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The Effect of Athletic Participation on Academic Achievement for Private High School Students

by

Jeff Johnson

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the College of Education

Lynn University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Educational Leadership

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The Effect of Athletic Participation on Academic Achievement for Private High School Students

by Jeff Johnson

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Abstract

Education's role in society is crucial for the sustainability of civilization (Ball, 2021). Education consists of people training people for the future and the betterment of humanity. Governments often prioritize education reform, and decision-makers and school leaders constantly look at ways to improve student gains (Ball, 2021). Further, improving the education system is an ongoing process that is an absolute necessity, and the intent behind this research was to contribute to that endeavor and promote progress.

The relationship between athletics and academic performance has been studied broadly in literature. However, there is a literary void and lack of delineated exploration regarding the impact of athletic participation for different target groups or school types (i.e., grade, age, gender, race, social-economic status, public, private, or charter schools). This research examined this area of exposure in student curriculum within the private high school setting.

A comprehensive research design was imperative to determine the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. A complete literature review created a framework for theory. As this was a study about private high school students, the best population to provide input and data are those who work in a private high school setting. The perceptions of fifty private high school professionals utilizing surveys befittingly assisted in determining the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement in private high schools.

Findings fully suggested that athletic participation positively affects academic achievement for private high school students. Thus, it should be a significant area of focus for private high school decision-makers, school leaders, and governing agencies. Recommendations for future research are provided, and this dissertation serves as a stimulus for future studies.

Key Words: student-athletes, sports, athletic participation, and academic achievement

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Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction to the Study

Sports are an essential and integral aspect of American society, as most people in America have either played or watched sports at least once in their lifetime (Macri, 2012). Those who participate in sports do so under three classifications: professionally, intramurally, or as amateurs. Sports on the professional and collegiate levels are very popular with the American public as they are seen on television, radio, print, and social media (Christiansen, 2022). Sports are also a big business in that billions of dollars are spent proliferating the professional and collegiate sports industries (Christiansen, 2022). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCSA Sports, 2022) recently passed a rule that college athletes can now be paid similarly to professional athletes through name, image, and likeness (NIL). These three terms comprise the *right of publicity*, a legal concept that allows intercollegiate student-athletes to promote a product or service (NCSA Sports, 2022). Many of the regulations of the NCAA restrict athletes from earning compensation from outside organizations through endorsements and sponsorships (Christiansen, 2022). As a result of changes like this new legislation, college sports are currently in a mid-shift of losing the amateurism label (Gerace, 2021; Jessop, 2021).

By contrast, youth and interscholastic sports are still considered amateur status. Playing sports in school appeals to many students, as few would question the notion that it is engaging for many middle and high school students (Rodesiler, 2017). Many consider it a large part of the high school experience, and they participate for reasons such as enjoyment, recreation, and competition. For other students and their parents, participating in sports perhaps leads to an eventual financial benefit. They feel they will likely receive monetary profits from their participation, like earning an athletic scholarship or securing a NIL deal (Fisher, 1996).

Physical education and athletics play a significant role in the high school education experience (Knox, 2007; Sitkowski, 2008; Tublitz, 2007). Moreover, physical education and education-based athletics are synonymous with a high school education. These focus on character-building principles while complimenting academics, whereas many life lessons can be better learned outside the classroom (Garcia, 2019; Pierce, 2019). These lessons can include hard work, determination, leadership, mental toughness, commitment, teamwork, improving socialization skills, practicing good values such as sportsmanship, and understanding how to manage adversity (Garcia, 2019). These are just a few documented intangible benefits and character-building qualities gained by participating in education-based athletics.

Past research claims organized sports are crucial in developing children into educated and well-rounded students (Sitkowski, 2008; Griffith, 2004; Schley, 2002). School leaders and athletic administrators promote this ideology as a mainstay in today's education curriculum, and this claim is often included in their schools' mission statements. The promotion of sports as a path toward maturity is supported by studies that have found that participation in extracurricular activities affects academic performance, attachment to school, and social development among high school students. Research has also linked activity participation with school engagement and academic success (Sitkowski, 2008; NHSAW, 2004; Martinez, 2016). Increased belief in this phenomenon lends credibility and attracts more attention to the correlation between physical education or athletic participation and academics. Termed as *education through the physical*, school leaders and decision-makers constantly look for ways to improve student gains. Trusting that athletic participation can assist this endeavor has historically garnered much support and interest. Over the last decade, there has been an increased interest in the correlation between

involvement in athletics and success in the classroom for middle school, high school, and even college students (Amos, 2013).

Anyone who cares about the future of our society should take an interest in ensuring that all children get an adequate and well-rounded education to prepare them for the future (Bhardwaj, 2016). Physical activity and athletic participation are essential parts of the learning experience. As an educator, historian, and advocate for equality in education, it is necessary to identify and address problems regarding the holistic education of all students (Bhardwaj, 2016). Sports serve as a great unifier in that all children can partake in games or contests in some capacity. People need to understand why they are doing so, beyond just for their entertainment or enjoyment. Holistic education includes sports participation, and this helps develop physical and mental health (Bhardwaj, 2016; Ivanova, 2018; Gerace, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

An ever-popular threat to this correlation between participation in athletics and success in the classroom is the rapidly growing professional influence in sports (NFHS, n.d.). There is a disappearance of the sacred play of amateurism. In contrast, youth do not play for the intangible benefits or the love of the game but rather for the prospect of garnering something tangible, such as a scholarship or money (NFHS, n.d.). For many, participation in high school sports places a young man or woman into a pipeline that leads directly to playing sports in college and even becoming a professional athlete (Sitkowski, 2008). It is even more pronounced with the NCAA's passing of the name, image, and likeness rule.

While parents of younger athletes are prone to be consumed by this enticement, the actuality and probability of this accomplishment are much less prevalent. Today, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA, 2022) states that less than 10% of high school student-

athletes play a sport in college, and the percentage of collegiate student-athletes playing professionally is even less. The NCAA breaks this data down by individual sports, though a deficient detail is the amount of scholarship money that each sport is allotted. It is often overlooked that most sports do not offer “full rides” but rather partial scholarships. Football still provides the most financial aid to student-athletes, as there are currently 85 full scholarships at the Division I level. In this case, a reward of this magnitude essentially serves as a lottery ticket for a better life for low-income families. It creates even more pressure on some children and leads to a problematic mindset. Some high school athletes laboring under the increased pressure caused by this professionalization compromise academics to participate at this level. In general, the professionalization of sports at the collegiate and high school levels has created a culture where athletics and academics appear to work at cross-purposes (Sitkowski, 2008; Martinez, 2016; Collins, 2022).

Therefore, school athletics must align with a school’s academic integrity. Fortunately, several studies (Bowen, 2012; Filsinger, 2012; Amos, 2013; Cole, 2014; Foye, 2017; Wretman, 2017; Mathy, 2020; Hairston, 2021) have shown that participation in extra-curricular activities can significantly improve the lives of students. Within the higher education system, scholars continue to address ways to best educate students as holistic human beings centered on the student experience and the academic experience (Weight, 2014). This exposes the need for current abstracts to be provided to stakeholders that more clearly define the impact of athletic participation on academic achievement. A detailed examination is an invaluable resource for these stakeholders focusing on the holistic curriculum of student-athletes at the high school, junior high, and even the lower levels for private, charter, and public institutions. The question, then, regarding whether or not participating in athletics may help student-athletes perform better

academically may be mired in the realities of the new pressures and tensions created between athletics and academics by the climate of the professionalization of sports in schools (Sitkowski, 2008; Collins, 2022). This research analyzed athletics and academics in a traditional sense, where there were no imbalanced practices in sports, as a process that can be modeled for future use in the private high school environment.

This trend of the professional influence on amateur sports has caused the developmental advantage of education-based athletics to be pushed to the backdrop (Collins, 2022). The concept that athletic participation positively helps students' academic success and achieve gains from a character-building standpoint is no longer the primary reason why people have their children play sports. While it might start that way when their children are younger, that changes over time. The older they get and the more successful they become, the more it causes people to become enamored with the potential tangible benefits of parenting economics (Doepke, 2019).

However, the intangible benefits of participating in sports are quantifiably perceptible. Athletics are needed to boost students' academic performance, and academically successful adolescents have higher self-esteem, have lower levels of depression and anxiety, are socially inclined, and are less likely to abuse alcohol and engage in substance abuse (Regier, 2011). Furthermore, academically successful adults are more likely to be employed, have stable employment, have more employment opportunities than those with less education and earn higher salaries, are more likely to have health insurance, are less dependent on social assistance, are less likely to engage in criminal activity, are more active as citizens and charitable volunteers and are healthier and happier (Regier, 2011). So, in essence, there are tangible benefits garnered from sports participation, even only at the amateur level. Despite the monetary gain of playing

sports professionally, it can be argued that participation in athletics on the amateur level is also lucrative from a long-term, mental toughness and character-building standpoint (Miller, 2022).

An answer to alleviate some of the professional influence on amateur sports is to provide more information and emphasized documentation about the relationship between athletic participation, physical activity, and sports engagement in conjunction with academic gains, student achievement, and success (Hariston, 2021). There is ample documented research (Bowen, 2012; Filsinger, 2012; Amos, 2013; Cole, 2014; Foye, 2017; Wretman, 2017; Mathy, 2020; Hairston, 2021) specific to this topic that already provides a consensus for athletic participation positively impacting academic achievement, but it is rarely broken down by different segments, populations, or school-types. The results are general and vague. There are numerous ways that it could further be delineated, and this is where there is a void in exploration and literature.

C. J. Wretman (2017) looked at school sports participation and academic achievement in middle and high school in the *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*. His work in 2017 was to expand research regarding the connections between physical activity and school achievement among middle school and high school students. He narrowed his focus to middle and high school students, though this is still too broad. While studies may separate different sample sizes by groupings like this, the findings remain vague, although most of these studies only focus on comparing students to student-athletes (Hairston, 2021). Therefore, future research must be precise by population, school type (i.e., private school), or both. In 2008, Sitkowski accomplished this by examining the effects of participation in athletics on academic performance among high school sophomores and juniors. By targeting these grade-level specific student groups (high school sophomores and juniors) that are impacted by athletic participation, it

provided detailed data that high school leaders can use. This resource will significantly assist with decisions regarding providing athletic and physical education at different levels or settings. Most findings about this topic should attest to a positive impact. Still, the degree may vary based on distinctive segments, such as age, race, gender, or school type (Ortega, 2022). This lack of delineated findings poses a problem for a private school, for example, because the true impact of athletic participation on academic achievement is unknown for this type of school.

Therefore, the specific segment that this review focused on was private high schools, which helped to fill the void in the private school athletic literature. Further, this study examined the relationship between athletics and academics for private high school students through the lens of private high school professionals. While the findings ultimately support that participation in sports and even physical education at the private high school level can improve grades and overall academic achievement, the feedback provides informative data. This data, acting as transformative research, allowed this study to answer the following research questions through detailed analysis and thorough examination.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the traits associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of private high school professionals about private high school student-athletes relative to their academic achievement?

Answering these questions elevates the comprehension of the correlation between academic performance and athletic participation for private high school students. In addition, this action research serves as a change agent specifically for private school education reform and provides a theoretical framework for future studies in the private high school setting.

Significance of the Study

The lack of delineated findings on the impact of athletic participation on behaviors linked to success at private high schools poses a problem for education reform advocates. Education reform is always a top priority and is hotly debated at the highest levels (Ball, 2021). Politicians are the leaders that represent the people (Ball, 2021). The value that they place on the American education system is ultimately what decides change (Ball, 2021). Whether it be personal, social, political, economic, or cultural development, the role of education cannot be underestimated. Today we have education on every aspect of life, which paves the way for the holistic development of the individual, society, and the nation (Bhardwaj, 2016). As positive strides have been made in valuing physical education, athletic participation, and engagement in sports relative to academic success, more publications, propaganda, and documentation must be needed to drive this encouragement further. Physical education is still a requirement in many school systems and districts, but it must continue to be pressed with a vigilant approach. Students, families, school leaders, and professional organizations must programmatically promote sports participation.

While there will always be other issues that face our country, the United States education system is one that needs continual improvement. A step in the right direction is to reengage in the ideal that holistic education is the most critical component of ensuring a future society. Education is an essential human virtue, a necessity of society, the basis of a good life, and a sign of freedom. Moreover, education tries to develop three aspects: physique, mentality, and character (Bhardwaj, 2016). Anything that can be done from a governmental standpoint to enhance these aspects and lead to student success should be cultivated, explored, reexamined, and promoted. It is time for a resurgence of data to support how physical activity and athletic participation can best develop these three aspects in our educational curriculum. This

information fills the literary void needed to continue improving education on a specific level.

However, it must be specific to all student populations or segmented by school types to provide quality recommendations for decision-makers, politicians, and change agents.

The fragment of education reform that pertains to the importance of physical activity and athletic participation remaining an essential part of the learning experience ties into the impact of sports participation at private schools. This type of research assists in glorifying the degree of the impact that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students. In the literature analysis, a consensus affirms that there is a positive effect on academic performance through athletic participation in schools. Though previous research has been limited to general populations and has not been specific to target groups, fewer studies examine this dynamic and break the results down demographically by grade, age, race, gender, or social-economic status. Even fewer are devoted to examining this phenomenon by the type of school - public, private, or charter. No statistical data or evidence supports any correlation between private high school students' athletic participation and academic achievement. Due to this lack of delineation, the degree of the participatory impact has yet to be deliberated. While always clearly defined, the measurement data varies amongst multiple studies. The absence of a detailed process with findings poses a research opportunity filled by this product.

This research fills that gap in athletic literature and is transformant about the value of participation in sports at the private high school level. It addresses how it can improve grades and overall academic achievement. Private school administrators can know the impact of athletic participation on behaviors linked to success in private institutions and be able to communicate this to the community. Moreover, athletic administrators at other private schools throughout the country can utilize this information to communicate to parents how students participating in

athletics affect their academic achievement as perceived by professionals in the industry. This enhanced comprehension of the correlation between academic performance and athletic participation in private high schools serves as a product for national, state, and local private school professional organizations and governing bodies to use for policymaking.

Lastly, providing information and helping add to physical education literature improves the private school student-athlete experience (Garcia, 2019). Understanding the educational benefits of participation in athletics should positively affect private school stakeholders to have garnered knowledge, insight, and understanding about why physical education is an integral part of a school's curriculum. When everyone agrees on this concept, the buy-in or collective response for participation is more accepted (Garcia, 2019). This will duly lessen the pressure on students whose parents drive them too hard. It also serves as a constant reminder to students about why they should focus on participating in athletics, which is for those intangible benefits.

To promote the idea that athletic participation betters the future of education, there is a prerequisite to understanding the history and evolution of the movement for physical education being required in schools. This is looked at in the theory of the literature review.

Theoretical Framework

This research provides qualified literature that increases comprehension about the correlation between academic performance and athletic participation in private high schools. This final product promotes participation in athletics for private high school students to benefit their academic achievement. Student involvement, such as participation in athletics, is essential for fostering a growth mindset in a learning environment, and this out-of-the-classroom participation is essential to qualify student involvement (Astin, 1985). Further, the educational gains attributed to the student-athlete are exemplified when part of the learning process is active

participation by the student (Astin, 1985). The fundamental principle that learning outside of the classroom is part of a student's overall curriculum lends credence to the conceptualization that athletic participation positively impacts academic achievement, regardless of the population segment being examined or the school type.

In addition to this research, assessing how participation in athletics affects academic achievement may reveal intrinsic qualities about the high school student-athlete, such as motivation and attitude, which increase academic gains. According to theorist Fritz Heider, motivation and attitude are significantly crucial for effective student learning. Private school professionals can connect the experience that student-athletes have to the balance theory, which is the psychology of motivation relative to attitude change (Heider, 2013). The perceptions by private high school professionals also reveal other qualities achieved through extracurricular activities that link the work of Heider and Astin to the aim of this examination.

Returning to the idea that participation in athletics is primarily for student engagement will reset a fundamental belief for many parents. This traditional view of participation will hopefully initiate a more realistic community outlook about why students should participate in athletics for academic gains and career success over the prospect of playing professionally with the potential to earn millions of dollars. Especially in the private school setting, many student-athletes who excel in the classroom are exemplars for living up to this traditional student-before-athlete model. Even this theoretical framework is formal in that it has sustained over time and explains why physical education was, at one time, added to the overall education curriculum (Collins, 2022). The value associated with athletic participation and physical education may vary by school, but ultimately it remains a requirement for the betterment of student involvement and their holistic educational experience.

Definitions

To provide clarity in reviewing this study, keywords and terms used throughout this dissertation are defined.

Student-athlete or *scholar-athlete* describes a student who participates in one or more sports while attending school. Although the term student-athlete does not appear in any standard English dictionary, it is routinely used in the United States for athletes participating in secondary and post-secondary school sports programs. Popular usage of the term student-athlete suggests widespread agreement in the culture and among academics that it is a term with either a favorable meaning or, at the very least, a benign or neutral one (Staurowsky, 2005).

Athletic participation refers to engaging in school-sponsored sports and competitions in interscholastic athletics. The school recognizes that the student represents the school in their high school participatory activity and must be enrolled or attending classes in grades 6 through 12 (Foye, 2017).

The term *academic achievement* can be measured in several ways. For this study, it consists of described behaviors linked to academic success by private high school professionals.

The term *private school* refers to an independent school founded, conducted, and maintained by a private group rather than by the government, usually charging tuition. A private school is a school that is not supported financially by the government and that parents have to pay for their children to go to (HarperCollins, n.d.).

A *private high school* professional is a teacher or coach with at least five years of experience in the industry to provide established feedback. They must work in a private high school and be at least 18 years old.

Summary

This research aims to promote participation in athletics for private high school students to benefit their academic achievement. Fostering student involvement supports Astin's fundamental principle that learning outside of the classroom is an invaluable part of the overall curriculum. Assessing how participation in athletics affects academic achievement also reveals many gained qualities, such as motivation, hard work, leadership, and practicing good sportsmanship (Heider, 2013; Garcia, 2019). In the end, these findings can be utilized by private school administrators and decision-makers when reforming their policies, practices, and curriculum. This research can serve as an overall "roadmap" for future studies and should inspire more studies on specific target groups or school types. Ultimately, all research adds momentum that continually proves that athletic participation enhances academic performance.

In the private school setting, where the focus is sometimes more on academic prowess, supplemented by extracurricular education in the arts and athletics, students, and parents, must understand that they are following a traditional model for educational success and avoid being influenced by the recent professional influence of sports. Given that the odds of making it professionally for sports are remote, investing in one's education is the safest path to career success (Fisher, 1996). Therefore, the best approach for academic gains is participating in athletics because it benefits academic achievement and the other intangible benefits associated with athletic participation.

A problem that exists with many families at private schools is because of paying tuition. Due to their affluent level of generational wealth, they are not as worried about their children's career longevity as they just want to see them succeed athletically (Ryan Dunn, 2016). They put pressure on children with a problematic mindset that feeds the professionalization of sports at the collegiate and high school levels, which has created a culture where athletics and academics

appear to be working against each other (Sitkowski, 2008; Martinez, 2016; Collins, 2022). The philosophy that athletic participation positively helps students' academic success and adds character-building qualities is no longer the overwhelming reason why parents entrench their children in sports.

To combat this phenomenon, more evidence and accentuated documentation about the benefit of athletic participation, physical activity, and sports engagement is needed and must be brought to the forefront (Papasideris, 2021). There is an opportunity for private school professional organizations and private school decision-makers to implement products like this that prove how education-based athletic participation aligns with academic principles (Papasideris, 2021). Moreover, specific segments, populations, or different school types must fill the literature gaps. Most of the existing studies looking at links between physical activity and academic achievement are limited by relatively small sample sizes and cross-sectional designs (Papasideris, 2021).

Playing interscholastic athletics in high school, while still considered amateur status, is a significant share of the high school curriculum as it plays a major role in the high school education experience (Rodesiler, 2017; Knox, 2007; Sitkowski, 2008; Tublitz, 2007). The impact of athletic participation on behaviors linked to school success and intangible benefits, such as character-building traits, claims that organized sports play a crucial role in this development (Sitkowski, 2008; Griffith, 2004; Schley, 2002). Further, sports participation helps develop physical and mental health (Bhardwaj, 2016; Ivanova, 2018; Gerace, 2021).

This research focused on the private high school setting. This study identifies the relationship between athletics and academics at private high schools, acting as transformative research, answering the question about what traits are associated with athletic participation that

leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes. It also provides the perceptions of private high school professionals about successful traits relative to academic achievement. This process elevates the comprehension of the correlation between academic performance and athletic participation in private high schools and assists in education reform.

