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PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
AND THE IMPACT ON ADOLESCENT OUTCOMES

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

KEVIN M. DUNNIGAN

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
AND THE IMPACT ON ADOLESCENT OUTCOMES

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze research linking extracurricular activity participation and impacts on adolescent outcomes. The research question was: What impact does participation in organized extracurricular activities have on the academic outcomes of American high school students? Modern secondary activities programs have become massive in breadth and cost, and studies showed that about 70% of students took part in an activity during high school. The research reviewed highlighted positive outcomes related to participation, including academic achievements, GPA and grades. There were positive impacts for students considered at-risk, and a notable negative outcome connecting athletic participation and alcohol use. Educators should understand activities are a positive extension of the classroom, and social aspects of activities can lead to negative effects.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I have been coaching for twelve years, and it was my coaching experience that ultimately led me to make a dramatic change into a teaching career. For years, the best part of my day was leaving work and driving to the field to spend time with my team. I initially thought it was my competitive drive and background playing sports that made me enjoy it so much. Over time, I began to realize that I enjoyed helping young men develop through adolescence, teaching them important personal skills that they could apply elsewhere in life, and showing them how to work toward goals. I had parents that would approach me and tell me I should consider teaching. No matter how stressed or upset I was leaving my day job, I usually left my practices with a smile and a full heart. It took me a while to realize what was right in front of me, but I finally decided to take a risk and pursue a teaching career.

This connection between adolescents, their education, and extracurricular activities has increasingly interested me as I grow in my teaching career. During my first high school teaching position, I was also coaching a freshmen soccer team in the fall. I quickly found that I was building relationships with the players, which then created a positive network for the freshmen students as they navigated their first semester of high school. The soccer aspects of the role were not nearly as important as character development and peer interactions. I since have moved to a different role in a much more diverse community, where about 40% of the student population is either Hispanic or African American. I again took a position as a freshmen team soccer coach, and this dramatically impacted my ability to connect with the diverse student population. I was able to build trust amongst both the Hispanic and African American student-athletes, which gave me a positive avenue to reach other students from those communities. Behavior issues have come up during the school day, and I have been able to step in and assist the administration in

dealing with some of their unique challenges because I have a strong bond with some of the student-athletes.

All of the experiences described above have led me to further investigate the impact of extracurricular activities on adolescent outcomes. I have seen many examples of my influences, but I wanted to dive deeper into the subject and look at it through an academic lens. The various research articles provide insight into the topic over the past few decades and can help me build on my ability to create relationships with students that will foster positive outcomes inside and outside of the classroom.

Background

Extracurricular activity participation has become an integral aspect of adolescence both within and outside of the educational setting. These activities are capable of instilling positive developmental skills in participants that can help them succeed academically, create connections with peers and adults, and further their interpersonal abilities. Modern participation rates and activity offerings continue to rise, and students are increasingly looking for ways to add to their college applications. Between their freshman and senior years of high school, 48 percent of male students and 65 percent of female students participated in more than one activity (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Additional studies found that roughly 70 percent of students take part in activities including clubs, music, plays, and student government, while about 50 percent play in school-sponsored athletics (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Hoffman, 2006).

In regards to the different types of activity participation, Dufur (1999) noted that Title IX led to a dramatic climb to 36 percent in female athletic participation, and that male participation was 50 percent. Title IX was an Educational Amendment that was enacted in 1972. The federal law forbids any discrimination on the basis of sex within any education program or activity that

is federally funded. Females had a higher likelihood of being involved in organizations and school clubs. About 30 percent of females and 18 percent of males were involved in music or performing arts activities. Female participation was 17 percent for academic clubs, where male participation was only 12 percent (Eccles et al., 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). These numbers demonstrate the notable levels of involvement that adolescents experienced, and it is understandable that so much research has been devoted to understanding its impact.

History

The curiosity surrounding extracurricular activities and their association with adolescent outcomes extends back to the late 1800s. During that time, it was widely believed that the educational setting was intended purely for the sake of academics and acquiring knowledge. Other activities were not seen as valuable in the pursuit of knowledge and were not promoted the same way they are today. Some secret fraternities and sororities existed, and the few organized pursuits, such as Boy Scouts, were not directly attached to the school system. It was not that policymakers and educators viewed activities as detrimental to academic performance, but that they did not see a correlation between the two and therefore considered activities simply recreational (Gerber, 1996).

