

THE JUNIOR GIANTS PROGRAM IN UNDERSERVED AFRICAN-AMERICAN
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
San Francisco State University
In partial fulfillment of
The Requirements for
The Degree

Master of Science
In
Psychology: Industrial/Organizational

by

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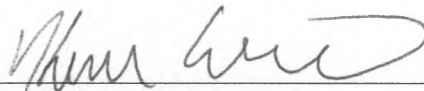
May 2015

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *The Junior Giants Program in Underserved African-American California Communities* by Casey Spencer La Honta, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree: Master of Science in Psychology: Industrial/Organizational at San Francisco State University.

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San Francisco, California
2015

Major League Baseball has recently experienced a decline of black players to levels not seen since integration. Theories for decline are reviewed including limited economic resources for black players and lack of person-organization fit between black athletes and careers as a professional baseball player. The Junior Giants program, sponsored by the San Francisco Giants Community Fund, was reviewed to determine its potential to address these deterrents. I hypothesized that the program would demonstrate rates of black players consistent with black populations of its communities, but that Leagues located in black communities would perform lower on both subjective and objective measures. Leagues in black communities showed higher rates of black players, and performed lower on subjective measures, supporting these hypotheses. However, contrary to expectations, results showed no significant difference of objective measures based on black population. These results have practical implications for the GCF and MLB, and can be used as a foundation for future interventions.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.



Chair, Thesis Committee

For Chris W. Smith

5/21/15

Date

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THE JUNIOR GIANTS PROGRAM IN UNDERSERVED AFRICAN-AMERICAN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES

The issue of declining black participation in Major League Baseball (MLB) has received increased attention over the past decade, and has been cited in news media as a priority for new MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred (Jopko, 2015; Morosi, 2015). Following decades of black participation higher than the percentage of black people in the United States (estimated at 12.6% in 2013), the percentage of black MLB players fell as low as 7.1% in 2009 (Armour & Levitt, 2013). In 2014, only 8.3% of players on opening day rosters were black (Kepner, 2014).

Comparing the percentage of black MLB players to the other major professional leagues highlights this disparity of black participation. The three most profitable leagues in the United States, the MLB, the National Football League (NFL), and the National Basketball Association (NBA), command 87% of the total annual revenue of professional sports leagues in the US and Canada, and each league individually generates more annual revenue than any other professional league in the world (Badenhausen, 2014; Brown, 2014; Chemi, 2014; Stubits, 2014). From 2013 to 2014, 67.98% of the National Football League and 76.3% of the National Basketball Association was made up of black players, both much higher percentages than that of the black population of the United States (Lapchick, Hippert, Rivera, & Robinson, 2013; Powell-Morse, 2014). These percentages, including the historical percentages of black MLB players, suggest a decline in black participation specifically in baseball, rather than a decline in black participation in sports.

Major League Baseball's own research, in addition to the limited academic literature on the topic, have provided insights into the underlying circumstances that diminish this participation. This study will review this research, and will evaluate one program that has the potential to intervene with this decline.

Major League Baseball took important steps towards understanding this phenomenon in 2013, with the creation of the On-Field Diversity Task Force. This committee was created to investigate the issues that limit diverse populations' participation in baseball, particularly the black youth population and their unique underrepresentation in the baseball talent pipeline ("Commissioner Selig Creates On-Field Diversity Task Force," 2013). A year into the Task Force's launch, a 2014 press release indicated that this underrepresentation may be due to a lack of resources for young black athletes. The release identified the high cost of youth baseball compared to other sports, the absence of quality coaching and scouting, and the disproportionately low number of athletic college scholarships as deterrents to black participation in baseball ("On-Field Diversity Task Force announces preliminary initiatives," 2014).

Resources

The high cost of youth baseball was the first obstacle for black participation identified by the Task Force's report. Research by Sabo and Veliz on youth participation in sports identifies family household income as one of the chief determinants of this participation. Although there were fewer differences between income levels in participation in recreational sports, this research notes that higher rates of "highly

involved” young athletes are associated with increased economic resources (Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Researchers at the University of Michigan corroborated these findings with their own study, which demonstrated significantly lower participation in school sports for low-income families (Davis et al., 2012). Economic limitations become more powerful in the case of organized baseball, as numerous reports note the costs of travel and equipment for one child at several thousands of dollars per year (Butler, 2011; Killion, 2013; Tanier, 2012).