There needs to be more information and data about athletic participation's impact on private school students' academic achievement. There is a need for more studies, which must be further broken down by target segments, populations, and school types (Hairston, 2021). Future research will fill these literary voids, but it also will assist in policy and decision-making at the federal, state, and local levels. Further, it serves as a transformation agent to solidify sports participation in the role of the school curriculum and drive program engagement. Knowledge will be shared. Specifically for private high schools, students, parents, and administrators will better communicate how important this promise is to maximize a child's learning experience.

By providing a resurgence of data to support how physical activity and athletic participation impact academic achievement for private high school students, private school organizations will pass this information down to private school administrators, who will know and communicate facts and findings to the community. In turn, athletic administrative organizations will pass this to athletic administrators nationwide at private schools, who can utilize this information to communicate with their constituents. Then, the collective dedication to promoting athletic participation in private schools will be more highly regarded (Garcia, 2019). From there, it will spill over into charter and public schools. Finally, all education stakeholders will benefit from knowing the value of increasing students' roles in the high school experience. Ultimately, this will be meaningful and contribute to improving our education system.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Introduction

Improving our education system is why studies are devoted to finding new and innovative ways to increase academic achievement. Much of the focus in educational research is on student gains. This study fills a literary void about athletic participation and physical activity relative to academic achievement for private high school students. The purpose of this chapter is to examine literature that relates to the research topic under study. This section provides theory and background about this subject, establishing a foundation for the effect of student involvement on the academic experience, and references studies that expose a void for more detailed analysis (Astin, 1985; Papisideris, 2021). This literature review exposes the need for detailed information but presents general findings on how extra-curricular participation affects school academics. Private high schools are addressed later in the study as private high school professionals provided feedback supporting intellectual growth as an intangible benefit for students participating in athletics, connecting their perceptions with mainstream belief and negating any uncertainties. The outcome of this process encourages participation in athletics for private high school students for the intangible benefits leading to academic gains.

Similarly, many studies found that participating in school sports is academically beneficial because they provide outside-of-the-classroom lessons, including intangible benefits that lead to academic improvement. Sitkowski (2008) referenced several studies over the years that have gone beyond finding only intangible advantages of participation in sports and argued that there is a direct correlation between participation in high school sports and students' academic success. He uses the term 'student-athlete' as it is impactful to describe the philosophy most accurately behind the notion that academics and athletics go together. The professionals in

this study utilized this popular label when describing students who play athletics. Whenever this label is used, it adds credibility to the cases researchers like Sitkowski cite about athletic participation positively influencing academic success. It is the degree to which this impact needs further reference because the effect can vary by segment. While the outcome does vary by population or type of school, more delineated studies need to continue to be conducted, and the findings need to be better publicized.

Theoretical Background

Within this scope of the study, two theorists, Alexander Astin and Fritz Heider, lay the groundwork for establishing this “student-athlete” success model. Alexander Astin, a distinguished theorist, describes *student involvement* as participation in the classroom and involvement in activities outside of the classroom. His theory emphasizes active participation by the student as part of the learning process. Fritz Heider, another well-known theorist, presented the attribution theory that encompasses motivation, which connects athletic participation to how student-athletes feel. Those who can feel good when they experience success in athletics have increased self-esteem and a positive self-image, which are critical components linked to higher academic achievement. These two researchers create a foundation for the ideology of why athletic participation positively impacts academic achievement.

Alexander Astin, a Professor Emeritus of Higher Education and Organizational Change at UCLA and the founding director of their Higher Education Research Institute explored the concept that out-of-the-classroom participation is essential to qualify student involvement. His work attests that active participation by the student is part of the learning process. Student involvement, high expectations, and assessments consist of the feedback cited as the necessary ingredients for fostering true educational effectiveness (Astin, 1985). The fundamental principle

that learning outside the classroom is part of a student's overall curriculum lends credence to the conceptualization that athletic participation positively impacts academic achievement. Astin has been an outspoken advocate of student involvement throughout his career, and as a result, many of his students and understudies have further probed and publicized his theory. For multiple studies citing Astin's work, substantial empirical data supports his claim (Friedlander, 1992; Moore, 1998; Mitchell, 2015; Ivanova, 2018).

Building upon Astin's theory about student involvement enhancing academic performance, many studies have focused on different activities (Lipscomb, 2007; Mathy, 2020). Clubs, the arts, and athletics are all extra-curricular opportunities that students can participate in outside the school day. However, with the ever-present popularity of sports and their contests, along with the physical education arm of the historical educational experience, the largest volume of research is geared toward the impact of academic gains for students who participate in sports. Also, this measuring technique is the easiest to quantify, especially when utilizing a standard such as test scores. Distinctively, sports contests are more popular due to the benefit for multiple parties involved. Sports contests are valued in many ways. Like a multi-faceted jewel, the surfaces of the sports contest may be valued economically, health-wise, and politically – to name but a few. After evaluating them relative to specific standards or rules, people may correctly express positive, negative, or neutral attitudes toward sports contests. Persons who approve of, prize, favor, or like sports contests in the economic realm, the health realm, or the political realm are performing an act of valuing. Acts of valuing are performed, at least if they are rational acts, out of the evaluation process. To illustrate more concretely, a businessperson may value the sports contest because it fulfills the economic standard of a profit-making activity; another person may value the sports contest because it meets a health standard of vigorous bodily

activity conducive to physical fitness; while a politician may value the sports contest because it contributes to a political standard of positive public visibility. Any sports contest may be evaluated from different points of view, and it fulfills the evaluative standards of a point of view (Fraleigh, 1983). This notion is part of the problem and shares in the responsibility for professionalism overtaking amateurism in the sports industry. Sports events, contests, and games are more followed, favored, and enjoyable than other activities. The energy and excitement exuded when watching or participating in a closely contested game can be exhilarating. At this moment, people typically forget about the innate value of participating in athletics, clubs, arts, and other extra-curricular activities. Instead, most people get carried away with a win-at-all-costs mentality. The amount of practice that led to the game's competitive nature is secondary, and the result is all that matters. Sports are considered American Culture 101. Despite the emphasis on other outside-of-the-classroom activities, athletics remains supreme in popularity.

Specific to amateur sports participation, results support student-athletes and academic achievement (Beal, 1998; Lumpkin, 2013). In 2009, a researcher named Nick Voinis found that student-athletes at one university demonstrated quantifiable gains in academic achievement regarding grade point average and graduation. 60% of the 235 student-athletes achieved a grade point average of 3.0 and above, and 36 had a 4.0-grade point average. In addition, 55 student-athletes graduated in 2009. The athletic department's APR score was calculated using data from 2004-08 (Voinis, 2009). Each student-athlete earned two points each semester; one for being eligible and one for remaining at the school (Gorman, 2010). While there is a preponderance of evidence like Lumpkin's and Voinis's that supports the concept that athletic participation positively affects academic achievement, there is always a greater need for expanded research in clubs, the arts, and other extra-curricular activities.

While analysis supports that physical education and athletic participation enhance academic performance, there are avenues by which this research can be applied and practiced. Schools need to develop a more ecological model of student behavior to build a physical environment that will contribute to, instead of inhibiting, routine physical activity during a school day (Sitkowski, 2008; Sailis, 2001). There is a need for empirical data to support and promote physical activity for students. The school or school district is responsible for providing physical opportunities to students while the focus is duly on academics. Due to the passage of many recent education reform policies, schools remain hyper-focused on test-score standards. As a result, they reduce non-core courses such as physical education (Wilkins & Graham, 2003). Wilkins and Graham delve into this postulation and find that teachers are reverting to direct instruction, drill, and ‘teaching to the test’ in classrooms nationwide (Wilkins & Graham, 2003). Further, they compared schools' test scores with the amount of time allocated to non-core subjects such as physical education. They found that the relationship between time in (core) areas and achievement was mostly statistically null (Wilkins & Graham, 2003). They also stated that schools that maintained at least one hour of physical education for students daily did better on tests. This push-pull dynamic between, what is known to be proven to help a student's academic achievement and what is popular, has created an imbalance of focus for school decision-makers. The more evidence that is prepared to support how physical education and athletic participation positively impact academic performance, the better the case it makes to eliminate this trend of ‘teaching to the test’ and reducing non-core course requirements. Rather, non-core courses such as physical education should be more encouraged and promoted within the school day structure.

Fritz Heider, an Austrian psychologist who published *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (1958), expands upon his creations of the balance and attribution theories. The balance theory is the psychology of motivation relative to attitude change. The attribution theory is a term used in psychology that deals with how individuals perceive the internal and external causes of everyday experience. He presented this attribution theory that encompasses motivation. The impact of motivation on students' learning in education is essential. Without motivation, learning is not possible. So, in education, motivation is effective in students learning. Due to motivation, students do any task and achieve the goal (Rehman, 2013).

Conceptually, student-athletes feel differently because of the success that inherently comes from playing a sport. Ultimately, these feelings transfer into the classroom and serve as a positive boost. From a broad-based perspective, a psychological benefit like this extends beyond the classroom and into one's life. Life lessons like these exemplify why sports participation is invaluable to a person's learning process. Furthermore, this psycho-educational principle sustains the prevalence that athletic participation is a fundamental necessity for raising youth. According to Fraser-Thomas in *Athletic Insight*, the benefits of youth sport participation include physical health, psycho-social development, and motor skills acquisition.

Historically, the parents and families of adolescents used to understand the innate value of athletic participation, which is one reason they enrolled their children in sports activities. Sports have been shown to foster ideals such as citizenship, social success, positive peer relationships, and leadership skills. Further, youth sports involvement has been related to adult career success and negatively associated with school dropout and delinquent behavior (Fraser-Thomas, 2006). To further this point, parents and families also understand that participation in sports competitions has many other intangible benefits, such as helping their child learn how to

make conventional decisions. The competitive sports experience is a laboratory for applying the skills for decision-making. Fraleigh (1983) reported that participation in competitive sports is often touted to help prepare children for the rigors of social existence as adults (Decker, 1995).

Heider was at the forefront of understanding behavior at a deeper level. He understood that his work would yield more study and help people understand the meaning behind what drives them. A study in the *American Journal of Health Promotion* in 2018 outlined that sports participation at the age of twelve was associated with better mental health in young adulthood. A cross-sectional study using self-administered questionnaires was administered to 680 males aged between 20 and 35. Results were measured by the short version of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale and mental distress with five items of The Short Form Health Survey (SF-36) scale. It was analyzed using a binary logistic regression model. The purpose of this examination was to discover retrospectively whether sports participation (SP) and competitive sports (CS) at the age of 12 years old were associated with mental health and health behavior in young adulthood among males (Appelqvist et al., 2018). Better mental health is a driving factor that leads to good behavior and intrinsic motivation. To be intrinsically motivated to achieve success is a learned trait and is not inherited. Essentially, according to Heider's behavioral theory, this study serves as an example to reaffirm sports' impact on the individual. Sports improve mental health, promoting positive behavior and motivation for other areas of an adolescent's life, such as doing chores, developing interpersonal relationships, and on their academic endeavors.

Further using Heider's motivational synopsis, Camire (2009) conducted qualitative research examining athletic participation's non-academic benefits. He found that there is a widespread belief that sports can be used to promote life skills and positive youth development.

However, little research has examined athletes' perspectives on developing life skills in school-based sports programs involving many youths. In addition, research has yet to examine how youth experience support, communication, and negotiation processes with parents and coaches in high school sports. These elements are fundamental in life skill development (Camiré, 2009). This delves into how high school student-athletes felt about themselves regarding their perspectives on support, communication, negotiation, and life skill development. Motivation and self-esteem are linked to the gains from participation in sports. This supports education-based athletics being synonymous with education in terms of character building. Again, those life lessons that are possibly best learned outside of the classroom benefit academic gains. The results of Camire indicate that: while variability was observed, many athletes believed they were able to negotiate many aspects of their sports participation with parents and coaches; a large number of athletes believe they received adequate support from parents and were able to communicate with coaches; and athletes believed high school sports participation allowed them to develop several life skills that could be transferred to other life domains (Camiré, 2009). Thus, from an intrinsic motivation perspective, the benefit of athletic participation yields attributes that are effective traits of students' learning capabilities indefinitely.

The academic and non-academic gains achieved through participation in athletics make students more likely to stay in school, behave better, and ultimately, be better citizens. However, most studies that prove this point concentrate on symptoms, not causal constructs (Sitkowski, 2008). To be convincing, studies must examine how participation in sports contributes to positive belief systems in young people and how sports improve young adults' achievement motivation (Sitkowski, 2008; Jacobs, 2002). In the area of motivational achievement, it has been found that self-competence beliefs are critical mediators of actual achievement in various

domains (Jacobs, 2002). Relative to Heider's attribution theory, children perform better and are more motivated to select increasingly challenging tasks when they believe they can accomplish a particular task (Jacobs, 2002). Motivation is essential for maintaining involvement in extracurricular activities, such as sports (Jacob, 2002). A critical theoretical finding in the context of these studies is that children's competence beliefs decline when they enter middle and then high school and that most students experience some level of a decline in perceptions of academic self-competence as they enter junior high school (Sitkowski, 2002; Jacobs, 2002). Participation in extra-curricular activities typically starts when students enter sixth grade.

Astin and Heider's theories facilitate other research that ultimately traces to the underlying fact that athletic participation positively impacts academic achievement. This impact is multi-faceted and includes acquiring traits that make for better learning students. Internal motivation and better mental health are associated with physical activity creating an equation for an intellectual growth mindset. Essentially, attitude is the rudimentary factor, in conjunction with active participation by the student, that most affects the learning process. These constraints are what theorists like Astin and Heider provide that link their research to studies about students and educational effectiveness.

Modern-day and future researchers can reference the information in this section as an origin for qualifying the "student-athlete" label. The student-before-athlete model establishes a framework, whereas the student-athlete is, in essence, the benefactor of the positive effect that athletic participation has on academics. Throughout this review, theorists and studies have continuously shown that there are intangible benefits for students who participate in physical activities, instituting a framework for further analysis of the phenomenon of athletic participation's effect on academic achievement.

Physical Education in Schools: Athletics and Physical Activity

Student-athletes must engage in the student-before-athlete model, where academics comes first in their priorities. Faculty, staff, and administration must also collectively adhere to the value of this model, as it should support the overall goal of providing a well-rounded education. A current trend in the United States education system is to promote a 21st-century learning environment where skills such as critical thinking and collaboration are at the forefront. Studies have revealed that using Athletics and Debate assists in developing competencies among secondary school learners and facilitates qualities such as building confidence, promoting citizenship, communication, creativity, imagination, and social skills (Manyasi, 2019).

A study in 2019 focused on analyzing the motivation, study habits, self-discipline, and academic performance of 83 high school student-athletes. The results showed that as to motivation, the respondents were driven to prepare, train hard and make personal sacrifices to achieve excellence and to get into the winner's circle (Garcia, 2019). Sacrifice, training hard, and playing to win are proficiencies inherently taught when students participate in sports. From an early age, adolescents who play sports quickly learn about the importance of practice and that *practice makes perfect*. Further, athletes must sacrifice their time to practice improving. These life lesson transfers from the fields, courts, and water into the classrooms and future workplaces.

Many student-athletes recognize these developmental traits and the intangible benefits of playing sports. Those same 83 student-athletes felt that in terms of their study habits, they gave their best effort on exams and quizzes, appropriately participated in class activities and discussions, and successfully tendered all academic requirements. They also strongly agreed that their participation in school athletics helped them develop better time management skills and that they showed discipline and stayed focused. (Garcia, 2019) The perceptions by student-athletes

produce similar results as the quantitative studies measuring grade point averages do; that athletic participation enhances academic achievement. However, there is the added element of the out-of-the-classroom rewards (i.e., time management) that they also recognize. This case strengthens the belief that sports participation provides many personal and academic benefits.

Comparably, Cole (2014) focuses on sports participation and academic achievement for high school students and adds self-efficacy to the analysis. Academic self-efficacy refers to one's confidence to perform typical academic behaviors, master different areas of coursework, and structure environments conducive to learning (Bandura, 1997; Cole, 2014; Zimmerman, 2002). Here another researcher adds yet another perspective from the student-athlete standpoint. Athletic self-efficacy refers to one's confidence in their ability to be successful in their chosen sport (Cole, 2014; Vealey, 1986). Ultimately, Cole's study concluded that student-athletes had high GPAs and academic self-efficacy scores. This reflects that student-athletes perceive the effect of athletic participation on academic performance as positive.

To further review how student-athletes perceive their athletic participation and its correlation to their academic performance, Paule (2011) conducted interviews with 30 collegiate non-revenue athletes. They were randomly chosen from a sample pool of 9,231 athletes nationwide. The interviews focused on how athletes juggle their athletic schedules with their academic requirements (Paule, 2011). Researchers transcribed the interviews until they were able to identify themes. All 30 student-athletes identified at least one common academic benefit attributed to their athletic participation. Generally, it should be noted that athletes were more positive when discussing their academics (Paule, 2011). Student-athletes' attitudes and approach towards their role in the classroom signal more credence as to how they feel when participating in sports. When this is the case at the post-secondary level, it has a trickle-down effect on lower

school levels. Historically, high school and amateur sports follow the lead of collegiate and professional sports. High school athletes want to become college athletes, and college athletes aspire to be professionals. This trend is infectious for younger children when they see older athletes desiring to be good students.

There are negative perceptions about athletics and physical education in schools (Hobneck, 2003). Commonly, there is the belief that athletics and physical education distract from the traditional classroom learning environment and that core classes are more critical than non-core classes. Another misconception is that schools that place a higher value on athletics often bargain it in exchange for their academic prowess. Lastly, some detractors do not want to acknowledge that it is athletic participation that yields a positive effect on academic achievement. While several studies have shown that students who participate in athletic activities perform better in school, it is unclear whether this association results from positive academic spillovers or the influence of unobservable factors (Rees, 2010).

To dispel these myths, studies have shown that there is no trade-off when a school, college, or institution emphasizes athletics relative to the fallacy that they may somehow compromise their academic integrity. On the contrary, the more that a high school produces, winning teams offer more sports and expand the number of students who can participate in athletics, the better a school does academically (Bowen, 2012). This view conceptually adds reliability to what can be considered a growing effect once there is trust in the student-before-athlete model for academic performance. This growing effect is a belief that having success in sports is a scholastic enhancer. Bowen found that high school athletics are balanced with academic success. Based on the data we examined from Ohio public high schools, an emphasis on athletic success and participation is associated with higher scores on standardized tests and

higher graduation rates. Moreover, high school students participating in sports have higher grades and standardized test scores in mathematics and language arts courses (Broh, 2002). McNeal (1995) found that student-athletes were 1.7 times less likely to drop out of school. High school student-athletes have also self-reported higher education aspirations, diligence in homework completion, and low absences (Bowen, 2012; Marsh, 1992). Studies like this that include hard facts and data to support the promotion of successful sports enrichment and athletic participation should be more credible. These types of abstracts must be duplicated and promoted to the public.

Because the ‘dumb jock’ stereotype remains prevalent, student-athletes are often not seen as serious students. Consequently, the faculty may have lowered expectations of them...[which] makes it easier for many students to prioritize athletics above academics (Stansbury, 2003). This external factor will convolute the integrity of further research because it implies that student-athletes may have it easier. Stansbury states that the social experiences in college are expanded and enhanced for students by providing activities like intercollegiate athletics, intramurals, and other co-curricular activities. This ultimately derives back to the underpinning of most research. Even when there is adversity to cloud the findings to support the impact of athletic participation on academic performance, most of the substantiated research contradicts such sediment and confirms the hypothesis. For example, comparing in-season versus out-of-season student-athletes and their academic performance leaves little ambiguity about the impact because it analyzes similar subjects. Over one grading period, participants in the current study were 123 high school students from five rural western New York schools. The five schools were chosen because of their similarities in rural settings and grading (GPAs are based on a 100-point scale). The results of this investigation supported the hypothesis that high school student-athlete participation in

sports does not endanger but enhances academic performance. This was based on grade point averages, and student absences were accounted for. The author contacted the school counselor to obtain this information at all five schools (Silliker, 1997). Here is another study that includes facts and data to support the promotion of successful sports enrichment and athletic participation. Therefore, when looking at academic achievement for any target population or school setting, one would assume that there will be a positive impact at the conclusion, with a varying degree of the resulting influence.