The development of the overall student approach started to take shape in the early 1900s, and the thinking towards extracurricular activities shifted. The idea was that schools could provide opportunities for student growth in a variety of ways and it would ultimately lead to overall development, including academic success. By the 1920s, educators began to promote participation in activities to form more opportunities beyond the classroom. Thus began an era

where the thinking around extracurricular activities swung in favor of more participation (Gerber, 1996).

Two different stances on extracurricular activity participation have formulated over the decades. Coleman (1961) called attention to some of the developing dynamics in schools, and it was his view that far too much emphasis was being placed on students who excelled in activities that garnered social currency. Participation in athletics, for example, drew positive attention from teachers and administrators. In Coleman's view, this kind of attention should have been directed towards academic achievements instead. Status earned through popularity, dating, and activity participation had worked its way into the fabric of schools nationwide. More students began to feel an obligation to partake to belong or fit in (Gerber, 1996).

A zero-sum argument also started taking shape to criticize activity participation. The thinking was that time spent engaging in activities took time away from studies and homework (Camp, 1990). An important moment was the release of the A Nation at Risk report from the U.S. Department of Education (1983). This report called attention to a nationwide decline in academic performance. The report also made recommendations to partially or fully eliminate programs in schools that were not academic-focused. From this, many states around the country have since enacted some version of what is commonly known as a No Pass/No Play policy, where students must achieve a certain level of academic performance before they can participate in activities.

Supporters of extracurricular activities view the educational process and the student through a wider lens. They believe that activities related to school can help develop the overall adolescent. Much of the modern support for activity participation stems from Holland and Andre's (1987) assessment of the connection between participation and self-concept, self-

esteem, delinquency, responsibility, self-confidence, and educational aspirations (Gerber, 1996). The idea is that the variety of personal and social skills attained through activities can, at the very least, compliment educational performance.

The role that extracurricular activities play in the modern educational setting cannot be ignored. More options become available each year, costs are increasing dramatically for more competitive programs, the time commitment for some activities are high, and more secondary students are looking for ways to make their college applications more attractive. This is just a handful of examples of different aspects that are evolving in modern activities. The problem is that society is still trying to understand if the time, money, and commitment to these activities are beneficial to the overall adolescent growth and development.

The purpose of this literature review is to look at leading research in the area of activity participation and the effects on educational achievement in American secondary schools. The guiding question is what impact does participation in organized extracurricular activities have on the academic outcomes of American high school students?

Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of important terminology that are related to the guiding question.

At-risk student: Students who face circumstances that could jeopardize their ability to complete school, such as homelessness, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, serious health issues, or domestic violence. Academically, it may refer to learning disabilities, low test scores, disciplinary problems, grade retentions, or other learning-related factors that could adversely affect the educational performance and attainment of some students (Ghongkedze, 2018, p. 1).

Extracurricular: Academic or non-academic activities that are conducted under the auspices of the school but occur outside of normal classroom time and are not part of the curriculum. Additionally, extracurricular activities do not involve a grade or academic credit and participation is optional on the part of the student (Bartkus et al., 2012, p. 698).

Extramural: Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines extramural as, "functioning outside or beyond the walls, boundaries, or precincts of an organized unit" (Definition section, para. 1). This would include activities that take place beyond or off the school's campus.

Interscholastic: Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines interscholastic as, "existing or carried on between schools" (Definition section, para. 1). These activities would feature competitions or meets with or against other schools.

Intramural: Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines intramural as, "competed only within the student body" (Definition section, para. 1b). This means the students within a school would only compete with each other or against students from the same school.

Prosocial activities: Barber et al. (2001) describe prosocial activities as, "church attendance and/or participation in volunteer and community-service-type activities" (p. 433). Ideals may vary, which makes this term hard to define, but it can be used to classify certain activities that do not fit with other types of activities.

Structured or organized extracurricular activities: Activities that emphasize skill-building, in which the skill attained increases in complexity under the guidance of competent non-parental adults. Such activities usually involve youth with a wide competency range for that skill, and are voluntary in order to facilitate and maintain investment and intrinsic enjoyment in the activity over time (Gilman, Meyers, & Perez, 2004, p. 32).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to examine research related to activity participation and the effects on educational performance, and the guiding question is: What impact does participation in organized extracurricular activities have on the academic outcomes of American high school students? To locate the literature used in this thesis, searches of Academic Search Premier, Educator's Reference Complete, ERIC (EBSCOhost), Expanded Academic ASAP, and ProQuest Education Journals were conducted for articles and journals from 1995 to 2019. The results were focused on peer-reviewed journals, and by using keywords such as “extracurricular activities,” “extracurricular activity participation,” “academic outcomes,” “activity participation,” “achievement,” and “athletic participation.”