In addition to the basic cost of equipment, scouting and coaching have recently been confined to traveling teams, also known as “select” teams. A traveling team, as the name implies, does not play in a league, but travels around participating in tournaments. Travel baseball is designed to provide players with a higher level of competition, and allows young players access to year round coaching and exposure to professional scouts (“An Introduction to Travel Ball,” 2011). Black participation has dwindled at this level of baseball as well, with participation rates lower than the black percentage of the communities in which travel baseball is played. For example, one survey found that black players made up less than 2% of travel baseball rosters in communities that were 9% black (Ogden & Hilt, 2003). One theory proposed by this research is that families with limited economic resources for travel baseball make the decision to not enroll their child. One study specifically addressing the low rates of black players cites time and money as deterrents to black participation. This study notes that a disproportionately high number of poor black families are often short of monetary resources and time, as the family

members (and often single parents) must work long hours in order to make a living (Ogden, 2000). This stage for development of baseball players is critical, as the gap in baseball competition and exposure widens between travel and recreational baseball. For example, travel teams in one summer may play between 50 and 150 games against a variety of teams, while inner city recreational leagues sponsored by charity organizations play as few as 10 to 15 games in the same amount of time (Ogden, 2002; Ogden & Hilt, 2003). With lower numbers of black players in travel baseball, fewer black players have experienced the exposure or development to play later on in college. A survey of nearly 500 players, for example, revealed that almost 90% of respondents played travel baseball before college (Ogden & Warneke, 2010). Therefore, the lack of black participation in travel baseball limits black players' access to elite competition and development, and further restricts them from opportunities to play in college.

Baseball players who are not initially scouted through their travelling teams or high school games are instead scouted in college, where baseball does not command the revenue or media attention of college football and basketball. According to the US Department of Education, men's National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I football and basketball brought in a staggering \$5.2 billion (\$3.8 billion from football alone) in 2013, which constitutes 84% of the total revenue generated by all men's Division I sports ("The Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool," 2013). According to the same report, college baseball brought in only \$289 million, less than 5% of the men's athletics total. For the NCAA's Division I, colleges are limited to the

number of athletic scholarships they may provide for a given sport, and these limits are influenced by the revenue these programs generate. This revenue disparity leaves college baseball with a limit of 11.7 full scholarships per program (with an average roster size of 35), while college football and basketball programs are allowed a limit of 85 and 13 full scholarships for average roster sizes of 118 and 16, respectively (“College Athletic Scholarships & Chances of Playing College Sports,” 2014; Ogden, 2000). Research by the University of Pennsylvania has demonstrated disproportionately high levels of black athletes in the two most profitable college sports, basketball and football. This study, which examined the demographics of colleges in the most profitable conferences from 2007 to 2010, found that black athletes made up 57.1% of football teams and 64.3% of basketball teams, while degree-seeking black undergraduate men only made up 2.8% of the undergraduate population (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). The trend of disproportionate black participation does not translate to scholarship-barren college baseball, however, as college teams in 2014 yielded an even lower percentage of black players than the MLB (Kepner, 2014; “Race and Gender Demographics Search,” 2014). These findings provide evidence that black athletes pursuing a college athletic scholarship target football and basketball programs, where the ratio of available scholarships to roster sizes increases the chance of obtaining a full athletic scholarship. The On-Field Diversity Task Force’s findings seem consistent with evidence of the economic resources required to support a baseball career, but academic literature and one

concept in Industrial/Organizational Psychology provide a perspective that Major League Baseball may have overlooked.

In the On-Field Diversity Task Force's list of preliminary initiatives, the choice of black athletes to pursue sports other than baseball was cited as one of the deterrents to black participation in professional baseball ("On-Field Diversity Task Force announces preliminary initiatives," 2014). In this announcement, the theory provided to explain this phenomenon was the lack of collegiate scholarships for the sport of baseball, which is consistent with the overall theme of economic limitations for emerging black athletes. Research on black identity, however, provides convincing evidence for an alternate explanation.