Physical Education is synonymous with athletic participation because it qualifies as physical activity when finding its place within the academic curriculum. The relationship between academic performance and Physical Education aligns similarly within the school system. Trudeau (2008) focused research on the broad-based sector of school-based physical activities, which includes physical education (PE), free school physical activity (PA), and school sports. Quasi-experimental data indicate that allocating up to an additional hour per day of curricular time to PA programs does not affect the academic performance of primary school students negatively, even though the time allocated to other subjects usually shows a corresponding reduction (Trudeau, 2008).

Similarly, when researching the effect of physical education on academic achievement in schools, past studies equivalently yield positive results with substantial data to support this hypothesis. However, as previously stated, past research has been mildly skewed using a single measurement (i.e., grade point averages). While this is clearly defined, the gauge varies amongst different studies. Trudeau provides an example of using grade point average. An additional curricular emphasis on Physical Education may result in grade point average gains. Such findings strongly suggest a relative increase in performance per unit of academic teaching time.

Thus, Tredeau states that Physical Education does not take time from other subjects and does not negatively impact student academic achievement. In contrast, adding time to “academic” or “curricular” subjects by taking time from physical education programs does not enhance grades in these subjects and may be detrimental to health. This work capsulizes the athletic and academic relationship by stating how this correlation has been the subject of extensive discussion between advocates and skeptics of PE, school PA, and school sports programs (Tredeau, 2008). This notion further supports the need for further examination, though many of the components of this work provide valuable data from their quasi-experimental and longitudinal studies. Ultimately, it essentially shows a positive link between GPA and PA participation.

In another study where the measurement was not only grade point averages but also absences and FCAT scores, data were collected in 2081 from randomly selected female and male high school students who identified as athletes at ten different public Senior High schools in Miami Dade County. The overall analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between athletic participation and educational performance. On average, student-athletes were absent only a few days from school per year, and athletes earned significantly high cumulative grade point averages (JacAngelo, 2003). The study also referenced that student-athletes scored high on the FCAT in reading and mathematics. Other rewards mentioned about athletic participation, as detailed by JacAngelo, were via the Carnegie Commission Report (Poinsett, 1996). The Carnegie Foundation is a private organization that explores all matters of education policy. This asserted that athletic programs promote responsible social behaviors, academic success, confidence in physical abilities, appreciation of personal health and fitness, and strong social bonds with individuals and institutions (JacAngelo, 2003).

Unlike using grade point average as the measurement, a similar quantitative instrument is SAT score. Two studies where the SAT was instead used to examine the importance of physical activity and physical education in predicting academic achievement were conducted in the early 2000s. In a longitudinal study with an enormous participant sample, Grissom (2005) utilized an extensive California database of 884,715 students to evaluate the relationship between physical fitness and academic achievement over one school year. Grissom also included students' SES and gender. Findings supported a positive relationship between physical fitness and academic achievement assessed by the Stanford Achievement Test 9* Edition (Stevens, 2008). In the other study, it was found that Tremarche, Robinson, and Graham (2007) compared the English and Language Arts and Mathematics standardized test scores of fourth-grade students from two school districts located in the same state that varied on the amount of physical education provided for students. The authors found that students who received more time in physical education scored significantly higher on the English and Language Arts test (Stevens, 2008). Comparatively, in looking at test scores as a model for assessment, the results are the same regarding athletic participation's impact on academic performance. It continues to be positive and further demonstrates that a positive relationship is prevalent. However, this assessment strains for a more detailed examination in different school settings.

These studies explain why schools should have no negative perceptions about athletics and physical education. The consensus of findings continually proves that athletic participation positively affects academic achievement. Singh (2013) provides a comprehensive literature review of other researchers studying this phenomenon. The author's examination of other studies is extensive and very applicable to dispelling myths about the scholastic gains of athletic participation in schools. Students who participated in sports benefitted in various ways, not only

academically through increased grade point averages but through greater school involvement, better self-esteem, and social skills. A documented study conducted at the University of Miami School of Medicine by Field, Diego, and Sanders in 2001 stated that students with a high level of exercise had better relationships with their parents, were less depressed, spent more time involved in sports, used drugs less frequently, and had higher grade point averages than did students with a low level of exercise. More abstracts, with supporting data promoting sports enrichment and athletic participation, must be replicated for different segments. Lastly, Singh provided a preponderance of the evidence from the reviewed studies showing how school-age students' involvement in exercise and sports, especially adolescents, can provide many social benefits, inevitably leading to better academic outcomes (Singh, 2013).

A higher fitness level was positively related to better grades (Singh, 2013).

Notwithstanding, the physical health component of staying active is more important than just increasing academic achievement for students. Regardless of age, physical activity is required to live a healthy life. Physical inactivity is now the fourth leading cause of death worldwide (Allison, Bird, McClean, 2017). A pronounced effect of participating in sports is that it requires one to be active. Early engagement in physical fitness can assist in healthy physical development for children. Moreover, evidence is accumulating that the onset of many chronic diseases of adulthood lies in childhood (Allison, 2017), and instilling the value of exercise into children can help offset future health problems. A 2012 Mott poll suggested that not getting enough exercise, childhood obesity, and stress were among the top concerns for children (Edwards, 2012).

Glanz (2008) examined health behavior and education. He proclaimed that theory-driven health behavior changes interventions and programs require an understanding of the components of health behavior theory and the operational and practical forms of the theory. Programs to

influence health behavior, including health promotion and education programs and interventions, will benefit community participants when a health behavior theory guides the program or intervention. Health behavior theories identify the targets for change and the methods for accomplishing these changes (Glanz, 2008). This supports the indication that more literature and advocates are needed. When communities truly engage in healthy behavior, the value of health will augment and translate to their culture. An example of this is when hospitals offer health classes. As nothing is more important than one's health, there is a quote that *no matter how much you have* (i.e., money, a successful career, a happy family), *nothing can supersede being healthy*. Chuck Pagano, a famous football coach who was the Head Coach of the Indianapolis Colts from 2012-2017, once said, "If you do not have your health, you do not have anything." Glanz looked at health behavior and education from his own experiences, frustrations, and needs, as well as the desire to synthesize the diverse literature and draw clear linkages between theory, research, and practice in health behavior and education (Glanz, 2008). Health education research is dated and needs more current reviews. Basch (1985) conducted one of the first evaluations that analyzed the implementation of a school health education curriculum. The results indicated that the curriculum positively affected students' learning.

There are many schools in America that include health and physical education as part of their education curriculum (Hardman, 2008). However, compared to the academic curriculum, it often falls secondary, especially at more academically inclined institutions. On a global scale, the issue of relevance and quality of Physical Education curricula is becoming significant in many countries. An emerging theme not apparent in Worldwide Survey I is referenced by teachers and significant others that pupils are no longer seeing the relevance or significance of Physical Education as a school subject. The experiences acquired from unwilling engagement in

competitive sport-related activity are not meaningful. In some instances, there appears to be a much more resounding rejection of Physical Education as a legitimate school activity (Hardman, 2008). American private and charter schools do not have to follow the same guidelines as public schools. There is a different accountability structure in place to require an emphasis on health and physical education. Governmental influence often dictates school districts' ideals, which trickle down to the schools. The Department of Education, the federal division responsible for overseeing our education system, must continue to take a historical approach in demanding that health and physical education are the highest priority for students. This belief traces its roots back to the ancient Greeks and the writings of Plato (1902). Plato held that participation in sports and physical activity was necessary for building healthy bodies and developing moral character in Athenian elites (Edwards, 2012).

In 1956, President Eisenhower established a President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS). It was comprised of 20 private citizens as appointed by the President. The President's Council promotes, encourages, and motivates the development of physical fitness and sports programs for all Americans. One of the council's oldest programs, the President's Challenge Youth Fitness Testing Program, started in 1966 with the implementation of the President Physical Fitness Award (Vidmar, 1992). Unfortunately, as time has passed and there has been turnover in the oval office, this program is no longer active. There is a need from the highest authority to reinvigorate and restress the importance of physical fitness to the states. Then, the influence will go to school districts through the Department of Education and the individual states. Then the hope is that the non-public institutions will follow suit as trends in education often lead to change, regardless of school type.

The government's role in determining the student experience and creating a positive learning environment is central (Utomo, 2022). The curriculum set forth and the value placed on physical activity will assume concentration (Utomo, 2022). History has indicated that this value is a priority. Schools have provided physical activity to American children and youth for over a century (Pate, 2006; Sulz, 2021). Physical Education has been an institution in American schools since the late 1800s, and school sports have been a growing component of the educational enterprise since the early 1900s. Traditionally, students have engaged in physical activity during recess breaks in the school day and by walking or riding bicycles to and from school (Pate, 2006; Sulz, 2021). However, as the world moves into the 21st century, alarming health trends are emerging, suggesting that schools need to renew and expand their role in providing and promoting physical activity for our nation's young people (Pate, 2006; Sulz, 2021). National and global groups promote physical activity in schools, such as the American Heart Association (AHA) and World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2022).

As the federal government sets and provides education policy to the states, the states pass it down to the schools, ultimately leading to the teachers. A school's faculty is the most influential determinant in providing quality instruction. The teaching style employed by the teachers is integral in achieving positive consequences in physical education students (Leo, 2022). While some studies already show that athletic participation positively impacts academic achievement, the incentive behind this topic is to create better students in the classroom. When understanding the holistic gains students achieve through sports, learning about effective techniques will enhance the overall educational experience (Leo, 2022; Miller, 1992).

On the global scale, in Ourban's (2018) journal, the author examines the relationship between sports participation, parental support, self-esteem, and academic achievement in

Pakistan. Ourban perfectly exemplifies the premise behind this study in that in every society, one of the main aims of parents and teachers for the students is to succeed better academically (Ourban, 2018). Shephard conducted another non-US study for a younger target group in 1984. As an early researcher, Shephard delves into this topic for younger children in elementary school. This study consisted of 546 subjects attending two traditional parochial schools in Quebec. It was an experimental plan where students were enrolled in strong development within physical education classes during the program's first two years. After the first year of observation, the control group had slightly better marks than the experimental subjects, thus furthering the notion that physical activity positively impacts academic grades. The researchers utilized tests and report cards to measure these results. This strategy is another technique that shows the abundance of possible research opportunities. All of this supports how different studies can be done on the impact of athletic participation on academic performance.

There have been many previous studies on the influence of sports participation on academic achievement (Shephard, 1984). Despite the negative perceptions about athletics and physical education in public and private schools, or the “dumb jock” connotation, the results of studies substantiate that physical activity positively impacts academic performance. No more general studies are needed to prove this theory that athletic participation enhances academic achievement. Regardless of the type of measurement used (GPA, SAT, graduation rates, standardized tests, the number of absences), the data of many studies point to the fact that the effect of physical education on academic outcomes is favorable. The accuracy of the overall findings may be compromised because the researchers may not consider all the options for following up on results (Creswell, 2017). However, it is foreseeable that the findings will always yield the same result regardless of the analyzed population. The degree by which the impact is

shown will vary by different segments, and that is where this research can grow. Different regions, different types of schools, and different student groups may produce different levels of findings. More research on school sports participation can and should be done (Pate, 2006). The only area of deficiency is to delineate the positive findings segments such as grade, age, gender, race, social-economic status, and public, private, or charter schools. This creates an opportunity for future researchers to produce delineated studies.

Limitations and Considerations

Using search engines such as Google, Google Scholar, Yahoo, and independent library online searches with keywords “private schools, athletic participation, academic achievement, student-athlete, academic performance” for 2017-2022, there was a significant void in studies. In all these studies, private schools were nowhere to be found. Further, there were more geared toward public schools before 2015, as referenced, though they were vague in describing the outcomes. The research consensus proves that athletic participation has positive academic benefits, but this reinforces the need for more current research. More evidence and accentuated documentation about the benefit of physical activities in schools, such as athletic participation and partaking in physical education, is needed for private schools and diverse segments or different school types to fill this literary gap (Papasideris, 2021).

One theory about the absence of more current studies is because of the overwhelming consensus of research concluding similar findings. This ended the argument, and it was proven that there were positive benefits from athletic participation in academics for students of all ages. Thus, nothing more is needed to be done. However, this is where the problem still lies. Times change, and numerous variables yield a more in-depth look at this phenomenon. Moreover,

findings always need to be updated. Lastly, the impact might vary by segment or school type, so robust data about the relationship between athletics and academics must be rejuvenated.

After looking for modern research of similar nature, the lack of studies and need is noteworthy, along with different ways to appropriately measure the implementation of health programs on a grander scale. How health is taught in schools is too important not to be better addressed. Concurrently, the lack of studies that delineate this phenomenon is equally concerning. Though this study differentiates research by type of school (i.e., private high school) for student-athletes, there needs to be more statistical data or evidence about the effectiveness of health implementation programs for different targets. The need for research is just another way to promote, advocate, and expose the public to the importance of health and physical education.

Recommendations

One way to stimulate education about health and physical education is through sports. The popularity of sports, especially in schools, facilitates a prodigious approach to increasing awareness and the prominence of health. Children see professional athletes on television and want to be like them. Athletes are role models to adolescents; most athletes are in good physical shape. There is a common perception that sports people are viewed as role models and have a correspondingly positive impact on individuals and the broader community. This perception has resulted in several programs where prominent and successful sports people have been promoted to the community as role models to influence sports participation rates. The proposed link between sporting success and health has been used to justify engaging successful sportspeople to disseminate healthy messages to the community (Payne, 2003). By educating children who aspire to be like older athletes, they will desire to engage in the traits that are needed, like training. Moreover, children benefit from a health standpoint when they partake in sports.

Physical activities, such as running, are considered sports. If a person is active, their health is increased. As society continues to engage in sports as entertainment, schools must honor this cultural effect and keep sports at the forefront of the school. By offering and celebrating sports, students are engrained in participating in them, whether as a spectator or a participant. Either way, an underlying message about the importance of good health is conveyed.

A school's athletic program often overshadows the institution itself. Current evidence indicates that success, and at times merely participation, in college athletics provides several benefits, including direct financial gain and indirect benefits such as increased university exposure and, in turn, increased financial contributions and student applications and enrollment (Goff, 2000). Another paradigm is that when people think about the Connecticut Huskies, they first think about their women's basketball program and the success they have had. When people think about the Michigan Wolverines, they think about their football program, not their exceptional engineering program. People do not attend a school's science class, but they will show up at its sporting event. This, by nature, demonstrates how society is enthralled with physical activity. In essence, the athletic component of achieving good health is delivered. Massive workout facilities continue to be built on college campuses, and gyms like Lifetime Fitness and LA Fitness are growing nationwide. Overall, the public tends to have a general understanding that health is essential. It is just that this value can always be heightened and documented. Mik-Meyer (2014) identified that health might not be necessary for some. Other quality-of-life measures can be defined in different ways, and a biomedical evaluation combined with values that praise self-control is only one of many possibilities. We also need to remember that the people who define a healthy and good life and formulate policies on health are the segment of society with the most economic and educational resources (Mik-Meyer, 2014).

Adding the other benefits of physical activity and sports participation, such as increasing mental health, raising academic achievement, and building character education traits, provides further research opportunities.

Physical activity needs to be mandatory in all schools. Students need to start physical activity early in life. One reason for starting physical activity early is to get in the habit of working out to where it is a part of one's lifestyle. Another reason is that it helps a person be mentally and physically healthy. If one is healthy, one feels better about themselves. Physical activity is being less talked about each day. It is one of the reasons why the United States is number one for obesity rates (Stark, 2017). It is the obligatory responsibility of decision-makers in the United States education system to improve overall student gains. As a society, there is the belief that academically successful students are more likely to be employed in the capitalist governmental system and thus live a better quality of life. Part of preparing the youth is through education in the mind and body. A student's holistic education is most important to our future society. Holistic thinking is an effort to regain this essential element of our being (Miller, 1992).

By promoting this notion to education reform change agents, with governmental support and the culture of sports in America sustaining, health and physical education will continue to be prevalent in our society and academia. The quest is then to create an uptick in attention so that everyone values health and physical education initiatives as a top priority. This influence will start at public schools, and charter and private schools will follow. As more detailed studies illustrate the importance of participating in sports, interscholastic athletics, and physical education, more credence will lend to taking over our belief system. In the end, our culture will amend to benefit children and adults by reducing the number of health-related issues, lowering obesity rates, and becoming an overall healthier society.

Conclusion

This study examines the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. This review addresses a gap in the literature via the type of school. This research may contribute to future, current, and past studies on the role of private education through physical activity and sports and athletics in education. Researchers at all levels have examined the effects of co-curricular activities on academic performance for years. To adequately assess the effect that athletics has on academic performance, more in-depth reviews of these studies need to be done (Stansbury, 2003). This literature review aids in this process and serves as a significant step in the right direction toward obtaining that aim.

A complete literature review created a framework for theory. This review established a foundation for the effect that student involvement has on academic achievement. It references studies that expose a need for more detailed analysis (Astin, 1985; Papisideris, 2021) while enhancing knowledge about the correlation between athletic participation and physical activity relative to academic performance. This method aids in answering the research question about what traits are associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes.

As this literature review has exhibited, previous research has shown that athletic participation can enhance the academic achievement of student-athletes at many school levels (Schley, 2002). While many studies support this general concept, more examination still needs to delineate the outcome amongst different target populations or school types. Furthermore, this body of research needs continual review and reexamination as the education landscape is fluid. Also, with current budget constraints threatening the existence of athletics, more research needs to be conducted so that education leaders can become informed about the role of athletics in the educational experience for high school students (Schley, 2002; Utomo, 2022).

Astin's (1985) emphasis on student involvement in fostering educational effectiveness explains why it is essential for adolescents to be engaged in extracurricular activities. Heider's balance theory (1946) about motivation and attitude for learning elucidates the psychological benefits students gain through playing sports. The attribution theory (1958) is connected to athletic participation because student-athletes can feel good if they experience success from athletic competition. In addition, many students feel good about themselves if they make the team, regardless of its success. The sense of belonging to such a prestigious group, an athletic team, increases self-esteem. High self-esteem and a positive self-image are critical components of high academic achievement.

Parker (2016) conducted a study to put this framework into inquiry. An eight-month quasi-experimental, randomized treatment field study administered an attribution-based motivation treatment (Attributional Retraining: AR) to student-athletes who differed in perceived control beliefs in a two-semester online course. Simple slope regression analyses revealed that the AR (vs. no-AR) treatment assisted competitive student-athletes with low control beliefs by increasing perceived success in the course, improving year-end course grades, and reducing course withdrawals. These results demonstrate the benefits of an attribution-based motivation treatment for vulnerable student-athletes regarding perceived course success, performance, and persistence in transitioning from high school to college (Parker, 2016).

Many other studies, like Parker's, support the effect of motivation on students engaged in physical activities. These studies produced results that provided the degree of athletic participation's effect on academic achievement. Other referenced studies by researchers such as Amos, Beal, Filsinger, and Wretman provided data to support the impact of athletic participation on academic outcomes. The work of Sitkowski and Gorman provided opportunities for further

research geared toward different target markets. This review examined multiple studies that supported the notion that physical education and participation in athletics promote positive attributes that enable students to succeed better in the classroom. It further provided quantifiable traits associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes.

Physical Education is synonymous with athletic participation because it qualifies as a physical activity within the educational extra-curriculum. These studies further exemplify why no negative perceptions about athletics and physical education should exist. The importance of this fact cannot be overstated, as physical activity promotes a healthier lifestyle, which leads to a better quality of life.

Examining literature on this research topic provided theory and background about this subject and reinforced the importance of physical education and health in society. Government plays a significant role in the influence of this curriculum on the federal, state, and local levels. Including this value in school requirements benefits children and leads to a healthy lifestyle into adulthood. A student-athlete inherently garners this value through their participatory obligation by partaking in sports. The term 'student-athlete' best describes how athletics and academics coincide. Education professionals use this popular label when describing students who play sports for their school. If student-athletes take the traits they learn through sports and apply them to the classroom, they will have the necessary tools to succeed. If they transfer their confidence and motivation into any other life context, including academics, they are more likely to use studying and learning strategies proven to improve academic performance. By this bridge, task-oriented athletic behavior translates into using strategies to improve academic outcomes. Combining motivation and intelligence, this construct offers a positive link between a certain

kind of sports participation and high academic achievement among high school students (Sitkowski, 2008).

In closing, the education system's responsibility is to prepare the youth for the future. This endeavor includes implementing good health and wellness in their minds and bodies through physical education. Students' holistic education includes being physically active, which can be accomplished through extra-curricular activities such as athletics. This literature review dispels any debate about whether participation in extra-curricular activities positively affects all students. While there is a need for delineated studies, the next chapter will complement these findings specifically for private high school students through the field study portion of this research.

