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To Participate Or Not Participate In High School Athletics

Submitted to the
Faculty of Urbana University
In partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of
Master in Education
Division of Graduate Study

By
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2003

Approved: SEPT 19, 03

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to identify the correlation between the motivational factors as to why students choose to participate versus not participate in extra-curricular athletics.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It has been questioned many times by various observers in the Northwestern High School community as to why students choose not to participate on the various athletic teams offered by the school system. Many have theorized reasons as to why students do participate in certain activities as well as why others choose not to become involved. These theories cover a broad range of possible reasons.

Many coaches have expressed frustration regarding the lack of participation, yet seem not to have a firm understanding as to the reasons for this lack of participation. Numerous faculty and staff members have discussed this issue with no specific conclusions. Community members have expressed concern and confusion regarding the same issue. The attempt to identify specific motivational factors for why students do choose to participate in athletics will hopefully provide the Northwestern community in general and coaches specifically with data that they can use to continue the growth of their athletic programs. The study will also seek to provide data as to why students choose not to participate in various athletic programs. This data is intended to help the athletic department, coaches, and the community as a whole to better fit the needs and

interests of the larger population of students at Northwestern High School.

QUESTIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED

- 1) Why do students at Northwestern High School choose to participate in various athletic programs?
- 2) Why do students at Northwestern High School choose not to participate in various athletic programs?
- 3) What is the correlation between students and their parents participation in athletics?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Activity Period – Wednesday morning session where student groups have the opportunity to meet. This is also a time for miscellaneous items to be completed including the data collection instrument administration.

Athletics - Ohio High School Athletic Association sponsored extra-curricular athletics that are offered by Northwestern High School in Springfield, Ohio. These include the following sports:

1. Women's volleyball (Fall)
2. Men's / Women's soccer (Fall)
3. Men's Football (Fall)

4. Men's / Women's cross country (Fall)
5. Men's / Women's basketball (Winter)
6. Men's wrestling (Winter)
7. Men's baseball (Spring)
8. Women's softball (Spring)
9. Men's / Women's track and field (Spring)
10. Women's cheerleading (Fall/Winter)

Extra-curricular - Programs that are offered by Northwestern High School as after school activities, but not required of students. These programs do not affect students academic standing.

Instrument - The survey that was used for the purposes of this study.

Motivational Factors - Reasons / Excuses for participating or not participating in athletics

NFHS - National Federation of State High School Associations. This organization is the governing body of the state governing bodies for athletics.

OHSAA - Ohio High School Athletic Association. This is the governing body for high school athletics in the state of Ohio.

Parents - Biological mother and father.

Participation - Being a recognized member of an athletic team according to

Northwestern athletic department policy.

Student body - Officially registered students including grades 9 through 12 at Northwestern High School.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGIES

The data collection methodology was in the form of action research. The survey was broken into three separate sections seeking to obtain various information about the respondents. (Appendix A)

The first section included information about the participant including gender, grade level, athletic participation, and athletic involvement of parents during their high school experience.

The second section was to be completed only by those students that participated in athletics during the 2002 – 2003 school year. The items in this section sought to find out why students chose to participate in athletics.

The third section was to be completed only by those students that did not participate in athletics during the 2002 – 2003 school year. The items in this section sought to find out why students chose not to participate in athletics.

The instruments were administered to all students in attendance on the day that it was given. The instrument was administered during “activity period” by various teachers. Students were given approximately fifteen minutes to complete the survey and

then they were collected. The instruments were then compiled from the teachers for the purposes of this study.

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. It is assumed that all participants in the study responded honestly and accurately.
2. The items on the survey accurately reflect the wide range of motivations for participation or non-participation in extra-curricular sports.
3. The participants in this study are a fair cross section of the student body of Northwestern High School.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The data collection instrument was not administered to those students who were absent on the day it was given.
2. The instrument was administered by a variety of teachers who have varying levels of interest in administering the instrument, therefore, students may have put forth more or less effort in completing the instrument.
3. It was also noted that any disruptions to the activity period was a limitation.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study included only students enrolled at Northwestern High School in the ninth - twelfth grades at the time of the study.
2. The data collection was limited to the items on the instrument. No personal interviews nor any other methods were used to obtain further information.

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

It has long been assumed that athletic participation is beneficial to the student and the literature on the topic seems to support that notion. The research indicates that there are a variety of benefits for the student, the school, and to society in general from participation in athletics in high school.

