	8	33(40.3%)	23(28.0%)	26(31.7%)
(I originally "came out" for athletics because it was something new to try.)					
27	76	7	27(35.5%)	22(28.9%)	27(35.5%)
27	82	8	34(41.4%)	20(24.4%)	28(34.1%)
(I "came out" for athletics for the fun of it.)					

agreed to by 76.6 percent of the seventh graders and 63.4 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 19 (being an athlete makes me feel better about myself), received a positive reaction (agree and strongly agree), from 85.7 percent of the seventh graders and 87.6 percent of the eighth graders. Statements which received negative reactions (disagree and strongly disagree), were statement 2 (I participate in athletics because athletes are more popular than other students), 66.3 percent of the seventh graders and 68.2 percent of the eighth graders, and statement 11 (I participate in athletics because we get dismissed early from school for athletic contests), 75.4 percent of the seventh graders and 79.2 percent of the eighth graders.

The students' reactions to statements pertaining to the initial motivations for athletic participation, according to sex, are listed in Table III.

Statement 1 (my parents encouraged me to participate in athletics), received positive reactions from 62.7 percent of the females and 76.2 percent of the males. Of the females, 61.4 percent agreed with statement 8 (I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics), as did 77.4 percent of the males. Statement 19 (being an athlete makes me feel better about myself), received an affirmative reaction from 86.6 percent of the females and 86.8 percent of the males. For statement 15 (I participate in athletics because it is something I can do well), 69.9 percent of the males were in agreement, while 33.4 percent of the females agreed. For statement 2 (I participate in athletics because athletes are more

Table III

Statements Related to Motivation for Athletic
Participation According to Sex

Statement	N	Sex	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
1	75	F	8(10.7%)	20(26.7%)	47(62.7%)
1	84	M	7(8.3%)	13(15.5%)	64(76.2%)
(My parents encouraged me to participate in athletics.)					
2	75	F	60(80.0%)	12(16.0%)	3(4.0%)
2	84	M	47(55.9%)	28(33.3%)	9(10.7%)
(I participate in athletics because athletes are more popular than other students.)					
8	75	F	3(4.0%)	26(34.7%)	46(61.4%)
8	84	M	3(3.6%)	16(19.0%)	65(77.4%)
(I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics.)					
9	75	F	31(41.4%)	17(22.7%)	27(36.0%)
9	84	M	31(36.9%)	31(36.9%)	22(26.1%)
(One of the reasons I am in athletics, is because my coach encouraged me to "come out.")					
10	75	F	42(56.0%)	16(21.3%)	17(22.7%)
10	84	M	32(38.1%)	30(35.7%)	22(26.2%)
(One of the reasons I decided to participate in athletics was because most of my friends do.)					
11	75	F	63(84.0%)	11(14.7%)	1(1.3%)
11	84	M	60(71.4%)	16(19.0%)	8(9.6%)
(I participate in athletics because we get dismissed early from school for athletic contests.)					
12	75	F	12(16.0%)	26(34.7%)	37(49.3%)
12	84	M	14(16.7%)	22(26.2%)	48(57.2%)
(Participation in athletics will make me a "better citizen.")					

Table III (Continued)

Statements Related to Motivation for Athletic
Participation According to Sex

Statement	N	Sex	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
15	75	F	13(17.4%)	37(49.3%)	25(33.4%)
15	83	M	5(6.0%)	20(24.1%)	58(69.9%)
(I participate in athletics because it is something I can do well.)					
19	75	F	2(2.6%)	8(10.7%)	65(86.6%)
19	83	M	0(0.0%)	11(13.3%)	72(86.8%)
(Being an athlete makes me feel better about myself.)					
20	75	F	48(64.0%)	25(33.3%)	2(2.6%)
20	84	M	35(41.6%)	33(39.3%)	16(19.0%)
(I am an athlete because that is one way of receiving a free college education--athletic scholarship.)					
23	75	F	18(24.0%)	25(33.3%)	32(42.6%)
23	84	M	46(54.8%)	13(15.5%)	25(29.8%)
(I originally "came out" for athletics because it was something new to try.)					
27	75	F	29(38.7%)	22(29.3%)	24(32.0%)
27	83	M	32(38.5%)	20(24.1%)	31(37.3%)
(I "came out" for athletics for the fun of it.)					

popular than other students), 80.0 percent of the females disagreed, as did 55.9 percent of the males. Statement 11 (I participate in athletics because we get dismissed early from school for athletic contests), received negative reactions from both sexes, 84.0 percent of the females and 71.4 percent of the males. Statement 20 (I am an athlete because that is one way of receiving a free college education--athletic scholarship), received a negative reaction from 64.0 percent of the females and 41.6 percent of the males.

Table IV included a grade level analysis of students' reactions to statements concerning whether the athletic experience met with the students' expectations.

Sixty eight percent of the seventh graders and 75.7 percent of the eighth graders agreed with statement 3 (my coach gave me a "fair share" of his/her attention during practice). Statement 21 (competing in athletics was as much fun as I thought it would be), was agreed to by 78.9 percent of the seventh graders and 86.6 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 30 (I became more physically fit than I had expected from athletics), received 72.7 percent affirmative reactions from the seventh graders and 71.7 percent of the eighth graders. The seventh graders, 63.6 percent, and the eighth graders, 63.4 percent, disagreed with statement 24 (the practice sessions were too hard). Statement 25 (I thought that my parents would come and watch my practices and games more than they did), received negative reactions from 55.9 percent of the seventh graders and 61.0 percent of the eighth graders.