Black Identity and Person-Organization Fit

Studies have demonstrated the role of sports as a component of black cultural identity to explain the overrepresentation of black athletes in sports (Bimper & Harrison, 2012; Harrison, Harrison, & Moore, 2002; Hoberman, 1997). Unsurprisingly, research has also indicated that a primary dream or aspiration for black children is to become a professional athlete (Harrison, Lee, & Belcher, 1999; Harrison, Sailes, Rotich, & Bimper, 2011; Lee, 1983). This black identification with sports in general, however, does not seem to carry over to black participation in baseball. Research has shown that black culture does not reward participation in baseball, and instead encourages young black athletes to play other sports. These studies have shown that other sports, particularly basketball, provide black people with a source of self-expression and empowerment, as

well as make up part of the black collective identity (Comeaux & Harrison, 2004; Harrison et al., 2011; Ogden & Hilt, 2003). In summary, sports like football and basketball are seen as more appropriately “black” than playing baseball (Philipp, 1998). This cultural dissociation from baseball also appears in Major League Baseball attendance and recreational baseball participation (Hyman, 2006; Philipp, 1999).

The mechanism through which this interpretation of black identity leads to diminished professional baseball participation may be explained by the concept of person-organization fit. Person-organization fit, or simply “P-O fit,” is defined as “the congruence between the norms and values of organizations and the values of persons” (Chatman, 1989). P-O fit can be viewed as an alignment of an individual’s and his or her organization’s values, and has been tied to numerous outcomes that explain the absence of black professional baseball players.

The effects of P-O fit influence the job seeking process, even before a job seeker becomes a part of an organization. While seeking a job, a potential employee’s search is influenced by his or her perception of congruence between their own values and those of a potential employer (Burke & Deszca, 1982; Cable & Judge, 1994; Chatman, 1989). Furthermore, how a job seeker perceives P-O fit is an important component of organizational attractiveness (Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002; Uggerslev, Fassina, & Kraichy, 2012). The perception of P-O fit with an organization is so powerful, has been shown to overcome demographic similarities of the job seeker with the organizational representative. Research performed by Cable and Judge (1996) followed job seekers

through their application and interviewing process, and gathered data from the seeker and the recruiting organizations on a number of P-O fit related variables. In this study, “demographic similarity” referred to the congruence between the job seeker and the representatives of the organization the seeker interfaced with, not the demographics of the organization overall. Although their research supported P-O fit’s influence on job choice and work attitudes, no effects were found for demographic similarity (Cable & Judge, 1996). These findings suggest that black players’ perceptions of their own fit with the sport of baseball are far more important than the presence of black coaches and managers.

To make the most sense of P-O fit affecting black athletes, these athletes must first be treated as job seekers and potential employees, and the different sports as different organizations from which to choose. Upon assessing his talents and goals, the black athlete will find that he may choose to invest his time and energy into any one of a number of sports, including baseball. P-O fit predicts that this black athlete’s job seeking is influenced by his perception of congruence between his own values and those of the organization’s. If the black athlete does not feel that baseball is a part of his identity and value system, he will perceive a lack of fit with the sport of baseball, and will not pursue a career in baseball. Instead, the black athlete will gravitate towards other sports he feels fit better with his own cultures or values, which will appear as more attractive options. Regarding Cable and Judge’s (1996) research, even presenting the black athlete with

black coaches, managers, or other organizational representatives will not increase the chances of attracting black players, if there is no perception of P-O fit.

Person-organization fit not only affects employees during the job seeking process, but has been tied to numerous other outcomes (Cable & Judge, 1996; Kristof, 1996). Many of these outcomes, all influenced by P-O fit, are positive for both the employee and organization, most notably job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Alniaçik, Alniaçik, Erat, & Akçin, 2013; Bretz & Judge, 1994; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). One study by Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) surveyed 231 employees, and asked their perceptions of their own P-O fit as well as their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Their results indicated that increased perceptions of P-O fit were significantly related to increased satisfaction and commitment to their job (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). This is further supported by one meta-analysis of over thirty thousand participants from 172 studies which found P-O fit to be strongly, positively correlated with both satisfaction and commitment (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Evidently, P-O fit remains an important component of an employee's experience with their organization, long after the job seeking process.