The individual student benefits from athletic participation in many ways. Students who participate in athletics have higher grade point averages, better attendance, lower dropout rates, fewer disciplinary problems, higher graduation rates, and better success in college than non-participants (Seattle Public Schools, 2002). In another study, it was determined that students showed increased self-esteem and motivation, better body image for girls, and overall psychological well-being for those that participated in athletics (Child Trends, 2000).

Participation in athletics provides coaches with a variety of “teachable moments.” These are opportunities to teach a life long message through the avenue of sport. Research clearly shows that highly charged emotional experiences, such as those often associated with athletics, heighten sensory and intellectual responses, increasing the likelihood that people will use and remember a message (Harvard, 2000).

Increased academic performance was a large benefit enjoyed by participants as

indicated in a 1995 study of the educational performances of athletes and non-athletes in North Carolina high schools. The grade point averages for athletes were found to be 21.6% higher than that of the non-athletes.(Whitley & Pressley, 1995) The North Carolina High School Athletic Association, in its own comprehensive state-wide study looked at athletes and non-athletes over a three year period and identified that the average athlete grade point average was 2.86 while the non-athlete grade point average was 1.96. (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002). In a similar study done on Colorado high school students, the mean grade-point average of athletes studied was 3.093 while the non-athletes was 2.444. (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002). New Mexico also found similar results. (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002).

Athletes were found to be in attendance at school consistently more often than their non-athlete counterparts as was discovered in (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002) and (Whitley & Pressley, 1995). This would certainly aide in the academic performances of each student over the course of their high school career.

Discipline referrals is another area where athletes outperformed non-athletes. Non-athletes were referred for discipline approximately nine - ten percent more frequently than the athletes according to (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002) and (Whitley & Pressley, 1995).

Meanwhile, it has been determined that non-athletes also dropped out of school at

about an eight percent higher rate than that of the athlete group. (Whitley & Pressley, 1995). This, compared to the fact that athletes tended to record a higher graduation rate than non-athletes (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002), provides a significant background of support for participation in high school athletics.

It is important to note that while the individual sees the benefits of athletic participation, the school and the society as a whole also benefits as a result. The school is made up largely of students as well as the staff members. Whatever the student brings to the table in terms of his / her individuality will be put together with many other students' offerings to form the collective student body of the school. Because of this, the enhancement of the individual is the key to trying to bring about a quality student body. As a result, the school benefits somewhat to the level that the individual benefits. If each student is able to improve their grade point average, daily attendance, cut back on discipline referrals, decrease the likeliness of drop-out and increase the likelihood of graduation, then the school would be viewed by most as having become a better school.

The effects of student participation in high school athletics can be felt well beyond the walls of the school building itself. According to a 1996 article in Career World, admissions officers at colleges and universities took into consideration grades, test scores, and involvement in extracurricular activities when deciding whether to accept or reject an application (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002).

It has also been suggested that there might be a link between high school athletic participation and success in the business world as well. A 1987 survey of 75 Fortune 500 companies found that 95 percent of the corporate executives were involved in sports while in high school (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002).

According to numerous newspaper articles and government statistics, the effects of drug abuse and smoking on our society have been devastating both in the numbers of deaths related to as well as health care costs associated with the abuses. Several studies have been done and have found that participation in high school sports is linked to lower levels of involvement in these areas. Wyoming High School Activities Association Statewide Students Activities Survey, compiled in 1998, that 25 percent of students involved in activities, including athletics, admitted using tobacco daily compared to 40 percent of the students that were not involved in extra-curricular activities (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002). A Canadian study by the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA) in 1997 showed similar results in a survey of 833 students (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002).

According to the literature on the topic, one could conclude that our society might do well to get more students involved in the athletic programs offered by high schools across the nation. In fact, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) collected data from all 50 state high school athletic/activity associations as well as the District of Columbia that are members of the NFHS and found that sport

participation has increased for thirteen consecutive years and now stands at an all-time high of 6,767,515 students for the 2001-2002 school year, an increase of 62,292 students (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002).

The State of Ohio saw an increase of 9,125 students from four years ago according to the NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002) and (National Federation of State High School Associations, 1999).

Northwestern Local High School had 51.7 percent of the student body involved in athletics during the 1999-2000 school year. Since that time, the participation rate has increased to 53 percent in 2002-2003 according to the Gender Equity Report obtained from the Northwestern High School Athletic Department.