Chapter III: Methodology

Overview and Purpose

Literature has established that participation in extra-curricular activities such as athletics and physical education is advantageous for students in terms of academic gains (Hairston, 2021). This study aims to examine the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. After this research, the results provide an outcome of this effect, filling a literary void for private high school findings. Private school administrators and stakeholders will benefit from this information because empirical data will support that promoting physical activity for private high school students increases their academic success. This study serves as a model for future use. This chapter contains the hypotheses, a description of the research design, the population and participants, ethical considerations, limitations, and a summary. It also includes the procedures, analysis, and instrumentation to answer the research questions.

This research assists in determining the degree of impact athletic participation has on academic gains for students in private high schools. The literature analysis proclaimed a consensus signifying a positive effect on academic performance through physical education and school athletic participation. However, with previous research being limited to general populations and not specific to target groups, few studies examine this by breaking down the results demographically - by age, race, or gender, and even fewer are devoted to examining this phenomenon by type of school - public, private, or charter. This will be the conclusive component of this research, identifying the intangible benefits of athletic participation as perceived by private high school professionals in the industry.

For this study, the most appropriate approach was mixed-methods action research (Mertler, 2019). A quantitative technique combined with a qualitative process utilizing surveys developed perceptual themes. A complete literature review created a framework for theory, and collectively, this produced an accord to answer the following two research questions:

RQ1: What are the traits associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of private high school professionals about private high school student-athletes relative to their academic achievement?

Findings substantiated themes that yield validity in supporting the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. The answers to these questions lead to hypotheses that explain how and in what way this correlation leads to academic gains and eventual success for student-athletes.

Hypothesis

H1: A statistically significant positive relationship will be between athletic participation and behaviors linked to success in the private school setting. Traits will be derived from the inquiry of private high school professionals, which should align with other studies to yield consistency.

H2: Secondly, there should be common themes that present themselves through the inquiry of private high school professionals. After receiving back completed surveys, the Likert scale and open-ended questions will yield repeated narrative descriptions and keywords that increase the case of positive traits associated with students who participate in athletics.

H3: Lastly, both results will mirror each other to collectively exhibit a positive effect that athletic participation has on academic performance for private high school students.

Research Design

A comprehensive literature review set the structure for this research by creating a framework for theory. Following this, an in-depth field study was conducted using mixed-method action research (Mertler, 2019), which consisted of quantitative and qualitative approaches. An analysis bringing the composed data together collected consistent findings to examine. This examination was analyzed to produce results and answers to the research questions. This is presented as a dissertation and a product for future comparison and modeling.

A primary reason for utilizing an explanatory mixed-methods research design for this topic was to allow data collection to be analyzed in two ways. Quantitatively and qualitatively, this is the best process for one study to adequately address the research problem and provide information for private school decision-makers (Creswell, 2017). This data was collected, entered, and coded solely by the researcher and intended to answer the research questions and substantiate the hypotheses.

As the tactic for this study was action research using a mixed-method research design, the researcher took on the role of a positivist and social constructivist in the approach for this topic (Creswell, 2017). As a positivist, the work was structured around the worldview that participating in athletics in a private high school has a significantly positive effect on academic achievement. As a social constructivist, the researcher interpreted survey data with the knowledge that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live based on their subjective interactions and experiences (Creswell, 2017).

This mixed-method research design was traditional in format but presents as a dissertation-in-practice. This literature is a recurrent improvement process and must be continuously updated for future reference and other institutions. The effects of athletic

participation on academic achievement in private high schools are significant for future educational curricula. This product serves as a change agent (Mertler, 2019), providing a resource for private high school decision-makers, school leaders, and governing agencies.

Population and Participants

While the population consisted of private high school students, private high school professionals were this study's only point of contact. Anonymity was a top priority throughout. As this is a study about private high school students, the best source for information is those who work in private high schools. The perceptions of private high school professionals add value when trying to comprehend the effect that athletic participation and physical activity have on academic achievement in private high schools. Private high schools must grant permission (See Appendix A) for subjects to partake in this research. This group was a sample used to study the relationships between the distribution of a variable in the target population and the distribution of the same variable in the study sample. For this purpose, it was essential to define the *inclusion criteria* - clinical, demographic, temporal, and geographical characteristics of the subjects that make up the study population, and the *exclusion criteria* - characteristics of the subjects that may interfere with the quality of the data or the interpretation of results (Otzen, T, 2017).

Participants in this research included fifty private school professionals. Each was required to have at least five years of experience in coaching or education. This was vetted by an emailed question in the survey asking how many years they have worked in their capacity. To be considered a professional, one should have at least five years of teaching or coaching experience in the industry to provide established feedback. This criterion served as apt reasoning for qualifying these subjects as professionals. All survey participants that were private high school professionals were also at least 18 years old.

While past studies covering this topic have been focused on a more general population (i.e., just college-level or high-school students), one of the barriers when conducting a specific study was that it would exclude other demographic groups (such as middle-school students) or underrepresented students (differing ages, races, or genders). This aspect could be one reason why previous studies were not more specific. There are many ways to delineate an examination on this topic (grade, age, race, gender, or social-economic status), yet these variables can also make for a limited research examination. This is also a fundamental reason why multiple studies must be conducted. Individual schools and school districts can benefit from understanding the effects of their own students' athletic participation on academic achievement. This research held a commitment to private high schools. Through developed relationships with other private high schools and their governing bodies, this information serves as a creditable sample for presentation.

COVID

Much of this study was dependent upon student-athletes being able to participate in athletics. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019-2020 and part of the 2020-2021 sports seasons were canceled or altered. Therefore, students across the country were affected and unable to partake in athletic activities. Even the Olympics and professional sports were essentially shut down. As sports were suspended, no one could play, and training was difficult.

The short-term impact of this effect varies, but for this research, student-athletes may not have had a normal timeframe, nor are they still having the whole experience of genuine *participation in sports*. Further, many schools and programs are still not operating the same way as they did pre-COVID. Additionally, there has been the *catch-up factor*, where student-athletes have had to get their minds and bodies back to competitive form while maintaining the balance

of their academics. This dysfunctional impact on student-athletes during COVID was well documented by Scerri & Grech (2021). Athletes experienced high levels of stress, an overall lack of social interaction hindered wellbeing, and the absence of organized training and competition, the lack of adequate communication between athletes and coaches, the inability to move freely, and inappropriate training conditions were negative consequences of social isolation or quarantine (Scerri, 2021). They also reference the physical impact that the pandemic had on athletes. It was impossible to anticipate the loss incurred with training-induced adaptation. Therefore, it is essential to identify the effects and understand the mechanisms and effects on all physiological systems and their impact on athletic performance (Scerri, 2021).

It is still impossible to foresee the long-term consequence that COVID has had on society, let alone student-athletes. Only time will tell, but in terms of present status, this research operated in a post-COVID state, assuming a 'back-to-normal' environment.

Research Design Phase – Quantitative and Qualitative Procedures

A fundamental design helped determine the effects of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. The primary research was through surveys administered to fifty private school professionals. These surveys contained both quantitative and qualitative questions to produce data. Data collection was analyzed for comparison and modeling to address the research questions and provide information. Likert scale questions were analyzed quantitatively, and the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. Both inform each other through triangulation to bring about a narrative picture. The information abstracted identified traits associated with athletic participation that led to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes.

This research method established trustworthiness to ensure a quality study. This data was collected, entered, and coded solely by the researcher. The researcher interpreted survey data with the knowledge that participants seek to understand their world based on their subjective interactions and experiences. A secondary collection instrument in qualitative studies was invaluable in the overall research for completing a comprehensive examination (Creswell, 2017). This includes professionals' perceptions of athletic participation on academic performance for private high school students. The process by which the research extracted useful information was imperative.

Email correspondence was conducted through email (Appendix B) and included a link for the participants to complete. Email exchange served as the primary and sole mode of communication. The narrative data was derived in the form of data extracted from surveys, grouped by theme, and entered into a spreadsheet for comparison and coding. The coding process took place in this study after the surveys were complete. Coding is delineating brackets of information and assigning a word or category to that information (Creswell, 2017).

The email from the researcher was to fifty private high school professionals (Appendix B). They were given a two-week deadline to complete the fourteen-question survey through an online survey software system (SurveyMonkey), which took approximately five minutes on average. The survey comprised of open-ended questions and questions using a 5-point Likert scale. The first question was an informed consent (Appendix C), which, if the participant chose to answer "no," they would no longer be able to move forward in the process. Those who said "yes" were able to see the following questions:

Q1. Informed Consent

Q2. How many years have you been working in education?

Q3. How many years have you been coaching?

Q4. Athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement for private high school students.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q5. Participation in athletics increases student involvement and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience for private high school students.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q6. Name three traits that you attribute as the most important for academic success.

Q7. Does the influence of athletic participation instill these three traits for private high school students?

Yes Partially No

Q8. Does the influence of athletic participation instill these three traits for private high school students?

Yes Partially No

Q9. What traits are associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Q10. What role does the coach play in facilitating an athletic experience that promotes success at school for student-athletes? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Q11: Provide an example of a strategy or technique that coaches use to facilitate an athletic experience that yields successful academic achievement for private high school student-athletes. (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Q12. After participating in athletics, private high school students improve in traits that lead them to be academically successful.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q13. Examples of qualities that are gained when participating in athletics include teamwork, collaboration, resilience, attentiveness, increased motivation, overcoming adversity, effective time management, and better work habits.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q14. Is there anything else that you would like to add about the value that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Instrumentation – Survey

Direct emails were sent through an email describing the request. The email contained a link to an online survey software system called SurveyMonkey. This software could export results from the survey into Microsoft Excel. Using Excel, the data was condensed to abstract keywords. These keywords or terms that continued to arise created a repeated pattern until enough substantiated findings yielded validity.

Subjects were informed before their involvement that if a participant felt uncomfortable in any way, they did not have to partake. A password-protected laptop with 16-megabyte encryption technology was utilized for confidentiality and safety.

Analysis – Survey

Correspondence with participants was conducted exclusively through email. The initial email (Appendix B) was sent to fifty private school professionals. It included a link to the survey in SurveyMonkey. This contained the informed consent statement and explained the study's purpose, risks, benefits, confidentiality, and anonymity. It also stated that participants could withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable partaking in the survey. Participation in the survey was voluntary with no monetary benefits, though the subjects may have felt a sense of pride for contributing to a pertinent study about academic gains.

The data extracted from the surveys were grouped and entered into a spreadsheet for coding. The quantitative questions were on a rating scale. Data gathered from the anonymous online survey were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The researcher calculated an overall mean score from the answers on the 5-point Likert scale and a combined average by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response ranging from (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1). SurveyMonkey

automatically exported results from the survey into Microsoft Excel. The qualitative questions are where people could write their answers comprised of open-ended questions regarding perceptions about athletic participation and academics (Appendix C). Using Excel, the data was condensed and coded to abstract keywords. These keywords or terms that arose created a pattern until enough substantiated findings yielded validity.

All information was kept in a closed-door office while examining it, and when the researcher was not working, the computer was turned off and securely password protected. The survey results have since been deleted now that the study is complete. A password-protected laptop with 16-megabyte encryption technology was utilized for confidentiality and safety. All data was collected, stored, and maintained in this password-protected computer.

Ethical Considerations

Threats are associated with any approach and must be accounted for. The accuracy of the overall findings may be compromised because the researcher needs to consider all the options for following up on the results (Creswell, 2017). The researcher considered this before deciding to move forward with this design. For the qualitative portion of this work, the researcher concluded the validity of the Likert scale survey items and the open-ended questions when the questions were conducive to obtaining perceptions regarding the effect of athletic participation on academics in the private high school setting without bias.

Concerning the participants in this study, the psychological risks were minimal, while there were no physical risks. The results could have been skewed due to bias, whereas subjects may have felt undue stress or anxiety to qualify their answers because they knew that the researcher had a vested interest in their answers. Participants could have exited the anonymous survey at any time without penalty or work repercussions. However, the benefit to their

participation was that they might feel honored and a part of an enhanced community by knowing they were associating themselves with such a pertinent study. When the survey was complete, the information was permanently deleted from SurveyMonkey. The survey was strictly anonymous, and the researcher did not know the participants' identities.

Moreover, ethical principles and human subject compliance may have become a factor. Subjects may have felt exposed to their career implications by providing answers that go against the mission or philosophy of the school. This would have only occurred if the results got lost, stolen, or misplaced. This misalignment may have made the subjects feel less compelled to provide honest answers than the industry standard response. To mitigate this variant, the researcher was proactively transparent about the entire process with each subject.

Trustworthiness was a threat that must be accounted for when collecting the data and during the analysis phase. It was a central issue for positivist ideals of validity and reliability. Trustworthiness is the process instituted to produce validity and reliability for a research study (Creswell, 2017).

Limitations

As mentioned throughout this study, there were innate limitations in the literature and the research. Other studies focused on a more general population, and when conducting a specific study, it would exclude other demographic groups by nature. This is one reason why previous studies were possibly not more specific. There are several ways to delineate an examination on this topic (grade, age, race, gender, or social-economic status), yet these variables can also make for a limitation.

Also, studies may never consider extraneous variables that may have affected results, such as the student's parents' social, economic status, or marital status. These variables could

impact the responses or even the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement (Schley, 2002). Moreover, there are missed populations that this study cannot focus on. The intent to which fifty private high school professionals were examined did not delve into other sampling groups.

Another limitation of the methodology was biased. Subjects (private school professionals) who were emailed may have answered surveys based on the researcher's desire. Aspects of the survey design, the researcher's role, and the survey situation determine the occurrence and the degree of social desirability bias (Krumpal, 2013). Therefore, addressing these limitations proactively and with subjectivity as a social constructivist was procedurally important.

Finally, the field-study portion of this analysis took place within a private high school. The problem with this school type is that many different kinds of private institutions (religiously affiliated, not-for-profit, corporate, and charter) exist. These types of private schools may yield different results. Therefore, even this study can be accused of being general.

Summary

In the literature review, relevant studies have provided a theoretical framework that provided a foundation for this research. In general, physical activity through extra-curricular activities provides intangible benefits to students that lead to academic gains. To complement this finding, more research is needed to address this phenomenon for different segments and school types. To fill the literary void in research specific to private high schools, the researcher conducted mix-methodology action research to address the population of private high school students. To accomplish this, questions in the form of surveys were administered to fifty private

high school professionals. The structure and order of the questions were created to answer the study's research questions while providing information relative to the hypotheses.

Based on the hypotheses, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between athletic participation in the private school setting and common themes that presented themselves through the inquiry of private high school professionals. Practitioners' perspectives should direct future action research. Other scholarly practitioners will pilot it at other locations. This model is a tool for future studies on different focus areas with different populations.

Given that this examination was a mixed methodology approach, there was a level of inductive and deductive study. This combination resulted in provided a great foundation to support the claim that athletic participation positively affects academic achievement for private high school students. The analysis and instrumentation for both approaches were conducted utilizing technology from SurveyMonkey and Microsoft Excel. All of this information was stored electronically and password protected, with only the researcher being able to view it. All information was deleted once complete, and participants were anonymous. Besides anonymity, there were no risks to the subjects, only to the researcher. Bias needed to be considered, as well as misinformation, that the researcher accounted for with transparency.

Further, there were missed populations that this study did not include. The prospects were boundless upon completing this examination in that it could catapult future examinations for local, regional, and even state-wide usage within the field. This research serves as a "roadmap" for future studies. The application of this transformative research act as an agent of change by providing empirical data that can be further analyzed. Additionally, it will inspire others to conduct more studies on specific target groups, positioning future researchers for public service, outreach, and organizational change.

This research deliberates that physical activity should be included in all educational curricula. It proves and supports the concept that athletic participation enhances academic performance. This applies to all schools at all levels. For private school education, this process provides information to influence private high school decision-makers, school leaders, and governing agencies. The education system should have a holistic approach to education (Bhardwaj, 2016). This study aids to help them ensure a well-rounded, overall holistic educational curriculum for private high school students. However, because of the specificity of this subject matter, any declarations such as this will also have an impact on a grander scale. What applies to private schools is also probable to be valid to all school types. This is the case throughout this examination and is an added advantage for this study. It adds value, knowledge, and significance to the education industry.

Chapter IV: Research Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine the effect that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students. This study fills a literature void specifically for private schools and contributes to dated studies about the impact of athletic participation on behaviors linked to school success. Further, this study adds to the existing general philosophy that athletic participation positively impacts academic achievement. Educational gains attributed to the student-athlete are exemplified when part of the learning process is active participation by the student (Astin, 1985). As this research focused specifically on a particular segment by examining private high school students, this study will also serve as a blueprint for future studies to examine this phenomenon in greater detail and further delineate this analysis by different segments, target groups, or school types.

The objective of this study was accomplished by answering the following research questions: Research Question 1: What are the traits associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes? Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of private high school professionals about private high school student-athletes relative to their academic achievement?

To adequately determine the effect that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students, a comprehensive research design was imperative. A mixed-methods approach consisting of a comprehensive literature review and the administering and analysis of surveys to private school professionals was conducted. These professionals provided their perceptions about student-athletes relative to their academic achievement. This data delivered substantial information to utilize as a reference resource about

the impact of athletic participation on behaviors that lead to academic success. Data gathered from these anonymous online surveys was scrutinized through descriptive statistics and coded to abstract consistency. These consistencies created findings to address the research questions. This chapter will provide the results and data collected from those surveys unbiasedly as research findings.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis Procedures

The surveys were administered through SurveyMonkey, an online survey software system available for subscription. The questions began with an Informed Consent, whereas if the participant could choose to answer “no,” they could no longer move forward in the process. Those who answered “yes” were able to proceed. The survey consisted of thirteen more questions, with a Likert scale and open-ended questions.

The Likert scale questions were analyzed quantitatively, and the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. Both inform each other through triangulation to bring about a narrative picture regarding the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students.

The researcher calculated an overall mean score from the answers on the 5-point Likert scale and a combined average by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response ranging from (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1; and 5 = Yes, 3 = Partially, No = 1). The open-ended questions allowed subjects to write their answers regarding perceptions about athletic participation and academics. These answers were exported into Microsoft Excel. The data was condensed and coded using Excel to abstract keywords, common responses, and identical wording. The coding process took place in this study after the survey was closed. Coding allows for bracketing data and assigning a

theme to this information (Creswell, 2017). These keywords or terms substantiated findings to yield validity in supporting the hypothesis.

The data presented in this chapter is chronological. A numerical system was used to compute an overall mean score for each question. The researcher incorporated figures into the study representing mean scores on the seven Likert scale questions to provide a visual representation. The research was concluded when the results adequately determined the effect that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students.

Population

As this was a study about private high school students' academic gains, the best population to provide input and data are those who work in the private high school setting. The perceptions of private high school professionals assist in determining and comprehending athletic participation's effect on academic achievement in private high schools. To be considered a professional, one should have at least five years of coaching or teaching experience in the industry to provide established feedback.

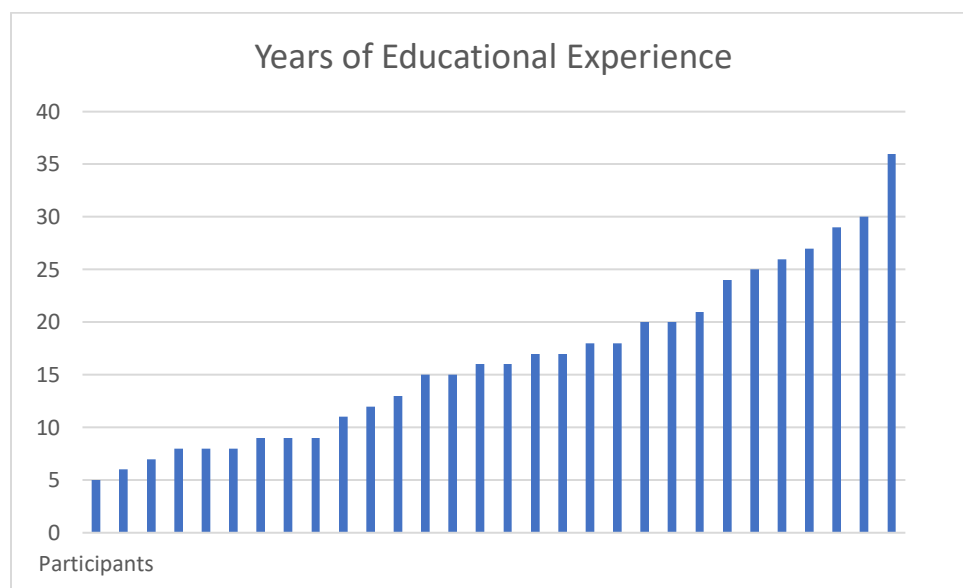
There were fifty subjects that each received an email with a link to the survey that the participant had the option of completing. The participants then had two weeks to take the survey. thirty of the fifty participants (60% of the sample) partook in the survey for this research, consisting of private high school professionals, which was a significant response rate as compared to the average for internet questionnaires. Typical survey response rates range between 6% and 15% (Krumpal, I. 2013, Paxson, M. 1995; Otzen, T. 2017). The survey was closed with this number of responses, and the data analysis phase began. If information and results were deemed not trustworthy for validity, reopening it was always possible. The participants who did not complete the survey could have been reminded a third time if needed.

