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Amateur Sport Participation and the Development of Athletes

Abstract

This research study sought to determine the impact amateur sport has on the development of adolescents. The development areas that were found critical for exploration include: physical, social, cognitive, and emotional. Thirty-five adolescent athletes who are currently participating in amateur sport were surveyed about their personal experiences in this competitive arena. The results confirmed that amateur sport is impacting the explored areas of adolescent development; however, the study was inconclusive on whether or not this impact was positive. The results presented numerous variables that promoted adolescent participation in amateur sport, and also exposed a variety of concerns that should be taken into consideration by all active members. The researcher found that the main concern for adolescent participation in amateur sport is centered around the time commitment that this extra-curricular commitment demands in comparison to other daily, and essential, activities. On a positive note, the researcher found that many athletes are participating out of pure admiration for the sport and a desire to improve upon aligned skillsets, which contradicts the general assumption of satisfying a potential, unrealistic desire to play college sports.

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by

Mycah Hulst

B. A. Dordt College, 2016

Action Research Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

Department of Education
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa
May 2019

Amateur Sport Participation & the Development of Athletes

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Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Approval	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	v
Abstract	vi
Introduction	1
Review of Literature	5
Methodology	16
Results	19
Discussion	27
References	35
Appendices	
Appendix A	38
Appendix B	39
Appendix C	41
Appendix D	43
Appendix E	49

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1. Pie chart of answers to participants reasoning for joining amateur sport.....	22
2. Bar graph of average number of hours dedicated a week to amateur sport.....	24
3. Pie chart of answers to what participants like most about amateur sport	25
4. Pie chart of answers to what participants like least about amateur sport.....	26
5. Pie chart of scenario's weekly hours	30
6. Pie chart of scenario's weekly hours version #2.....	31

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Average age for starting sport versus amateur sport.....	19
2. Average responses for Likert-scale questions.....	20-21
3. Numbers comparing family's influence on adolescent's participation.....	22-23
4. Variables for K-W-H statistical test of significance	26
5. Hypotheses for K-W-H statistical test of significance.....	27
6. K-W-H statistical test of significance results.....	27

Abstract

This research study sought to determine the impact amateur sport has on the development of adolescents. The development areas that were found critical for exploration include: physical, social, cognitive, and emotional. Thirty-five adolescent athletes who are currently participating in amateur sport were surveyed about their personal experiences in this competitive arena. The results confirmed that amateur sport is impacting the explored areas of adolescent development; however, the study was inconclusive on whether or not this impact was positive. The results presented numerous variables that promoted adolescent participation in amateur sport, and also exposed a variety of concerns that should be taken into consideration by all active members. The researcher found that the main concern for adolescent participation in amateur sport is centered around the time commitment that this extra-curricular commitment demands in comparison to other daily, and essential, activities. On a positive note, the researcher found that many athletes are participating out of pure admiration for the sport and a desire to improve upon aligned skillsets, which contradicts the general assumption of satisfying a potential, unrealistic desire to play college sports.

Youth are entering competitive sport environments and specializing in single sports at earlier ages than ever before (Paule-Koba, 2008). Research shows that 27 million US youth between 6 and 18 years of age participate in team sports (DiFiori, Benjamin, & Brenner, 2014). Furthermore, the National Council of Youth Sports survey found that 60 million children aged 6–18 years participate in some form of organized athletics, with 44 million participating in more than one sport (DiFiori, et al., 2014). Accordingly, research has shown that the reasoning behind the increase in amateur competition is attributed to the internal (i.e. personal) or external (i.e. parents, coach, friends) desires to compete at elite levels (Paule-Koba, 2008). A recent study by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) found that many college athletes began specializing in their sport by the age of 12 (Paule-Koba, 2008). The desire to increase athletic opportunities at higher levels of competition and build upon one's career is often the motivation. While scholastically affiliated teams are on the radar of college coaches, many (i.e. coaches, parents, athletes, etc.) believe that is not enough and seek elsewhere for more exposure. Additionally, attracting scholarship offers has presented many athletes with a challenging circumstance because the market is over-saturated with skilled individuals. Proof of this reality is validated through interview-based research of college coaches completed by Paule-Koba (2008):

What I think people don't understand is that Division I does not recruit out of the high school because it's not a good evaluation. It's one great player surrounded by a lot of other kids who are not very good. So, if you are going to base a full ride scholarship on something, you want it to be on a good evaluation. So, it's out of the clubs...we do whatever we can to help them and support them and value their role in education. But in terms of the actual am I going to recruit Suzy over Janie it's not going to be based on a high school event. It just isn't...I just know that recruiting in college is primarily done out of the clubs and not in high school. (p. 2)

In all, amateur sport has become a contemporary platform for seeking athletic opportunities and careers; specifically, via one organization in particular, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). The Amateur Athletic Union is a non-profit, volunteer, sports organization that has exclusively dedicated all efforts to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical fitness programs (Paule-Koba, 2008). Even though the AAU is a nonprofit, the revenue generated is substantial, due to the expense required for participation. Amongst American children, the supremacy of amateur competition has accrued more than \$7 billion spent annually on youth sport travel alone (Wendling, Flaherty, Sagas, & Kaplanidou, 2018). Additionally, many of the associated expenses (ex. travel) typically fall on the family to provide before the adolescent can participate. Costs to participate in travel sport are significant and require either sacrifice or societal status.

According to a TD Ameritrade investor survey conducted in July of 2016, nearly two-thirds of the parents surveyed claimed to spend up to \$500 monthly per child on youth sport activities. Another 20% of parents surveyed spent more than \$1,000 monthly, per child, with most of the expenditures allocated to travel and team fees (Wendling et al., 2018). One team in Michigan, required each member to pay \$350 for participation. This initial fee pays for five friendship tournaments and the state tournament. In addition, each member of the team had to pay \$43 for uniforms and they voted to pay \$53 each for warm-ups. The team is able to limit travel expenses, which must be paid by all team members, by traveling to cities within driving distance for day trips (Paule-Koba, 2008). As research shows, paying-to-play requires an immense amount of paternally-provided resources, which places financial tension on the family. However, families still choose to do so for their child out of hope for opportunity. Parents justify the substantial financial sacrifice and uncountable hours spent on their children's sport pursuits, as the quest for a college scholarship or professional career (Wendling et al., 2018).

Interestingly, while many athletes reported high family expectations to compete in college as playing a role in their involvement and participation in travel sports, the same individuals presented evidence of regret and resentment for said pressure (Wendling et al., 2018). Researchers have found that, when asked post-career, early sport specialization and extreme competitive environments at young age have led participants to wish they had participated in other sports (Wendling et al., 2018). Further, these same individuals, eventually experienced burnout, social isolation, psychological stress, and overuse injuries, as result of participating in highly-competitive arenas since adolescence (Paule-Koba, 2008). These accounts contradict every single aspect of AAU's mission statement, which emphasizes "to offer amateur sports programs through a volunteer base for all people to have the physical, and mental development of amateur athletes and to promote good sportsmanship and good citizenship" (Paule-Koba, 2008). While concerns are present, the inconsistencies of travel sports persist as there is limited information available to prove legitimacy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine amateur sport's impact on youth development. Through the comparison of personal accounts and numerical data provided by various individuals associated with amateur sport, the researcher hoped to unveil the reality of adolescent participation in amateur athletics.

Research Questions

The research question for this study can be condensed into one, overarching inquiry that has sub-categories to provide specific insight on various elements.

1. How has amateur sport impacted the development of adolescent athletes?
 - a. Physically
 - b. Socially

- c. Cognitively
- d. Emotionally

Definitions

For the purpose of this paper, the following definitions will be used. The definitions are the author's own unless otherwise indicated.

Adolescent- Individuals within the ages of 10-18.

Amateur Sports(i.e. travel or club)- athletic teams that are run by organizations with the intent to provide the global, athletic world with the opportunity to play semi-professional sport. Monetary incentives are not permitted or allowed.

Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)- a non-profit, volunteer, sports organization that is dedicated exclusively to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical fitness programs (Paule-Koba, 2008).

Burnout- a spectrum of conditions that includes over-reaching and overtraining. It occurs as a result of chronic stress that causes a young athlete to cease participation in a previously enjoyable activity (DiFiori et al., 2014).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)- a general legislative and administrative authority for men's and women's intercollegiate athletics. It formulates and enforces the rules of play for various sports and the eligibility criteria for athletes (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 1998).

Overuse Injuries- Overuse injuries occur due to repetitive submaximal loading of the musculoskeletal system when rest is not adequate to allow for structural adaptation to take place. Injury can involve the muscle-tendon unit, bone, bursa, neurovascular structures and the physique. Overuse injuries unique to young athletes include apophyseal injuries and physical stress injuries (DiFiori et al., 2014).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)- a fundamental need for competence within the human organism which motivates much exploratory and growth-relevant behavior (Sheldon, K. M., Williams, & Joiner, 2003). SDT asserts that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are basic needs, and the extent to which they are met determines one's intrinsic motivation for an activity (Beedie, 2017).

Sport Specification/Specialization- an intensive, year- round training in a single sport at the exclusion of other sports (DiFiori et al., 2014).

Literature Review

Sports have stood the test of time. However, throughout the years, format and style have been altered to meet societal expectations and continuously develop talented athletes. Recently, these pressures to perfect one's skill and become an elitist have motivated adolescent competitors to start training at a younger age each year (Paule-Koba, 2008). Since scholastically-affiliated teams have grade restrictions on the commencement of athletics, youths are seeking out amateur sports leagues to meet internal and external expectations.

Impact on Physical Development

Youth sport participation offers many benefits including the development of self-esteem, peer socialization, and, especially, increasing opportunity for general fitness (DiFiori, et al., 2014). For instance, one recent study found that participation in competitive sports kept adolescents physically active during eighth through twelfth grades, a period when physical activity significantly declines (Messner, 2016). Accordingly, the study found that when compared to adolescents who do not participate in sports, adolescents who participated in at least one competitive sport during the past year engaged in 1.5 days more of physical activity for at least sixty minutes during the past week. Furthermore, participation in competitive sports was found to be a stronger factor among twelfth- graders (when compared to eighth- and tenth-

graders) to maintain appropriate levels of physical activity throughout the week (Messner, 2016). Amateur sports not only increase the adolescent's interaction with physical activity but also creates layers of events that promote a healthier lifestyle. A young athlete will spend time in required physical education classes, will attend after-school sports practices, and then on certain days, will further that activity with their amateur sports responsibilities.