With the mounds of evidence that indicates the importance of high school athletics in the lives of successful people both nationally and internationally, it makes one wonder what keeps some students from participating while others choose to participate.

While the NFHS records an all-time high in athletic participation, it needs to be noted that the statistics used do not take into account that many students participate in more than one sport during the school year. This would mean that the numbers reported to the NFHS would be higher than the actual number of different individuals involved in high school athletics. This suggests that there are a few students in high schools filling out the rosters for their school in multiple sports which leaves a large group of students not participating in any sports.

While there have been numerous studies done on the effects of athletic participation among high school students, there seems to be relatively little research showing what motivates students to participate or not participate in the sports offered by high schools.

Contributing factors seem to include, but not limited to, the students' gender, their fathers' past athletic experiences, and educational level of their mothers (Overman and Rao, 1981). In some cases, the socioeconomic conditions of students seem to prevent students from becoming involved in high school athletics (Weiler, 1996).

Some observers of the situation have offered the suggestion that students do not participate because of the coach. Others would suggest that they do participate because of the coach. While it would not be accurate to place every coach under the same label, it is important to note that people generally agree that coaches make a positive contribution to the sport and its athletes (Steinbrecher, Kearney, & Noland, 1978). Of course, each sport and each school must evaluate the role of the coach as it relates to their situation and their student body. However, it is valuable for the coach to understand the expected role she / he is to play in their particular sport. Understanding the limited professional literature on the topic, the coach could better fill the needs and desires of the students choosing to participate and / or considering whether or not to participate in a given sport.

Several suggestions have been offered by others, but according to a survey of 10,000 students, the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association in 1990 claimed that the

number one reason why girls and boys participated in sports was to have fun. This survey also found that the lack of fun was the leading reason for why students dropped out of participating in athletics (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2002).

According to Dr. Richard Stratton, Health and Physical Education professor at Virginia Tech, the top reasons for young athletes to participate in sport are that children expect to have fun, learn skills, develop fitness, and enjoy competition (Stratton, 1998).

While identifying the reasons for why students would chose to become active in sports is important, it is equally important to identify the reasons given by students who chose not to participate or stop participating. In a study of approximately 700 youth sport drop-outs, the top ranked motivations for quitting were: I lost interest, the coach played favorites, I was not having any fun, and I developed other non-sport interests (Stratton, 1998).

The team environment seems to also play a large role in whether students participate or not. Teams in which athletes feel the coach does not do a good job, teammates do not get along well with each other, or there is too much pressure to win ultimately push athletes away from athletics (Stratton, 1998).

Jim Thompson, the director of Public Management Program at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, asserts that "most young athletes, like adults, want more than anything else to avoid looking dumb...and some of them try incredibly hard to keep

out of situations where they are at risk of looking dumb.” (Thompson, 1995). He also states that with this failure avoidance, many students have a need to achieve that can be met through athletics (Thompson, 1995).

According to the study, *Goal Orientation and Participation Motives in Physical Education and Sport: Their relationships in English schoolchildren*, the authors conclude that coaches need to emphasize personal improvement, choice, and learning in order to promote the intrinsic motivation that children desired (Zahariadis, P.N. & Biddle, S.J.H., 2000). Intrinsic motivators seem to work well with female athletes while extrinsic motivators work well with the male athletes (Frederick, Morrison, and Manning, 1996).

It was the purpose of this study to identify the motivations for participating or not participating in athletics at Northwestern High School. As a result of this study, the Northwestern Schools and its community will be able to identify how their school compares to the established professional literature discussed in this study.

CHAPTER III

SUBJECTS

The population of this study included all students enrolled in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades at Northwestern High School in Springfield, Ohio during the 2002 – 2003 school year. A total of 415 surveys were returned including a total of 218 males to 197 females; 209 athletes to 206 non-athletes; 121 male athletes to 88 female athletes; and 97 male non-athletes to 109 female non-athletes.

INSTRUMENTATION

The data collection instrument that was used for this study was a survey (Appendix A). Each student was afforded the opportunity to respond to various questions to determine the motivations behind choosing to participate or not participate in athletics at the high school level. The instrument also sought to gather information regarding the subjects responding.