Table IV

Grade Level Analysis of Statements
Related to Student Expectations

Statement	N	Grade	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
3	75	7	11(14.7%)	13(17.3%)	51(68.0%)
3	82	8	4(4.9%)	16(19.5%)	62(75.7%)
(My coach gave me a "fair share" of his/her attention during practice.)					
6	76	7	37(48.7%)	26(34.2%)	13(17.1%)
6	81	8	45(55.5%)	23(28.4%)	13(16.1%)
(We spent too much practice time on fundamentals and not enough time playing the game.)					
17	76	7	31(40.7%)	27(35.5%)	18(23.7%)
17	82	8	39(47.5%)	27(32.9%)	16(19.5%)
(I thought I would be able to play in the games more than I did.)					
21	76	7	4(5.3%)	12(15.8%)	60(78.9%)
21	82	8	1(1.2%)	10(12.2%)	71(86.6%)
(Competing in athletics was as much fun as I thought it would be.)					
24	77	7	49(63.6%)	20(26.0%)	8(10.4%)
24	82	8	52(63.4%)	28(34.1%)	2(2.4%)
(The practice sessions were too hard.)					
25	77	7	43(55.9%)	22(28.6%)	12(15.6%)
25	82	8	50(61.0%)	19(23.2%)	13(15.8%)
(I thought that my parents would come and watch my practices and games more than they did.)					
26	77	7	28(36.4%)	21(27.3%)	28(36.4%)
26	82	8	31(37.8%)	25(30.5%)	26(31.7%)
(I haven't done as well in athletics as I thought I could.)					
30	77	7	4(5.2%)	17(22.1%)	56(72.7%)
30	81	8	7(8.6%)	16(19.8%)	58(71.7%)
(I became more physically fit than I had expected from athletics.)					

Table IV (Continued)

Grade Level Analysis of Statements
Related to Student Expectations

Statement	N	Grade	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
32	77	7	20(26.0%)	26(33.8%)	31(40.3%)
32	82	8	10(12.2%)	29(35.4%)	43(52.4%)
(Being on an athletic team was just what I had expected.)					
34	77	7	21(27.3%)	33(42.9%)	23(29.9%)
34	82	8	37(45.1%)	37(45.1%)	8(9.8%)
(I am a better athlete than my coach thinks I am.)					
37	77	7	29(37.7%)	36(46.8%)	12(15.6%)
37	82	8	39(47.6%)	31(37.8%)	12(14.6%)
(Being on an athletic team has made me more popular.)					

In Table V, a comparative analysis of the reactions, according to sex, to statements related to program expectations, is presented..

Statement 3 (my coach gave me a "fair share" of his/her attention during practice), received 68.5 percent positive reactions from the females and 75.0 percent from the males. Of the females, 82.7 percent agreed with statement 21 (competing in athletics was as much fun as I thought it would be), while 83.1 percent of the males agreed. Statement 30 (I became more physically fit than I had expected from athletics), received affirmative reactions from 70.3 percent of the females and 73.9 percent of the males. Statement 6 (we spent too much practice time on fundamentals and not enough time playing the game), received negative reactions from 60.8 percent of the females and 44.6 percent of the males. For statement 24 (the practice sessions were too hard), 61.3 percent of the females disagreed, as did 65.5 percent of the males. Of the females, 64.0 percent disagreed with statement 25 (I thought my parents would come and watch my practices and games more than they did), as did 53.6 percent of the males. Three statements received opposing reactions from the females as compared with the males. Statement 26 (I haven't done as well in athletics as I thought I could), received 46.7 percent positive reactions from the females and 51.2 percent negative reactions from the males. The females, 49.3 percent, disagreed with statement 34 (I am a better athlete than my coach thinks I am), while 51.2 percent of the males chose the neutral response, (do not agree or disagree). The reactions for statement 37 (being on an athletic team has made me

Table V
 Statements Related to Students'
 Expectations According to Sex

Statement	N	Sex	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
3	73	F	10(13.7%)	13(17.8%)	50(68.5%)
3	84	M	5(6.0%)	16(19.0%)	63(75.0%)
(My coach gave me a "fair share" of his/her attention during practice.)					
6	74	F	45(60.8%)	21(28.4%)	8(10.9%)
6	83	M	37(44.6%)	28(33.7%)	18(21.7%)
(We spent too much practice time on fundamentals and not enough time playing the game.)					
17	74	F	27(36.5%)	27(36.5%)	20(27.1%)
17	84	M	43(51.2%)	27(32.1%)	14(16.7%)
(I thought I would be able to play in the games more than I did.)					
21	75	F	1(1.3%)	12(16.0%)	62(82.7%)
21	83	M	4(4.8%)	10(12.0%)	69(83.1%)
(Competing in athletics was as much fun as I thought it would be.)					
24	75	F	46(61.3%)	23(30.7%)	6(8.0%)
24	84	M	55(65.5%)	25(29.8%)	4(4.8%)
(The practice sessions were too hard.)					
25	75	F	48(64.0%)	18(24.0%)	9(12.0%)
25	84	M	45(53.6%)	23(27.4%)	16(19.1%)
(I thought that my parents would come and watch my practices and games more than they did.)					
26	75	F	16(21.3%)	24(32.0%)	35(46.7%)
26	84	M	43(51.2%)	22(26.2%)	19(22.7%)
(I haven't done as well in athletics as I thought I could.)					
30	74	F	5(6.8%)	17(23.0%)	52(70.3%)
30	84	M	6(7.2%)	16(19.0%)	62(73.9%)
(I became more physically fit than I had expected from athletics.)					

Table V (Continued)

Statements Related to Students'
Expectations According to Sex

Statement	N	Sex	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
32	75	F	20(26.7%)	28(37.3%)	27(36.0%)
32	84	M	10(11.9%)	27(32.1%)	47(56.0%)
(Being on an athletic team was just what I had expected.)					
34	75	F	37(49.3%)	27(36.0%)	11(14.7%)
34	84	M	21(25.0%)	43(51.2%)	20(23.8%)
(I am a better athlete than my coach thinks I am.)					
37	75	F	46(61.4%)	23(30.7%)	6(8.0%)
37	84	M	22(26.2%)	44(52.4%)	18(21.4%)
(Being on an athletic team has made me more popular.)					

more popular), revealed that 61.4 percent of the females disagreed, while 52.4 percent of the males chose the neutral response (do not agree or disagree).

Table VI contains a comparison of seventh and eighth grade students' reactions to the statements concerning the importance of athletics.