Once again, treating black baseball players as employees and organized baseball as their organization helps give context to the application of P-O fit. Consider a comparison between two employees: one who experiences person-organization fit with his employer, and one who does not. The first employee will likely experience higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment, while the second employee will experience

intentions to quit and will likely leave his organization. The meta-analysis by Kristof-Brown and colleagues (2005) which found P-O fit to be associated with satisfaction and commitment also found P-O fit to be moderately negatively correlated with intent to quit. Other studies have also supported the relationships between P-O fit and these outcomes (Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991; Winfred, Bell, Villado, & Doverspike, 2006). This comparison works just as well as a comparison between a black athlete in any sport in which his culture encourages his participation, and a black baseball player. Once again, the logical corollary is that the first black athlete will experience feelings of person-organization fit, while the black baseball player will not. The worst-case scenario is likely to befall the black baseball player, as he is just as likely to leave his organization (in this case organized baseball) as the second employee from the previous example.

With a lack of economic resources and black athletes' cultural attitudes and norms limiting their feelings of person-organization fit, the evidence suggests that attracting black athletes back into professional baseball is a challenging task. Despite numerous upstart efforts by organized baseball to target the decline of black participation, the scope and magnitude of the issue leaves plenty of work to be done. The San Francisco Giants, one of the MLB's 30 clubs, have one solution that may mitigate this decline in the San Francisco Bay Area and the rest of Northern California.

The Junior Giants Program

The San Francisco Giants Community Fund's (GCF) flagship program, the Junior Giants, has the potential to target the factors that contribute to decreased black

participation in professional baseball (“About the Junior Giants,” 2015). The Junior Giants program aims to provide underserved populations with a free opportunity to play baseball and participate in character building activities in a safe environment, with proper facilities and baseball equipment. With respect to the economic situation of its participants, the GCF provides all of the baseball equipment required for these programs, in addition to providing training for volunteer coaches. The program operates through units called “Leagues,” run through organizations in their respective communities. Organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and Police Activities Leagues are examples of common Junior Giants host organizations. These Leagues consist of multiple teams of children, ranging in age from 5 to 18. Teams are divided into age divisions, and the divisions range in size from as few as 49 players to as many as 774. The Leagues operate throughout the Bay Area and Northern and Central California, with one in Nevada and two in southern Oregon.

The Junior Giants’ primary goal is to provide a free, quality baseball program to children in underserved communities. To achieve this goal, each League sends the Giants Community Fund an order form for equipment, which the GCF then uses to order for all of the Leagues. The equipment is therefore provided to the Leagues at no cost to the League or the players. The GCF also provides t-shirts and hats, and works with the organization in each community to ensure that volunteer coaches are background checked and trained. The Junior Giants therefore mitigates some of the problems caused by

economic limitations of black families, enabling black youth to participate in a sport they would not have otherwise had the opportunity to play.

Hypothesis 1: Participation rates of black players in the Junior Giants program will be significantly positively associated with the percentage of black people in their corresponding communities.

By providing training for coaches and encouraging parent involvement, the Junior Giants program attempts to create a positive and nourishing baseball culture, where players take part in character building programs as well as baseball training. These Leagues rely heavily on parent involvement, as parents generally fulfill the roles of volunteer coaches and team parents. Because of this, League quality is often at the mercy of whatever group of potential volunteers is available in a given community. Leagues in black communities are often served by black coaches and volunteers, who experience the same cultural dissociation with baseball as black players. These cultural issues and lack of fit perceptions will likely manifest themselves in decreased League performance.

Hypothesis 2: Junior Giants Leagues in communities with a high black population will perform significantly worse than Leagues with a low black population, according to objective measures.

Hypothesis 3: In addition to performing worse than Leagues with a low black population, Leagues with a high black population will be subjectively evaluated by the Giants Community Fund as significantly less successful.

Method

Sample

In total, there were 87 Junior Giants Leagues in 80 underserved communities. The Giants Community Fund defines an “underserved” community as one in which the median household income is less than \$80,000 per year. In accordance with this mission, US Census Bureau (2013) data confirmed that 81 out of the 87 Leagues were located in communities that met this requirement. In the six Leagues located in communities with a median household income more than \$80,000, 86% of players self-reported as being of low-income status. Data from these communities were obtained from the US Census Bureau.