This chapter is structured as a review of literature related to extracurricular activity participation. The first portion will focus on the theoretical framework through which this topic is often viewed. The following section reviews participation in organized extracurricular activities, which includes data and types or levels of participation. The next sections are organized to address adolescent outcomes, at-risk outcomes, and post-secondary outcomes of extracurricular activities.

Theoretical Framework

A multitude of studies and articles directly addressed or contributed to the formulation of three commonly referred to theoretical frameworks. These frameworks were used to investigate the impacts that extracurricular activities had on student outcomes. Broh (2002) provided an overview of these three frameworks in his study that linked extracurricular programming to academic achievement. In this study, questionnaires were distributed to 24,599 eighth graders from 1,052 public, private and parochial schools across the U.S. as part of the larger National

Education Longitudinal Study (NELS). The research, which began in 1988, went further with follow-ups conducted two and four years after the base year (10th and 12th grade respectively).

The first, and most frequently discussed, was referred to as the Developmental Model. Broh (2002) explained that participation in sports helped teach students a variety of skills that contributed to success academically, such as determination, work ethic, and respect for authority. The idea was that extracurricular activities provided a unique setting where students developed many different attributes that, in turn, built on their ability to perform in the classroom. In fact, a handful of studies found that participation in extracurricular activities developed many of these personality and social characteristics including self-esteem, locus of control, educational aspirations, and self-confidence (Fejgin, 1994; Holland & Andre, 1987; Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). Building character was an additional important aspect of sports participation, which then led to positive academic outcomes (Broh, 2002).

Another aspect of extracurricular activity participation was the increased awareness or understanding of how to successfully navigate the educational attainment process, which means the necessary steps to reach the next secondary or post-secondary level of education (Mahoney et al., 2003). This also included alignment with school values and rules, and the overall societal structure that is so achievement-oriented (Broh, 2002; Fejgin, 1994; Mahoney et al., 2003; Marsh, 1992).

Not all extracurricular activities were equal in this effort. Some activities had higher budgets, more school support, or more community attention. To achieve the positive outcomes discussed, it was important that the activity provided structure had adequate adult supervision and had a certain level of parental involvement (Broh, 2002). This was not always the case when,

for example, the activity was not highly supported by the school or community. Team activity participation commonly adhered to these guidelines, and thus generally provided a more fruitful experience for those participants (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

With the Developmental Model, there is still some debate over the causal order and self-selection into extracurricular activities. There is a lack of research proving whether students that had a strong personality and social characteristics chose to participate in activities, or if activity participation played a large role in the acquisition of these characteristics (Holland & Andre, 1987; Videon, 2002). This presented a challenge in trying to present a clear, convincing argument in favor of the Developmental Model.

The Social Capital Model is viewed as another effective lens to assess extracurricular activity participation and its effects on student outcomes (Broh, 2002). According to Broh, social capital was something that students could gain through being a part of a social group or organization connected to the school. These social networks could have included friends or peer groups, teachers, coaches, other adults, and parents. By connecting students to the school through these communication lines, it could have benefited them in a variety of ways.

Gilman et al. (2004) explained that when students participated in structured extracurricular activities that had positive social networks and capable adults, positive student outcomes occurred such as self-esteem, social competence, school engagement, and increased academic performance. Extracurricular activity participation also bolstered a student's commitment to their school and that school's value system, which could have indirectly improved academic success (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999; Marsh, 1992). Eccles and Barber (1999) also found that sports participation predicted increases in a student's attachment to their school.

Sports participation helped strengthen social ties between students and their peers, between students and their parents as it pertained to school, between parents and the school, and between parents in general. These social connections strengthened the dissemination and processing of information related to school and academic outcomes. Parents could share tips, advice and other information with other parents that they knew and trusted while they attended activities in which their son or daughter participated. Also, through contact with coaches, school staff and administration, activities increased the amount of communication that parents had with school staff (Broh, 2002).