Nevertheless, even though sport participation can play a positive role in adolescents' lives, sport also introduces a variety of health risks (Messner, 2016). The pressure to succeed can be stifling for an athlete and drive them to a point of exhaustion. An emphasis on competitive success, often driven by goals of elite-level, amateur team selection, collegiate scholarships, Olympic team membership, and even professional contracts, has seemingly become widespread. This has resulted in an increased, external (i.e. from parents, coaches, agencies, friends, etc.) pressure to begin high-intensity training at young ages. Such an excessive focus on early intensive training and competition at young ages rather than a focus on skill development can lead to overuse injury and burnout. The prevalence of overuse injury varies by the specific sport, ranging from 37% (skiing and handball) to 68% (running) (DiFiori et al., 2014). Overuse injuries are underestimated in the literature because most studies define injury as requiring a time loss from participation. Previous injuries are a strong predictor of future overuse injuries, due to burnout. Additionally, overuse injuries may be more likely to occur during the adolescent growth spurt. "The physes, apophyses and articular surfaces in skeletally immature athletes in a rapid phase of growth are less resistant to tensile, shear and compressive forces than either mature bone or more immature pre- pubescent bone" (DiFiori et al., 2014).

Higher training volumes have consistently been shown to increase the risk of overuse injury in multiple sports. Sport specialization and, in general, amateur athletics, have pressured-cooked athletes into expending several hours a day pushing their bodies to the limit at a very

young age, eventually depleting the body. Despite low odds that early specialization may lead to athletic scholarships or a professional career, many parents, coaches, teammates, and peers continue to pressure youth to specialize (Beedie, 2017).

Another factor that may contribute to overuse injury, but lacks clinical data, includes poor fitting equipment. In particular, when not gear is not appropriately adjusted for changes in growth, in combination with overscheduling, such as multiple competitive events in the same day, injury is prone to occur (DiFiori et al., 2014). Amateur sports often involve day-long weekend tournaments, which require the athlete to start and end the day competing for 3-days straight. While this responsibility to attend lengthy competitions may be considered valuable by both the athlete and external parties, physical exhaustion is an absolute.

Societal and government parties have pushed for the increased involvement and presence of amateur sport, due to the belief that these intense competitions are improving the problem of adolescent obesity in America (Jones, Bocarro, & Edwards, 2018). However, findings suggest that the physical activity benefits of participating in at least some sports are relatively modest, and even when participating in sports on a regular basis, children are exercising for only a small amount of time (Jones et al., 2018). While this statement does not necessarily take into account the fact that amateur athletes are spending more than just a couple hours a day exercising, the food present at competitions removes any potential gain achieved through participation. Youth sport athletes are likely to be exposed to excess calories in sport settings in the form of snacks, convenience and fast foods, and sugar-sweetened beverages (Malecki & Demaray, 2002). Frequently observed foods in these setting include chocolate, candy, ice cream, salty snacks (e.g., chips), sugary beverages (including sports drinks), and entrees such as hot dogs and pizza, with few healthier alternatives. For example, a postgame snack can easily total 450 calories, approximately 150 calories more than what was expended. Over time, this surplus may

contribute to weight gain (Messner, 2016). In addition, parents routinely provide unhealthy foods and beverages to children in sport settings. The busyness of amateur sport overwhelms parents, just as much as the athlete; so, when responsible for bringing “nutrition” and “fuel” to the competition, efficiency and ease overcome the need for natural and nurturing. Organized postgame “snacks” or “treats” that parents describe as “unhealthy” are common, and parents regularly pick up fast food because sport schedules often conflicted with meal times. Although parents expressed some unease about these choices, they felt their children’s sporting activities offset the poor diet choices (Messner, 2016).

Impact on Social Development

When children make the transition into adolescence, their social DNA becomes friend-oriented. For the first time, satisfaction and companionship is found outside the realms of family, and parents/guardians become authoritative figures (Spodek, B., & Saracho, 2008). As such, the groundwork for positive social development is nurtured within the home. How family members interact and how household relationships are established determines a child’s ability to appropriately develop social proficiency. For example, when the mothers and fathers provide affective communication, children play at a higher level of engagement (e.g., establishing common ground activities, exchanging information, self-disclosing personal information or feelings). The children’s negativity during peer interaction increases when they have experiences with parents who are intrusive, engage at a low level, and disrespect humor (Spodek et al., 2008). Ultimately, while friends are important, the impact parents have on amateur sport and adolescent social development is crucial (Spodek et al., 2008).

Parents enroll their children in sport for a variety of reasons. Similar to other life domains (i.e., school, peer relationships, eating habits), the goal with amateur sport is to manipulate an environment that allows children to develop and adopt skills and competencies that support a

healthy, self-directed, responsible and autonomous form of life (Hutchinson, 2003). While monetary expenditures are required from parents, this extra-curricular activity also provides opportunities for frequent interaction with one's child. Research has found that youth sports helped build communication and trust between many parents and children (Messner, 2016). Sports provided a vehicle for parents and kids to spend time together, to have conversations, or to practice together, both in dual- parent families and single-parent families (Messner, 2016). Parents have also come to view sports participation, especially competitive sports, as a key component of their children's overall socialization (Kanters & Bocarro, n.d.).

That said, youth sport clubs cannot be understood simplistically as places where children go to learn the rudiments of a sport and, if they are talented enough, where they stay on to develop their skills and enter competition. Instead, sports clubs are social institutions that have official and unofficial agendas (Kirk & Macphail, 2003). Social positioning drives the notion and understanding of purpose within a club. Individuals are able to occupy some but not other positions in relation to the club; people engage in different ways with the club and so have sometimes different understandings of what the club is. The practice, participation, and perception of clubs are uniquely diverse, and not all members are going to have same purpose and motivation in partaking in amateur sports. These differences create a range of meaning, multiple agendas and complexity (Kirk & Macphail, 2003). For example, there are two misconceptions that often surround amateur sport, the freedom of participation and universality of competition, both of which are based on individualistic-perception. Some respond much like the following:

“At the end of the day my attitude is that it's voluntary, it's not school, they don't have to be here so if they want to do athletics they come along and behave themselves and do it.

And those that won't don't have to come. (Lisa, Wednesday IG coach)". (Kirk & Macphail, 2003)

Others see amateur sport and youth-elite teams as the singular way to continue an athletic career collegiately and beyond. Regardless of which position is correct, this situation recognizes the diversity in purpose.

Within amateur sport, the ideal parent is a willing helper who offers support and encouragement to their child but who does not interfere with the coaches' work. When a parent's level and intensity of involvement in their child's sport increases, children tend to report feeling "trapped" and may experience sport burnout (Kanters & Bocarro, n.d.). At the same time, researchers have found that parents are essential aids in effectively running an amateur sports program (Bean, Fortier, Post & Chima, 2014). However, outside of this "helper" role, the parent's involvement should be minimal. When a parent takes on a leadership role in his or her child's sports team, the experience can become overwhelming for the athlete and remove certain elements required for enjoyment (Kirk & Macphail, 2003).

Further, in seeking opportunity for one's child, the parent and family also face notable amounts of stress due to the monetary requirements associated with participation (Jones et al., 2018). Active involvement in amateur sport comes at a cost and with sacrifice of other amenities (i.e. time, freedom, etc.). Most teams have fees that are required and there is typically a universal, AAU membership fee for each individual. Further, the participants on these teams have to buy their own equipment and pay for their travel expenses (Wendling et al., 2018). These expectations create a disadvantage for those who are unable to financially adhere, causing stress and creating a divide between members of the family. Furthermore, this lack of accessibility, also creates a social disadvantage. Although sport remains one of the most popular activities among youth, recent studies indicate participation is decreasing (Jones et al., 2018). This trend is

particularly evident among disadvantaged youth (e.g., minority, low-income, rural), indicating barriers to sport participation are becoming even more restrictive for certain populations (Jones et al., 2018).

Impact on Cognitive (Academic) Development

Recently, the “dumb jock” stereo-type has proven to be false (Messner, 2016). Rather, the athlete is an intellectual and academically-motivated individual, because of the requirements needed to get into elitist schools. All collegiate prospects have to take and pass core high school courses, maintain a certain grade point average, and take the required standardized tests, such as the ACT or SAT, to seriously be considered for scholarship or entrance (Paule-Koba, 2008).

Additionally, research has found that influential role-models are essential as an adolescent gets older. Other forms of social support (i.e. parents and teachers) decrease with grade level (middle school vs. high school students). In many cases, the coach is someone who steps in to fill that role. Researchers have identified a significant supportive adult (i.e. a coach) in the child’s life or an emotionally supportive parent as buffers for vulnerable children to nurture self-determination ((Malecki & Demaray, 2002). Many athletes consider the interscholastic or AAU coach to be a “fatherly/motherly-figure” or mentor, which provides accountability to stay present in academics and achieve goals. This proactive involvement is especially essential in diverse communities. Minority students in elementary schools reported perceiving more support from teachers than white students. However, when surveyed, middle and high school minority students reported less support than white students (Malecki & Demaray, 2002). Sports involvement lowered the drop- out rate among some minorities in suburban and rural schools, though not in urban schools (Jones et al., 2018). Indeed, depending on school location (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural) some racial and ethnic minorities seemed to benefit more academically from sports involvement. Hispanic female athletes in rural and suburban schools

benefited from involvement, while Black females and males in urban schools showed the least favorable educational benefits (Messner, 2016). Generally, student athletes in high school tend to do better academically over time. Both female and male athletes have higher grades, higher educational aspirations, and less school-related discipline problems than nonathletes (Messner, 2016). At the school level, higher sports participation rates for girls and boys across US public high schools were associated with advanced placement enrollment rates (Malecki & Demaray, 2002). Moreover, schools with higher sport participation rates for girls and boys reported significantly fewer suspensions during the school year and fewer crimes on school grounds (Messner, 2016).

On the other hand, AAU and amateur sport require significant amounts of time. In pursuit of athletic success, adolescents and their parents may enlist the services of a personal sport coach and/or fitness instructor, and also register for camps and showcase events that often occur on weekends and, sometimes, even week nights (DiFiori et al., 2014). As a result, sport responsibilities compete with academics, creating limited time to study and embrace childhood. Collegiate programs and institutions will often advertise the idea of kids being students first, and athletes second, however researchers are starting to question if this claim is actually the case (Yost, 2010). Youth are now twice as likely to suffer from anxiety compared to 30 years ago, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013) estimated that as many as one out of every five American children under the age of 18 suffers from some form of mental disorder (Jones et al., 2018). While amateur sports are not to be blamed for this increase, the pressure athletes face within the realms of competition certainly could contribute to stress. Even though AAU and travel ball teams offer an extended season and the opportunity for college recruiter attention, they also can create situations in which all participants expect college scholarships. Some parents or coaches may even encourage a child to concentrate on a single sport in an

attempt to improve his or her chances of selection in the elite team, and therefore, exposure to the college recruiting process (DiFiori et al., 2014).