Statement 29 (athletics are an important part of my life), was agreed to by 71.5 percent of the seventh graders and 74.4 percent of the eighth graders. Affirmative reactions were given by 70.2 percent of the seventh graders and 72.0 percent of the eighth graders for statement 35 (becoming physically fit from the athletic workouts is just as important to me as actually competing in athletics). Statement 36 (learning the fundamentals is as important to me as competing in athletics), was agreed to by 68.9 percent of the seventh graders and 75.6 percent of the eighth graders. The seventh graders, (89.9%), and the eighth graders, (87.8%), agreed with statement 4 (I think athletics are great). Statement 18 (I hope I can participate in some form of sport for the rest of my life), was agreed to by 83.1 percent of the seventh graders and 87.8 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 33 (athletics are a valuable part of the school program), received positive reactions from 88.4 percent of the seventh graders and 87.8 percent of the eighth grade students.

Statement 5 (athletics is the only thing I enjoy about school), received negative reactions from 62.3 percent of the seventh graders and 64.2 percent of the eighth graders. In reacting to statement 14 (I would like to be able to miss practice whenever I want), 85.8

Table VI

Feelings About the Importance of
Athletics According to Grade Level

Statement	N	Grade	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
4	77	7	0(0.0%)	7(9.1%)	70(89.9%)
4	82	8	1(1.2%)	9(11.0%)	72(87.8%)
(I think athletics are great.)					
5	77	7	48(62.3%)	11(14.3%)	18(23.4%)
5	81	8	52(64.2%)	16(19.8%)	13(16.0%)
(Athletics is the only thing I enjoy about school.)					
7	76	7	24(31.6%)	27(35.5%)	25(32.9%)
7	82	8	40(48.8%)	24(29.3%)	18(21.9%)
(I should be excused from practice when it interferes with my other after-school activities.)					
13	77	7	46(59.8%)	17(22.1%)	14(18.2%)
13	82	8	67(81.7%)	9(11.0%)	6(7.3%)
(I think we practice too many nights a week.)					
14	77	7	76(85.8%)	7(9.1%)	4(5.2%)
14	81	8	74(91.4%)	3(3.7%)	4(5.0%)
(I would like to be able to miss practice whenever I want.)					
16	77	7	20(26.0%)	25(32.5%)	32(41.6%)
16	82	8	21(25.6%)	24(29.3%)	37(45.2%)
(It is more important to me that my team wins than it is for me to play in the game.)					
18	77	7	2(2.6%)	11(14.3%)	64(83.1%)
18	82	8	1(1.2%)	9(11.0%)	72(87.8%)
(I hope I can participate in some form of sport for the rest of my life.)					

Table VI (Continued)

Feelings About the Importance of
Athletics According to Grade Level

Statement	N	Grade	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
22	77	7	36(46.8%)	21(27.3%)	20(26.0%)
22	82	8	53(64.7%)	16(19.5%)	13(15.9%)
(I think winning became too important to my coach.)					
28	77	7	27(35.1%)	31(40.3%)	19(24.7%)
28	82	8	52(63.5%)	21(25.6%)	9(11.0%)
(I think winning became too important to my teammates.)					
29	77	7	9(11.7%)	13(16.9%)	55(71.5%)
29	82	8	2(2.4%)	19(23.2%)	61(74.4%)
(Athletics are an important part of my life.)					
31	77	7	56(72.8%)	14(18.2%)	7(9.1%)
31	82	8	68(82.9%)	9(11.0%)	5(6.1%)
(If I had to choose between athletics and another after-school activity, I would give up athletics.)					
33	77	7	4(5.2%)	5(6.5%)	68(88.4%)
33	82	8	2(2.4%)	8(9.8%)	72(87.8%)
(Athletics are a valuable part of the school program.)					
35	77	7	6(7.8%)	17(22.1%)	54(70.2%)
35	82	8	5(6.1%)	18(22.0%)	59(72.0%)
(Becoming physically fit from the athletic workouts is just as important to me as actually competing in athletics.)					
36	77	7	1(1.3%)	23(29.9%)	53(68.9%)
36	82	8	5(6.1%)	15(18.3%)	62(75.6%)
(Learning the fundamentals is as important to me as competing in athletics.)					

percent of the seventh graders and 91.4 percent of the eighth graders disagreed. Statement 31 (if I had to choose between athletics and another after-school activity, I would give up athletics), received a negative reaction from 72.8 percent of the seventh graders and 82.9 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 13 (I think we practice too many nights a week), received negative reactions from 59.8 percent of the seventh graders, and 81.7 percent of the eighth graders. The reactions for statement 22 (I think winning became too important to my coach), were negative for the seventh graders, (46.8%), and for the eighth grade students, (64.7%). Of the seventh graders, 35.1 percent disagreed with statement 28 (I think winning became too important to my teammates), while 63.5 percent of the eighth graders disagreed.

Table VII compares the students' reactions, by sex, regarding statements about the importance of athletics.

For statement 29 (athletics are an important part of my life), 73.4 percent of the females and 72.6 percent of the males agreed. Statement 35 (becoming physically fit from the athletic workouts is just as important to me as actually competing in athletics), received affirmative reactions from 74.6 percent of the females and 67.8 percent of the males. Seventy six percent of the females and 69.0 percent of the males agreed with statement 36 (learning the fundamentals is as important to me as competing in athletics). Ninety two percent of the females and 86.9 percent of the males agreed with statement 4 (I think athletics are great). Statement 18 (I hope I can participate in some form of sport for the rest of my life), received positive reactions