To test the two hypotheses, data were also gathered on the Junior Giants Leagues themselves. Data obtained from the Leagues were gathered through an online program called SportsSignup, used by the GCF and the Leagues to track League data. Data for the Leagues are reported by various League volunteers, depending on the structure of the League, but can be viewed and extracted by the GCF. Data pertaining to League financials were kept by the GCF, and were not reported by the Leagues.

Measures

Black Population. The black population of each community was gathered as a percentage of the community’s total population ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 8.27$). These data were obtained from the 2013 American Community Survey, the yearly demographic survey conducted by the US Census Bureau (2013). Communities were determined using the

address of each Junior Giants League's office in the area, rather than the name of the League, as not all Leagues were named after their respective communities. The black population of each Junior Giants League was obtained from SportsSignup as a percentage of the total number of players ($M = 12.75$, $SD = 15.62$). To address Hypotheses 2 and 3, communities were considered to have a high black population if the black percentage of the population was higher than the national black population percentage of 12.6%. Using this criterion, 13 communities were considered "High black Population," and ranged from 13.72% to 37.01% black ($M = 22.60$, $SD = 7.34$). There were 67 communities considered "Low black Population," which ranged from 0% black (three communities had no black population) to 12.06% black ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 3.08$).

League Performance. The GCF uses metrics called "League Grades" to measure the performance of Junior Giants Leagues, and are determined by taking a League's actual value as a percentage of its maximum possible value of 100% ($M = 62.52$, $SD = 26.64$). Actual value is calculated by factoring in cost per child, retention rate, and participation rate for each League. Dividing the League cost from the GCF's financial records by the total number of players on that League's SportsSignup calculated the cost per child, in dollars ($M = 83.11$, $SD = 27.71$). Retention for the Junior Giants was calculated by dividing the number of retained players by the total number of players ($M = 87.97$, $SD = 11.45$). A player was considered "retained" if he or she was not listed as "dropped" or "unregistered" in SportsSignup. For player participation, the GCF considered participation in only one of 18 different opportunities as having participated.

The number of players who participated in at least one opportunity was divided by the total number of retained players, rather than the total number of players, to calculate the participation rate ($M = 72.50$, $SD = 30.33$). Retention and participation were retrieved from SportsSignup.

Maximum possible value of a League was calculated using cost per child, assuming a 100% retention and participation rate. The GCF considers this to be the best possible performance for a League, because such a League would not only be retaining all of its players, but would be seeing participation from all of them. Thus, actual value was divided by maximum value, producing the percentage of the maximum value that was retained by the League through its player retention and participation.

Coordinator Score. Every Junior Giants League was overseen by a Coordinator, a GCF employee tasked with controlling their Leagues' resources and relaying information from the Giants to the Leagues. Junior Giants Coordinators were essentially the supervisors of these Leagues, and ultimately controlled whether or not a League would continue to operate. Each Junior Giants Coordinator was asked to rate their Leagues on a 1 to 10 scale, measured in half-point increments from 1 to 5 ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.05$). Ratings were to be based on each Coordinator's ratings of League organization and perceived quality of their data reporting. The idea behind Coordinator Score was to account for any Leagues that may have misrepresented themselves through SportsSignup in order to appear favorable to the GCF. The subjective Coordinator Score was found to correlate with the objective League Grades ($r = .40$, $p < .001$). This correlation is

supported by research on the relationship between subjective and objective performance measures (Baer & Frese, 2003; Bommer, Johnson, Rich, Podaskoff, & Mackenzie, 1995; Wall et al., 2004).