PROCEDURES

Each survey was collected and broken into groups and sub-groups in order to study the data of specific parts of larger groups as is indicated on tables 1-6. By looking at each sub-group of data, the mean responses to each item of the instrument was then determined. Tables 1 - 4 show the percentages of students whose parent(s) participated

in high school athletics during their prep careers. Tables 5 – 6 show the mean responses to each item of the instrument according to the various groups and sub-groups.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study surveyed high school students in grades nine through twelve at Northwestern High School in Springfield, Ohio. Each student was given the opportunity to complete an instrument by scoring 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 indicating the importance of various motivators. The instrument used for this study is included in Appendix A. When all of the data was collected, the raw data was then calculated into mean scores using the 1 – 5 scale provided on the instrument. For each question, the mean score was determined and placed in tables 5 and 6. Tables 1 – 4 show the demographics of the study. Table 5 shows the mean responses for those students who participated in athletics during the 2002 – 2003 school year. Table 6 shows the mean responses for the non-athlete population of the students.

Table 1 indicates that among ninth graders, students who have parents that participated in high school athletics themselves tend to have children that chose to participate in athletics during their high school career as well. 77.54 percent of the freshman athletes have at least one parent who participated in high school athletics themselves compared to the 46.48 percent for the non-athlete populous. It is also noted that the athlete respondents seem to be more aware of their parents involvement during their high school experience than their non-athlete counterpart. The ninth grade class, however, was the only grade level in which the non-athletes had a lower percentage of

mothers who were involved in high school athletics than the athletes group. Females seem to be about ten percent more likely to have a parent with scholastic athletic experience than do males at this level.

Table 1: 9th Grade – Parent Participation In High School Athletics

	Father	Mother	One or Both	Both	Not Sure	No
Males	27.27%	7.79%	57.14%	22.08%	19.48%	23.38%
Females	29.03%	12.90%	67.74%	25.81%	19.35%	12.90%
Athletes	36.36%	14.71%	77.54%	26.47%	10.29%	11.76%
Non-Athletes	19.72%	5.63%	46.48%	21.13%	28.17%	25.35%
Male Athletes	36.84%	10.59%	73.75%	26.32%	7.89%	18.42%
Female Athletes	36.67%	20.00%	83.34%	26.67%	13.33%	3.33%
Male Non-Athletes	17.95%	5.13%	41.20%	17.95%	30.77%	28.21%
Female Non-Athletes	21.88%	6.25%	53.13%	25.00%	25.00%	21.88%

Table 2 indicates a similar finding to that of the ninth grade results in that athletes have a much higher percentage of parents who participated in high school athletics. In fact, 73.58 percent had at least one parent that was involved in athletics at the high school level. The tenth grade class results indicate that non-athletes were approximately twice

as likely not to have parents who participated in high school athletics as the athletes. The male and female athletes seem to have similar participation rates among their parents.

Table 2: 10th Grade – Parent Participation In High School Athletics

	Father	Mother	One or Both	Both	Not Sure	No
Males	20.90%	8.96	62.70%	32.84%	16.42%	20.90%
Females	19.05%	19.05%	57.15%	19.05%	23.81%	19.05%
Athletes	24.53%	9.43%	73.58%	39.62%	11.32%	15.09%
Non-Athletes	16.88%	16.88%	50.64%	16.88%	25.97	23.38%
Male Athletes	27.59%	3.45%	72.42%	41.38%	10.34%	17.24%
Female Athletes	20.83%	16.67%	75.00%	37.50%	12.50%	12.50%
Male Non-Athletes	15.79%	13.16%	43.27%	26.32%	21.10%	23.68%
Female Non-Athletes	17.95%	20.51%	46.15%	7.69%	30.77%	23.08%

Table 3 shows that 51.06 percent of the athletes in the eleventh grade came from homes where both parents were involved in scholastic athletics as students. The trend continues to show that non-athletes either do not have parents with athletic background or they are not sure of the athletics status of their parent(s).

Males seem to have more parental athletic experience from high school than do the females in the eleventh grade.