The connections between activity participation and academic outcomes that were created via social capital could encounter challenges if a student's cultural resources at home were not positive (Eitle & Eitle, 2002). Parents may have chosen not to utilize the available various networking opportunities, hence limiting their impact. Fejgin (1994) found that parents' educational level was the strongest determinant of athletic participation in school, which led to the notion that the parents' attitudes or socioeconomic situation could impact participation. Videon (2002) found similar results in that the greater a student's parents' educational attainment was, the greater the likelihood the student would participate in sports.

Cultural differences may have also existed, and some parents might not have seen the same value in connecting with other parents or school staff. Additionally, if the quality of the peer network that was formed was lacking, or if the adults involved were not good role models, further challenges could have arisen in creating a positive social network (Gilman et al., 2004). Again, similar to the Developmental Model, it was important that the activity had structure, qualified adult involvement, and parental participation for it to have benefited student outcomes (Broh, 2002).

The third, and less discussed, theoretical framework was the Leading Crowd Hypothesis. This hypothesis offered that students who participated in activities could raise their status among peers, thus aiding their efforts to be a part of a leading crowd (Broh, 2002). The leading crowd could have meant a variety of things such as gifted athletes, high academic achievers, talented musicians, or other groups that were seen in a positive light by school staff, coaches, or other adults. For female students, the best chance to become popular in eyes of male students was to be a member of a leading group, and both sexes agreed that to gain popularity with girls, it was expected that boys were either strong athletes or members of a leading group (Goldberg & Chandler, 1992).

Broh explained that participating in sports helped increase a student's number of academically oriented friends. Peer groups had a positive impact on student outcomes and academics but were found to be weaker than other influences (Broh, 2002). The Developmental Model and the Social Capital Model had more support and had stronger ties to positive student outcomes throughout the research.

Participation in Organized Extracurricular Activities

Participation in extracurricular activities covered a large number of different activities and it is important to understand how different variables affected participation. Some of the studies looked at the differences between extramural and intramural activities, or the more competitive interscholastic activities. Marsh (1992) looked at the differences between the types of activities offered by different schools, which included sports, cheerleading, drama or debate, music, dance or chorus, hobby clubs, school subject clubs, vocational clubs, community youth clubs, publications, student government, church activities, service clubs, and honor societies. This provided a pretty inclusive list considering all of the different types of extracurricular

activities available to students and the study will be addressed in depth later in this research. Still, other studies found different ways to break up the different types of activities offered. With each study using a different approach, results varied across the different activities, but there was plenty of overlap in the findings.

Gerber (1996) looked at participation in extracurricular activities and their impact on academic achievement. The study assessed data from 10,944 students that were used from the sample, which was pulled from the larger 1988 NELS study. In this study, the students were given group-administered questionnaires and cognitive achievement tests in math, reading, and science were used. Part of the data collected asked students to choose from a list of 31 different types of activities. Gerber found that the largest participation rates for both African American and white students were sports. Musical and artistic pursuits, along with science fair activities, were also popular. Religious organizations were another activity favored by both groups.

Mahoney et al. (2003) noted that extracurricular activity participation in both early and middle adolescence was significant in their study. Among the data collected, during the early adolescent seventh and eighth grades, 24% of the students had one year of extracurricular activity participation, and 29% had two years of participation. During grades nine and ten, students with one year of activity participation remained 24%, but those with two years of participation climbed to 47%.

Another aspect of participation that was addressed was the difference between individual activity participation compared with team participation. Marsh and Kleitman (2003) looked at various dimensions of individual versus team participation in their study that examined athletic participation effects on growth and change during high school. This study also pulled data from the national study NELS but used 4,250 students starting in the base year 1988. Follow-ups were

conducted two, four, and six years after the base year. The nature of the study examined the total number of activities that students participated in, and which types of activities (e.g. intramural, extramural, individual, or team).

Among their findings, Marsh and Kleitman (2003) discovered that students from the smaller school sizes and rural schools participated in a larger number of total, extramural, and team athletic activities than students from urban and larger schools. Students from private schools participated more in intramural and less in individual sports compared to students from public schools. The different outcomes in regards to individual and team participation will be further discussed later in the adolescent outcomes section of this review.