Table VII
 Statements Concerning the Importance of
 Athletics According to Sex

Statement	N	Sex	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
4	75	F	0(0.0%)	6(8.0%)	69(92.0%)
4	84	M	1(1.2%)	10(11.9%)	73(86.9%)
(I think athletics are great.)					
5	74	F	55(74.3%)	10(13.5%)	9(12.2%)
5	84	M	45(53.6%)	17(20.2%)	22(26.2%)
(Athletics is the only thing I enjoy about school.)					
7	74	F	29(39.2%)	28(37.8%)	17(23.0%)
7	84	M	35(41.7%)	23(27.4%)	26(30.9%)
(I should be excused from practice when it interferes with my other after-school activities.)					
13	75	F	54(72.0%)	12(16.0%)	9(12.0%)
13	84	M	59(70.2%)	14(16.7%)	11(13.1%)
(I think we practice too many nights a week.)					
14	75	F	72(96.0%)	2(2.7%)	1(1.3%)
14	83	M	68(81.9%)	8(9.6%)	7(8.4%)
(I would like to be able to miss practice whenever I want.)					
16	75	F	27(36.0%)	16(21.3%)	32(42.7%)
16	84	M	14(16.7%)	33(39.3%)	37(44.1%)
(It is more important to me that my team wins than it is for me to play in the game.)					
18	75	F	0(0.0%)	8(10.7%)	67(89.3%)
18	84	M	3(3.6%)	12(14.3%)	69(84.2%)
(I hope I can participate in some form of sport for the rest of my life.)					

Table VII (Continued)

Statements Concerning the Importance of
Athletics According to Sex

Statement	N	Sex	Intensity of Reactions		
			Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
22	75	F	41(54.7%)	15(20.0%)	19(25.4%)
22	84	M	48(57.1%)	22(26.2%)	14(16.6%)
(I think winning became too important to my coach.)					
28	75	F	38(50.6%)	22(29.3%)	15(20.0%)
28	84	M	41(48.8%)	30(35.7%)	13(15.5%)
(I think winning became too important to my teammates.)					
29	75	F	4(5.4%)	16(21.3%)	55(73.4%)
29	84	M	7(8.3%)	16(19.0%)	61(72.6%)
(Athletics are an important part of my life.)					
31	75	F	56(74.7%)	13(17.3%)	6(8.0%)
31	84	M	68(81.0%)	10(11.9%)	6(7.2%)
(If I had to choose between athletics and another after-school activity, I would give up athletics.)					
33	75	F	3(4.0%)	7(9.3%)	65(86.6%)
33	84	M	3(3.6%)	6(7.1%)	75(89.3%)
(Athletics are a valuable part of the school program.)					
35	75	F	5(6.7%)	14(18.7%)	56(74.6%)
35	84	M	6(7.2%)	21(25.0%)	57(67.8%)
(Becoming physically fit from the athletic workouts is just as important to me as actually competing in athletics.)					
36	75	F	2(2.6%)	16(21.3%)	57(76.0%)
36	84	M	4(4.8%)	22(26.2%)	58(69.0%)
(Learning the fundamentals is as important to me as competing in athletics.)					

from 89.3 percent of the females, and 82.2 percent of the males. Affirmative reactions were given by 86.6 percent of the females and 89.3 percent of the males for statement 33 (athletics are a valuable part of the school program).

Negative reactions by males, (70.2%), and females, (72.0%), were observed for statement 13 (I think we practice too many nights a week). Statement 14 (I would like to be able to miss practice whenever I want), received negative reactions from 96.0 percent of the females and 81.9 percent of the males. For statement 31 (if I had to choose between athletics and another after-school activity, I would give up athletics), 74.7 percent of the females disagreed, as did 81.0 percent of the males.

Discussion of the Results

A questionnaire was administered to the 159 seventh and eighth grade students who participated in interscholastic athletics at the Brookings Middle School, Brookings, South Dakota, during the 1975-76 school year. The questionnaire investigated three major areas: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) ways in which the actual athletic experience coincided or contrasted with the student's expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system.

Findings related to the motives of program participants. A review of the pertinent literature revealed that several factors influence the behavior of an adolescent. Frey identified the family, particularly parental attitude, as being important in influencing the

adolescent's behavior. (3) Snyder and Spreitzer reported a positive relationship between parental encouragement and a youth's participation in sports. (19)

Findings in the present study appear to support the concept that there is a relationship between parental attitudes and adolescent behavior. For example, when comparing the reactions, by grade level, 74.1 percent of the seventh graders and 65.8 percent of the eighth graders agreed with statement 1 (my parents encouraged me to participate in athletics). When reacting to statement 8 (I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics), 76.6 percent of the seventh graders and 63.4 percent of the eighth graders agreed. Thus, it appears that the parents of the seventh grade students are offering more encouragement than those of eighth grade students. This may be due to the fact that they are interested in reinforcing the students' first interscholastic athletic experience.

When comparing the reactions, according to sex, 62.7 percent of the females and 76.2 percent of the males indicated agreement with statement 1 (my parents encouraged me to participate in athletics). When reacting to statement 8 (I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics), 61.4 percent of the females and 77.4 percent of the males agreed. This seems to indicate that parents offer more encouragement to male participants than to female participants. Singer and Singer reported that parents may want their children to behave in certain ways and may try to make their children behave accordingly. (16) It is possible that this is a reflection of

sex stereotyping. In other words, parents may see more value in athletics for males than for females.

Strang observed that the peer group has a strong influence in shaping the interests, attitudes, and behaviors of adolescents. (19) Horrocks agreed that it is a characteristic of the adolescent to depend on and conform to the opinions and behavior of the peer group, and to comply with the views, activities, and appearance of other adolescents. (7) The findings, of the present study, did not support the peer influence concept. When comparing the results according to grade level, only 20.8 percent of the seventh graders and 28.0 percent of the eighth graders agreed with statement 10 (one of the reasons I decided to participate in athletics was because most of my friends do). When reacting to statement 2 (I participate in athletics because athletes are more popular than other students), only 9.1 percent of the seventh graders agreed, as did 6.1 percent of the eighth graders. This study may indicate that the seventh and eighth grade athletes at the Brookings Middle School are not influenced in their athletic participation by the peer group.