Unfortunately, research has yet to prove whether or not AAU actually improves opportunity. From an outsider's perspective, amateur sport often seems to only produce negative effects, due to the intensity of the competition. For example, an adolescent athlete can only handle so much pressure and high-stress environments before he is overwhelmed and cognitive stability/focus diminishes. Too much exposure to elements not appropriate for those within the adolescent age range can cause issues that impact the rest of a child's life. A recent study examined the characteristics of high school subjects that were most likely to lead to academic success for college students. Through the comparison and analyzation of data, researchers found that up to six hours of physical exercise produces a positive, academic outcome. Once the athlete exceeded this amount, the probability of getting the highest grade steadily decreased, while the lowest grade steadily increased (Heynen, 2006). Accordingly, data not only suggests that athletes who had early specialized training, withdrew from their sport due to either an injury or a burnout from the sport, but that variations in cognitive development, as well as motor skills, should be considered when setting goals and expectations (DiFiori et al., 2014).

Cognitive development must occur before the young athlete can participate in most of the organized sports. In early childhood, the young athlete may not understand the need to stay in position or be able to remember instructions. To enjoy a sport, the youngster needs to understand the fundamental rules and strategy of the sport. He or she must also have the cognitive ability to follow directions and interact with their fellow team members (DiFiori et al., 2014).

Impact on Emotional Development

Motives for participating in youth sport are triggered by the desire for autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Wendling et al., 2018). According to self-determination theory

(SDT), those characteristics contribute to intrinsic motivation and self-determined extrinsic motivation (Sheldon et al., 2003). Thus, when a youth's needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence are sufficiently met in a single context, or sport, sustained engagement in the sport will likely be supported (Wendling et al., 2018). Through sports the athlete also develops a sense of emotional awareness and resilience. Athletes have a marvelous ability to transform almost any tedious or unpleasant task into a game. They have a less admirable capacity to corrupt pure play by ulterior motives that can range from the innocent maintenance of physical fitness to the maiming of an opponent in order to secure the winner's share of the take. (Guttmann, 2004).

Unfortunately, coaches and parents may lack knowledge about normal development and signs of readiness for certain tasks, physically and psychosocially. This can result in unrealistic expectations that cause children and adolescents to feel as if they are not making progress in their sport. Consequently, children may lose self-esteem and withdraw from the sport (DiFiori et al., 2014). Additionally, the focus placed on athletic success through participation in amateur sport may cause the individual to lose perspective and fail to develop appropriate, emotional awareness.

Athletes with a mastery (or task) orientation are focused on personal skill development and mastery, playing well, and self-evaluated performance. Young athletes with intrinsic goal orientations such as skill development have been found to be more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors during competitive play than athletes with extrinsic goal orientations such as social status or rewards. Athletes with an ego orientation are characterized as concerned about being seen as successful, winning at all costs, and dominating over the opposing team. Furthermore, some researchers suggest that sportsmanship becomes less of a focus when perceptions of ego orientation dominate. (Arthur-Banning, G. S., Wells, Malcarne, & Oh, 2018)

A task-oriented motivational climate is constructive for sport participation while an ego-oriented climate can reduce youth participation (Beedie, 2017). In fact, ego-oriented climates and evaluations of competency based on social comparisons, often more evident in specialized settings, are predictors of negative personal development in youth sports (Beedie, 2017). Young athletes in the elite tournament engage in approximately four times the number of negative sportsmanship behaviors per half game as the young athletes in the recreational tournament. Consequently, one might argue that this is where the increased levels of pressure due to increased competitive level are manifested. While there were more negative behaviors in the elite game, there were more opportunities for behaviors simply because the game moves faster and there is a greater likelihood for behaviors to occur (Arthur-Banning et al., 2018). Furthermore, players at this level are certainly more skilled or they would not be participating at such a level which also means they are likely being coached more intensely. Many coaches attempt to teach not only the skills of the game but the tactics as well and unfortunately, many of the players do not fully understand how to properly implement the tactics and, as such, are perceived as negative. (Arthur-Banning et al., 2018).

Summary

In all, chronological age is not a good indicator on which to base sport developmental models because motor, cognitive and social skills progress at different rates, independent of age (DiFiori et al., 2014). Research proves that readiness is a key factor in the appropriateness and benefit of participating in travel sports as an adolescent. Readiness for sports is related to the match between a child's level of growth, development (motor, sensory, cognitive, social/emotional) (DiFiori et al., 2014). Thus, presented research has conclusively shown that while positives do abound, the negatives are equally as present and are directly associated within the foundational structuring of amateur sport. As a result, this obvious correspondence between

adolescent development and participation in amateur sport, as well as the lack of numerical data available on this topic, spurs the purpose of this study.

Methodology

Amateur sport has become widely popular amongst athletes over the past century. Reasons for this increase is mainly rooted in the opportunities provided through participation, but little attention has been drawn to the possible developmental issues that may be occurring as a result. This descriptive study examined the various facets (i.e. physical, social, cognitive, and emotional) of adolescent development potentially effected by amateur sport. All research was collected through a survey issued to adolescents who are currently participating in amateur sport. Collected results were measured through the correlations found in relation to amateur sport's impact on the different facets of development.

Participants

The sample for this study was a compilation of 35 adolescent athletes, 21 females and 14 males, ranging from ages 10-18, who are currently competing in amateur sport. This study was not partial to one specific sport as this research is universally applicable to various forms of club competition. Thus, the study included perspectives of the following amateur sports: basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, hockey, soccer, and dance. All participants in the study were from the midwestern states of Iowa, Minnesota, and Michigan. Participants for this study were chosen for convenience with the intent that the researcher could receive valuable feedback and responsiveness.

Materials

The Elements of Sports Participation Questionnaire (ESPQ) survey designed by Wendling and Associates was used as a template when designing the survey (Wendling et al., 2018). This survey was originally used for her study and permission was granted prior to

implementing it into this study. The original ESPQ questionnaire included 25 questions that were used to formulate a thorough understanding of amateur athletics with respect to an adolescent's level of comprehension. Fourteen of 25 items were rated on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to five (*strongly agree*). Eleven of 25 items related to parents' and coaches' pressures, and time conflict with school responsibilities were measured on a one (*never*) to five (*all of the time*) scale. To complete the survey, Wendling and Associates added two, open-ended questions, in addition to the 25 Likert scale questions (Wendling et al., 2018).

To ensure that the ESPQ survey was beneficial for all aspects of this study, numerous edits were made to the original questions to create consistency between each sub-category (i.e. physical, social, cognitive, emotional) and to make sure that the survey had a solid research base (Appendix E). First, to benefit the comprehension and relatedness of the participant, all "elite" and "amateur" verbiage was replaced with "club/travel". Additionally, questions were removed or added to make the survey relative to the purpose of this study (See bottom of Appendix E). After all the revisions were made, the survey resulted to be a compilation of 10 demographic, 24 Likert-scale (six questions per development area), and two open-ended questions (Appendix C).

Following the completion of this process, the revised survey was piloted out to six individuals, who tested the material for grammatical errors, relatedness, and comprehension. With the feedback received from the pilot, more edits were made to the survey and consent form.

The parental consent form, introduction letter (Appendix B), and revised ESPQ survey were distributed via the online platform, Google Forms, to increase efficiency and ease of access for all participants. All contact information needed for research was acquired through professional connections and done with the subject's privacy at the forefront.

Data was compiled categorically and then numerically, so that factual translation was transparent and transferable. The conclusive categories that the results were separated into, was

determined through an alignment with research sub-categories, which included physical development, social development emotional development, and cognitive development.

Design

This descriptive research study was designed to determine whether or not amateur sport was impacting the development of adolescents. To answer the various facets of research questions, a survey was distributed to participants who fit the study's profile. The methodology behind the design of the study was centered around efficiency and accuracy. Since the survey was conducted remotely and needed to be completed within a month's time, all content had to be easily accessed and submitted with a click of a button.

All materials that were going to be filled out by the participant were placed on Google forms. The consent form was completed electronically and was designed in a manner that would not allow the participant to proceed until completed. This ensured that all ethical responsibility in regard to the research of minors was maintained. The platform hosting the consent form also sent an e-receipt of the signed consent form for the parent's/guardian's personal files. Through the submission of the consent form, the participant was then directed to the survey. Through the interlinking of the consent form and survey, there was not only flow to the process, but confidentiality and professionalism was exemplified. Furthermore, in making the entire study electronic, the analyzing of data also improved.

Procedure

Prior to the survey, two emails were sent out to all contacts indicating the purpose and process of the research being done. The first email confirmed the individual's participation and also delivered an informative letter to provide background (Appendix B). The second email was sent out five days later containing the consent form and survey URL and instructions for completion. Within this message, the participant was also asked to complete the survey within

two weeks of receiving, and to forward the survey to any club athletes who fit the profile. Additionally, the participants were requested to answer all questions honestly and in solitude. This was done to encourage all responses to be genuine and lack the opinion of other members. Whether or not this actually is occurred is an unknown variable, as the surveys were taken remotely. A total of 100 participants received the survey URL. The survey took a maximum of 30 minutes. If the participant did not complete the survey within a week's time, a reminder was sent out on a week day as this has the highest potential for participation, in comparison to the weekend. Further, if the individual still failed to complete the survey, one final reminder was sent with the closure email one week later. This final email was designed to encourage last minute participation and thank the participant for their time and efforts.

Results

In exploring whether or not club sport is impacting the physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development of adolescents, the researcher first gained general insight into the state of amateur sport, since this information is currently unavailable to the general public. Table 1 summarizes research relating to the average age that athletes start their competitive careers in amateur sport.

Table 1

Average Age for Start of Sport vs. Amateur Sport

	Average age for starting sport	Average age for starting amateur sport	Average number of years between start of sport and amateur sport
<i>Male</i>	4.85	9.62	4.71
<i>Female</i>	7.3	9.95	2.62

Table 2 presents the average response per Likert-scale question. There were 24 total questions within this portion of the survey.