Participation differences between boys and girls were often considered in many of the studies. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) conducted a study looking at the relationship between involvement in school-based extracurricular activities and early school dropout, but in doing so, reported some participation numbers for boys and girls. A large number of students participated in only one or no activities each year from 1982 to 1984, and an average of 59% of girls and 68% of boys participated in one or no school activities each year. Extracurricular activity participation for this group increased significantly in high school. During ninth through twelfth grade, 48% of boys and 65% of girls participated in more than one activity. Troutman and Dufur (2007) found that white females were most likely to participate in sports, with the percentage of white participants surpassing nonparticipants by 11%. Female athletes were more likely to come from families with a higher socioeconomic status (SES), live with both parents, and attend private schools and schools in suburban or rural neighborhoods.

Some studies attempted to tackle the causal relationship between personal characteristics and activity participation. This created several challenges, but if successful, could have done a

great deal in supporting the argument that extracurricular activities could stimulate positive student outcomes. Videon (2002) examined how various individual and contextual characteristics were related to the likelihood of interscholastic athletic participation. She used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, which pulled from a database of high schools. The data was collected from September 1994 through April of 1995 and included 13,869 participants. Some of the questions that guided her research included whether boys were more likely to participate in interscholastic athletics than girls, if sports participation was associated with better academic outcomes for both boys and girls, and whether a portion of the association between sports participation and better academic outcomes were due to selection factors, with more capable adolescents participating in sports.

As students grew older, their participation rate decreased, where each grade had an average of 8% lower likelihood of activity participation. In looking at different regions of the country, adolescents living in the West, Midwest, and Northeast were more likely to participate in sports. Private school students were almost twice as likely to participate than were students from public schools. School size also played a role in the likelihood that students would participate in activities. If students attended a school where the enrollment was greater than 1,000, they were 17% less likely to participate than students that attended schools with an enrollment between 401 and 1,000 students. Whether or not the school was located in a rural or suburban setting had an impact on activity participation as well. Students that attended schools in rural districts were 33% more likely to participate in sports than those students that lived in suburban school districts (Videon, 2002).

Adolescent Outcomes of Extracurricular Activities

One of the overarching themes in this research was the relationship between

extracurricular activity participation and the many different adolescent outcomes. The most common were related to academics and whether or not activity involvement benefited achievement, grades, and GPA. The research also reviews the connection between adolescent outcomes and participation level, participation type, and gender. With adolescent sports and activities so closely tied to the school system, and large portions of school budgets allocated to activities, it is important to understand how these activities impact student success.

Academic Achievement

Marsh (1992) looked at how extracurricular activity participation impacted student development during the last two years of high school. Marsh researched the full scope of participation in a range of student outcomes, whether the benefits faded at a certain level or amount of participation, and if different personal characteristics interacted differently with participation. His study used data from the sophomore cohort of the High School and Beyond (HSB) study, and looked more specifically at data collected after the two years follow up when the group was seniors in high school. There were 14,825 in the original sample, and that number was reduced to 4,422 for this study.

Marsh (1992) found that a student's total extracurricular activity participation was positively linked to many outcomes, including GPA and educational aspirations during their sophomore year of high school. Participation during the last two years of high school was more impactful than participation during the sophomore year. At the end of high school, total participation was associated with many academic outcomes such as academic self-concept, taking advanced courses, time spent on homework, postsecondary educational aspirations, GPA, absenteeism, senior-year educational aspirations, being in the academic track, and senior occupational aspirations. He also found that participation could help strengthen a student's

dedication to their school. This increased dedication or added ties to the school could lead to greater student success. Marsh asserted that activity participation usually aided academic outcomes versus taking away from them.

There were many positive findings relating extracurricular participation with academic outcomes. Fredericks and Eccles (2006) found that all groups of students gained from extracurricular participation, and that participation was a strong predictor of academic adjustment during high school. Barron, Ewing, and Waddell (2000) explained that participation in athletics increased productivity. Additional studies showed results that extracurricular activity participation had both short-term and long-term benefits, and that participation did not detract from academic outcomes (Barber et al., 2001; Lipscomb, 2007; Stegman, 2000). According to Videon (2002), those that participated in sports had modestly better outcomes than non-participants, but that participation had positive impacts on all of the outcomes studied. She also explained that school attendance, curriculum tracking, and academic expectations were strongly associated with sports participation.

Marsh and Kleitman (2003) explained that the positive effects of athletic participation applied to most of the academic and non-academic outcomes, across the full scope of activities offered, and across the variety of different groups of students. All five of the participation measures studied were linked to higher grades, higher educational aspirations, and more time spent on homework (except for team activities). In another study that looked at sports participation, Broh (2002) noted that participation had educational benefits for students and that sports involvement in a student's sophomore and senior year increased their time spent on homework. Broh also added that sports participation strengthened student success in the classroom and on standardized math tests.