When studying the reactions, according to sex, to statement 10 (one of the reasons I decided to participate in athletics was because most of my friends do), 22.7 percent of the females and 26.2 percent of the males agreed. When reacting to statement 2 (I participate in athletics because athletes are more popular than other students), 4.0 percent of the females and 10.7 percent of the males agreed. It would appear that neither the females nor the males are influenced to a large degree by their peer group. There may be some indication,

however, that the males are more inclined to be influenced by peer group pressures and popularity in their choice of activities than are females. These findings support the results of Buchanan and others, in which it was found that among boys, athletes were more popular, while among girls, student-athletes seemed to be slightly more popular. When asked to rank four factors as contributors to popularity, boys ranked sports as most important, while girls ranked grades first. (2)

Singer and Singer referred to the self-concept as all the attitudes and cognitions a person has about himself. They stated that it involved the negative or positive value which the person places on what he believes about himself. (16) Horrocks stated that the self-concept was pervasive throughout all the adolescent's behavior. (7) When reacting to statement 19 (being an athlete makes me feel better about myself), 85.7 percent of the seventh graders and 87.6 percent of the eighth graders agreed. When comparing the reactions, according to sex, 86.6 percent of the females agreed, as did 86.8 percent of the males. It would appear that participating in athletics improved the self-concept of the majority of the subjects in this study.

Several statements were designed to probe the dimension of self-concept. When comparing the reactions to statement 15 (I participate in athletics because it is something I can do well) by grade level, 50.0 percent of the seventh graders agreed, as did 54.9 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 26 (I haven't done as well in athletics as I thought I could), received positive reactions from 36.4 percent of the seventh graders and 31.7 percent of the eighth

graders. The overall self-concept of the eighth graders, in regard to their athletic ability, appears to be slightly more positive than that of the seventh graders. There is also an indication, that many of the seventh grade students entered their first interscholastic athletic experience with an unrealistic self-appraisal of their physical abilities. This was observed in the subjects' reactions to statement 34 (I am a better athlete than my coach thinks I am), where 29.9 percent of the seventh graders agreed, compared to 9.8 percent of the eighth graders. This may be a result of an insufficient number of prior athletic experiences upon which to base a valid appraisal. Two other statements also support this notion. Statement 23 (I originally "came out" for athletics because it was something new to try), received a positive reaction from 40.3 percent of the seventh graders, compared to 31.7 percent of the eighth grade students. Statement 32 (being on an athletic team was just what I had expected) was reacted to positively by 40.3 percent of the seventh graders and 52.4 percent of the eighth graders. The reactions to these two statements seem to indicate that since participation in interscholastic athletics was a new experience, it did not as closely parallel the expectations of the seventh graders, as it did for the eighth grade students.

When comparing the reactions for statement 15 (I participate in athletics because it is something I can do well) according to sex, 33.4 percent of the females agreed, as did 69.9 percent of the males. Statement 26 (I haven't done as well in athletics as I thought I could), received positive reactions from 46.7 percent of the females

and 22.7 percent of the males. When reacting to statement 34 (I am a better athlete than my coach thinks I am) 49.3 percent of the females disagreed, as did 25.0 percent of the males. The comparison of the female and male's reactions to the self-appraisal items was similar to the comparison of the seventh and eighth grade students' reactions. The self-concept of the females, as athletes, seems to be much lower than that of the males. Like the seventh grade males, the females may have an unrealistic appraisal of their athletic competencies. This is probably not surprising, because the females lack previous athletic experience to a much larger extent than the seventh grade males. This is reinforced by statement 23 (I originally "came out" for athletics because it was something new to try), which received positive reactions from 42.6 percent of the females, compared to 29.8 percent of the males. Further, in reacting to statement 32 (being on an athletic team was just what I expected), 36.0 percent of the females agreed, as compared to 56.0 percent of the males.

Singer and Singer stated that children try to behave in ways generally rewarding in the segment of the culture in which they live. They do this by learning behaviors according to the positive or negative reactions which result from their acts. (16) Hurlock stated that adolescents strive to do what is acceptable according to social expectations. (9)

When reacting to statement 12 (participation in athletics will make me a better citizen), 61.1 percent of the seventh graders and 46.3 percent of the eighth graders agreed. When comparing the reactions, according to sex, for statement 12 (participation in athletics will

make me a better citizen), 49.3 percent of the females agreed, as did 57.2 percent of the males. These results show that a large number of students feel that participation in athletics makes them a better citizen. Since being an athlete is generally accepted as a desirable activity in society, athletic participants are positively reinforced for their involvement in sports by that society.

Two of the statements related to motivation met with very little approval from the students. Statement 11 (I participate in athletics because we get dismissed early from school for athletic contests), received affirmative reactions from 10.4 percent of the seventh graders, and 1.2 percent of the eighth graders. When comparing the reactions to statement 11, according to sex, 1.3 percent of the female students and 9.6 percent of the male students agreed.

When reacting to statement 20 (I am an athlete because that is one way of receiving a free college education--athletic scholarship), 14.3 percent of the seventh graders and 8.6 percent of the eighth graders agreed. Statement 20 was agreed to by 2.6 percent of the female students and 19.0 percent of the male students, when compared by sex.

The students did not respond very favorably to athletic participation because of early dismissal or athletic scholarships. The data is not surprising, because neither statement 11 or statement 20 provides a very good reason for athletic participation. Despite the negative reactions, there is some indication that the male students are more apt to participate for these reasons. One reason for the difference in reactions, for males and females for statement 20, may

be due to the fact that athletic scholarships have been more available for males than for females.

The other two statements, received relatively balanced reactions among the three choices. For statement 9 (one of the reasons I am in athletics, is because my coach encouraged me to "come out"), the seventh grade students' reactions were 31.2 percent agree, 32.5 percent neutral, and 36.4 percent disagree. The eighth grade students' reactions were 30.5 percent agree, 28.0 percent neutral, and 41.5 percent disagree. The reactions to statement 9, according to sex, were 36.0 percent agree, 22.7 percent neutral, and 41.4 percent disagree for the females. The males' reactions were 26.1 percent agree, 36.9 percent neutral, and 36.9 percent disagree.