Results

The survey's first two questions are demographic, as they merely substantiate the importance of utilizing professionals' perceptions to gauge how athletic participation impacts academic achievement for private high school students. The first question was: *How many years have you been working in education?* Figure 1 represents the Years of Educational Experience of the thirty survey participants. The mean is 16.5 years.

Figure 1

Years of Experience in the Education Profession

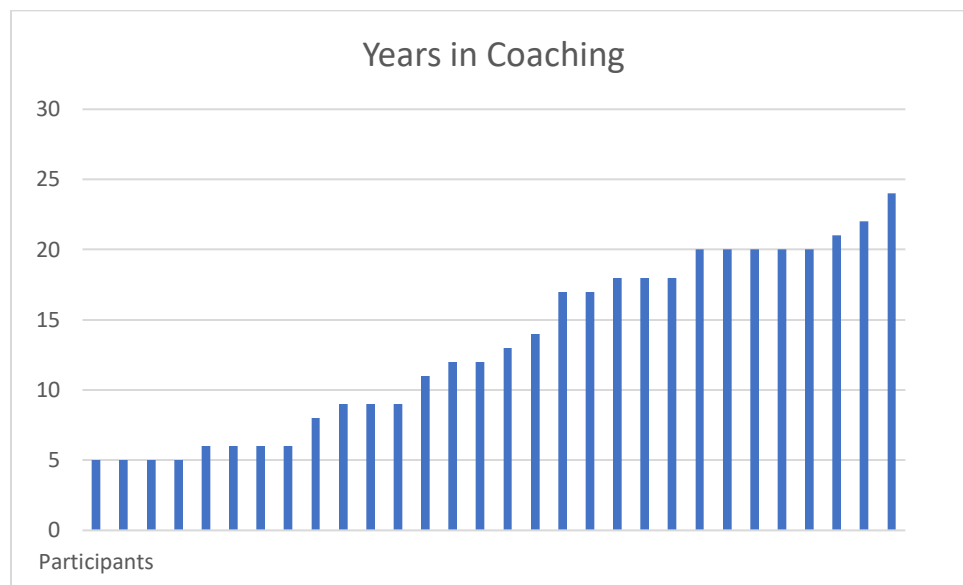


Similarly, when comparing the years in the education profession to the number of years of coaching experience, all thirty subjects also had coached for at least five years in their careers. This further supported the significance and importance of these professionals' perceptions. The input garners reputable feedback about athletic participation's effect on academic achievement in private high schools. This greatly assists in accomplishing the objective of this study to answer the research questions. Survey Question #2 was: *How many years have you been coaching?*

Figure 2 represents the Years of Coaching Experience for the thirty survey participants. The mean of these professionals in the industry for coaching was 13.2 years.

Figure 2

Years of Coaching Experience



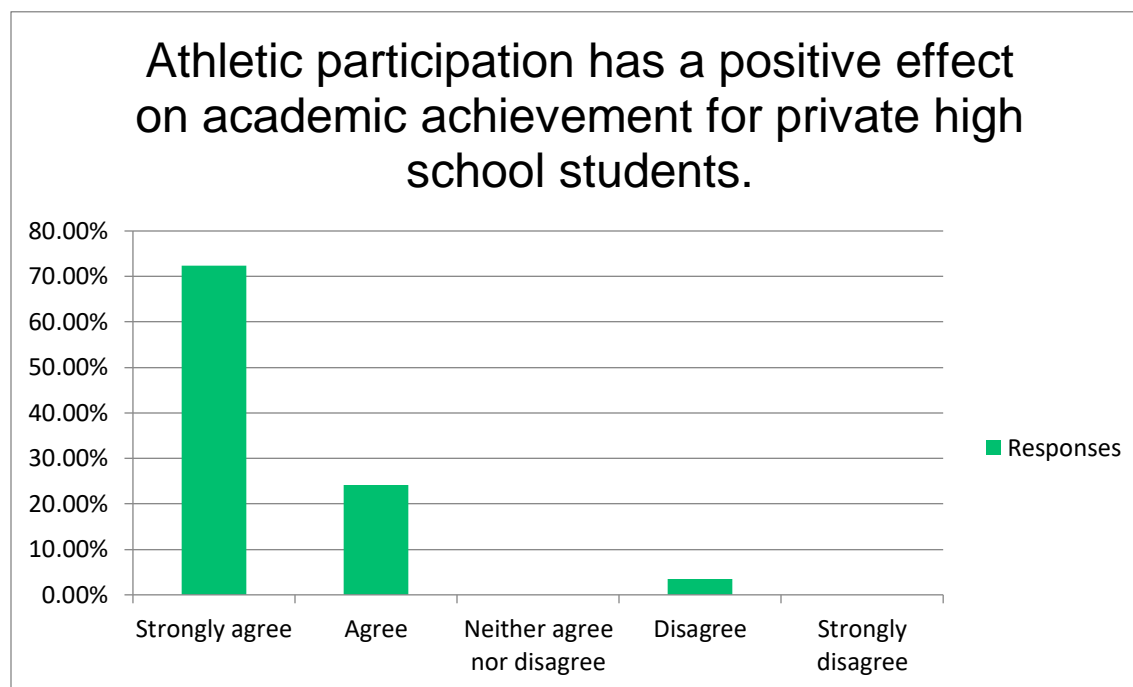
Figures 1 and 2 provide rationality to expect inclusive findings in the remaining survey questions. The mean score of 16.5 and 13.2 years in education and coaching merit the implication of value for the examination utilizing this population.

The following survey questions build the narrative picture and answer the research questions that help determine the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. Likert scale questions are #3, #4, #6, #7, #11, and #12; open-ended questions are #5, #8, #9, #10, and #13. A figure and detailed synopsis of the results will proceed after each question.

Survey Question #3 was: *Athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement for private high school students. (Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree)*

Figure 3

Athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement for private high school students.

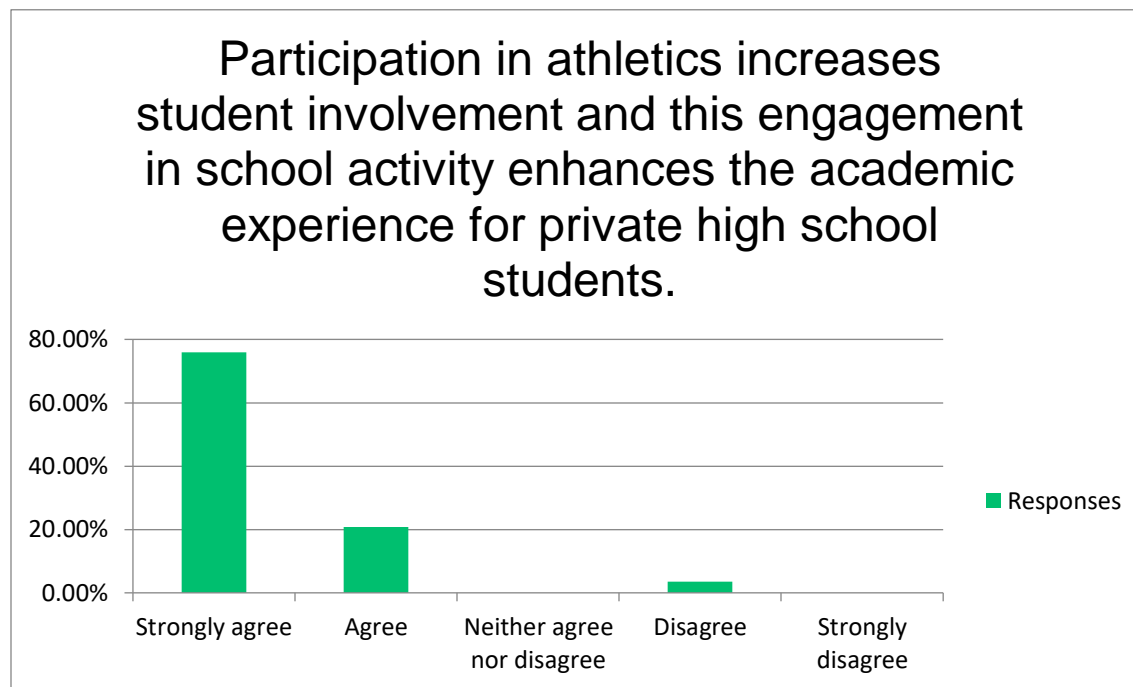


Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants answered this question, and one did not. Twenty-one responded with *Strongly Agree* (72.41%), 7 responded with *Agree* (24.14%), and one responded with *Disagree* (3.45%). Using the aforementioned scoring system by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1; and 5 = Yes, 3 = Partially, No = 1), all of the scores were averaged for an overall mean score of 4.66. This number most closely indicates a *strongly agree* sentiment that athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement.

Survey Question #4 was: *Participation in athletics increases student involvement and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience for private high school students.* (Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree)

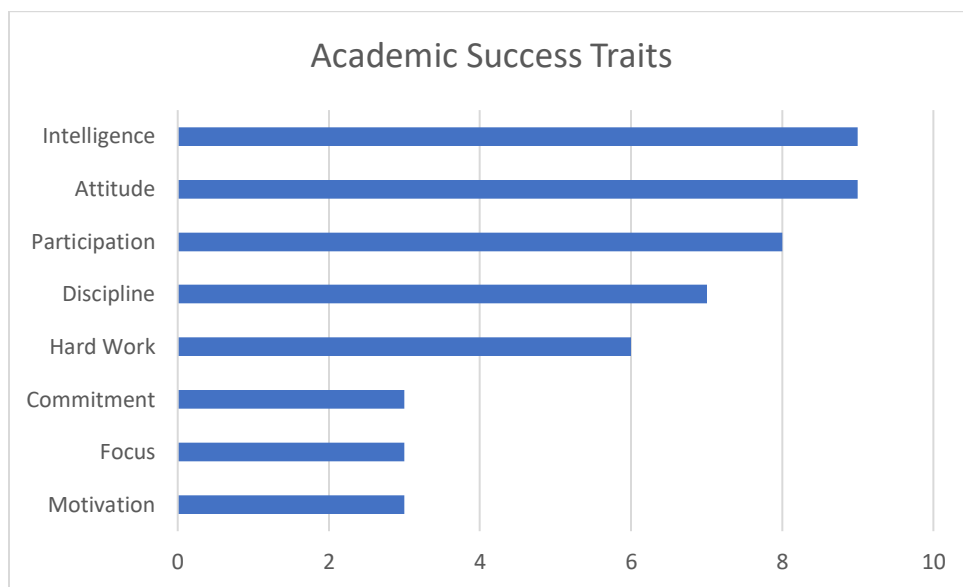
Figure 4

Participation in athletics increases student involvement and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience for private high school students.



Again, twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants answered this question, and one did not. Twenty-two responded with *Strongly Agree* (75.86%), six responded with *Agree* (20.69%), and one responded with *Disagree* (3.45%). Using the aforementioned scoring system by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1; and 5 = Yes, 3 = Partially, No = 1), all of the scores were averaged for an overall mean score of 4.69. This number most closely indicates a *strongly agree* sentiment that participation in athletics increases student involvement and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience.

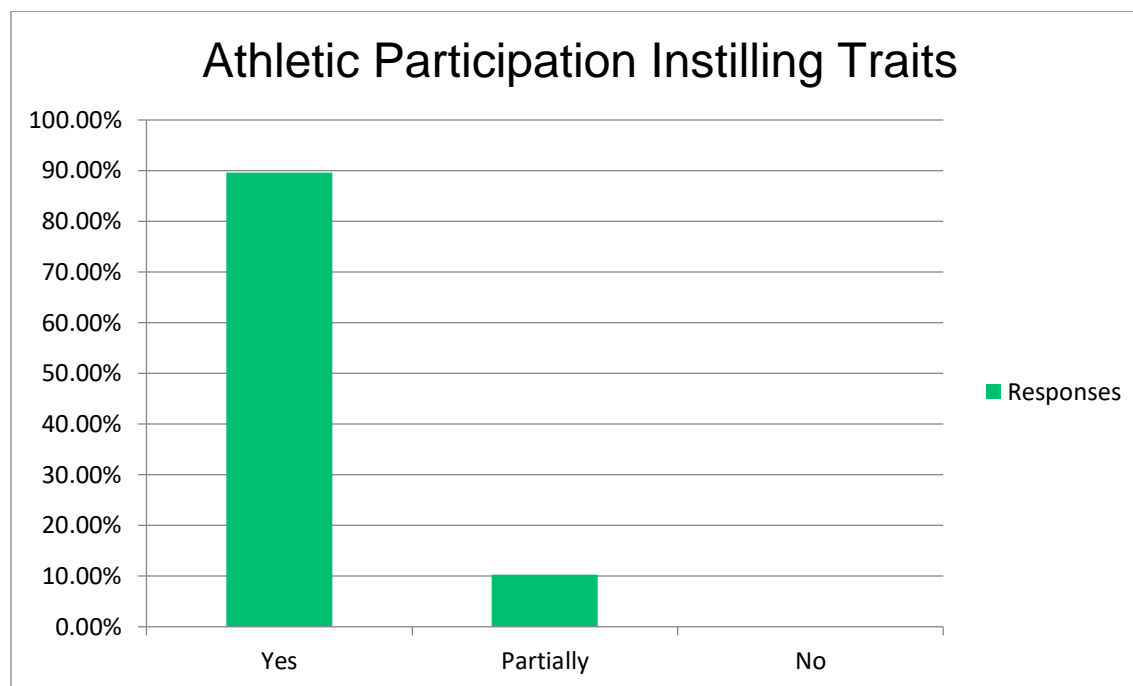
Survey Question #5: *Name three traits that you attribute as the most important for academic success.*

Figure 5*Academic Success Traits*

Note. These traits are what professionals attribute as being important for academic success.

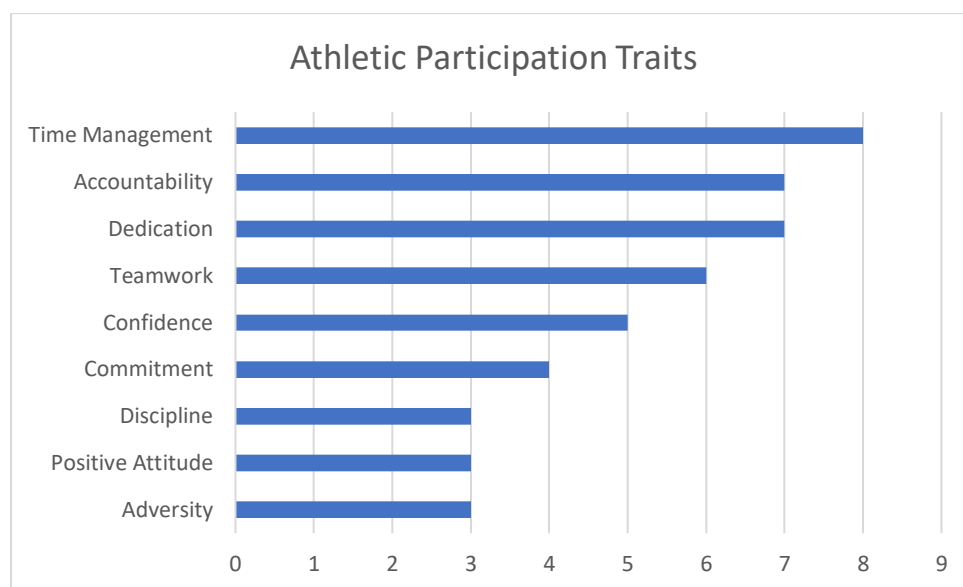
Responses from nine subjects included “Intelligence” and “Attitude” as traits most important for academic success; eight cited “Participation” as a most important trait; seven referenced “Discipline” and six mentioned “Hard Work” while three stated “Commitment,” “Focus,” and “Motivation.” Analysis for these responses was generated from Word Cloud and exported into Excel for coding. If there were any less than three references for a keyword, it was not grouped. The keywords that we extracted most frequently were organized from most to least. These eight traits that were grouped attributed to 53.33% of the overall list of traits cited (90).

This question facilitates an opportunity for comparative analysis for the next two survey questions because of the correlation between academic success traits and those gained through athletic participation. Survey Question #6 was: *Does the influence of athletic participation instill these three traits for private high school students? (Yes Partially No)*

Figure 6*Athletic Participation Instilling Traits*

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants answered this question, and one did not. Twenty-six responded with *Yes* (89.66%), and three responded with *Partially* (10.34%). Using the aforementioned scoring system by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response (5 = Yes, 3 = Partially, No = 1), all scores were averaged for an overall mean score of 4.79. This number most closely indicates a *Yes* sentiment that participation in athletics does instill academically successful traits in private high school students.

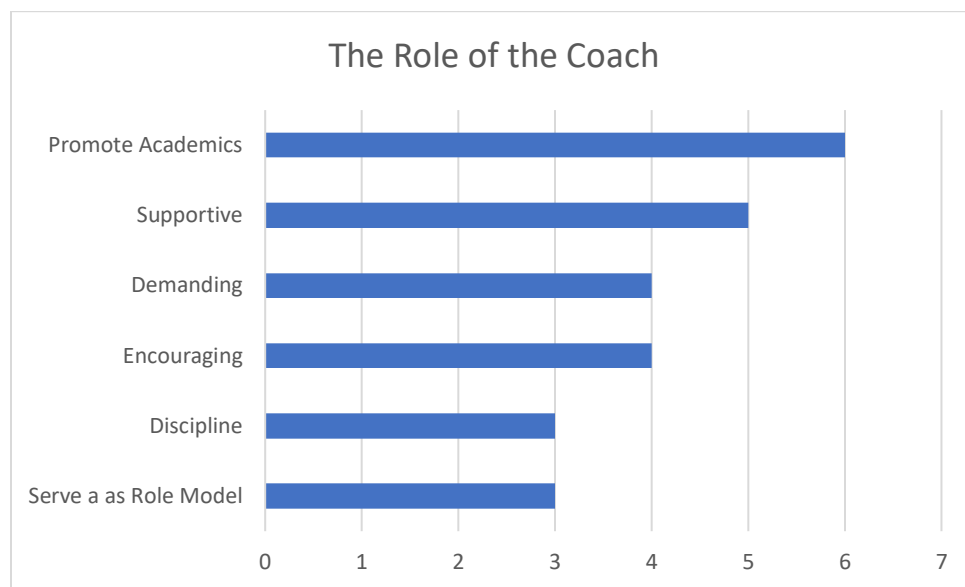
Tying into this question, Survey Question #7 was: *What traits are associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)* Pursuant to question five: *Name three traits that you attribute as the most important for academic success*; this question did not limit the response to three traits and is associating athletic participation as an independent variable.

Figure 7*Athletic Participation Traits*

Note. These are traits that are associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes.

Responses from eight subjects indicated “Time Management” as a trait associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes; seven identified “Accountability” and “Dedication” as two traits for academic success; six referenced “Teamwork,” and five listed “Confidence” while four referenced “Commitment,” followed by two specifying “Discipline,” and a “Positive Attitude.” Analysis for these responses was generated from Word Cloud and exported into Excel for coding. If there were any less than three references for a keyword, it was not grouped. The keywords that we extracted most frequently were organized from most to least. These nine traits that were grouped attributed to 51.11% of the overall list of traits cited (90).

Survey Question #8 was: *What role does the coach play in facilitating an athletic experience that promotes success at school for student-athletes? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)*

Figure 8*The Role of the Coach*

Note. These keywords and terms designate the coach's role in facilitating an athletic experience that promotes success at school for student-athletes.

Responses from six subjects used the term “Promote Academics” as a way in which the coach plays a role in facilitating an athletic experience that promotes success at school; 5 recognized being “Supportive,” four cited “Demanding” and “Encouraging,” and three for “Discipline” and to “Serve as a Role Model.” Analysis for these responses was generated from Word Cloud and exported into Excel for coding. If there were any less than three references for a keyword, it was not grouped. The keywords that we extracted most frequently were organized from most to least. These six traits that were grouped attributed to 27.78% of the overall list of traits cited (90).