Table 2

Average response per Likert-scale question

Question:	Average Response:
I believe that I am good enough to play college sports in the future.	3.89
I play club/travel sports for the excitement and challenge of competition.	4.66
GPA requirements to participate in collegiate sports and earn scholarships motivate me to keep my grades up.	4
I play club/travel sports to stay in shape and get exercise.	3.8
I play club/travel sports to hang out with my friends.	3.43
I think my club/travel coach is a great coach.	4.57
I enjoy the higher volume of training club/travel sports provide.	4.43
I play club/travel sports because my parents want me to.	1.57
I play club/travel sports to get noticed and praised by others.	1.91
The extra training of club/travel sports has improved my level of physical ability, endurance, & skill.	4.74
My club coach values the contribution I make to the club/travel team.	4.43
The snacks at club/travel tournaments are healthy (i.e. fruits, veggies, protein bars, etc.).	3.26
My teammates value the contribution I make to the club/travel team.	4.29
How often do your parents mention the amount of time and money your club/travel sports participation requires of them?	2.46
My parent(s) are very involved in my club/travel team.	3.94
My mom or dad become upset when I do not play as well as they would like me to in a game.	2.66
My mom or dad puts pressure on me to earn a college scholarship through club/travel sports.	1.63

Table 2 (cont'd)

Average response per Likert-scale question

My club/travel coach's expectations for team participation and performance are fair.	4.43
Getting too many concussions is a concern of mine when playing sports.	1.74
The extra training of club/travel sports has caused overuse injuries (i.e. stress fracture, constant muscle soreness/tightness, etc).	1.94
The amount of time my club/travel sports takes, makes it difficult to complete my school work.	1.71
How much do you enjoy playing club/travel sports?	4.83
How frequently do you think about quitting club/travel sports?	1.31
How frequently do you think about quitting all of the sports that you play?	1.14

Figure 1 displays a visual representation of research findings relating to the reasons why respondents chose to participate. While there were 35 participants, 36 different responses were collected, as one response applied to more than one category. If the participant indicated that school was part of their reasoning for utilizing amateur sport, this response was placed within the "Coach" category. The "Family" category was a compilation of responses indicating that participation in amateur sport was due to sibling participation or parental involvement. The responses represented by the "Other" category includes the following:

"Other" Response #1- *Summer rec*

"Other" Response #2- *A flyer that came home*

"Other" Response #3- *Locally available*

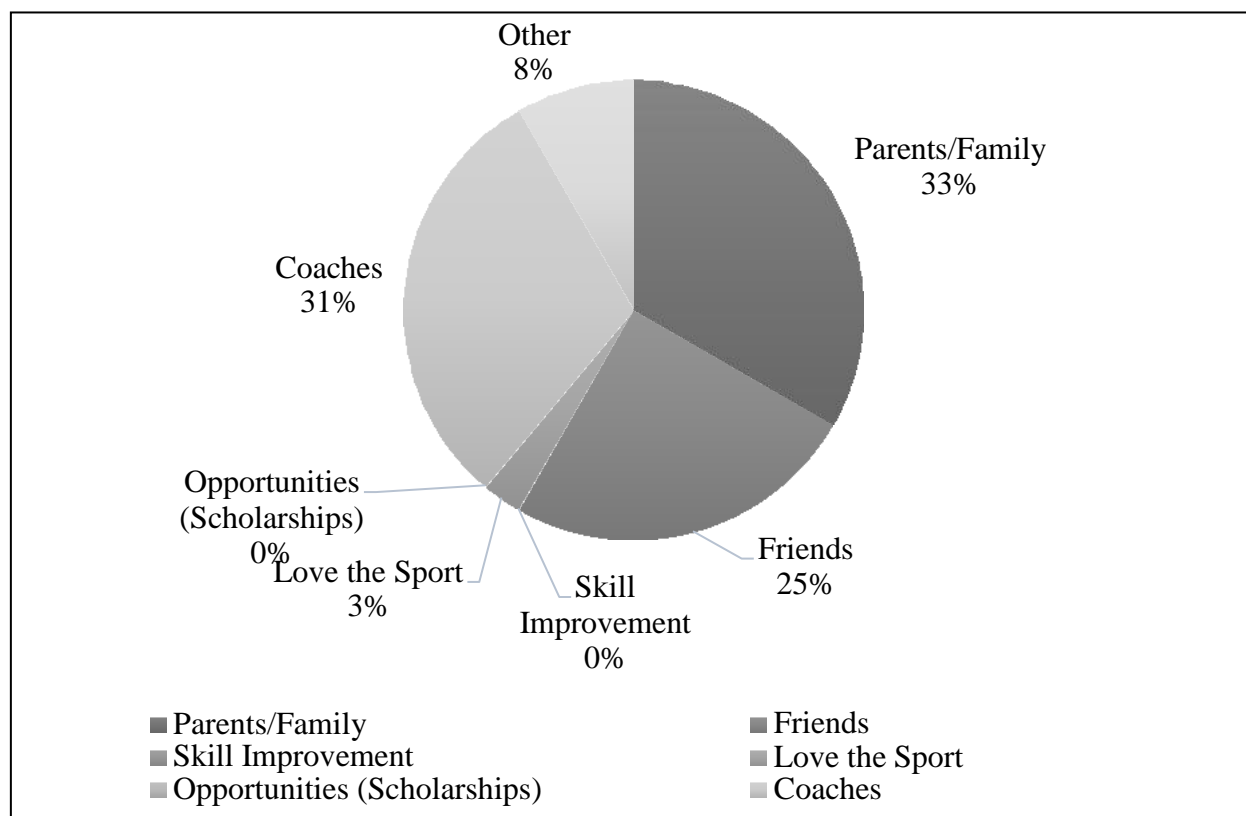


Figure 1. Reasoning for Joining Amateur Sport

An additional analysis (Table 3) was done to compare the two groups (sibling participation vs. parental involvement) in response to found research indicating that the impact on adolescents differs between the two groups. While the comparison was inconclusive (50-50), the family-related reasonings for participation are essential to the study and provide insight on the impact this internal-social group has on an adolescent.

Table 3

Sibling Participation vs. Parental Involvement

Response	Sibling Participation vs. Parental Involvement
Parent/School	Parental Involvement
My parents gave me the opportunity to go further in sports, so I took it.	Parental Involvement
Family	Sibling Participation

Table 3 (cont'd)

Sibling Participation vs. Parental Involvement

My older sister started playing hockey, so I wanted to try it	Sibling Participation
My parents signed me up	Parental Involvement
Family-I play with the little brothers of girls on my sisters travel teams	Sibling Participation
My brothers played	Sibling Participation
My brother and dad	Sibling Participation
My mom coached	Parental Involvement
Older siblings	Sibling Participation
Parents	Parental Involvement
My parents.	Parental Involvement
Total:	Sibling Participation- 6 responses Parental Involvement- 6 responses

Figure 2 displays a visual representation of research findings relating to the average number of hours the respondents dedicated to amateur sport each week.

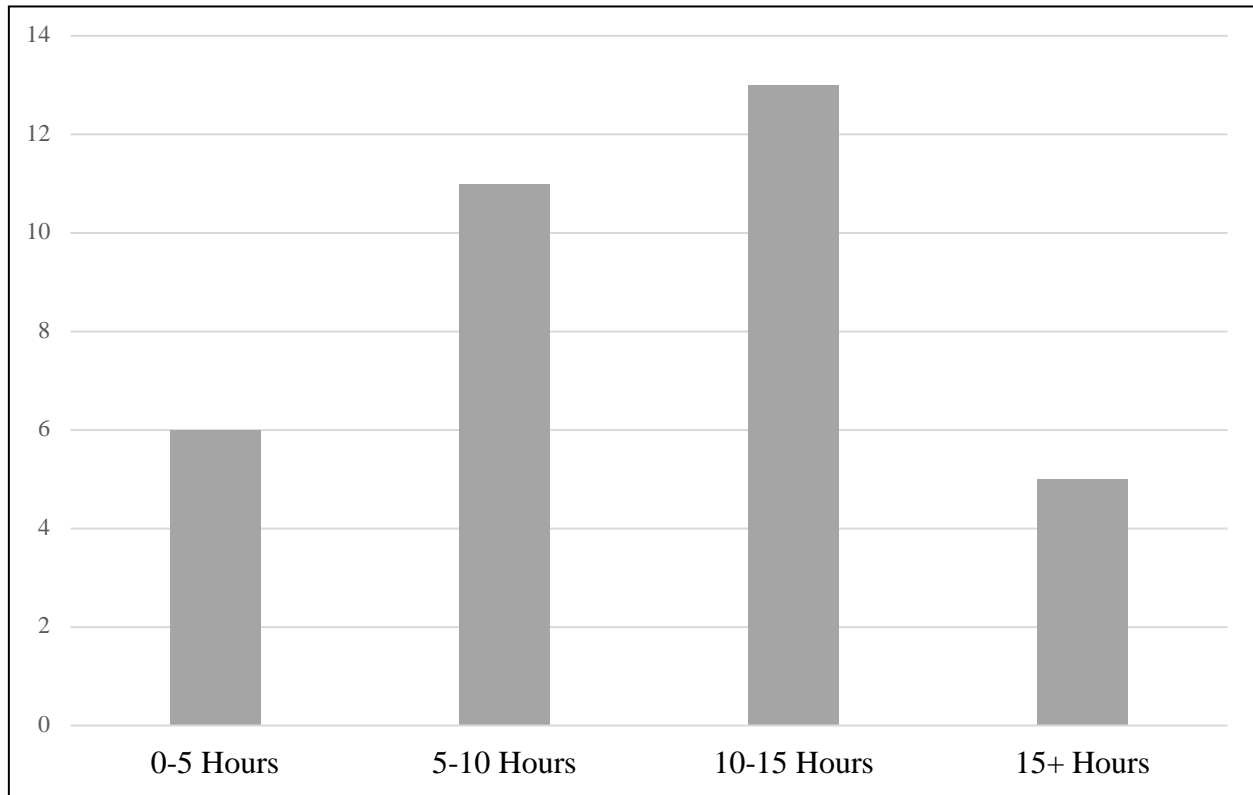


Figure 2. Average # of Hours Dedicated A Week to Amateur Sport (Travel Time, Games, Practices, Team Bonding, etc.)

Additionally, the athlete's purpose and perspective on amateur sport was also collected to gain further insight on the current state of amateur sport. The data for Figures 3 and 4 came from open ended questions inserted into the last portion of the survey. For Table 3, while there were 35 participants, 52 different responses were collected, as 17 responses applied to more than one category. The responses represented by the "Other" category includes the following:

"Other" Response #1- Keeping the team motivated

"Other" Response #2- I get chance to play in different cities. I get to have fun with my team in hotels. I like the competition versus playing against not good teams.