Results

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Leagues in black communities would have a percentage of black players comparable to the black percentage of their community's population. A Pearson correlation was used to investigate Hypothesis 1. This hypothesis was supported by a strong, positive correlation, which was found to be statistically significant, $r = .94, p < .01$. These results demonstrate that Leagues communities with a higher black population have proportionally higher black participation.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that Leagues in "high black population" communities would perform poorly compared to those in "low black population," measured by League Grades. A two sample independent *t*-test was used to investigate Hypothesis 2. Leagues in communities with a high black population ($M = 62.8, SD = 27.33$) did not perform differently than Leagues in communities with a low black population ($M = 62.47, SD = 26.69$), measured by League Grades. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported, with no significant differences between Leagues, $t(20) = -.04, p > .05, d = -0.01$.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that Leagues with a high black population would perform poorly compared to those with a low black population, measured by Coordinator scores. A two sample independent *t*-test was used to investigate Hypothesis 3. The hypothesis was supported, with Leagues in "high black population" ($M = 2.33, SD = 1.18$)

communities having significantly lower scores than Leagues in “low black population” ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.92$) communities, $t(18) = 3.55$, $p < .003$, $d = 1.08$. Thus, Leagues with a high black population were rated by Coordinators as significantly worse than Leagues with a low black population.

Discussion

The first hypothesis predicted that the rate of black players in Junior Giants Leagues would be related to the black percentage of their community’s population. The results supported this hypothesis, which is good news for the Giants Community Fund. Again, the Junior Giants program provides Leagues with all of the equipment and resources needed to put on a quality program, and does not charge players, their families, or the organizations running the Leagues for participation (“About the Junior Giants,” 2015). Clinics for training volunteer coaches are also provided free of charge. The Junior Giants program therefore has the opportunity to mitigate many of the economic limitations that Major League Baseball has determined prevent young black athletes from playing baseball (“On-Field Diversity Task Force announces preliminary initiatives,” 2014). Of course, the Junior Giants program cannot provide these resources to black players if the Leagues are not reaching their community’s black population. By supporting this hypothesis, the GCF can be assured that their resources are reaching the intended populations. In spite of these results, they are not consistent with P-O fit’s implications for the decline of black participation in baseball. In fact, P-O fit would predict that black participation would not be affected by percentage of black players in

the community, and would be low whether or not the community had a high or low black population. Another possible explanation is a potential mediating effect of low-income status. The Junior Giants program was intended to target underserved populations with a free program, but not necessarily black populations. Therefore, simply having access to a free program may have overcome the effects of a perceived lack of fit.

One limitation to this finding, however, is that the percentages of black players were based on total players registered, and included dropped players as well. Use of different percentages that account for dropped players may reveal black participation to be low, even in black communities. This future direction for research is also supported by P-O fit literature that relates lack of fit to decreased organizational commitment. That is, black players who do not feel they fit in with a baseball program may demonstrate higher drop rates, and furthermore lower participation in black communities.

Hypothesis 2, which was not supported, predicted significantly lower League Grades in communities determined to have a high black population. The results, on the surface, appear to benefit the GCF, as ideally performance differences should not be related to demographics. Considering the meaning of the League Grades, this finding implies that cost per child, as well as player retention and participation, are no different regardless of black population percentage. This finding also contradicts research that black culture does not encourage participation in baseball (Comeaux & Harrison, 2004; Harrison et al.; Ogden & Hilt, 2003; Philipp, 1998). Also, according to P-O fit, if black culture truly directed young black athletes toward other sports, the research should have

demonstrated lower retention and participation for Leagues with a higher black population. These lower retention and participation rates would manifest themselves as lower League Grades. Though this finding contradicts the available research, more investigation into this relationship is needed, as the data used for the objective ratings may not be reliable.

Hypothesis 3 was supported, and predicted that Leagues in communities with higher black populations would receive lower Coordinator scores. Coordinator scores were meant to capture League organization and perceived quality of their data reporting, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of GCF communication with these Leagues. Previous research on black culture's relationship with baseball, as well as P-O fit, drove this hypothesis, and suggests that the lower quality of League organization and communication could be due to this relationship. It is possible that these Leagues may have fewer coaches and team parents involved, as black parents feeling a lack of fit with a baseball program would also be less likely to participate in a baseball League. An alternate explanation is that League leadership in a black community is not committed to a baseball program, and instead invests its time in other sports programs. Research suggests that members of the black communities would possibly perceive fit, however, with a basketball or football program. Future research on these communities' support of other programs would presumably reveal this relationship. The support of this hypothesis also has implications for the previous hypothesis. Specifically, Coordinator scores' inclusion of quality of data reporting calls the findings from Hypothesis 2 into question.