Another study assessed the relationships between five different types of after-school activities and academic achievement. Cooper et al. (1999) looked at 424 units of data from three different types of high schools. The first school was from a large metropolitan public school district in Tennessee, the second was a suburban school near the metro area school, and the third was a rural school in Tennessee.

After-school activities contributed to the prediction of achievement even after the student's gender, grade level, ethnicity, free-lunch eligibility, and levels of adult supervision after school were all statistically controlled (Cooper et al., 1999). Of the five different after-school activities addressed, those that were linked to achievement and those that helped create a connection with the school both helped influence academic achievement. After-school activities boosted the prediction of successful test scores by 7%. Extracurricular activity participation was positively linked to residualized grades and predicted grades by 11%. Some problems with the study include the fact that 90% of the respondents were white when only 64% of the student bodies at the three schools included were white, and 7% of the participants were eligible for free lunch compared to 40% across the three schools (Cooper et al., 1999).

GPA

Among the different academic outcomes, GPA was directly addressed by a handful of the articles. Hoffman (2006) stated that, for both male and female students, participation in both athletic and nonathletic extracurricular activities was associated with a higher GPA. Eccles and Barber (1999) explained that students that participated in all five of the different types of activities had better than anticipated high school GPAs. Eccles and Barber also noted that high school activity participation creates a better environment for academic success.

In a study that addressed whether participation in sports teams and physical activity impacted academic outcomes, Fox, Barr-Anderson, Neumark-Sztainer, and Wall (2010) used data from the Project Eat survey which assessed eating behavior, physical activity, weight-related issues, and other aspects of adolescent health. The study included 4,746 middle school and high school students from 31 schools in the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area of Minnesota. Some of the research questions took into consideration the relationship between participation in sports and academic outcomes across a diverse population while controlling for socioeconomic variables, the relationship between the recommended amount of activity and student success, and how to team participation and physical activity individually related to academic outcomes.

Among high school boys, those that participated in no sports had a mean GPA of 2.50. High school boys who participated in one sport had a mean GPA of 2.69, boys that participated in two sports had a mean GPA of 2.79, and for three sports, the mean GPA was 2.94. This is a pretty strong argument for increased participation and its relationship with academic success. For high school girls who did not participate in any sports activities, the mean GPA was 2.73. High school girls that participated in one activity had a mean GPA of 2.85, girls that participated in two sports had a mean GPA of 3.06, and the girls that participated in three sports had a mean GPA of 3.20. In looking at middle school students, this trend linking the level of sports team participation to GPA was not as notable. Looking at physical activity more generally, there was a significant linear association between performing more hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity and a higher mean GPA for both genders and school groups (Fox et al., 2010).

Grades

Grades were another specific aspect of academic outcomes that came up often throughout the research. Zaugg (1998) explained that absenteeism was much less of an issue for the athlete group compared to the non-athlete group in his study. Regarding midterm grades, there was not a notable difference between the athlete group and non-athlete group, other than in the sciences where the athletes scored much higher grades. Additionally, there was not a major difference between final grades for the athlete and non-athlete groups, except for the sciences and a group of classes categorized as “all other courses combined” (Zaugg, 1998, p. 69).

Camp (1990) stated that instead of taking away from student success, participating in activities positively affected grades. Camp went on to conclude that there was some interaction between activity participation and achievement and that some of the data supported a causal relationship. Marsh (2003) claimed that there are positive effects for participation as it related to school grades. Another study found that participation in sports helped boost grades through increased social capital (Broh, 2002). Lipscomb (2007) found a 2% increase in math and science assessments that was related to participation in athletics.

Participation Level

The level or amount of extracurricular activity participation was another key component when looking at adolescent outcomes. This was especially important when considering the zero-sum concept because, theoretically, the more time spent participating in extracurricular activities is time that could have been spent on homework or studying. Gerber (1996) found that higher amounts of participation in extracurricular activities were related to student success in both the African American and white racial groups, and even more so for the white participants. For both of the racial groups studied, academic achievement was very much related to the level of participation.