Table 3: 11th Grade – Parent Participation In High School Athletics

	Father	Mother	One or Both	Both	Not Sure	No
Males	13.89%	2.78%	74.97%	58.30%	2.78%	22.22%
Females	23.68%	13.16%	60.52%	23.68%	21.05%	20.00%
Athletes	19.15%	6.38%	76.59%	51.06%	8.51%	14.89%
Non-Athletes	18.52%	11.11%	51.84%	22.22%	18.52%	29.63%
Male Athletes	14.81%	0.00%	77.77%	62.96%	3.70%	18.52%
Female Athletes	20.00%	15.00%	70.00%	35.00%	15.00%	10.00%
Male Non-Athletes	11.11%	11.11%	26.66%	4.44%	0.00%	33.33%
Female Non-Athletes	22.22%	11.11%	44.44%	11.11%	27.78%	27.78%

According to table 4, 76.74 percent of the athletes in the twelfth grade indicate that one or more parents experienced scholastic athletics in their past. 47.50 percent of the seniors who do not participate come from families in which neither parent participated. The table shows that there is little difference between males and females in

regards to the participation levels of their parents for both athletes and non-athletes.

Table 4: 12th Grade – Parent Participation In High School Athletics

	Father	Mother	One or Both	Both	Not Sure	No
Males	26.67%	4.44%	60.00%	28.89%	6.67%	28.89%
Females	21.05%	7.89%	52.62%	23.68%	13.16%	36.84%
Athletes	30.23%	4.65%	76.74%	41.86%	6.98%	18.60%
Non-Athletes	17.50%	7.50%	35.00%	10.00%	17.50%	47.50%
Male Athletes	32.14%	3.57%	75.00%	39.29%	7.14%	17.86%
Female Athletes	26.67%	6.67%	80.01%	46.67%	6.67%	20.00%
Male Non-Athletes	17.65%	5.88%	35.29%	11.76%	17.65%	47.06%
Female Non-Athletes	17.39%	8.70%	34.79%	8.70%	17.39%	47.83%

Table 5 shows the mean responses of athletes on the data collection instrument.

Overall, the top three general motivations for participation in athletics at Northwestern High School were in order as follows: Getting / staying in shape (first), the opportunity to reach various accomplishments (second), and to have fun (third).

Every sub-group recorded a mean response of 4.00 or higher on both meeting personal goals (Accomplishment) and the enjoyment of competition (Fun). These were the only two specific areas to record such a consistently high mean on the instrument.

The next popular general motivators in order of rank were having the opportunity to meet team goals (fourth), padding the college resume (fifth), enjoying social activities (sixth), and the possibilities of getting a college scholarship (seventh).

Getting or staying in shape ranked particularly high among female athletes as indicated with every grade level listing this as the primary reason for getting involved in scholastic sports. The opportunity to have fun was what the female athletes listed as being their number two reason for athletic participation. It was noted the ninth and tenth grade girls rated this higher than the eleventh and twelfth grade females.

The opportunity for accomplishments ranked third among female athletes stating that attaining team goals and school records were important.

The younger females seem to participate with the idea of trying to improve their college resume while the seniors did not score this item as very significant.

Male athletes listed the same three general motivators as the females, but in a different order of priority. The males placed accomplishments at the top of their list of reasons citing the opportunity to attain team goals such as post-season appearances as a main source of motivation.

The males did agree with the females that having fun was very important as it ranked second in importance as did the females.

Getting or staying in shape ranked third for the males compared to the first that the girls placed it. Ninth thru eleventh grade boys listed this as one of their main

motivators, however, getting into shape ranked seventh among senior boys.

The male athletes listed competition as their top specific motivator with meeting personal goals a very close second. Getting into shape was close behind and in third place, but only by .04 on the mean response table. These three reasons were clearly the top three motivators for the male population of athletes.