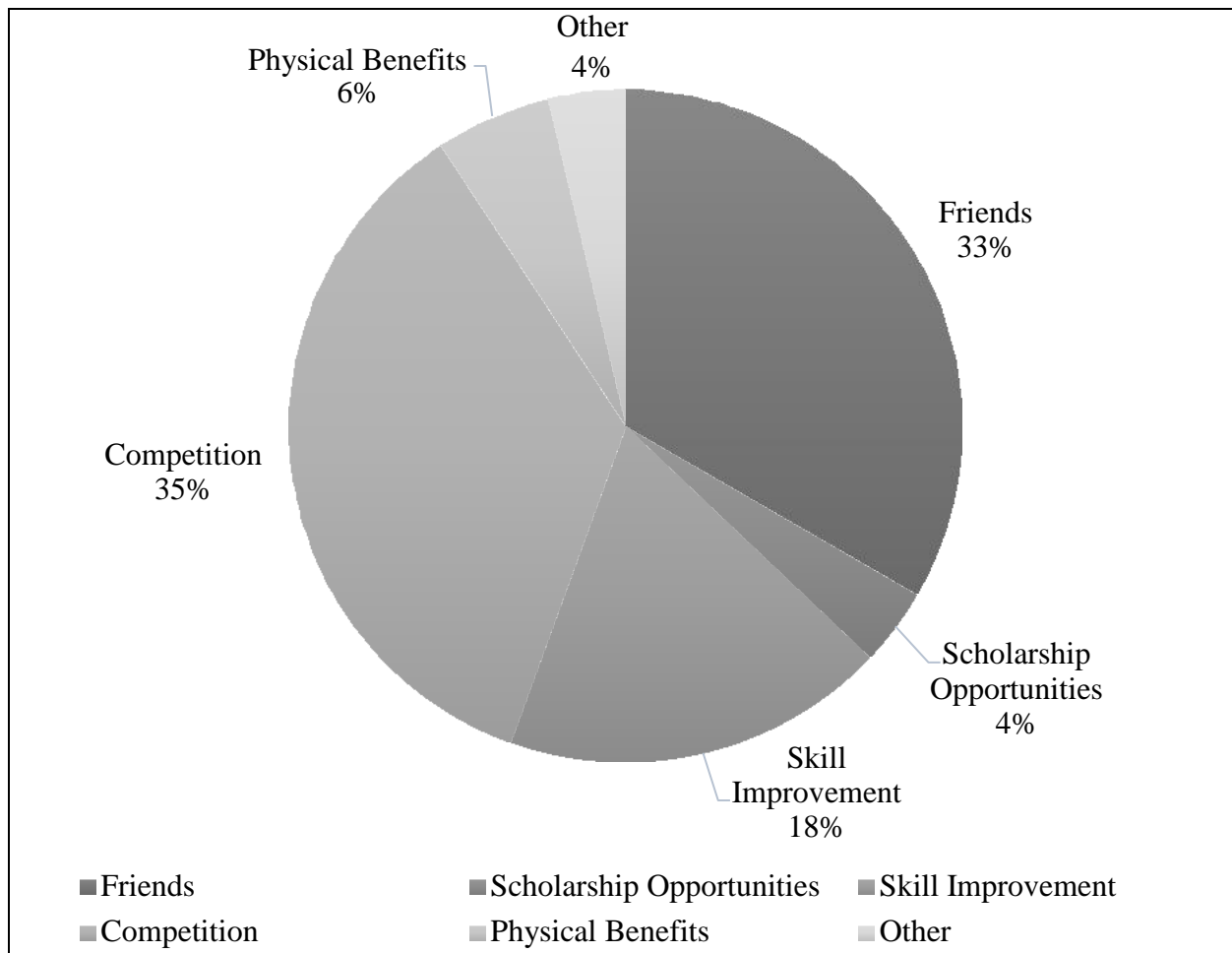


Figure 3. Survey results for what the athlete liked most about amateur sport.

In Figure 4, while there were 35 participants, 37 different responses were collected, as two responses applied to more than one category. All the responses within the social category, included any content that referenced being away from friends due to amateur sport travel requirements, teammate discrepancies, and amateur sport social environment (ex. trashing talking during competition). The responses represented by the “Other” category includes the following:

“Other” Response #1: *When you lose*

“Other” Response #2: *I don’t like how the volleyball teams are seperated into ABC and DA teams. It can make you feel unhappy if your are put on a certain team.*

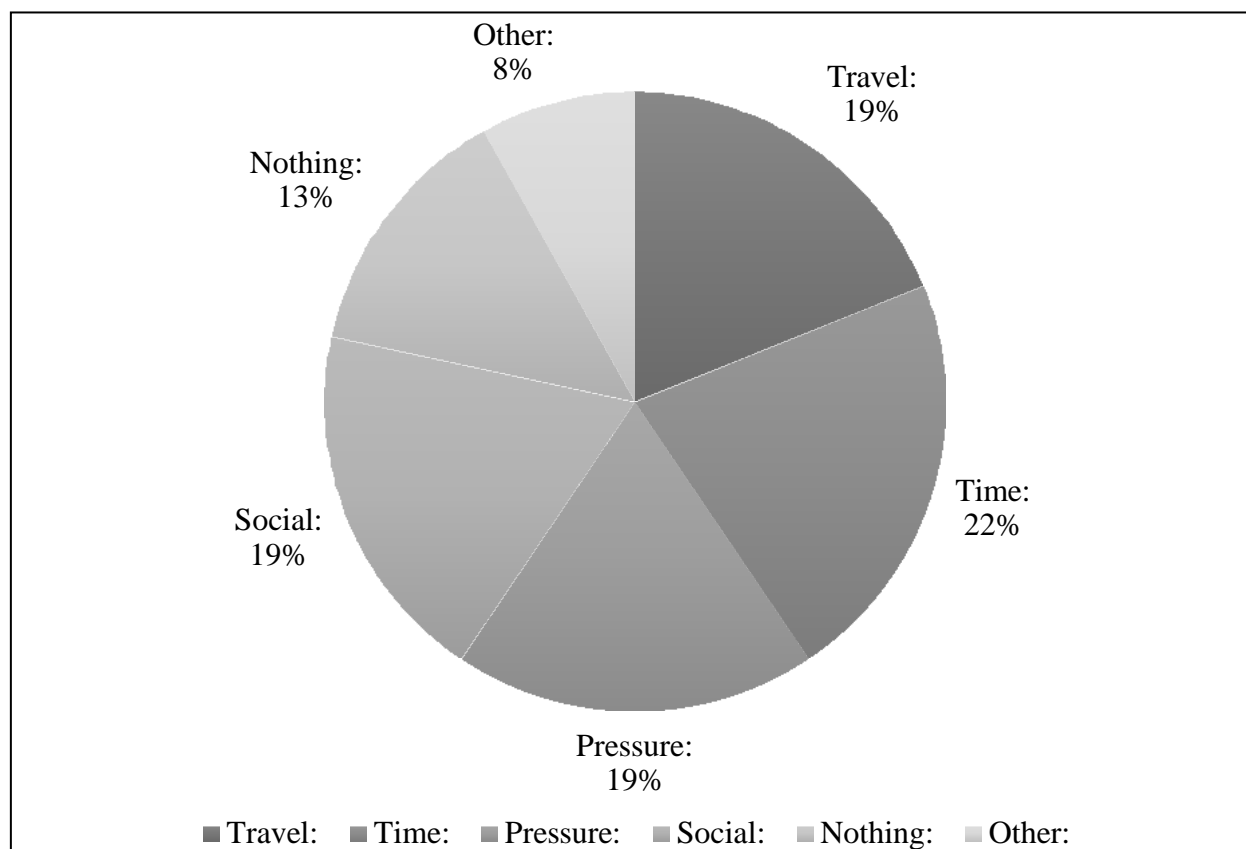


Figure 4. Survey results of what athlete like least about amateur sport.

In answering the research question “How has amateur sport impacted the development of adolescent athletes?” while addressing its sub-categories (i.e. Physical, Social, Cognitive, and Emotional), the researcher completed a Kruskal-Wallis H (K-W-H) test or one-way ANOVA on ranks. This particular analysis was done, because the K-W-H does not assume normal distribution, is specifically designed to meet the needs of ordinal studies and does not require the study to have an independence of observations. Table 4 and Table 5 provide the test-specific details needed for purposeful analysis.

Table 4

Variables of the K-W-H test

Dependent	Club/Travel (Amateur) sport’s impact
Independent	An adolescent’s development (i.e. physical, social, cognitive, and emotional)

Table 5

Hypotheses of the K-W-H test

Null Hypothesis	The impact club sport has on the following areas—physical, social, cognitive, and emotional— of adolescent development is identical.
Alternative Hypothesis	The impact club sport has on the following areas—physical, social, cognitive, and emotional— of adolescent development differs.

In testing for validity, the researcher first found the average response for each question and placed with the appropriate sub-group. The averages were then listed from lowest to highest and given a ranking that aligned with its placement on the numerical scale. All assigned rankings were totaled and used within the K-W-H formula to provide the H value (Table 6).

Table 6

Statistical results from the K-W-H test

N	Df	Chi-square	H-value
24	3	7.815	0.5467

Since the H-value is significantly lower than the chi-square value, the researcher cannot reject the null hypothesis. Thus, as far as this study shows, the impact club sport has on the researched areas of development is identical.

Discussion

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine amateur sport's impact on the development of adolescents in the following areas: physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Through surveying adolescent athletes who are currently participating in amateur sport, the study gained insight on the relationship between the two. The research question "How has amateur sport

impacted the development of adolescents?” was initially observed through the K-W-H test. This statistical analysis was completed with the initial intent of discovering what type of impact is occurring in relation to adolescent development and the individual’s participation in amateur. Additionally, the analysis sought to determine whether or not there were any significant outliers between the focused sub-groups (i.e. physical, social, cognitive, and emotional), indicating that one area is impacted more by amateur sport than the others. However, since statistical significance was not found, research indicates that the level of impact amateur sport has on the development of adolescents exists but is identical between focused sub-areas.

Even though, the K-W-H test did not produce evidence of one sub-group being significantly impacted by amateur sport in comparison to another, quantitative responses not evaluated by the K-W-H test provide valuable insight on the current status of this focused relationship. One should note that these findings are observations based on found trends and not conclusive evidence, making them subject to human error and biases.

First, the research that was found prior to the study indicated that the main reasoning for participating in amateur sport was to increase the likelihood of scholarship and collegiate opportunities (Paule-Koba, 2008). Thus, increasing the pressure on the athlete and, subsequently, removing the freedom to proceed as one truly desires. However, the results (Figure 1) showed that future prospects were least likely to motivate an adolescent to participate, and instead, social parties showed to be the impacting factor. Reason for participation is significant to all four, developmental sub-areas in a distinct way and these positive responses indicate that what may have been assumed to be a negative impactor, might actually be an action of freewill, appreciation for extra-curricular activities, and valued human interaction. That said, one of the biggest influencers was family, which raises the red-flag of parental pressure. However, a common reason the athlete joined in relation to this social party, was because of sibling

participation (Table 3). While negative parental involvement in the decision-making process should not be discounted, the active participation of siblings provides an indicator that amateur sport can be a family activity and a way to generate positive relations within that entity.