For statement 27 (I "came out" for athletics for the fun of it), the seventh graders' reactions were 35.5 percent agree, 28.9 percent neutral, 35.5 percent disagree. The eighth graders' reactions were 34.1 percent agree, 24.4 percent neutral, and 41.4 percent disagree. The reactions to statement 27 (I "came out" for athletics for the fun of it), according to sex, were 32.0 percent agree, 29.3 percent neutral, and 38.7 percent disagree for the females. The male reactions were 37.3 percent agree, 24.1 percent neutral, and 38.5 percent disagree. It appears as though neither the coach's encouragement nor athletics "for fun" were dominant motivating factors in the students' decision to participate in athletics.

Findings related to the expectations of program participants.

In this study, many of the statements concerning the students' expectations, are related to the content of the athletic program at

the Brookings Middle School. The data seems to indicate that the students were generally satisfied with their athletic experience. For statement 3 (my coach gave me a "fair share" of his/her attention during practice), 14.7 percent of the seventh grade students disagreed, as did 4.9 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 3, when compared by sex, was disagreed with by 13.7 percent of the females and 6.0 percent of the males.

When reacting to statement 17 (I thought I would be able to play in the games more than I did), by grade level, 23.7 percent of the seventh grade students and 19.5 percent of the eighth grade students agreed. For statement 17, when compared according to sex, 21.1 percent of the females reacted affirmatively, as did 16.7 percent of the males.

Statement 24 (the practice sessions were too hard), was agreed with by 10.4 percent of the seventh graders, as compared with 2.4 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 24, compared by sex, received positive reactions from 8.0 percent of the females and 4.8 percent of the males.

When reacting to statement 30 (I became more physically fit than I had expected from athletics), 72.7 percent of the seventh grade students and 71.7 percent of the eighth grade students agreed. Statement 30 was reacted to positively by 70.3 percent of the females and 73.9 percent of the males.

When reacting to statement 6 (we spent too much time on fundamentals and not enough time playing the game), 17.1 percent of the seventh graders agreed, as did 16.1 percent of the eighth graders.

Statement 6, according to sex, was agreed with by 10.9 percent of the females and 21.7 percent of the males.

For statement 21 (competing in athletics was as much fun as I thought it would be), 78.9 percent of the seventh grade students agreed, as did 86.6 percent of the eighth graders. When comparing the reaction, according to sex, for statement 21, 82.7 percent of the females and 83.1 percent of the males agreed.

Although the seventh and eighth grade students' reactions were similar in regard to their expectations, the eighth graders seemed to be somewhat more satisfied with their athletic experience. This is consistent with the expected results, since most of the eighth grade students participated in interscholastic athletics during the previous year. The male students appear to believe that their expectations were met to a greater degree than do the females. This may be related to the fact that the males have generally had more previous experience in athletics than have the females.

Statement 25 (I thought that my parents would come and watch my practices and games more than they did), received positive reactions from 15.6 percent of the females and 15.8 percent of the males. When comparing the reactions for statement 25, according to sex, 12.0 percent of the females and 19.1 percent of the males agreed. It would appear that there was little difference between the seventh and eighth grade students' reactions. When comparing the reactions, according to sex, more of the males, than females, expected their parents to attend more practices and games than they did.

For statement 37 (being on an athletic team has made me more popular) according to grade level, 15.6 percent of the seventh grade students agreed, as did 14.6 percent of the eighth grade students. When comparing the reactions for statement 37, according to sex, 8.0 percent of the females and 21.4 percent of the males agreed. A substantially greater number of the male students believed that they were more popular after being on an athletic team, than did the female students.

Findings related to the importance of athletic participation.

Webb surveyed students in an attempt to rank three items of importance (skill, fairness, and victory) in play activity. His findings revealed that victory became more significant for the boys after sixth grade, but declined in importance for the girls as they matured. (12)

In the present study, the seventh graders, (26.0%), and the eighth graders, (25.6%), disagreed with statement 16 (it is more important to me that my team wins, than it is for me to play in the game). When comparing the reactions, according to sex, 36.0 percent of the females and 16.7 percent of the males disagreed with the statement. The findings of the present study demonstrated little difference when comparing the seventh and eighth grade students; however, the females seemed to be more concerned about the fact that they played in the games rather than whether their teams won or lost.

Webb, when ranking the importance of skill, fairness, and victory in play activity, found that skill became more important as both sexes matured. He attributed the emphasis on skill to the change in attitude toward play. (12)

In the present study, 68.9 percent of the seventh graders reacted positively, as did 75.6 percent of the eighth graders, to statement 36 (learning the fundamentals is as important to me as competing in athletics). When reacting to statement 6 (we spent too much practice time on fundamentals and not enough time playing the game), 17.1 percent of the seventh graders agreed, as did 16.1 percent of the eighth graders. The responses of both grades to these two statements seem to reinforce the theory that skill becomes more important with increased maturity.

When comparing the reactions, according to sex, 76.0 percent of the females and 69.0 percent of the males agreed with statement 36 (learning the fundamentals is as important to me as competing in athletics). When reacting to statement 6 (we spent too much practice time on fundamentals and not enough time playing the game), 10.9 percent of the females agreed, compared to 21.7 percent of the males. It would appear that the females valued the learning of fundamentals more than the males or realized that they needed more work on fundamentals due to their lack of previous opportunities and experience in athletics.

Alderman tested athletes as to their reactions toward physical activity. He reported that male and female athletes' attitudes toward physical activity were very similar. (1)

In this study, the females reacted to statement 4 (I think athletics are great) positively with 92.0 percent agreeing, as did 86.9 percent of the males. For statement 18 (I hope I can participate in some form of sport for the rest of my life), 89.3 percent of the

females and 82.2 percent of the males agreed. When reacting to statement 29 (athletics are an important part of my life), 73.4 percent of the females agreed, as did 72.6 percent of the males. For statement 33 (athletics are a valuable part of the school program), 86.6 percent of the females and 89.3 percent of the males were in agreement. These results seem to confirm the notion that male and female athletes share similar attitudes toward the value of athletics.