Table 5: Mean Responses of Athletes

	12 th	12 th	11 th	11 th	10 th	10 th	9 th	9 th			Gr	Gr	Gr	Gr
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	Male	Female	9	10	11	12
# of	28	15	27	19	29	24	37	30	121	88	67	53	46	43
A1	3.11	3.27	3.11	3.21	3.86	4.04	3.32	3.37	3.35	3.44	3.34	3.94	3.15	3.17
A2	3.07	2.73	2.81	2.79	3.45	3.33	2.89	2.73	3.05	2.91	2.82	3.38	2.80	2.95
A3	2.93	2.87	2.96	3.05	4.03	3.71	3.24	2.80	3.30	3.11	3.04	3.89	3.00	2.96
A4	3.00	3.40	3.44	3.63	3.66	4.13	3.51	3.37	3.41	3.64	3.45	3.87	3.52	3.14
A5	3.07	3.60	3.11	3.32	3.45	4.08	3.42	3.47	3.28	3.63	3.44	3.74	3.02	3.25
B1	3.54	2.60	3.81	2.79	3.97	3.71	4.03	3.57	3.85	3.27	3.82	3.85	3.38	3.21
B2	4.18	4.13	4.59	4.00	4.31	4.67	4.49	4.60	4.40	4.41	4.54	4.47	4.28	4.16
B3	4.00	3.40	4.37	3.89	4.29	4.33	4.05	4.27	4.17	4.06	4.15	4.31	4.17	3.79
C1	3.04	3.73	3.41	3.53	3.57	4.13	3.92	3.69	3.52	3.78	3.82	3.82	3.46	3.28
C2	2.71	3.47	3.26	3.11	3.14	3.96	3.38	3.33	3.14	3.47	3.35	3.51	3.20	2.98
C3	3.07	3.21	3.44	3.11	3.59	3.79	3.59	3.31	3.46	3.38	3.47	3.68	3.31	3.12
C4	2.64	3.00	2.96	2.89	3.55	2.96	3.14	3.07	3.08	2.99	3.12	3.28	2.93	2.77
D	3.96	4.00	3.96	4.21	4.00	4.46	4.08	4.23	4.04	4.25	4.15	4.29	4.06	3.97
E	3.73	3.46	4.07	3.95	3.93	4.17	4.08	4.17	4.03	4.01	4.12	4.04	4.02	3.64
F	3.82	4.00	3.67	3.61	3.57	4.22	4.36	4.20	3.96	4.04	4.29	3.86	3.65	3.88
G1	4.00	4.38	3.96	4.26	4.00	4.57	4.44	4.47	4.19	4.44	4.45	4.26	4.08	4.12
G2	3.89	4.31	3.70	3.95	3.68	4.04	4.11	4.40	3.93	4.19	4.24	3.84	3.80	4.02
G3	4.25	4.38	4.27	4.37	4.04	4.61	4.56	4.77	4.41	4.58	4.67	4.30	4.29	4.29
H	3.32	3.46	3.78	3.84	4.18	4.35	4.31	4.50	3.99	4.15	4.40	4.26	3.80	3.36
I	3.43	3.69	3.74	4.26	4.14	4.65	3.97	4.60	3.90	4.40	4.29	4.37	3.95	3.51
J	3.86	4.46	4.44	4.47	4.21	4.78	4.61	4.77	4.37	4.66	4.68	4.47	4.45	4.05

Note: Use Appendix A for an explanation of each item.

Table 6 shows the mean responses for the non-athlete population for the items on the data collection instrument.

The overall number one mean response for why high school students at Northwestern choose not to participate in athletics is because they have jobs according to the table below. Listed as the second leading reason is that athletics, at the high school level, lack the level of fun that these students seem to be seeking. The fear of failure and amount of time required was found to tie for the third reason among non-athletes.

The next general reasons for non-participation in order of rank are: the expense of participation (fifth); not liking the coach (sixth); students do not feel liked or needed (seventh); and not liking the athletes on the team and not being sure of how to get started were listed as the next leading reasons for not getting involved in athletics at Northwestern.

Among the non-athlete respondents, males and females agree on the top two reasons for their lack of participation as stated previously. However, the two groups disagree on their third reason. While females claim that athletics takes too much time, males claim that they do not like the coach and / or are lazy.

Many of the females recorded that their fear of failure was a fairly strong motivation for not participating in athletics.

It was generally noted that the means scores for the non-athletes were considerably lower than that of the athletes' responses.

Having a job becomes a larger distraction for students as they worked their way through high school as indicated by the scores on table 6, item B. The scores for freshman are lower than the scores for seniors.