Secondly, the number of hours dedicated to amateur sport should be highlighted as a concern. When the respondents were questioned whether or not the amount of time required for amateur sport participation made completing schoolwork difficult, the response was low (1.71). This average indicates that, in general, the athletes strongly disagreed with this particular scenario. However, when observing the average recorded number of hours dedicated to amateur sport (Figure 2), one can see that the most popular response (37%) was 10-15 hours per week. Additionally, 14 percent of the respondents said amateur sport requires 15 or more hours each week. When compared to the number of hours total in a given week this presents an issue, due to other variables that are essential for a healthy lifestyle (i.e. sleep, social, school, etc.). Consider the following hypothetical situation:

There are 168 hours in one week. If an athlete sleeps for 8 hours, that would be 56 hours per week. School attendance is 6 hours a day, Monday-Friday, totaling to 30 hours in a week. After adding these numbers together, along with the 15 hours required for amateur sport, this leaves 67 hours to other responsibilities. Figure 5 provides a visual representation of this scenario.

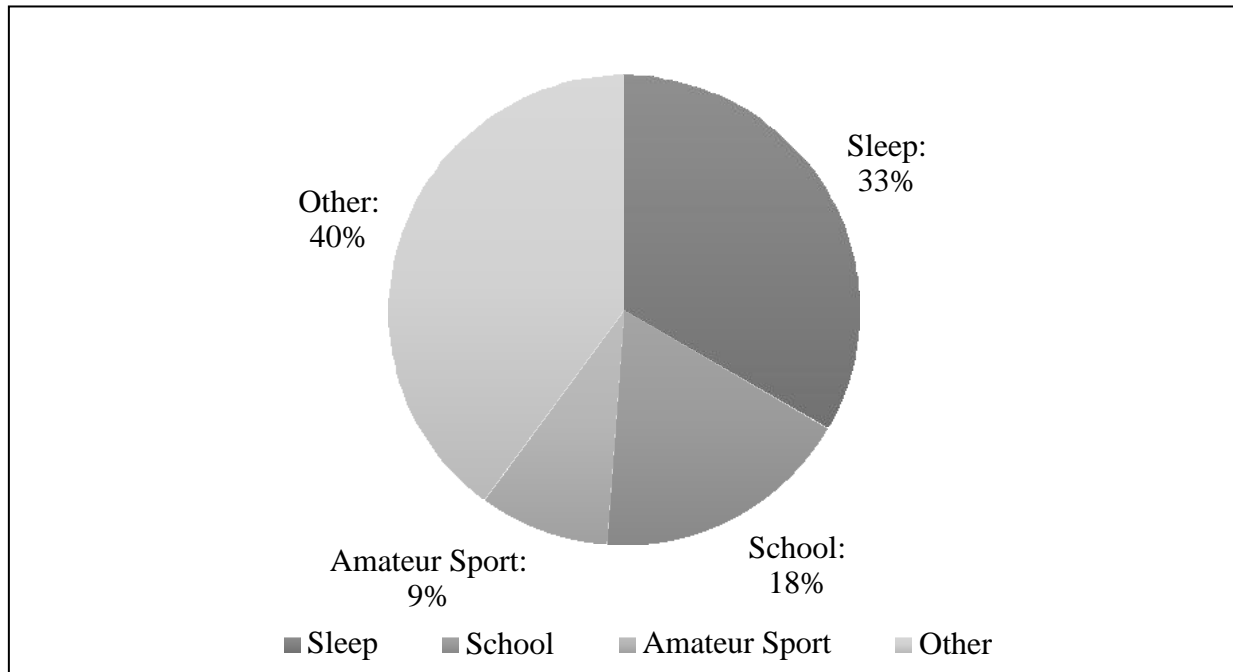


Figure 5. Scenario's Weekly Hours

While this doesn't appear to be concerning, one must take into consideration the fact that these are only three activities out of an entire week. Figure 6 provides a representation of this reality. The "Used" category is a compilation of the hours required for amateur sport, sleep, and school. The "Leftover" category represents the hours available after-the-fact.

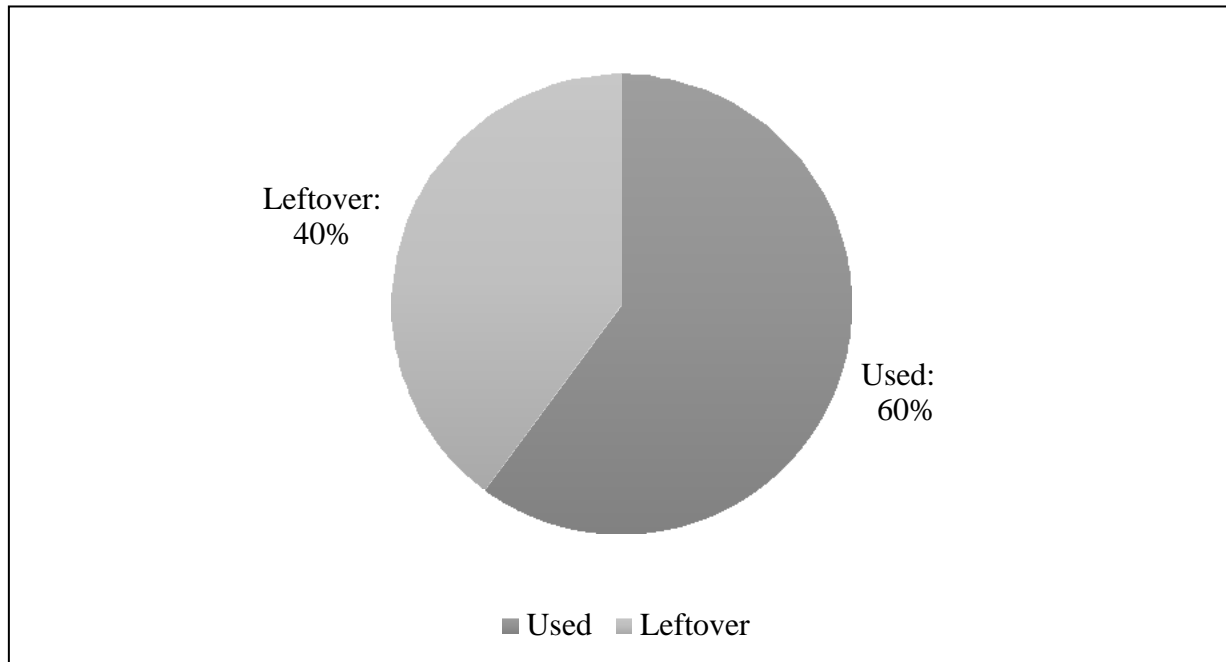


Figure 6. Scenario's Weekly Hours Version #2

67 hours (40%) of a week are left to complete school work, family, eating, and other tasks that are necessary within a day. However, this doesn't even take into account the other activities that are relevant to the lifestyles of these athletes. One can assume that many of these respondents are also in a school sport which means additional sports practices, games, and responsibilities, and more time consumed by sport. While this hourly commitment to athletics should not be considered as an automatic negative, the reality of incredible sacrifice should be emphasized. Further evidence of this inference can be visualized in Figure 4, which displays areas that the respondents liked least about amateur sport. The most popular response was time constraints, and the second highest being social reasoning (ex. Not being able to hang out with friends). With 51 percent of respondents spending at least 10 hours participating in amateur sport, the conclusion can be made that adolescents are having to "give up" an area of their life, whether it be social, school, sleep, or etc., for the sake of athletics.

Thirdly, when questioned about the favorite attributes of amateur sport (Figure 3), the most popular answer was centered around improved competition and how this level of

athleticism impacts the positive development of skill. This result reveals to the researcher two potential scenarios. Ultimately, this means that the athletes researched in this study are truly dedicated individuals who are striving to develop their abilities in whichever sport they are currently competing in. This expressed motivation provides reasoning for the pursuance of increased levels of participation, training, coaching, and competition. Additionally, this information brings to question the motivation behind this dedication to achieve improvement. While many of the athletes indicated that their main purpose for participation in amateur sport was not centered around the desire to earn a college scholarship, other results, including the responses to favorite aspects of amateur sport, indicate otherwise. Within the quantitative study the athletes were asked, “Do you believe you are good enough to play in college?”, the average response was 3.89 (a five being strongly agree). Additionally, the athletes were asked, “GPA requirements to participate in collegiate sports and earn scholarships motivate me to keep my grades up”, which earned an average response of four (a five being strongly agree). Between the combination of a desire to improve abilities and above average response rate to both of these collegiately-focused questions, one can pose that maybe amateur sport is being actually used to fulfill collegiate aspirations. That said, the proposition is neither negative or positive, but should be considered as significant and taken into consideration by parents, coaches, teachers, and athletes. Subsequently, these parties should analyze whether or not this underlying desire is impacting performance elsewhere and influencing their personal development.

Finally, all of the quantitative questions that hinted toward a negative opinion on amateur sport created significant outliers in comparison to the rest of the data (See Appendix E). Initially indicating that the athlete holds no negative opinion towards being involved in amateur sport. While these answers still hold validity and are not to be disregarded, an inconsistency is presented with what was found through the open-ended question, “*What do you like least about*

playing club/travel sports?” As data shows, answers varied between social, pressure, time, and travel, all of which were major concerns presented in found research. This finding hints at the possibility that adolescents are being negatively impacted by amateur sport, but the present positives are currently outweighing the effect of these factors.

Limitations of the Study

Following the completion of the study and analyzing of results, there were a variety of limitations that appeared and were significant for the proper interpretation of this material.

First, the statistics indicated that some of the questions may have been flawed in the sense that was being asked, may not have produced the intended response. These questions are also those that hinted toward a negative outcome or opinion (See Appendix E). Thus, to mark them as inconclusive seems drastic, and rather as an area of much needed editing and exploration. While the researcher believes that these questions were worded in a manner that aligned with intent and focus area, the overall emotion of the sentence was negatively portrayed, which may have scared the participant from marking an honest answer. Additionally, no physical study was done in response to these questions, making the responses the athlete’s own perception of his or-herself. While this does not indicate that the produced results are incorrect or invalid, human error does become a variable in this research project. As a result, the study lost valuable insight into areas that would have provided more depth to the current status of amateur sport and the development of adolescents.

Secondly, the entire study was completed remotely and distributed via the internet. Since participation in this study could not be supervised, the potential for parental involvement or input from a second-party may have occurred. This unwarranted peer pressure subsequently creates answers that lack authenticity and true insight on how some of the athletes feel about amateur sports.

Finally, the number of participants proved to be a significant limitation in this study. Due to allotted time and access to specific-populations, the ability to connect with a diverse and willing group was complicated and challenging. More participants provide greater variance and significance with findings, which creates the potential to draw stronger conclusions.