This question segued into the next line of questioning to fund the narrative that a coach, and thus athletics in general, are highly influential in increasing academic gains in the private school setting. Survey Question # 9 was: *Provide an example of a strategy or technique that*

coaches use to facilitate an athletic experience that yields successful academic achievement for private high school student-athletes. (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Figure 9

Strategies and Techniques

Strategies and Techniques	
1)	The coach can bring competitiveness to the team. This teaches the student athletes that there will always be competition and that it's a good thing. In the classroom and in real life this will happen too and students will know how to handle it.
2)	The coach can help facilitate time management by having a schedule for practice that is beneficial to what the team needs to accomplish. This will help the students in and out of the classroom by using their time to accomplish the things that are the most important.
3)	Coaches can always better the student athletes by acknowledging and correcting mistakes made by players in a positive way. This will let the student athletes know that it is okay to make mistakes, you learn from them, grow, and move on.
4)	Putting the team through drills together, for example, if one messes up then they all get the consequence. This can help kids tend to others more carefully in any environment.
5)	Showing concern for student-athletes' success in the academic realm, we can help student-athletes see the connection between sports and school and the importance of academic achievement.
6)	Challenging a player to make in game adjustments. Trust your leadership, try new things and provide feedback on how they felt in that situation can help a person in their everyday life and in the classroom.
7)	Coaches work to build relationships among teammates, work on goal setting, and work on time management.
8)	Educating students about the importance of practice is key to perfecting your craft. This correlates to the classroom...studying is important.
9)	You have prepared and planned and yet you lose the game -same principles apply in classroom sometimes it's just going to be hard and you face some failure.
10)	Bad call drill - helps students overcome adversity.
11)	Time Management-Players need to be able to balance sports, academics, and social life through time management. It is difficult enough to keep up with the stress of homework and studying, but it is crucial that a student athlete can balance everything when practice is after school 5 days a week. It is important to reinforce time management. The best example is to have players prepare their equipment/athletic clothes the night before practice or a game. The balance is essential.
12)	Grade checks will reinforce the idea that academics come first. Bus rides to and from away games should be used for homework if necessary. Limiting practices to two hours a day gives students a chance to finish homework every night. Planning ahead and using the weekend to do homework helps as well.
13)	The playing of mindful and positive music has the ability to boost the moods of your student-athletes during pre-game and during competition.
14)	Conduct a team study hall.
15)	Effective coaches lead by example, showing how to run an organized and time-efficient practice. Practice plans are usually sectioned into different skills, allowing small break times, all designed with the goal to prepare for the "exam" - the contest. Student-athletes must organize their lives in the same way. This is a great example of how coaches model successful strategies on and off the field.
16)	A strategy a coach can use to help yield academic success is to encourage kids to take ownership of their conflicts, by looking ahead on their schedules so that they can communicate with their teachers and coaches in advance, so that they are better served.
17)	Coaches can encourage athletes to be successful in the classroom by celebrating a high team GPA or by assigning an upperclassman to serve as a mentor to an underclassman. The upperclassman can emphasize the importance of maintaining good grades, and getting proper nutrition and sleep which will translate to success both on the field and in the classroom.
18)	A coach can push an athlete to work hard and believe in themselves which will raise the student-athlete's confidence. Confidence allows students to try something new or push themselves harder than they would without.
19)	Students should be students first and then athletes. Both can definitely be done. Coaches should encourage students to perform in the classroom and go to extra help when needed without fear of being punished. Having a strong team GPA can be a motivator for students who are struggling to work harder in the classroom. With the varying ages on teams, there is always someone who has taken a class and could help.
20)	Starting practice on time and ending practice when promised. Starting practice on time makes punctuality a must. Instilling this habit in players helps them be better organized and disciplined students. Ending practice on time reinforces the importance of time management as well as enables students to effectively manage their own time. Sounds simple but often overlooked.
21)	Having the team hold each other and themselves accountable for being on time, giving the best effort practice or game and keeping each other honest with this.
22)	Holding the student-athletes to a set practice schedule, and then requiring them to study during designated times.

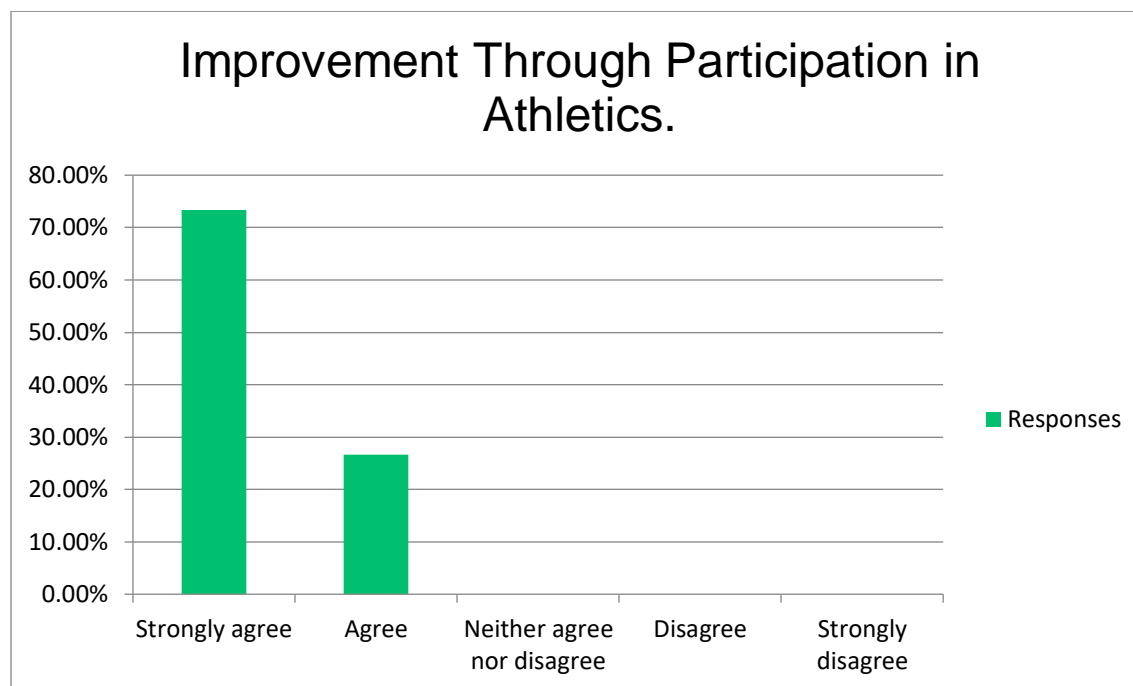
Note. These were examples of strategies or techniques coaches use to facilitate an athletic experience that yields successful academic achievement for private high school student-athletes. Responses from thirty subjects produced twenty-two usable responses based on the accuracy of the answer. Eight responses did not answer the question and instead just listed additional values that athletic participation has on academic achievement. From the usable responses, a consistency was derived that addressed the impetus behind the strategies and techniques chosen for yielding academic success. This consistency was comprised of five key themes that coexist within the other survey questions. These were extracted from the data set and included:

- Improving time management skills,
- Learning/teaching good practice/study habits,
- Overcoming adversity,
- Valuing the importance of academics while balancing the workload, and
- Facilitating a relatability to the classroom experience.

The analysis for these responses consisted of exporting answers into Excel and organizing them for readability. The process by which this took place involved reading each answer in its entirety and then summarizing it and condensing it for clarity. This clarity made it simpler to establish themes. These themes were essentially a subsection of all the responses with a few outliers. Overall, all twenty-two responses provided supporting examples of strategies or techniques that coaches use to facilitate an athletic experience that yields successful academic achievement for private high school student-athletes.

Survey Question #10: *After participating in athletics, private high school students improve in traits that lead them to be academically successful.*

(Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree)

Figure 10*Improvement Through Participation in Athletics*

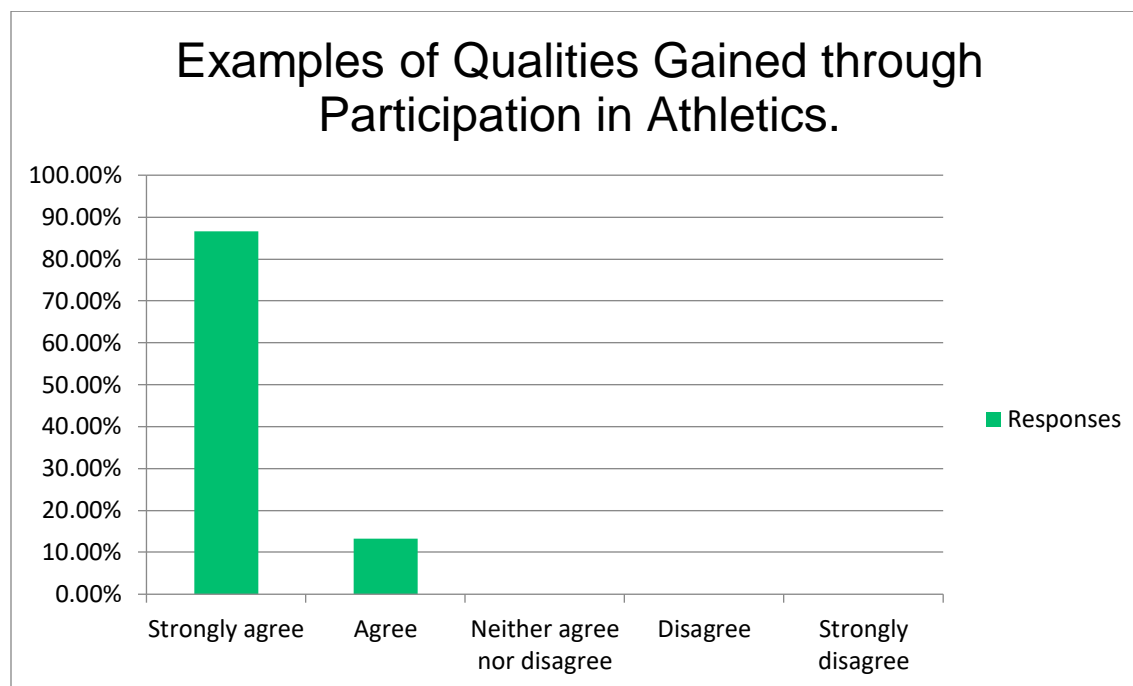
Thirty survey participants answered this survey question. Twenty-two responded with *Strongly agree* (73.33%), and eight responded with *Agree* (26.67%). Using the aforementioned scoring system by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1), all scores were averaged for an overall mean score of 4.73. This number most closely indicates a Strongly agree sentiment that after participating in athletics, private high school students improve in traits that lead them to succeed academically.

Survey Question #11: *Examples of qualities that are gained when participating in athletics include teamwork, collaboration, resilience, attentiveness, increased motivation, overcoming adversity, effective time management, and better work habits.*

(*Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*)

Figure 11

Examples of Qualities Gained through Participation in Athletics.



Note. These are the responses when asked about examples of qualities that are gained when participating in athletics, including teamwork, collaboration, resilience, attentiveness, increased motivation, overcoming adversity, effective time management, and better work habits.

Thirty survey participants answered this survey question. Twenty-six responded with *Strongly agree* (86.67%), and four responded with *Agree* (13.33%). Using the aforementioned scoring system by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1), all of the scores were averaged for an overall mean score of 4.87. This number most closely indicates a Strongly agree sentiment that teamwork, collaboration, resilience, attentiveness, increased motivation, overcoming adversity, effective time management, and better work habits are sound examples of qualities that are gained when participating in athletics.

Survey Question #12: *Is there anything else that you would like to add about the value that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students?*

(Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Figure 12

Additional Value

Additional Value	
1)	Participating in high school athletics teaches so many skills that students need to become better in the classroom.
2)	I think high school athletics instills so many life lessons in young children and helps teach them valuable lessons that prepare them for real life situations.
3)	Participation in sports requires teamwork, discipline, resiliency, respect, compassion, and character. Each of these attributes contributes to academic success in the classroom and in life.
4)	Athletics throughout a student's career can help provide valuable life lessons to help them with their careers and families. It's a way to also build life long friendships and family mentality that can never be taken away.
5)	Nothing I haven't already said. Coaches and athletic participation provide qualities of good character and good citizenship that academics alone cannot do.
6)	There are so many carryover benefits and athletics is more physical of course than academics but the success points are so similar.
7)	Many private schools tend to focus more on academics and student-athletes understand that academics come first.
8)	The physicality of sports increases the mental sharpness of the student athlete in the classroom.
9)	Perhaps the greatest reasons why athletics plays a pivotal role in academics is that A) It is the best dropout prevention program and keeps students in school B) Athletics builds character, encourages empathy and teaches student-athletes to respect others and themselves 3) Athletics is a community event that involves the student body, teachers, parents, alumni and other community groups as a whole.
10)	Teaches them to put in the hard work and time to get better, which mirrors the academic side.
11)	Athletics give the students a place to unwind and rest their brains from school which is important as well.
12)	Athletics provide the perfect platform to learn how to fail in order to succeed. A team can prepare as best they can but ultimately does not control the outcome. There are many factors that go into a game. Academics are similar. Preparation does not guarantee success. Outside factors come into play and it's how one deals with those moments of adversity that provides the greatest growth and ultimately "success".
13)	Being a student athlete leads to respect in the classroom.
14)	Participating in athletics teaches high school students how to manage their time, communicate effectively, be part of a team, and work toward a common goal. With pressure to succeed in the classroom higher than ever, the lessons learned through sports absolutely benefit students in all areas of their lives.
15)	I believe being on an athletic team builds relationships and creates a family like environment that allows students to feel at home at school. Being comfortable and having a strong support system is part of the foundation of success.
16)	This is based on no evidence, but I bet most students perform well academically while in season than out of season.
17)	Participating in athletics helps to keep students on the healthy body/healthy mind. It has been proven that the more one participates in physical activity the healthier and clearer their mind will be to learn academically.
18)	Sports enhance the academics.

There were 18 responses from thirty subjects, as this question was essentially optional. The analysis for these responses consisted of exporting answers into Excel and organizing them for readability and clarity. Each input was independently unique, though there was uniformity in that they all supported athletic participation's value on academic achievement for private high school students.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to determine the effect that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students. Research consisting of analyzing survey results offered information relative to behaviors and traits that lead to academic success. Data gathered from these surveys further provided consistencies to create themes that address and answer the research questions: What are the traits associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes, and what are the perceptions of private high school professionals about private high school student-athletes relative to their academic achievement?

The survey consisted of fourteen questions administered through an online software program, with a Likert scale and open-ended questions. Likert scale questions were analyzed quantitatively. The open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. An overall mean score was calculated from the answers on a 5-point Likert scale by assigning a corresponding numerical value to each response (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1; and 5 = Yes, 3 = Partially, No = 1). The open-ended questions allowed subjects to write as much as they wanted in responses. These answers were exported from SurveyMonkey into Microsoft Excel for coding. Keywords, terms, and common phrases were grouped. The breakdown of these responses created a unified picture of the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students.

The response rate was sufficient to close the survey after two weeks. Thirty private high school professionals, all with at least five years of experience in coaching or education, partook in the survey to provide established responses. As sequestered in survey questions 1 and 2, the mean for their education tenure was 16.5 years, and for coaching was 13.2 years of experience.

Combining these results established significant credibility for the feedback that this population provided and the usefulness of this research.

Survey questions 3 and 4 appropriated the perceptions of whether these professionals considered athletic participation to positively impact and enhance academic achievement for private high school students. Twenty-nine of the thirty subjects responded. The overall mean score of 4.66 indicated a *strongly agree* sentiment that athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement for private high school students. Further, the score for the correlating question was 4.69 which represented a *strongly agree* response that participation in athletics increases student involvement and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience for private high school students.

Survey questions 5, 6, and 7 delve into the traits that lead to academic success for private school students. Analysis for these responses was generated from Word Cloud, creating keywords extracted from Excel during the coding process. “Intelligence, Attitude, Participation, Discipline, Hard Work, Commitment, Focus, and Motivation” were the most frequent as these eight traits attributed to 53.33% of the response. When garnering the sentiment from these participants about whether participation in athletics instills academically successful traits in private high school students, the overall mean score was 4.79, which resoundingly indicated *Yes*. Lastly, when asked about traits associated with athletic participation that lead to successful academic outcomes, the participants identified “Time Management, Accountability, Dedication, Teamwork, Confidence, Commitment, Discipline, and a Positive Attitude.” These nine traits accounted for 51.11% of the overall list of traits cited.

The next set of survey questions (8 and 9) examined the role of the coach and the strategies and techniques that facilitate and promote academic success. Responses came in the

form of the key terms, “Promote Academics, Supportive, Demanding, Encouraging, Discipline, and Serve as a Role Model.” These terms construct the narrative that participation in athletics enhances academic performance when combined with data from the corresponding question that includes consistencies comprised of key themes. These include: Improving time management skills, Learning/teaching good practice/study habits, Overcoming adversity, Valuing the importance of the academics while balancing the workload, and Facilitating a relatability to the classroom experience. This narrative segues into the remaining survey questions.

Survey questions 10 and 11 reaffirmed that the professionals in the private high school industry ‘Strongly agree’ that after participating in athletics, private high school students improve in traits that lead them to be academically successful. All thirty subjects produced an overall mean score of 4.73. Similarly, they scored a mean score of 4.87 to ‘Strongly agree’ that teamwork, collaboration, resilience, attentiveness, increased motivation, overcoming adversity, effective time management, and better work habits are sound examples of qualities that are gained when participating in athletics.

Finally, the last survey question (12) gave the freedom to provide additional input into the topic. Eighteen of the thirty subjects responded with different variations, but as a consensus that all supported athletic participation's value on academic achievement for private high school students. The data gathered from this question served as a profound and comprehensive conclusion to substantiate this analysis. It also provides sustenance for all the other questions.

In the end, the instrumentation and data collection procedures accomplished the objective of this study by ascertaining the traits associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes. Integration was used for the two forms of data as this is a central feature of mixed methods research (Creswell, 2019).

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze these results. The perceptions of private high school professionals provided substantive feedback about private high school student-athletes relative to their academic achievement. As a result, the purpose of this study was also deemed sufficient to determine the effect that athletic participation has on academic success for private high school students. The Executive Summary will recapitulate these research findings and outline what they represent relative to the topic of study.

Executive Summary

Subject Matter Introduction

Playing sports while obtaining a secondary or post-secondary education is considered a privilege in America. Many student-athletes represent themselves and their schools while competing on the fields, courts, and in the water. When they are not participating in their sport, they are often studying or in class. This balancing act that they manage yields much interest. Athletic participation and academic achievement have been studied for years in the literature though they are not specific in nature. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of athletic participation on the academic achievement for private high school students.

The significance of this matter is multi-layered. As education intertwines with society, society's values are illustrated through the school systems (Bhardwaj, 2016). Recently, society has lost sight of the traditional values that participating in sports provides, which is to enhance one's character, increase their academic experience, and assist in the overall educational development process (Collins, 2022). Instead, the recent financial influence of passing the NCAA's name, image, and likeness rule, obtaining a scholarship, or earning professional money has become a leading reason for participation (Sitkowski, 2008). In general, the professionalization of sports at the collegiate and high school levels has created a culture where athletics and academics appear to work at cross-purposes (Sitkowski, 2008; Martinez, 2016; Collins, 2022). As a result, there is also a significant drop in attention and literature regarding this effect (Collins, 2022). Moreover, the positive impact of enhancing academic performance needs to be promoted more due to this money-driven concept that is happening with sports, which overshadows the art of play and the benefits of participation (Martinez, 2016).

Having lost sight of this phenomenon has also created a literary void for updated and new research about this topic. While there is research that provides a consensus for athletic participation positively impacting academic achievement, it is dated and rarely broken down by different segments, populations, or school types (Bowen, 2012; Filsinger, 2012; Amos, 2013; Cole, 2014; Foye, 2017; Wretman, 2017; Mathy, 2020; Hairston, 2021). Because previous research has been limited to general populations and not specific to target groups, fewer studies examine this dynamic and break the results down demographically by age, race, or gender. None are currently devoted to examining this phenomenon by private schools or private school students. This research will assist in glorifying the degree of athletic participation's impact on academic performance, specifically for private high school students. Moreover, it serves as a “roadmap” for future studies and hopefully creates a renewed influx to conduct more studies on specific target groups, intending to prove that athletic participation enhances academic performance. It can also catapult future examinations for local, regional, statewide, and national usage. An up-to-date analysis that collects specific and detailed data will provide a practical resource for decision-makers and policy-creators who look at athletics and physical education’s role in relation to student's holistic education. This examination will include data in a dissertation for future modeling and comparison. This study ultimately aims to improve the overall holistic educational curriculum for private school students and all students.