If these Leagues are receiving lower Coordinator scores due to the integrity of their data reporting, their objective League Grades may be invalid.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are a number of limitations to this research that the Giants Community Fund and future researchers should consider, both to enhance the Junior Giants program and to improve future projects. First of these is the possible lack of consistency between Junior Giants Leagues. The GCF, as well as this study, makes the assumption that all Junior Giants Leagues conduct the same program, and that participants in all of these Leagues receive the same experience. Leagues are present in multiple communities, and are run by a variety of organizations; no two Leagues are alike. The reality is that Leagues are subject to the schedules and agendas of the organizations that run them, and therefore could conduct themselves in completely unique ways. Without adhering to the template provided by the Junior Giants, putting on a uniform program across Leagues, and holding League-hosting organizations accountable for this uniformity, it is impossible to say that two Leagues can be logically compared with each other. The GCF and future researchers would benefit from finding ways to implement a more uniform Junior Giants program.

Second, The self-report nature of the League data introduces numerous limitations that the GCF and future researchers should consider. Leagues understood that the data being entered into SportsSignup reflected on the League itself, even without being included in a League Grade. Therefore, Leagues may well have been motivated to

misrepresent their League in order to appear as if they were performing well. The Coordinator scores attempted to compensate for inaccurate data reporting, but it is in the best interest of both the GCF and research projects going forward to find better ways to hold Leagues accountable for accurate data reporting. Another limitation is that inaccurate data reporting could also be the result of Leagues simply neglecting to enter data into SportsSignup. Whether a League did not enter data out of laziness or absentmindedness, the possible end result is a set of data that may not capture the true performance of the League. To address this problem, and the problem of deliberate data manipulation, future Leagues may need to be subjected to a new system of data entry to more reliably and accurately capture true League performance.

This limitation also explains the discrepancy between the objective and subjective results. If the effects predicted by P-O fit (lower retention and participation) manifested themselves in any of these Leagues, League coaches and parents may have wanted to disguise this negative performance by misrepresenting their data. For example, a League may claim that they had better player retention than they actually had, or could report inflated rates of participation. With no system to check the integrity of SportsSignup data, the GCF used all data reported by the Leagues without considering the possibility data were manipulated. Thus, the objective scores would become less reliable than the subjective scores, and the two would not demonstrate the same statistical relationship with the Leagues' percentages of black players. This limitation is particularly unfortunate because objective scores are ideally free from bias and not the result of manipulation.

Development of truly objective scores would, in the long run, provide a better picture of League performance than subjective scores. However, until the GCF creates a method for maintaining the integrity of League-reported data, subjective Coordinator scores should be used as a true indication of League performance.

Finally, most of the research and participation statistics describe this phenomenon at a professional and collegiate level. The Junior Giants program, however, demonstrates youth black participation at rates that represent their respective communities. Future studies can contribute to investigating the decreased black participation in professional baseball by looking at black participation at other ages and levels of baseball. For example, little research provides the rates of black players in high school, or in the minor leagues. Looking at these populations may provide insight as to when during a black athlete's athletic career he decides to cease participation in baseball, and may provide insight into other factors that contribute to this decline.

Practical Implications

These results have implications not only for the Giants Community Fund, but also for Major League Baseball. For the GCF, although there is a silver lining from the demonstration that black populations are being served by the Junior Giants program, the players in these communities may be getting a lower-quality program than other communities. Although League Grades would imply that the program is no less successful in black communities than in other communities, the Coordinator scores tell a different story. The GCF should consider taking a more active role in these communities

in order to guarantee that an important target population is receiving the same quality program as other communities.

For Major League Baseball, this research has similar implications. Most importantly, the success of the Junior Giants program in reaching the correct populations addresses the MLB's goal of addressing the economic limitations of black athletes. The MLB can also consider using the Junior Giants program as a model to encourage other clubs to follow, as black populations in other cities and states. Ultimately, the goal of Major League Baseball is to share the sport of baseball with black culture, and this research demonstrates that America's pastime is at least making headway into black communities.

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