Considerations for Future Study

Researching how amateur sport impacts the development of adolescents could provide significant aid and insight for those who are crucial participants in this stage of life (i.e. parents, educators, coaches, and individual athlete), if the following items are considered. First, a more diverse and numerous sample group is needed. As already mentioned, for this study to provide conclusive evidence, research should be done from different angles and stages. Secondly, while quantitative information showed significance and would improve with more participants, increasing the amount of qualitative data through personal interviews would give the subject an opportunity to explain and provide the researcher with increased, authentic perspective. Finally, an addition of a comparison party to the researched population. All participants of this study were those of which participated in amateur sport, which limited the analysis and depth of the study. Were there to be another group (i.e. adolescents who do not participate in amateur sport), a comparative analysis could be completed in which there would be a stronger basis to support claims. Additionally, this specific study would benefit from an analysis on those who participated in amateur sport as an adolescent and proceeded to play college sports. This particular subset of information would increase insight on whether or not what professionals are claiming to occur through participation in amateur sport is actually correct. Just researching those who are currently participating, has stronger potential to create biases and limited perspective.

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Appendix A

Parental Consent Form for Club Sport Research Survey

The purpose of this Dordt College master thesis study is to determine how club/travel sport is impacting an athlete's development in the following categories: physically, socially, cognitively, and emotionally. During this study, your child will take an online survey that should not exceed 15-20 minutes.

Participation in this research is voluntary and completely up to you and your child to partake in. No harm, risk, or manipulation will be present in this study. If at any point in the survey, your child would like to stop answering questions and withdraw participation, he or she will have the freedom to do so. The answers provided by your child will be kept completely anonymous- he or she will not be asked to give his or her name on the survey. Furthermore, once collected data has been reviewed and utilized for my research purposes, all material will be securely disposed of.

If you have any questions about this study or would like more information, please feel free to contact Mycah Hulst. If you have any questions about the ethics of this study, feel free to contact Dr. Pat Kornelis (Pat.Kornelis@dordt.edu).

If you have decided to let your child participate in this study, please enter your email. (*This contact information will ONLY be used to send you a copy of the consent form) Then read the statement below with your child and both sign your initials.

Thank you so much for your time and participation!

Mycah Hulst

I understand the information on this page and am willing to allow my child to participate in this study. I understand that he or she can withdraw at any time and his/her results will not be used.

Printed name of child

Printed name of parent/guardian

Date

Signature of child

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

Appendix B

Introduction Letter

Hello!

My name is Mycah Hulst, and I am in my last year of the Dordt College (soon to be University J) Teacher Leadership master's program. I graduated in 2016 from Dordt with a Bachelor of Business Marketing and Administration, and through the combination of my unique degrees, I hope to one day become a professor.

Over these past 3 years while working on my Masters, I have also been a track and field coach at Dordt (click [link](#) for my coaching bio)! My background is defined by sports, which as you would imagine, has significantly impacted the person I am today. Athletics provides great opportunities and has the potential to bring a person to places they never would've imagined. That said, for this positive experience to continue, I firmly believe that academia and athletics need to get on the same page. Throughout my career, I struggled as a student athlete to make my schooling and participation in sports agree. It always seemed like one party (i.e. either the teacher or coach) was never willing to view the other side's perspective, making the ability to succeed a very stressful experience—and I'm sure, I'm not the only one who felt this way.



Thus, my hope with this research is to unify these two parties (i.e. academia and athletics) by providing insight into the future of athletics, club/travel sport. This unique format of competition has swept the nation and has become the main source for developing and improving the abilities of athletes. Furthermore, club/travel sport has created incredible opportunities for athletes to receive scholarships and an education. That said, while there are many positives, some are doubting the benefits and are questioning whether or not club/travel sport actually accomplishes all that has been assumed. Which leads me to the purpose of my study: How has club/travel sport impacted the development of adolescent athletes? With this research statement, I will determine the positive and negatives of club/travel sport and make connections to the root of any found issues, whether it be from sport, academia, or other reasonings.

In all, through the information gained from your participation, I intend to provide a compilation of solutions and valuable content for the nationwide benefit of teachers, coaches, and student athletes.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your help with this study! I am looking forward to analyzing the results and learning from all your knowledge and experience. If you would like to

see what I discovered through this research, send me an email (mychhlst@dordt.edu) and I will gladly share a copy with you!

many
blessings
- myeah

Appendix C

Club/Travel Sport Participation Survey

Derived from Wendling's ESPQ Survey and her study on Youth Athletes Sustained Involvement in Elite Sport. Slight modifications were made to the questions so that the content was applicable to the purpose of this study.

Section 1:

1. Gender (Drop-down)
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. I do not wish to answer
2. What is your age?
3. How old were you when you started competing in sports?
4. How old were you when you joined your first club/travel team?
5. How did you get involved in club/travel sports?
6. How many sports do you currently play?
7. What sports do you play?
8. How many club/travel sports teams or groups are you a part of?
9. What club/travel sports do you play?
10. On average, how many hours a week are dedicated to club/travel sports (this includes: travel time, games, practices, team bonding, etc.)?

Section 2: will be rated on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1. I believe that I am good enough to play in college sports in the future.
2. I play club/travel sports for the excitement and challenge of competition.
3. GPA requirements to participate in collegiate sport and earn scholarships, motivate me to keep my grades up.
4. I play club/travel sports to stay in shape and get exercise.
5. I play club/travel sports to hang out with my friends.
6. I think my club/travel coach is a great coach.
7. I enjoy the higher volume of training my club/travel team provides.
8. I play club/travel sport because my parents want me to.
9. I play club/travel sport to get noticed and praised by others.
10. The extra training of club/travel sports has improved my level of physical ability, endurance, & skill.

Section 3: will be rated on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

1. My club/travel coach values the contribution I make to the team.
2. The snacks at tournaments are healthy (i.e. fruits, veggies, protein bars, etc.).
3. My teammates value the contribution I make to the team.
4. How often do your parents mention the amount of time and money your sports participation requires of them?
5. My parent (s) are very involved in my club/travel team.

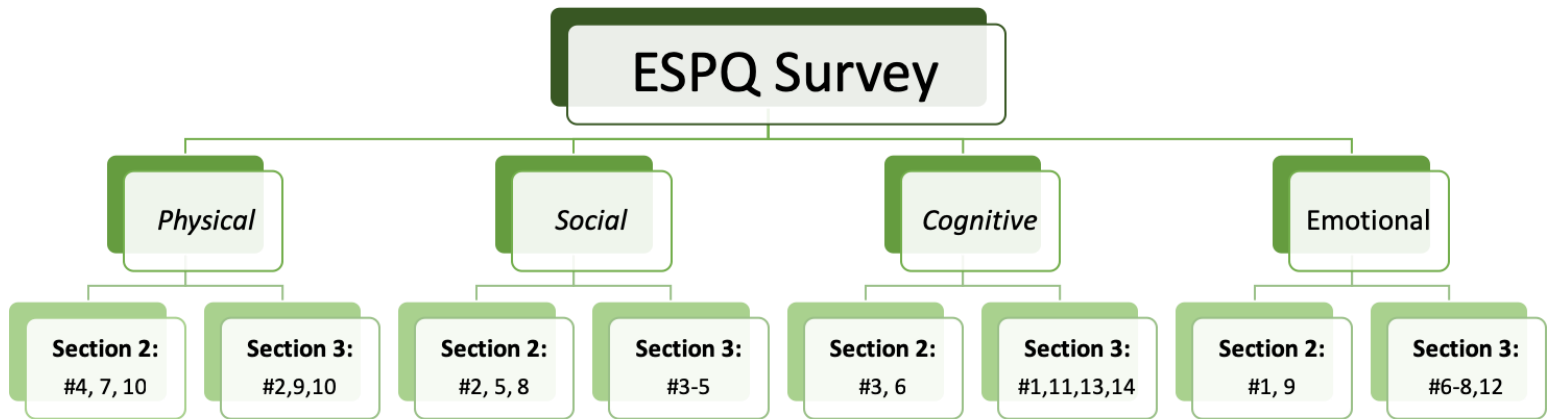
6. My mom or dad gets upset when I do not play as well as they would like me to in a game.
7. My mom or dad puts pressure on me to earn a college scholarship through club/travel sports.
8. My club coach's expectations for team participation and performance are fair.
9. Getting too many concussions is a concern of mine when playing sports.
10. The extra training of club/travel sports has caused overuse injuries (i.e. stress fracture, constant muscle soreness/tightness, etc.).
11. The amount of time it takes to play sports makes it difficult to complete my school work.
12. How much do you enjoy playing club/ travel sports?
13. How frequently do you think about quitting club/travel sports?
14. How frequently do you think about quitting all of the sports that you play?

Open-ended:

1. What do you like most about playing club/travel sport?
2. What do you like least about playing club/travel sport?

Appendix D

Survey's Connection to Research



Connection to Research

Physical:

- I play club/travel sports to stay in shape and get exercise.
 - o Participation in competitive sports kept adolescents physically active during eighth through twelfth grades, a period when physical activity significantly declines (Messner, 2016).
- The snacks at tournaments are healthy (i.e. fruits, veggies, protein bars, etc.).
 - o Youth sport athletes are likely to be exposed to excess calories in sport settings in the form of snacks, convenience and fast foods, and sugar- sweetened beverages. Frequently observed foods in these setting include: chocolate, candy, ice cream, salty snacks (e.g., chips), sugary beverages (including sports drinks), and entrees such as hot dogs and pizza, with few healthier alternatives. I play elite sport to increase my chances of earning a college scholarship (Messner, 2016).
- Getting too many concussions is a concern of mine when playing sports.
 - o Higher training volumes have consistently been shown to increase the risk of overuse injury in multiple sports.
 - While a concussion is not considered to be an overuse injury, the more concussions an individual experience the greater possibility severe brain damage will occur in the future. Thus, through high volume training and competition there is more exposure and opportunity for a concussion. That said, this question was inputted to discover whether or not this variable is a concern for the athlete.
- The extra training of club/travel sports has caused overuse injuries (i.e. stress fracture, constant muscle soreness/tightness, etc.).
 - o Such an excessive focus on early intensive training and competition at young ages rather than skill development can lead to overuse injury and burnout (DiFiori et al., 2014).
- I enjoy the higher volume of training my club/travel team provides.
 - o Sport specialization and, in general, amateur athletics, have pressured-cooked athletes into expending several hours a day pushing their bodies to the limit at a very young age, eventually depleting the body. Despite low odds that early specialization may lead to athletic scholarships or a professional career, many parents, coaches, teammates, and peers continue to pressure youth to specialize.
- The extra training of club/travel sports has improved my level of physical ability, endurance, & skill.
 - o Sport specialization and, in general, amateur athletics, have pressured-cooked athletes into expending several hours a day pushing their bodies to the limit at a very young age, eventually depleting the body. Despite low odds that early specialization may lead to athletic scholarships or a professional career, many parents, coaches, teammates, and peers continue to pressure youth to specialize.