Method Analysis

The specific segment of this review is student-athletes at private high schools which also helps to fill the void in the private school athletic literature. As transformative research, this study answered two research questions through examination. Answering these questions elevates the comprehension of the correlation between academic performance and athletic participation in

private high schools. In addition, this action research serves as a change agent for education reform and provides a theoretical framework for future studies in the private high school setting. Understanding the academic profits of athletic participation benefits private school stakeholders in garnering knowledge and provides insight into why athletics and physical education are integral parts of private schools' curricula. The objective of this study was accomplished by answering the following research questions: Research Question 1: What are the traits associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes? Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of private high school professionals about private high school student-athletes relative to their academic achievement?

A comprehensive research design was imperative to determine the effect of athletic participation on private high school students' academic achievement. A complete literature review created a framework for theory and set the structure for this research. The in-depth field study was conducted using action research mixed methods consisting of quantitative and qualitative research (Mertler, 2019). Combining these two assisted in analyzing survey results of private school professionals garnered perceptions about student-athletes relative to their academic achievement. A primary reason for utilizing a mixed methods research design for this topic is to allow for data collection to be best analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively for one single study to adequately address the research problem and provide information for private school decision-makers (Creswell, 2017). This analysis and data provide substantive information to utilize as a resource for reference about athletic participation's impact on behaviors that lead to academic success. Data gathered from these anonymous online surveys were analyzed through descriptive statistics and coded to abstract consistency. These consistencies created findings to address the two research questions.

There are two theorists, Alexander Astin, and Fritz Heider, who laid the groundwork for establishing the student-athlete success model. Student involvement, such as participation in athletics, is essential for fostering a growth mindset in a learning environment. This out-of-the-classroom participation is essential to qualify student involvement (Astin, 1985). Further, the educational gains attributed to the student-athlete are exemplified when the student participates in the learning process (Astin, 1985). The fundamental principle that learning outside the classroom is part of a student's overall curriculum lends credence to the conceptualization that athletic participation positively impacts academic achievement, regardless of the population segment being examined or the school type. In addition to this research, assessing how participation in athletics affects academic performance may reveal intrinsic qualities about the private school student-athlete, such as motivation and attitude, which increase academic gains. According to theorist Fritz Heider, motivation and attitude are significantly crucial for effective student learning. Private school professionals will connect the student-athlete experience to the balance theory, which is the psychology of motivation relative to attitude change (Heider, 2013). The perceptions of education professionals obtained in the surveys further uncover other qualities achieved through extracurricular activities that link Heider and Astin's work to this research's goals.

As this is a study about private high school students' academic gains, the best population to provide input and data are those who work in the private high school setting. The perceptions of private high school professionals befittingly assisted in determining and comprehending athletic participation's effect on academic achievement in private high schools. To be considered professional, all survey participants were also at least 18 years old and had at least five years of experience in the coaching and education profession.

Fifty subjects received an email with a link to the survey that the participant had two weeks to complete. Thirty of the fifty participants (60% of the sample) partook in the survey for this research, consisting of private high school professionals, which was a significant response rate. The survey consisted of mission-specific questions using a Likert scale and open-ended questions. The Likert scale questions were analyzed quantitatively; the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. Both inform each other through triangulation to give a narrative picture regarding the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. The open-ended questions allowed subjects to write their answers regarding perceptions about athletic participation and academics. These answers were exported into Microsoft Excel. The data was condensed and coded using Excel to abstract keywords, common responses, and identical wording. These themes substantiated findings to yield validity in supporting the hypothesis that the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students is positive.

Findings

The survey results provided an overwhelming consensus from a statistical standpoint and in descriptive themes. Both support the notion that athletic participation enhances academic achievement for private high school students.

- Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants most closely indicate a *strongly agree* sentiment that athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement for private high school students, as well as that participation in athletics increases student involvement, and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience for private high school students.

- Subjects included “Intelligence and Attitude” as the most important traits for academic success, along with “Participation, Discipline, Hard Work, Commitment, Focus, and Motivation.” Analysis for these responses was generated from Word Cloud and exported into Excel for coding. It was not grouped if there were any less than three references for a keyword. These eight grouped traits attributed to 53.33% of the comprehensive list of traits cited (90).
- The subjects most closely indicated a *Yes* sentiment that participation in athletics does instill these academically successful traits in private high school students.
- Responses from thirty subjects produced five key themes that coexist within the other survey questions regarding a coach’s influence to facilitate an athletic experience that yields successful academic achievement for private high school student-athletes. These were extracted from the data set and included:
 - Improving time management skills,
 - Learning/teaching good practice/study habits,
 - Overcoming adversity,
 - Valuing the importance of academics while balancing the workload, and
 - Facilitating a relatability to the classroom experience.
- Thirty survey participants most closely indicated a *strongly agree* sentiment that private high school students improve in traits that lead them to succeed academically after participating in athletics.
- The mean for years of experience in education for the thirty survey participants was 16.5.
- The mean of these professionals in coaching was 13.2 years.

The provided data is based on these findings and programmatically supports this research.

Conclusions

This Executive Summary provided an overall summary of this study. The study's goal was to determine the effect that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students. The subject matter was thoroughly introduced and is essential to address the problem. The research method used in this examination answered the research questions and provided invaluable data to produce conclusive findings. The results yielded support for the hypotheses and theory. Sports, athletics, and physical education are imperative and enhance an adolescent's academic and learning experience.

While the results from this research undoubtedly support that athletic participation enhances academic achievement for private high school students, it also identifies how. Learned traits through athletic participation that lead to academic success and the role of the coach are significant in assisting student-athletes in their academic outcomes. The consistency of responses and common keywords ensure the validity of these findings.

A limitation of this research was only obtaining the opinions of a small sample size within the private school community in the same region of the country. Findings that are so unified based on a study of just thirty private school professionals warrant more investigation with different segments and populations. The limitation of delineating different segments hinders this phenomenon from being a universal concept yet, but this is where the opportunity for more research will unilaterally solidify the findings. Future studies should produce similar results.

This overwhelming consistency of the responses from this study aligned well with previous literature to provide a sound and substantial unity supporting the phenomenon that athletic participation enhances academic achievement. This is also the case specifically for private high school students. The data warrants a consensus that athletic participation enhances

academic performance in the private school setting, but this also reinforces the importance of *education through the physical* on a grander scale. One which deserves responsiveness and promotion from national, state, and local agencies, as will be discussed in this next section.

Recommendations

There are two different groups that this recommendation of the study is geared to address. The first group consists of policymakers, decision-makers, and governing bodies within the private school sector. This includes private school member organizations, professional development associations, and private school leadership. The second is all stakeholders within private schools. This includes the students and their families, faculty, and interested parties who want to further the research on this subject matter.

For the first group, this study serves as a product and resource. In an effort to help ensure and promote a well-rounded, holistic education in private schools, this study provides information useful for the betterment and improvement of curriculum. Participation in extra-curricular activities such as sports, athletics, and physical education enhances the academic and learning experience. Improving the education system in our country is an ongoing process for the improvement of the future of our society. Studies such as this contribute to this endeavor. Moreover, physical activity is more important than just increasing academic achievement for students as it is essential to living a healthy life (Shephard, R. 1984; Allison, 2017). There is nothing more important than one's health. This product serves as a facilitator to remind decision-makers of this fact and that implementing it in our schools should be a top priority as a society. The responsibility falls on the leaders and policymakers in the industry to reemphasize athletic participation again by making it a requirement. If not in sports, then at least through physical education as more than just a course credit. There is no reason why it should not be valued as

much as the core subjects in schools and taken even more seriously. There is no reason why private schools cannot institute active participation for students.

The implication is that this study should facilitate more research to influence education reform. Education intertwines with society, and society's values are illustrated through the school systems (Bhardwaj, 2016). This research should reinvigorate and inspire people to further explore this phenomenon for the benefit of all, not just students. Much has been and can continue to be learned by modeling that of the "student-athlete." There is room to identify more traits and additional ways active participation leads to successful academic outcomes. More questions and an expanded audience can provide more depth about this topic.

For the second group, this is a call to continue research upon the back of this blueprint. Previous literature and past studies have declared similar findings, though outdated and vague. The consistency of these specific results, explicit to private high school students, is invaluable to private high school stakeholders (student and their parents, faculty, and researchers). More targeted research can yield similar outcomes. For this reason, other delineated studies should be conducted similarly for certain stakeholders. In this sense, this process will serve as a resource for future researchers and can be a programmatic process for further discovery. This demands that more attention be placed on examining concepts in different ways. All literature should prove consistent with the general findings that sports, athletics, and physical education enhance academic achievement for students and ultimately add to the updated literature advocating for the implementation and requirement of this in schools. This dissertation can now be added to the bank of literature as one that affirms that the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students is positive.

Furthermore, for this group, this information offsets the mentality of professionalism in sports. It is important to note that many traits learned through athletics are also invaluable in life. These traits from this research include hard work, determination, leadership, mental toughness, commitment, teamwork, improving socialization skills, practicing good values, sportsmanship, time management, accountability, dedication, confidence, discipline, and a positive attitude. By reminding people about these many non-monetary, intangible benefits, people may emphasize participation for traditional reasoning. Along the same lines, it would help if the people who work in media could concentrate on these benefits rather than exploiting student-athletes as marketing and money-driven commodities.

Not only does this product provide and fill the necessary void in research about this topic, but it serves as a much-needed reminder and notice to both groups about the value of athletics and physical education in private high schools. Improving the private school education system is an ongoing process that both groups invest in, and this study aims to partake in that venture. Together, everyone shares in the same mission to promote and provide findings like these as a resource. Resources deliver information to make informed decisions for improvement. Improvement is a constant goal for the development of schools (Sitkowski, 2008).

The process of this study can be presented in a programmatic format at school board meetings, academic and athletic conferences, education webinars, or even just in conversation. Through developed relationships with private schools and private school governing agencies, this information serves as a creditable program for presentation, which is this product's intention. It is another “tool in the toolbox” for athletic administrators, coaches, and physical education teachers to validate their role in private school education. It will duly help sustain athletics and physical education as a requirement in the education system.

The practitioner of this research subject is a transformative agent of change. A study of this nature is essentially a procedure that can be duplicated and distributed. In this case, this is a product, a program, and a process that can be shared, promoted, and circulated to every private school in the country. This work is a dissertation-in-practice and is fluid. It can be built upon similar to the works of theorists Heider and Astin, in the literature review.

The goal of this study was met in that it determined the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. In closing, as this study initially stated, education's role in society is crucial for the sustainability of civilization (Ball, 2021), and education consists of people training people for the future of humanity. We constantly look for ways to improve student gains (Ball, 2021). This dissertation hopefully contributed towards progressing in that direction.

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Appendix A
Written Consent



November 11, 2022

Re: Permission to access and use private data set in research study

Dear Lynn University IRB Committee:

This letter is to confirm that Jeff Johnson, a student researcher at Lynn University, has the permission of Pine Crest School ("Pine Crest" or the "School") to access and use in connection with his research study the contact list that Pine Crest maintains for athletic coaches who are employed by the School. Pine Crest will provide Mr. Johnson with the names and contact information of all employed athletic coaches. The School understands that Mr. Johnson will access this private information for the purpose of recruiting participants to complete a survey for his study.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Lisa Ockerman, Ed.S
Vice President of Academics
Co-Chair of Pine Crest School's Research Review Board
lisa.ockerman@pinecrest.edu

[REDACTED]
Whitney Walters-Sachs, J.D., Ed.D. '92
Vice President of School & Legal Affairs
Co-Chair of Pine Crest School's Research Review Board
whitney.walters-sachs@pinecrest.edu

Appendix B
Initial Email Correspondence

Requesting your assistance for a survey...



Recipients

Requesting your assistance for a survey...

Dear -----,

As you may or may not know, I am currently enrolled in graduate school and in the process of earning a Doctoral degree at Lynn University. I am asking you to participate in a research study for my dissertation. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have about the research, I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail.

I am interested in learning more about the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. You will be asked to answer questions related to this topic in this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KHZLKFM> .

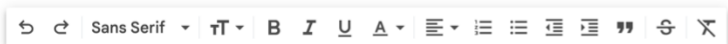
This will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. All information will be kept confidential. This survey is anonymous; this means that your name will not appear anywhere and no one except me will know about your specific answers. I will assign a number to your responses, and only I will have the key to indicate which number belongs to which participant. In any articles I write or any presentations that I make, I will use a made-up name for you, and I will not reveal details or I will change details about where you work, where you live, any personal information about you, and so forth. No IP addresses will be known.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping me to understand the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement. There is no risk to you for participating in this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Johnson, CAA
Director of Athletics
Pine Crest School
██████████



Appendix C
Informed Consent

Informed consent:

My name is Jeff Johnson, and I am a Doctoral student at Lynn University. I am asking you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have about the research, I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail.

I am interested in learning more about the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement for private high school students. You will be asked to answer questions related to this topic in this survey. This will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. All information will be kept confidential.

This survey is anonymous; this means that your name will not appear anywhere and no one except me will know about your specific answers. I will assign a number to your responses, and only I will have the key to indicate which number belongs to which participant. In any articles I write or any presentations that I make, I will use a made-up name for you, and I will not reveal details or I will change details about where you work, where you live, any personal information about you, and so forth.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping me to understand the effect of athletic participation on academic achievement. There is no risk to you for participating in this study. If you do not wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from this study, without penalty, at any time.

Participant - All of my questions and concerns about this study have been addressed. I choose, voluntarily, to participate in this research project. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

Jeff Johnson
Doctoral Student, Lynn University

██████████

IRB Chair: Dr. Jennifer Lesh (email: jlesh@lynn.edu)
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Kathleen Weigel (email: kweigel@lynn.edu)

Appendix D

Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q1. Informed consent:

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Jeff Johnson
Doctoral Student, Lynn University

IRB Chair: Dr. Jennifer Lesh (email: jlesh@lynn.edu)
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Q2. How many years have you been working in education?

Q3. How many years have you been coaching?

Q4. Athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement for private high school students.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q5. Participation in athletics increases student involvement and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience for private high school students.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q6. Name three traits that you attribute as the most important for academic success.

Q7. Does the influence of athletic participation instill these three traits for private high school students?

Yes Partially No

Q8. Does the influence of athletic participation instill these three traits for private high school students?

Yes Partially No

Q9. What traits are associated with athletic participation that leads to successful academic outcomes for private high school student-athletes? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Q10. What role does the coach play in facilitating an athletic experience that promotes success at school for student-athletes? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Q11: Provide an example of a strategy or technique that coaches use to facilitate an athletic experience that yields successful academic achievement for private high school student-athletes. (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Q12. After participating in athletics, private high school students improve in traits that lead them to be academically successful.

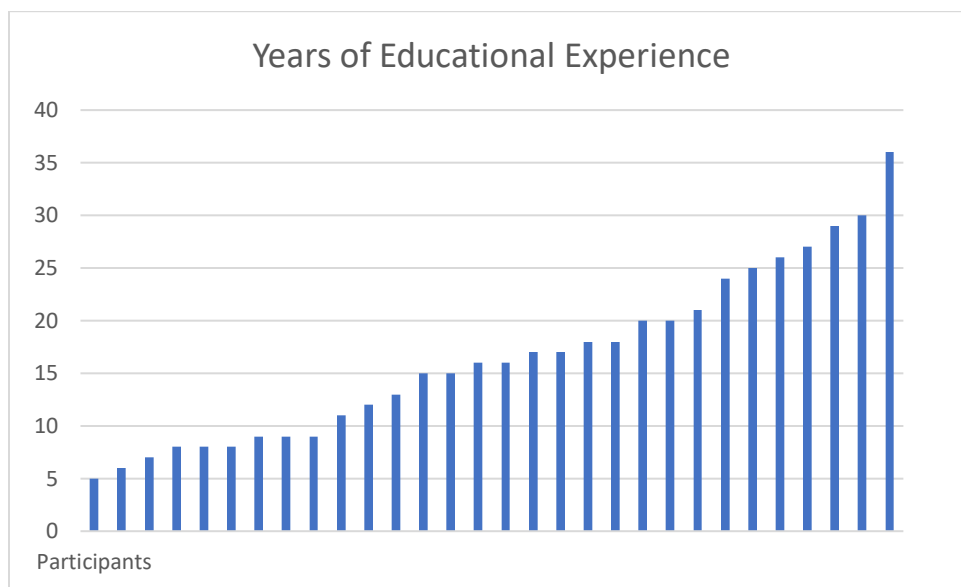
Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q13. Examples of qualities that are gained when participating in athletics include teamwork, collaboration, resilience, attentiveness, increased motivation, overcoming adversity, effective time management, and better work habits.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Q14. Is there anything else that you would like to add about the value that athletic participation has on academic achievement for private high school students? (Please feel free to write as much as you like)

Appendix E
Survey Result Figures 1-12

Figure 1*Years of Experience in the Education Profession***Figure 2***Years of Coaching Experience***Figure 3**

Athletic participation has a positive effect on academic achievement for private high school students.

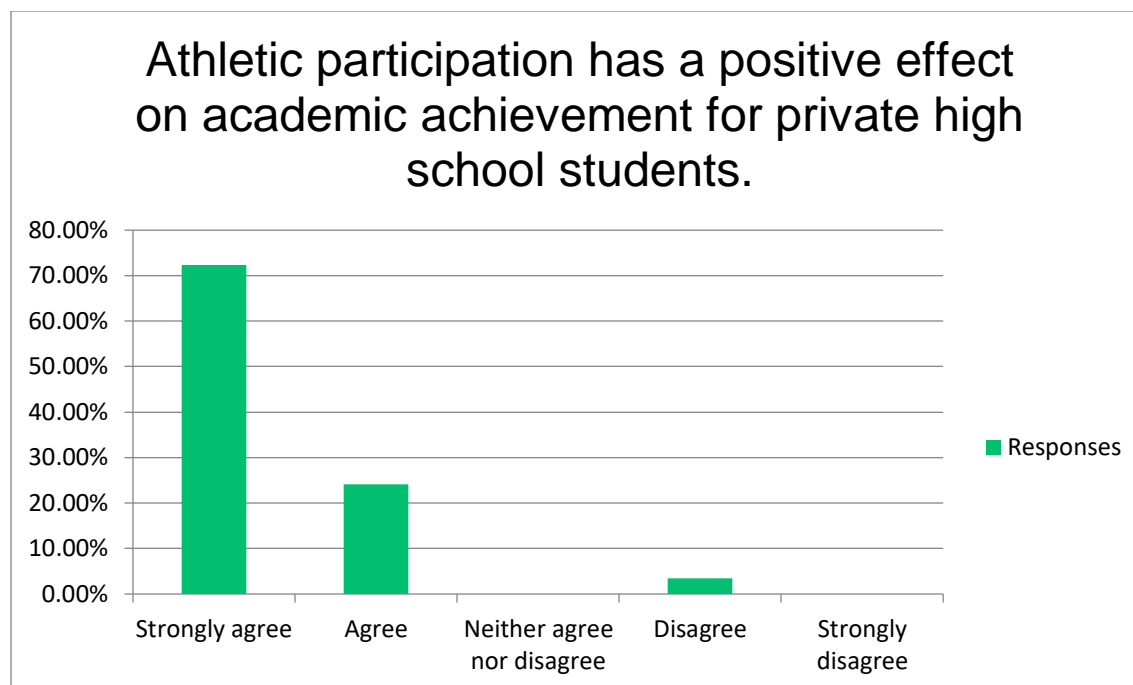


Figure 4

Participation in athletics increases student involvement and this engagement in school activity enhances the academic experience for private high school students.