Table 6: Mean Responses of Non-Athletes

	12 th M	12 th F	11 th M	11 th F	10 th M	10 th F	9 th M	9 th F	Male	Female	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	Gr 12
#	14	23	9	17	35	38	39	31	97	109	70	73	26	37
A	1.57	2.04	2.55	2.35	2.00	2.75	1.82	2.61	1.90	2.49	2.17	2.38	2.42	1.86
B	3.46	3.70	3.00	3.71	2.57	2.72	2.62	1.97	2.96	2.87	2.32	2.65	3.46	3.61
C	2.86	3.09	2.55	2.41	3.14	2.39	2.59	2.33	2.38	2.53	2.47	2.72	2.46	3.00
D1	2.43	2.27	2.77	1.69	3.06	2.36	1.46	2.16	2.33	2.18	1.79	2.71	2.06	2.33
D2	2.67	2.19	2.55	1.76	2.71	2.63	1.57	2.71	2.26	2.41	2.08	2.67	2.03	2.31
E	1.85	2.55	3.11	1.94	2.97	2.53	2.03	2.87	2.49	2.54	2.42	2.75	2.35	2.29
F	2.14	2.14	2.33	1.53	2.80	1.83	1.94	2.42	2.33	2.02	2.16	2.31	1.81	2.14
G	2.31	2.18	1.44	2.06	2.17	2.58	1.81	2.84	1.98	2.49	2.29	2.38	1.85	2.23
H	1.38	2.00	1.44	2.24	2.20	1.94	2.06	2.23	1.97	2.08	2.14	2.06	1.96	1.77
I	2.79	2.41	1.44	1.76	2.23	1.94	1.72	2.77	2.01	2.25	2.21	2.08	1.65	2.55
J1	1.57	1.59	1.22	1.78	2.09	1.56	1.33	1.28	1.65	1.52	1.31	1.83	1.59	1.58
J2	1.76	1.57	1.88	1.18	1.76	1.89	1.46	1.74	1.66	1.66	1.59	1.83	1.42	1.64
J3	1.57	1.43	1.33	1.24	1.74	1.43	1.11	1.17	1.44	1.33	1.14	1.59	1.27	1.48

Note: Use Appendix A for an explanation of each item.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research shows that there are many benefits to participating in athletics at the high school level including increased academic performance, higher attendance rates, fewer discipline referrals, fewer drop-outs, better chances for college admissions, indications of higher success rates in the business world, and less involvement in drug abuse and smoking.

The research further shows a clear trend of increased numbers of participants nationally as well as at the state level in Ohio. Northwestern has seen the percentage of participation has increased by 1.3 percent during the same period.

While this might sound encouraging, there is a large population of students who choose not to get involved in athletics at the high school level.

As a result of having completed this study, it has been determined that there are particular motivators for students when choosing to participate or not participate in athletics at Northwestern High School.

This study has noted the increased participation rates as well as the non-participation rates specifically at Northwestern High School and has come to some conclusions as to why students choose participation or non-participation.

This study has found that the three main reasons why athletes choose to participate are: 1) To accomplish goals; 2) to have fun; and 3) to get in or stay in

shape. While these three motivations are consistent among athletes, they do differ in order of priority between males and females as was stated in Chapter 4.

The main motivations for not participating are as follows: 1) Students have jobs; 2) lacks fun; 3) requires too much time; and 4) students do not care for the coach. Both males and females agree on the first two items as to their importance, but females said that athletics requires too much time while boys tended to say they did not like the coach.

According to the data collected, there is a strong relationship between athletic participants and their parents' high school athletic experiences. The research clearly shows that parents who participated in high school athletics tend to have children that participate in high school athletics while those who do not participate tended to have parents that did not participate in scholastic athletics during their high school years.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the results of this study, the following conclusions are warranted:

1. Students choose to participate in athletics at Northwestern because they:
 - a. want to get in or stay in shape.
 - b. want to accomplish personal and team goals.
 - c. want to have fun.
2. Students choose not to participate in athletics at Northwestern High School

because they:

- a. have jobs.
 - b. do not believe they will be able to have fun.
 - c. feel that athletics requires too much time.
 - d. because some do not like the coaches.
3. There is a relationship between athletes and the participation rates of their parents during their high school careers.
 4. There is a relationship between non-participants and the participation rates of their parents during their high school careers.

IMPLICATIONS

Few would argue that our nations' schools face tremendous challenges with reducing drug abuse and smoking among students, lowering the drop-out rates of would-be graduates, cutting down on violence, increasing academic performance, and a myriad of other issues.

The research has shown that participation in high school athletics is one proven method that can work to these and many other ends. It is suggested here that if more students would chose to participate in high school athletics, Northwestern High School specifically, would be a better overall environment. The question is how to get more students involved.

It is important to remember that the students of today will become the parents of tomorrow. The research clearly shows a connection between the child and parent participation rates. In order to increase the likelihood of students of tomorrow participating in athletics, the students of today need to become involved at a higher rate.