Social:

- My parent (s) are very involved in my club/travel team.
 - o Within amateur sport, the ideal parent is a willing helper who offers support and encouragement to their child but who does not interfere with the coaches' work. (Kirk & Macphail, 2003). When a parent's level and intensity of involvement in their child's sport increases children tend to report feeling "trapped" and may

experience sport burnout (Kanters & Bocarro, n.d.). Researchers have found that parents are essential aids in effectively running an amateur sports program. However, outside of this “helper” role, the parent’s involvement should be minimal. When a parent takes on a leadership role in his or her child’s sports team, the experience can become overwhelming for the athlete and remove certain elements required for enjoyment (Kirk & Macphail, 2003).

- I play club/travel sports for the excitement and challenge of competition.
 - o Parents enroll their children in sport for a variety of reasons. Similar to other life domains (i.e., school, peer relationships, eating habits) the goal with amateur sport is to manipulate an environment that would allow their children to develop and adopt skills and competencies that support a healthy, self-directed, responsible and autonomous form of life (Hutchinson, 2003).
- I play club/travel sports to hang out with my friends.
 - o Parents enroll their children in sport for a variety of reasons. Similar to other life domains (i.e., school, peer relationships, eating habits) the goal with amateur sport is to manipulate an environment that would allow their children to develop and adopt skills and competencies that support a healthy, self-directed, responsible and autonomous form of life (Hutchinson, 2003).
- I play club/travel sport because my parents want me to.
 - o Parents enroll their children in sport for a variety of reasons. Similar to other life domains (i.e., school, peer relationships, eating habits) the goal with amateur sport is to manipulate an environment that would allow their children to develop and adopt skills and competencies that support a healthy, self-directed, responsible and autonomous form of life (Hutchinson, 2003).
- My teammates value the contribution I make to the team.
 - o Parents have also come to view sports participation, especially competitive sports, as a key component of their children's overall socialization (Kanters & Bocarro, n.d.).
- How often do your parents mention the amount of time and money your sports participation requires of them?
 - o Further, in seeking opportunity for one’s child, the parent and family also face notable amounts of stress due to the monetary requirements associated with participation. Active involvement in amateur sport comes at a cost and with sacrifice of other amenities (i.e. time, freedom, etc.).

Cognitive:

- My club/travel coach values the contribution I make to the team.
 - o Researchers have identified a significant supportive adult (i.e. a coach) in the child’s life or an emotionally supportive parent as buffers for vulnerable children to nurture self-determination (Malecki & Demaray, 2002).
- I think my club/travel coach is a great coach.
 - o Influential role-models are essential as an adolescent gets older. Other forms of social support (i.e. parents and teachers) decrease with grade level (middle school vs. high school students). In many cases, the coach is someone who steps in to fill that role.
- The amount of time it takes to play sports makes it difficult to complete my school work.
 - o At the school level, higher sports participation rates for girls and boys across US public high schools were associated with advanced placement enrollment rates.

Moreover, schools with higher sport participation rates for girls and boys reported significantly fewer suspensions during the school year and fewer crimes on school grounds (Messner, 2016).

- On the other hand, AAU and amateur sport require significant amounts of time. In pursuit of athletic success, adolescents and their parents may enlist the services of a personal sport coach and/or fitness instructor, and also register for camps and showcase events; that often occur on weekends and, sometimes, even week nights (DiFiori et al., 2014). As a result, sport responsibilities compete with academics, creating limited time to study and embrace childhood.
- GPA requirements to participate in collegiate sport and earn scholarships, motivate me to keep my grades up.
 - Recently, the “dumb jock” stereo-type has proven to be false (Messner, 2016). Rather, the athlete is an intellectual and academically-motivated individual, because of the requirements needed to get into elitist schools. All collegiate prospects have to take and pass core high school courses, maintain a certain grade point average, and take the required standardized tests, such as the ACT or SAT, to seriously be considered for scholarship or entrance (Paule-Koba, 2008).
- How frequently do you think about quitting club/travel sports?
 - Through the comparison and analyzation of data, researchers found that up to six hours of physical exercise produces a positive, academic outcome. Once the athlete exceeded this amount, the probability of getting the highest grade steadily decreased, while the lowest grade steadily increased (Heynen, 2006). Accordingly, data not only suggests that athletes who had early specialized training withdrew from their sport due to either an injury or a burnout from the sport, but that variations in cognitive development, as well as motor skills, should be considered when setting goals and expectations
- How frequently do you think about quitting all of the sports that you play?
 - An adolescent athlete can only handle so much before one is overwhelmed and cognitive stability/focus deters. Too much at a young age causes defining issues that impact the rest of a child’s life.

Emotional:

- I believe that I am good enough to play in college sports in the future.
 - Young athletes with intrinsic goal orientations such as skill development have been found to be more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors during competitive play than athletes with extrinsic goal orientations such as social status or rewards. Athletes with an ego orientation are characterized as concerned about being seen as successful, winning at all costs, and dominating over the opposing team (Arthur-Banning et al., 2018).
- I play club/travel sport to get noticed and praised by others.
 - Motives for participating in youth sport are triggered by humanity’s desire for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. According to self-determination theory (SDT) those characteristics contribute to intrinsic motivation and self-determined extrinsic motivation.
 - In fact, ego-oriented climates and evaluations of competency based on social comparisons, often more evident in specialized settings, are predictors of negative personal development in youth sports (Beedie, 2017).
- My mom or dad gets upset when I do not play as well as they would like me to in a game.

- Unfortunately, coaches and parents may lack knowledge about normal development and signs of readiness for certain tasks, physically and psychosocially. This can result in unrealistic expectations that cause children and adolescents to feel as if they are not making progress in their sport. Consequently, children may lose self-esteem and withdraw from the sport (DiFiori et al., 2014).
- My mom or dad puts pressure on me to earn a college scholarship through club/travel sports.
 - Unfortunately, coaches and parents may lack knowledge about normal development and signs of readiness for certain tasks, physically and psychosocially. This can result in unrealistic expectations that cause children and adolescents to feel as if they are not making progress in their sport. Consequently, children may lose self-esteem and withdraw from the sport (DiFiori et al., 2014).
- My club coach's expectations for team participation and performance are fair.
 - Unfortunately, coaches and parents may lack knowledge about normal development and signs of readiness for certain tasks, physically and psychosocially. This can result in unrealistic expectations that cause children and adolescents to feel as if they are not making progress in their sport. Consequently, children may lose self-esteem and withdraw from the sport (DiFiori et al., 2014).
- How much do you enjoy playing club/ travel sports?
 - Unfortunately, coaches and parents may lack knowledge about normal development and signs of readiness for certain tasks, physically and psychosocially. This can result in unrealistic expectations that cause children and adolescents to feel as if they are not making progress in their sport. Consequently, children may lose self-esteem and withdraw from the sport (DiFiori et al., 2014).

Questions removed from original ESPQ survey

Reasoning: To ensure that all conducted research was relevant to the purpose statement, the following questions were removed due to the lack of applicableness and to provide opportunity for study-specific questions to be added.

- My mom or dad give me money, gifts, or treats when I perform well in a game.
- I play elite sport to travel with my team.
- I play elite sport because I want to be a professional athlete when I get older.
- I play elite sport to be a part of a team.
- I play elite sport to have fun.
- I really like playing for my club coach.
- I believe that I am good enough to be a professional athlete when I am older.
- I play elite sport to win games and tournaments.
- I play elite sport to increase my chances of earning a college scholarship.

Questions added to ESPQ Survey

Reasoning: To increase the relatedness and category-uniformity of the ESPQ survey, the following questions were added to the designated category.

Physical:

- The snacks are tournaments are nurturing (i.e. fruits, veggies, protein bars, etc.).

- I enjoy the higher volume of training my club team provides.
- I'm scared the higher volume training will have long term effects on my body.

Social:

- My parent (s) are very involved in my travel team.

Cognitive:

- GPA requirements to participate in collegiate sport and earn a scholarship, motivate me to keep my grades up

Appendix E

Questions that created outliers due to negative connotation.

Variables being tested/studied				
Dependent Variable: Club sports impact				
Independent Variable: An adolescent's development (physical, cognitive, emotional, social)				
Null Hypothesis: The impact club sport has on the following areas (physical, social, cognitive, & emotional) of adolescent development is identical				
Alternative Hypothesis: The impact club sport has on the following areas (physical, social, cognitive, & emotional) of adolescent development differs				
# of Participants:				
35				
Measurment				
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagr	>	>	>	Strongly Agree/Always
Data (mean response from each question)				
	Physical	Social	Cognitive	Emotional
Question 1	3.8	3.9428571	4.4285714	3.8857143
Question 2	3.2571429	4.6571429	4.5714286	1.9142857
Question 3	1.7428571	3.4285714	1.7142857	2.6571429
Question 4	1.9428571	1.5714286	4	1.6285714
Question 5	4.4285714	4.2857143	1.3142857	4.4285714
Question 6	4.7428571	2.4571429	1.1428571	4.8285714

Key-	
Physical	
Question 1	I play club/travel sports to stay in shape and get exercise.
Question 2	The snacks at tournaments are healthy (i.e. fruits, veggies, protein bars, etc.).
Question 3	Getting too many concussions is a concern of mine when playing sports.
Question 4	The extra training of club/travel sports has caused overuse injuries (i.e. stress fracture, constant muscle soreness/tightness, etc.).
Question 5	I enjoy the higher volume of training my club/travel team provides.
Question 6	The extra training of club/travel sports has improved my level of physical ability, endurance, & skill.
Social	
Question 1	My parent (s) are very involved in my club/travel team.
Question 2	I play club/travel sports for the excitement and challenge of competition.
Question 3	I play club/travel sports to hang out with my friends.
Question 4	I play club/travel sport because my parents want me to.
Question 5	My teammates value the contribution I make to the team.
Question 6	How often do your parents mention the amount of time and money your sports participation requires of them?
Cognitive	
Question 1	My club/travel coach values the contribution I make to the team.
Question 2	I think my club/travel coach is a great coach.
Question 3	The amount of time it takes to play sports makes it difficult to complete my school work.
Question 4	GPA requirements to participate in collegiate sport and earn scholarships, motivate me to keep my grades up.
Question 5	How frequently do you think about quitting club/travel sports?
Question 6	How frequently do you think about quitting all of the sports that you play?
Emotional	
Question 1	I believe that I am good enough to play in college sports in the future.
Question 2	I play club/travel sport to get noticed and praised by others.
Question 3	My mom or dad gets upset when I do not play as well as they would like me to in a game.
Question 4	My mom or dad puts pressure on me to earn a college scholarship through club/travel sports.
Question 5	My club coach's expectations for team participation and performance are fair.
Question 6	How much do you enjoy playing club/ travel sports?