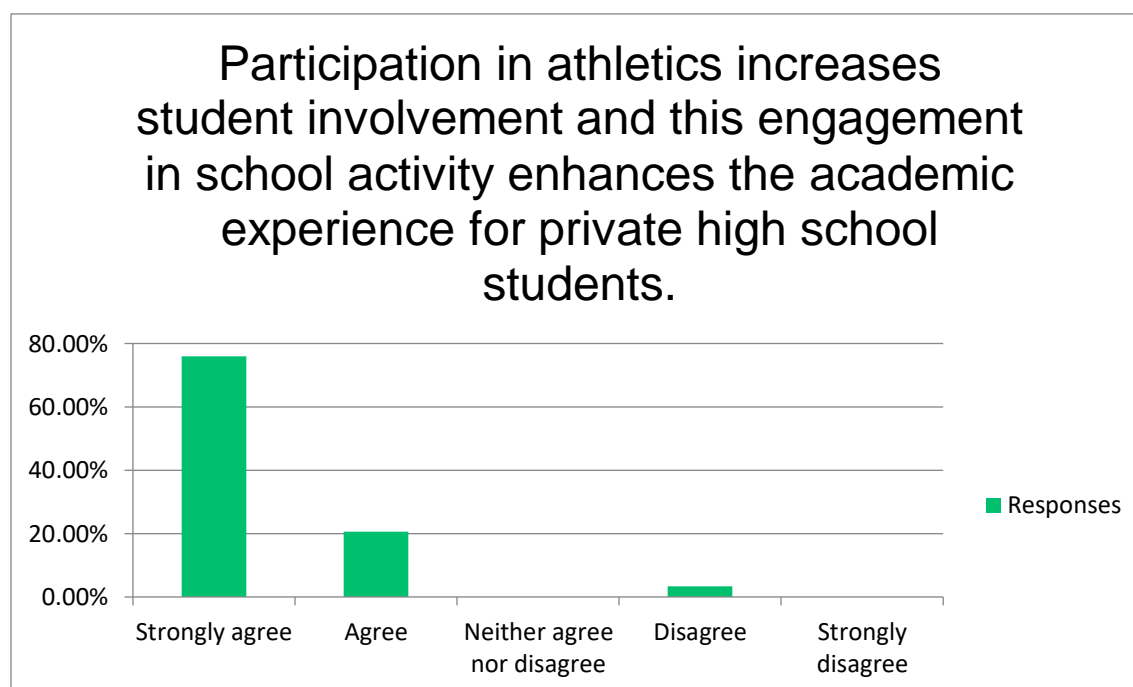


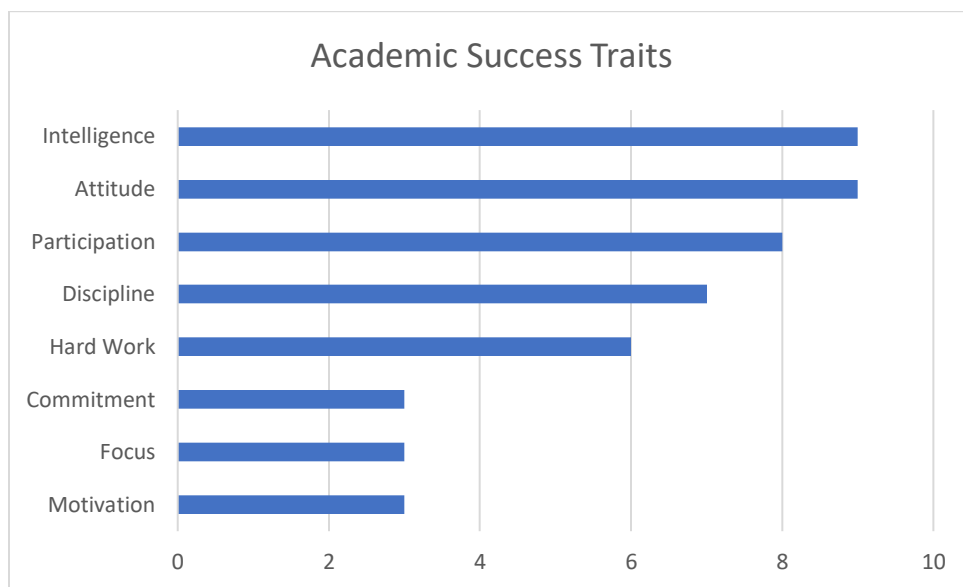
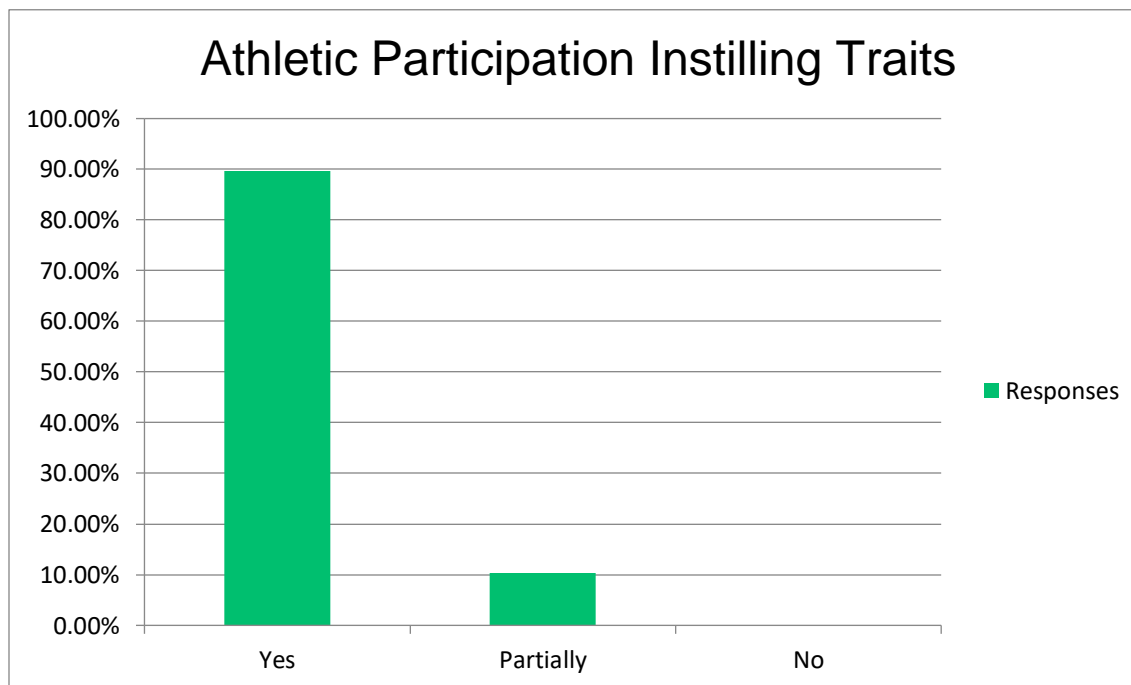
Figure 5*Academic Success Traits***Figure 6***Athletic Participation Instilling Traits*

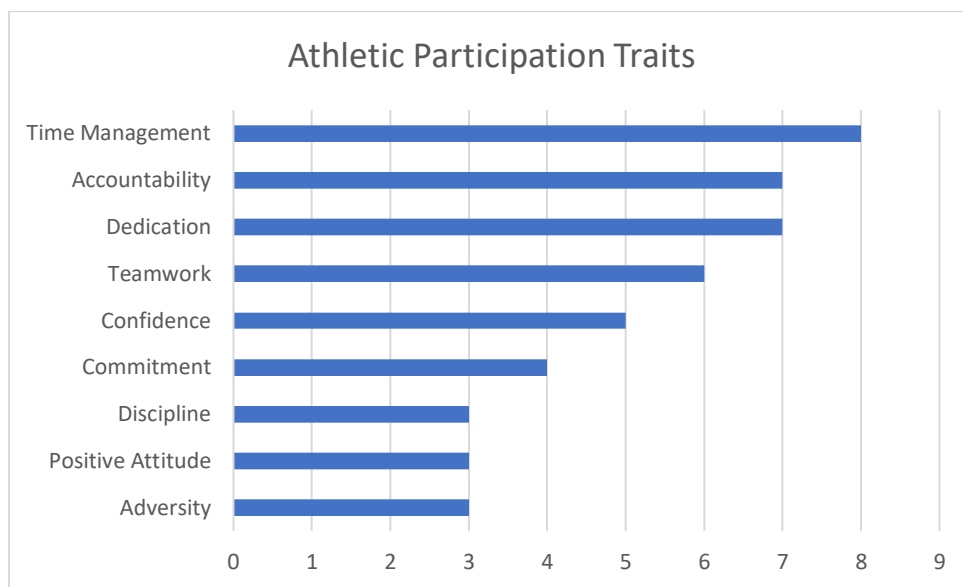
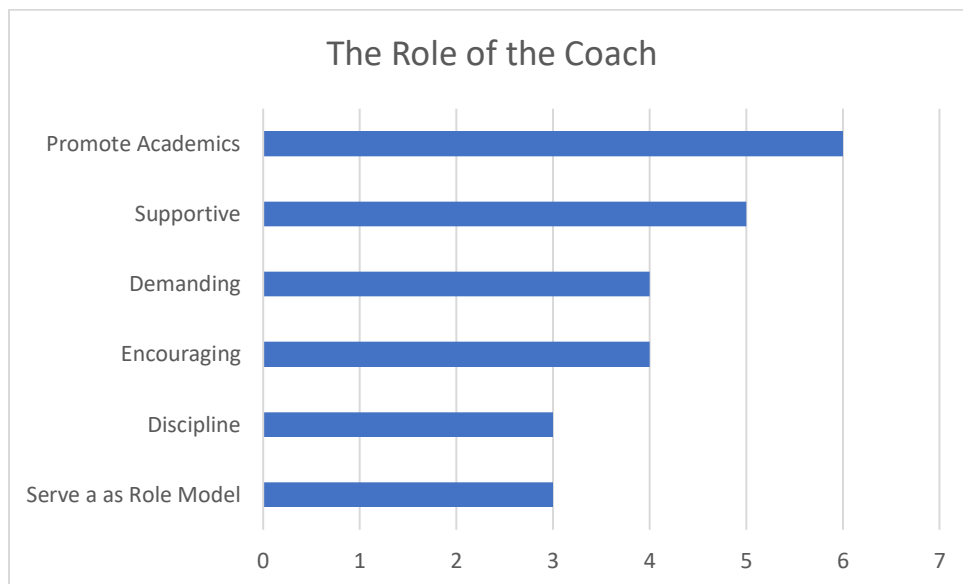
Figure 7*Athletic Participation Traits***Figure 8***The Role of the Coach*

Figure 9*Strategies and Techniques*

Strategies and Techniques	
23)	The coach can bring competitiveness to the team. This teaches the student athletes that there will always be competition and that it's a good thing. In the classroom and in real life this will happen too and students will know how to handle it.
24)	The coach can help facilitate time management by having a schedule for practice that is beneficial to what the team needs to accomplish. This will help the students in and out of the classroom by using their time to accomplish the things that are the most important.
25)	Coaches can always better the student athletes by acknowledging and correcting mistakes made by players in a positive way. This will let the student athletes know that it is okay to make mistakes, you learn from them, grow, and move on.
26)	Putting the team through drills together, for example, if one messes up then they all get the consequence. This can help kids tend to others more carefully in any environment.
27)	Showing concern for student-athletes' success in the academic realm, we can help student-athletes see the connection between sports and school and the importance of academic achievement.
28)	Challenging a player to make in game adjustments. Trust your leadership, try new things and provide feedback on how they felt in that situation can help a person in their everyday life and in the classroom.
29)	Coaches work to build relationships among teammates, work on goal setting, and work on time management.
30)	Educating students about the importance of practice is key to perfecting your craft. This correlates to the classroom...studying is important.
31)	You have prepared and planned and yet you lose the game -same principles apply in classroom sometimes it's just going to be hard and you face some failure.
32)	Bad call drill - helps students overcome adversity.
33)	Time Management-Players need to be able to balance sports, academics, and social life through time management. It is difficult enough to keep up with the stress of homework and studying, but it is crucial that a student athlete can balance everything when practice is after school 5 days a week. It is important to reinforce time management. The best example is to have players prepare their equipment/athletic clothes the night before practice or a game. The balance is essential.
34)	Grade checks will reinforce the idea that academics come first. Bus rides to and from away games should be used for homework if necessary. Limiting practices to two hours a day gives students a chance to finish homework every night. Planning ahead and using the weekend to do homework helps as well.
35)	The playing of mindful and positive music has the ability to boost the moods of your student-athletes during pre-game and during competition.
36)	Conduct a team study hall.
37)	Effective coaches lead by example, showing how to run an organized and time-efficient practice. Practice plans are usually sectioned into different skills, allowing small break times, all designed with the goal to prepare for the "exam" - the contest. Student-athletes must organize their lives in the same way. This is a great example of how coaches model successful strategies on and off the field.
38)	A strategy a coach can use to help yield academic success is to encourage kids to take ownership of their conflicts, by looking ahead on their schedules so that they can communicate with their teachers and coaches in advance, so that they are better served.
39)	Coaches can encourage athletes to be successful in the classroom by celebrating a high team GPA or by assigning an upperclassman to serve as a mentor to an underclassman. The upperclassman can emphasize the importance of maintaining good grades, and getting proper nutrition and sleep which will translate to success both on the field and in the classroom.
40)	A coach can push an athlete to work hard and believe in themselves which will raise the student-athlete's confidence. Confidence allows students to try something new or push themselves harder than they would without.
41)	Students should be students first and then athletes. Both can definitely be done. Coaches should encourage students to perform in the classroom and go to extra help when needed without fear of being punished. Having a strong team GPA can be a motivator for students who are struggling to work harder in the classroom. With the varying ages on teams, there is always someone who has taken a class and could help.
42)	Starting practice on time and ending practice when promised. Starting practice on time makes punctuality a must. Instilling this habit in players helps them be better organized and disciplined students. Ending practice on time reinforces the importance of time management as well as enables students to effectively manage their own time. Sounds simple but often overlooked.
43)	Having the team hold each other and themselves accountable for being on time, giving the best effort practice or game and keeping each other honest with this.
44)	Holding the student-athletes to a set practice schedule, and then requiring them to study during designated times.

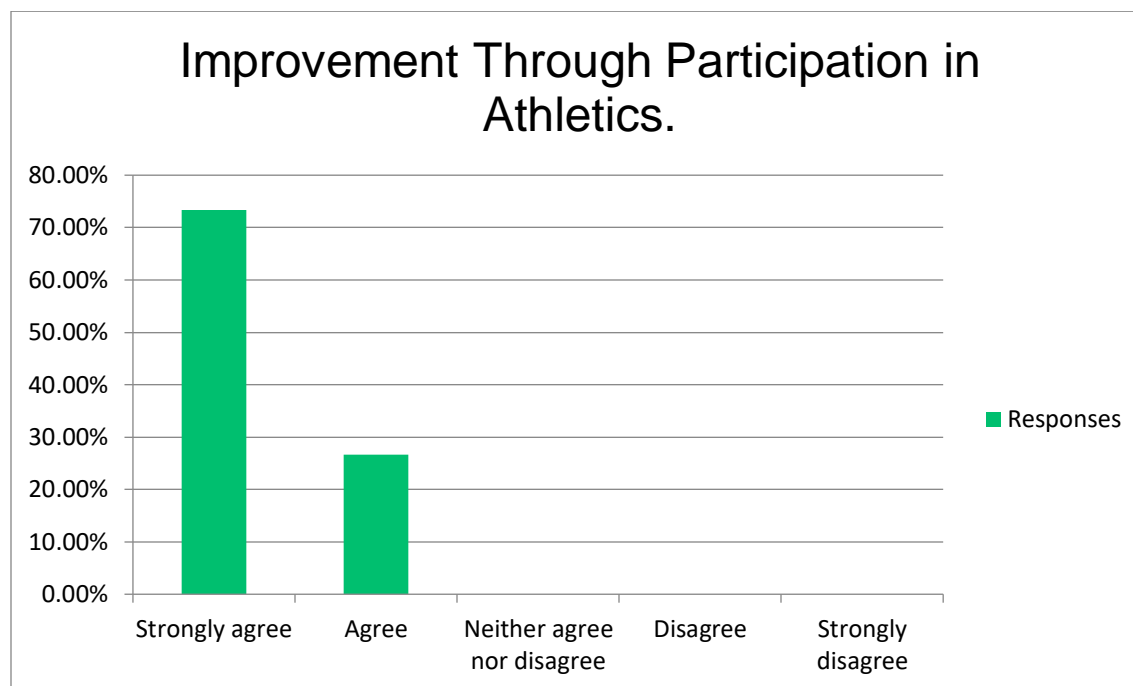
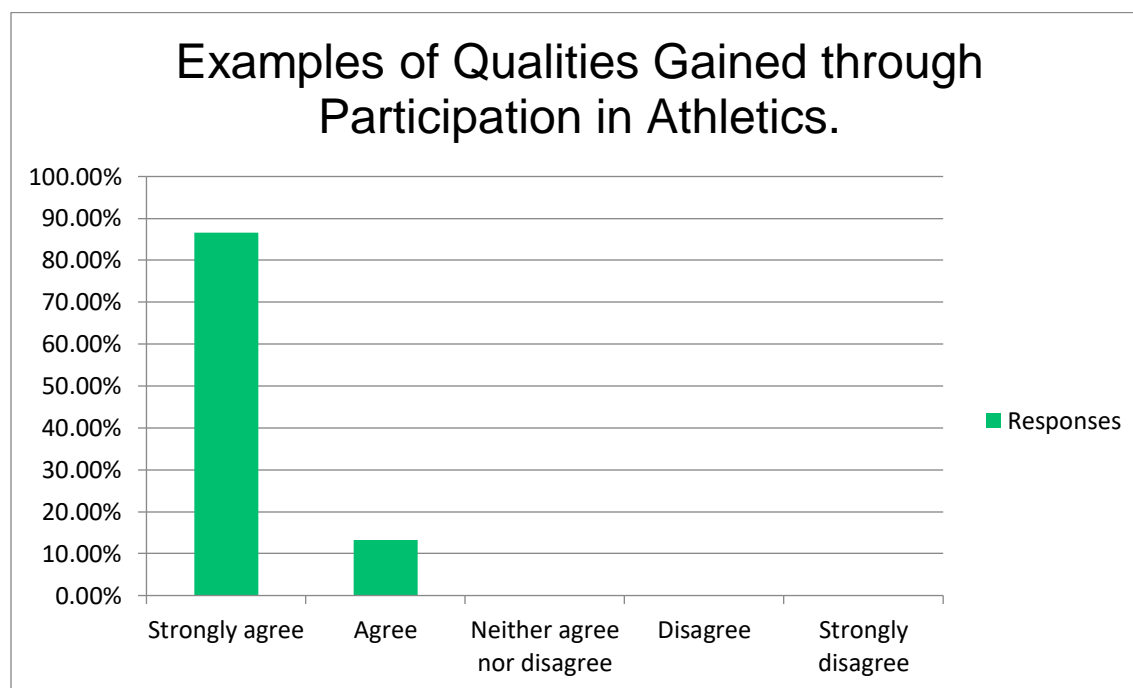
Table 10*Improvement Through Participation in Athletics***Figure 11***Examples of Qualities Gained through Participation in Athletics.*

Figure 12*Additional Value*

Additional Value
19) Participating in high school athletics teaches so many skills that students need to become better in the classroom.
20) I think high school athletics instills so many life lessons in young children and helps teach them valuable lessons that prepare them for real life situations.
21) Participation in sports requires teamwork, discipline, resiliency, respect, compassion, and character. Each of these attributes contributes to academic success in the classroom and in life.
22) Athletics throughout a student's career can help provide valuable life lessons to help them with their careers and families. It's a way to also build life long friendships and family mentality that can never be taken away.
23) Nothing I haven't already said. Coaches and athletic participation provide qualities of good character and good citizenship that academics alone cannot do.
24) There are so many carryover benefits and athletics is more physical of course than academics but the success points are so similar.
25) Many private schools tend to focus more on academics and student-athletes understand that academics come first.
26) The physicality of sports increases the mental sharpness of the student athlete in the classroom.
27) Perhaps the greatest reasons why athletics plays a pivotal role in academics is that A) It is the best dropout prevention program and keeps students in school B) Athletics builds character, encourages empathy and teaches student-athletes to respect others and themselves 3) Athletics is a community event that involves the student body, teachers, parents, alumni and other community groups as a whole.
28) Teaches them to put in the hard work and time to get better, which mirrors the academic side.
29) Athletics give the students a place to unwind and rest their brains from school which is important as well.
30) Athletics provide the perfect platform to learn how to fail in order to succeed. A team can prepare as best they can but ultimately does not control the outcome. There are many factors that go into a game. Academics are similar. Preparation does not guarantee success. Outside factors come into play and it's how one deals with those moments of adversity that provides the greatest growth and ultimately "success".
31) Being a student athlete leads to respect in the classroom.
32) Participating in athletics teaches high school students how to manage their time, communicate effectively, be part of a team, and work toward a common goal. With pressure to succeed in the classroom higher than ever, the lessons learned through sports absolutely benefit students in all areas of their lives.
33) I believe being on an athletic team builds relationships and creates a family like environment that allows students to feel at home at school. Being comfortable and having a strong support system is part of the foundation of success.
34) This is based on no evidence, but I bet most students perform well academically while in season than out of season.
35) Participating in athletics helps to keep students on the healthy body/healthy mind. It has been proven that the more one participates in physical activity the healthier and clearer their mind will be to learn academically.
36) Sports enhance the academics.