When comparing the attitudes, toward the value of athletics, according to grade level, similar results were found. For statement 4 (I think athletics are great), 89.9 percent of the seventh grade students agreed, as did 87.8 percent of the eighth grade students. Statement 18 (I hope I can participate in some form of sport for the rest of my life), received affirmative reactions from 83.1 percent of the seventh graders and 87.8 percent of the eighth graders. When reacting to statement 29 (athletics are an important part of my life), 71.5 percent of the seventh graders agreed, as did 74.4 percent of the eighth graders. For statement 33 (athletics are a valuable part of the school program), 88.4 percent of the seventh grade students and 87.8 percent of the eighth grade students were in agreement.

Several statements were designed to cause the subjects to compare the merits of athletics with the students' other interest areas and activities. For statement 7 (I should be excused from practice when it interferes with my other after-school activities), 32.9 percent of the seventh graders agreed, as did 21.9 percent of the eighth graders. Statement 13 (I think we practice too many nights a

week) received affirmative reactions from 18.2 percent of the seventh graders and 7.3 percent of the eighth graders. When reacting to statement 14 (I would like to miss practice whenever I want), 5.2 percent of the seventh grade students agreed, as did 5.0 percent of the eighth grade students. For statement 31 (if I had to choose between athletics and another after-school activity, I would give up athletics), 9.1 percent of the seventh graders and 6.1 percent of the eighth graders agreed. It appears that the seventh and eighth grade students value athletics and realize that practice is important, but the seventh grade students do not seem as ready to commit their after-school time to athletics. This may be due to some uncertainty on the part of the seventh graders not knowing which activities they want to pursue or develop fully.

When comparing the reactions, according to sex, for statements concerning the importance of athletics, the results were somewhat unexpected. For statement 7 (I should be excused from practice when it interferes with my other after-school activities), 23.0 percent of the females agreed, as did 30.9 percent of the males. Statement 13 (I think we practice too many nights a week) received affirmative reactions from 12.0 percent of the females and 13.1 percent of the males. When reacting to statement 14 (I would like to miss practice whenever I want), 1.3 percent of the females agreed, as compared to 8.4 percent of the males. For statement 31 (if I had to choose between athletics and another after-school activity, I would give up athletics), 8.0 percent of the females agreed, as did 7.2 percent of the males. It would appear that both sexes value athletics very highly.

Two statements pertained to the importance placed on winning in athletics. Statement 22 (I think winning became too important to my coach), received affirmative reactions from 26.0 percent of the seventh graders and 15.9 percent of the eighth graders. When comparing the reactions for statement 22, according to sex, 25.4 percent of the females agreed, as compared to 16.6 percent of the males. Although a minority agreed, apparently, the seventh graders, to a larger extent than the eighth graders, thought the coach placed too much emphasis on winning. When comparing the reactions, by sex, the females thought winning became too important to the coach, more than the males. These reactions are probably due to the fact that the interscholastic athletic program is different than the intramural programs, to which the seventh grade students and females had become accustomed.

For statement 28 (I think winning became too important to my teammates), 24.7 percent of the seventh graders agreed; as compared to 11.0 percent of the eighth graders. When comparing the reactions, according to sex, 20.0 percent of the females agreed, as did 15.5 percent of the males. Similarly, a minority of the students agreed, however, it appears that the seventh grade students believed, to a larger extent than the eighth graders, that winning became too important to their teammates. The females believed, somewhat more than the males, that winning became too important to their teammates.

Two additional statements involved the students' reactions to the importance of athletics. Statement 5 (athletics is the only thing I enjoy about school) received affirmative reactions from 23.4 percent of the seventh graders, as compared to 16.0 percent of the eighth

graders. When comparing the reactions for statement 5, according to sex, 12.2 percent of the females agreed, as did 26.2 percent of the males. Obviously, athletics is not the only popular school activity. It does appear, however, that a higher percentage of seventh graders than eighth graders feel that athletics is the only thing they enjoy about school. A larger number of males than females also hold this view.

Statement 35 (becoming physically fit from the athletic workouts is just as important to me as actually competing in athletics), received affirmative reactions from 70.2 percent of the seventh grade students and 72.0 percent of the eighth grade students. When comparing the reactions, according to sex, 74.6 percent of the females agreed, as did 67.8 percent of the males. The results would indicate that becoming physically fit was equally important to the seventh and eighth grade students, but somewhat more important to the females, than the males.

In retrospect, there are several factors which may have influenced the students' reactions to statements in the questionnaire. These include:

1. Male and female, seventh and eighth grade reactions may have differed because of the diversity in philosophy, techniques, and conditioning methods employed by the various Brookings Middle School coaches.

2. A student who had participated in two or three sports may have reacted to his or her experience in any one of them, while a

student in one sport could only have reacted to his experience in that sport.

3. The seventh graders and the females may not have been able to make accurate, objective assessments of several characteristics, due to lack of previous interscholastic athletic experience.

4. Some reactions could have been inoperative due to bias, deception, or fraudulence.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of the participants toward their experience in the interscholastic athletic program at the Brookings Middle School, in Brookings, South Dakota. A comparative analysis was conducted to determine the influence of sex and grade level on attitudes toward the athletic program.

A questionnaire was administered to all seventh and eighth grade males and females who had completed a season of at least one sport during the 1975-76 school year. The instrument was designed to elicit reactions to statements relative to: (1) the initial motivations which led the student to participate in athletics; (2) ways in which the actual athletic experience coincided or contrasted with the student's expectations; and (3) the place of athletics in each student's value system.

Conclusions

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions seemed warranted:

1. A high percentage of students indicated that their parents encouraged them to participate in athletics, and that they believed that their parents were proud of them because they were in athletics.

2. Peer group pressure and popularity have little influence in motivating students to participate in athletics.

3. Subjects in the present study believe that participation in athletics improves their self-concept.

4. Males are more likely than females to participate in athletics because they believe that it is something they can do well.

5. In comparison with the males, a greater percentage of the females believe that their athletic performance did not measure up to their pre-season expectations.

6. A higher percentage of males than females believe that their athletic experiences paralleled their expectations for that activity. A higher percentage of eighth grade students than seventh grade students believe that their athletic experiences paralleled their expectations for that activity.

7. More seventh grade students than eighth grade students believe that participation in athletics will assist them in becoming better citizens.