This will require looking at the motivations for why students choose to participate as well as the motivations for why students choose not to participate. This can be done as a district, but more specifically at the coaching level where the coach has more direct contact with the student and her / his particular program.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While sports need to have a strong focus on being successful in terms of winning and losing, it is critical that the coach does not lose sight of the students' desire to have fun. Furthermore, coaches can take steps in controlling the amount of time required for participation in some sports. Some sports have more flexibility to work at different levels which would require various time commitments on behalf of the student. This may encourage more students to get involved.

Coaches can also create fun activities that may not be sport specific. Playing non-sport specific games after a practice for those that can attend often builds not only team unity, but satisfies the desires of those searching for the fun of sports (Stratton, 1998).

Creating an intramural program may encourage some to participate that might not

otherwise get involved. This could give some a chance to experiment with athletics at a low risk level therefore minimizing the fear of failure that some might have. Club sports might offer some the opportunity to get involved in athletics in an area that is not currently offered by the OHSAA. This might help increase the rate of participation.

While it is important to understand what makes high school students desire to be involved in athletics, it might be useful to find out what motivates middle school students to become involved or not become involved. Further study might reveal why many students stop participating after they leave the middle school and enter into high school. If these reasons could be established, more students at a younger age might be able to not only enjoy participating in athletics, but also find higher levels of success in school as well as in their social environment.

APPENDIX A

www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/...

1. Circle all that apply to you:

A. Male / Female

B. Current Grade Level: 9 10 11 12

C. Did your parent(s) participate in high school athletics?

Yes No Not Sure

D. Which parent participated in high school athletics?

Mother Father Both

1. In which sport(s) did they participate: *(Please signify which parent)*

E. Do you currently participate in extra-curricular athletics at Northwestern High School? Yes No

(Note: Only the sports listed in question F are to be considered for this question.)

F. In which sport(s) do you currently participate?

Volleyball	Tennis	Baseball
Cross Country	Golf	Softball
Football	Wrestling	Track and Field
Soccer	Basketball	Cheerleading (Fall / Winter)

Note: If you answered "Yes" to question E, complete the "Athletes Only" section below.
 If you answered "No" to question E, complete the "Non-Athletes" section on the back.
 ***** ONLY COMPLETE ONE OF THE BELOW SECTIONS *****

(Athletes Only)

2. Circle the number that best represents your reason(s) for participating high school athletics:

	Not Important			Very Important	
A) Recognition					
1. Awards	1	2	3	4	5
2. Newspaper Articles	1	2	3	4	5
3. Attention from my peers	1	2	3	4	5
4. Attention from my family	1	2	3	4	5
5. Attention from my coach	1	2	3	4	5
B) Accomplishments					
1. School Records	1	2	3	4	5
2. Personal goals met	1	2	3	4	5
3. Team goals (ie. Playoffs)	1	2	3	4	5
C) Expectations of others:					
1. Parents	1	2	3	4	5
2. Siblings (Brothers / Sisters)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Friends	1	2	3	4	5

4. Teachers / Staff Members	1	2	3	4	5
D) Be a part of a group / team	1	2	3	4	5
E) I have a talent to participate	1	2	3	4	5
F) I like the coach	1	2	3	4	5
G) To have fun:					
1. To enjoy social activities	1	2	3	4	5
2. To enjoy practices	1	2	3	4	5
3. To enjoy the competition	1	2	3	4	5
H) Scholarships possibilities	1	2	3	4	5
I) Looks good on a college application	1	2	3	4	5
J) To get into / stay in shape	1	2	3	4	5

(Non-Athletes Only)

3. Circle the number that best represents you reason(s) for not participating in high school athletics:

	Not Important			Very Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
A) Fear of failure	1	2	3	4	5
B) I have a job	1	2	3	4	5
C) Too much time is required	1	2	3	4	5
D) I do not like the:					
1. Coach	1	2	3	4	5
2. Athletes on the team	1	2	3	4	5
E) Lack of fun	1	2	3	4	5
F) Laziness	1	2	3	4	5
G) I don't feel liked / needed	1	2	3	4	5
H) Not sure how to get started	1.	2	3	4	5
I) Too expensive	1	2	3	4	5

J) Not allowed because of:

1. Parents	1	2	3	4	5
2. Academically Ineligible	1	2	3	4	5
3. Discipline reasons	1	2	3	4	5

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