8. The fact that participation in athletics might lead to the acquisition of an athletic scholarship is not a major factor in motivating students to participate in athletics.

9. A large percentage of students believe that their athletic participation enabled them to develop a higher level of physical fitness than they had initially anticipated.

10. Although the learning of the fundamentals of a given sport is regarded as being valuable among most students, females consider this to be of greater importance than do the males.

11. A large percentage of students regard athletic practice as valuable, with greater emphasis being placed on it's importance by the eighth grade students.

12. More seventh graders than eighth graders, and more females than males, believe that winning is too important to the coach and his or her teammates.

13. A large percentage of the students believe that athletics is an important part of their educational experience, and would continue to have high priority throughout their adult life.

Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions may be of value in the continued development of the Brookings Middle School Athletic Program.

1. Since parental attitudes play a role in the students' level of athletic participation, the values of the athletic program should be clearly communicated to the parents.

2. The development of physical fitness is important to the participant and should be emphasized.

3. It would appear that a more intramural-oriented program with less emphasis on winning would be more desirable for females and seventh grade students.

4. Consideration should be given to reducing the length and number of practices for seventh grade participants.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the writer proposes the following recommendations for further study.

1. That a similar study be conducted which not only includes an analysis of the reactions by grade level and sex, but more specifically between seventh grade females and eighth grade females, and seventh grade males and eighth grade males.

2. That a similar study be conducted to determine the reasons why some students choose to drop out of the athletic program.

3. That a similar study be conducted to determine the reasons why some students do not participate in athletics.

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Comprehensive Experiments

1. In the experiment, the following was observed:

RESULTS

APPENDIX

- 1. In the first experiment, the following was observed:
- 2. In the second experiment, the following was observed:
- 3. In the third experiment, the following was observed:
- 4. In the fourth experiment, the following was observed:

In the course of the investigation, it was found that the results of the experiments are in general agreement with the theoretical predictions. The following table shows the results of the experiments in detail.

APPENDIX A

Personal Data and Directions for Questionnaire Recipients

PERSONAL DATA

Grade (circle one)

7 8

Sex (circle one)

male female

Circle each of the sports in which you participated and completed the season during the past school year. (1975-76)

BoysGirls

8th grade A football

7th or 8th grade A basketball

8th grade B football

7th or 8th grade B basketball

7th or 8th grade A basketball

7th or 8th grade gymnastics

7th or 8th grade B basketball

7th or 8th grade track and field

7th or 8th grade wrestling

7th or 8th grade track and field

Questionnaire Directions

This questionnaire is designed to determine your attitudes toward athletics in the Brookings Middle School. There are a number of statements and each one is followed by the letters: SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), Neutral (do not agree or disagree), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree). To indicate your feelings about each of the statements, circle the letters under each statement which best match your feelings about them. Please consider each statement carefully.

Example:

Basketball is my favorite sport.

SD

D

Neutral

A

SA

My Opinion of Athletics at the Middle School

1. My parents encouraged me to participate in athletics.
 SD D Neutral A SA
2. I participate in athletics because athletes are more popular than other students.
 SD D Neutral A SA
3. My coach gave me a "fair share" of his/her attention during practice.
 SD D Neutral A SA
4. I think athletics are great.
 SD D Neutral A SA
5. Athletics is the only thing I enjoy about school.
 SD D Neutral A SA
6. We spent too much practice time on fundamentals and not enough time playing the game.
 SD D Neutral A SA
7. I should be excused from practice when it interferes with my other after-school activities.
 SD D Neutral A SA
8. I thought my parents would be proud of me if I participated in athletics.
 SD D Neutral A SA
9. One of the reasons I am in athletics, is because my coach encouraged me to "come out."
 SD D Neutral A SA
10. One of the reasons I decided to participate in athletics was because most of my friends do.
 SD D Neutral A SA

11. I participate in athletics because we get dismissed early from school for athletic contests.
- SD D Neutral A SA
12. Participation in athletics will make me a "better citizen."
- SD D Neutral A SA
13. I think we practice too many nights a week.
- SD D Neutral A SA
14. I would like to be able to miss practice whenever I want.
- SD D Neutral A SA
15. I participate in athletics because it is something I can do well.
- SD D Neutral A SA
16. It is more important to me that my team wins than it is for me to play in the game.
- SD D Neutral A SA
17. I thought I would be able to play in the games more than I did.
- SD D Neutral A SA
18. I hope I can participate in some form of sport for the rest of my life.
- SD D Neutral A SA
19. Being an athlete makes me feel better about myself.
- SD D Neutral A SA
20. I am an athlete because that is one way of receiving a free college education. (athletic scholarship)
- SD D Neutral A SA
21. Competing in athletics was as much fun as I thought it would be.
- SD D Neutral A SA
22. I think winning became too important to my coach.
- SD D Neutral A SA

23. I originally "came out" for athletics because it was something new to try.
- SD D Neutral A SA
24. The practice sessions were too hard.
- SD D Neutral A SA
25. I thought that my parents would come and watch my practices and games more than they did.
- SD D Neutral A SA
26. I haven't done as well in athletics as I thought I could.
- SD D Neutral A SA
27. I "came out" for athletics for the fun of it.
- SD D Neutral A SA
28. I think winning became too important to my teammates.
- SD D Neutral A SA
29. Athletics are an important part of my life.
- SD D Neutral A SA
30. I became more physically fit than I had expected from athletics.
- SD D Neutral A SA
31. If I had to choose between athletics and another after-school activity, I would give up athletics.
- SD D Neutral A SA
32. Being on an athletic team was just what I had expected.
- SD D Neutral A SA
33. Athletics are a valuable part of the school program.
- SD D Neutral A SA
34. I am a better athlete than my coach thinks I am.
- SD D Neutral A SA

35. Becoming physically fit from the athletic workouts is just as important to me as actually competing in athletics.

SD D Neutral A SA

36. Learning the fundamentals is as important to me as competing in athletics.

SD D Neutral A SA

37. Being on an athletic team has made me more popular.

SD D Neutral A SA