Mahoney and Cairns (1997) found that middle school participation was noticeably lower than high school participation. During middle school, 8% of male students and 13% of females participated in more than one activity, but those numbers jumped significantly between the ninth and twelve grade years. Fejgin (1994) noted that the students who were more involved in sports during high school had positive academic outcomes including better grades, higher educational aspirations, and fewer discipline problems. During late adolescence, consistent participation in activities was related to high educational aspirations (Mahoney et al., 2003).

Barron et al. (2000) discovered that students who were extremely involved in sports activities earned better high school percentile class ranks. For the students whose sports activity involvement was intensive, the positive link between participation and educational attainment was stronger. Years after high school, wages were higher for male students that participated in high school athletics, and this impact on wages grew stronger as the intensity of athletic participation increased (Barron et al., 2000). Fredricks and Eccles (2006) found that the extent of participation in activities was related to signs of adjustment in both adolescents and young adults. Cooper et al. (1999) explained that extracurricular activity participation could have negative impacts on student outcomes if the identification with the activity began to outweigh the overall identity with the school values, or if the activity's time commitment became so much that it did not leave time for academic-related activities such as homework.

Stegman (2000) conducted a study that assessed if athletics and academics were compatible and there were some key takeaways related to participation intensity. Across the four different groups that were involved, the group with higher participation had better outcomes than the group with lower participation in the three different measures of student success. The female students with higher participation had much better academic success than female students with

lower participation. The male students with higher participation also had better academic outcomes than those with lower participation, but the results were not as statistically significant. In looking at both the males and females that were placed in the high participation group, the female students had much higher academic scores. One of the drawbacks of the study was that it was fairly small, only distributed to 93 juniors and 96 seniors at a suburban high school in Omaha, Nebraska.

Marsh (1992) used total extracurricular activity participation to measure the amount of involvement. One finding was that the overall amount of participation was positively related to a host of academic outcomes including academic self-concept, taking advanced courses, time spent on homework, postsecondary educational aspirations, GPA, absenteeism, senior-year educational aspirations, being in the academic track, and senior occupational aspirations. A higher amount of total activity participation was connected with increased gains for all the studied outcomes. The effects of total participation that were statistically notable were generally small but steadily positive. Total participation, across all of the different total participation results, contributed to more benefits for the variety of academic outcomes.

Participation Type

There are many different types of extracurricular activity participation, and a lot of the articles evaluated how the different activities affected adolescent outcomes. Sports participation and academic performance were the most commonly reviewed. McNeal (1995) found that students that participated in either fine arts activities or academic organizations were both less likely to drop out of high school compared to other students. Lipscomb (2007) concluded that participation in clubs was connected to a one percent boost in math scores and that students that

participated in both clubs and sports both enjoyed a 5% increase in their expectations of attaining a bachelor's degree.

Eitle and Eitle (2002) conducted a study that assessed the various family components and means, which lead to participation in high school sports and the related influence on student outcomes. One of the goals of their research was to first understand if a connection existed between different socioeconomic factors or academic resources at home, and whether or not male adolescents will compete in certain sports. Then after adjusting for the socioeconomic factors and academic resources, they looked at whether or not the participation in particular sports produced positive or negative academic outcomes. Eitle and Eitle also looked at whether or not race was an additional factor. Data from the national 1988 NELS longitudinal study was used. The first wave of students was in eighth grade in 1988, and they were randomly selected from a thousand middle schools nationwide. During the first wave, 4,930 student samples were collected. In the next wave, 4,951 samples were collected in 1990 when the students were in tenth grade.

Among some of the findings, Eitle and Eitle (2002) revealed that basketball and football participation was negatively linked to standardized achievement scores. Further, students that participated in either basketball or football did not have any benefits or costs related to their grades. Playing sports other than basketball and football led to higher grades for white students, but worse grades for black students. Overall, the research uncovered that the connection between athletic participation and academics relied on the different socioeconomic resources that each student came to school with, in addition to which sport they played. This connection between athletic participation and student success was more complicated than earlier studies suggest, and

future studies should look deeper into the different reasons behind sports participation (Eitle & Eitle).

Marsh and Kleitman (2003) looked at participation in extramural versus intramural, and individual or team sports, as they related to academic performance. They reported a wealth of results. One takeaway was that those who were involved in more sports had better grades, higher educational aspirations, spent more time on homework, and applied to more universities. More specifically, the students that participated in extramural activities saw positive results in the form of grades, amount of time spent on homework, educational aspirations in Grade 12 and postsecondary, and the number of universities to which they applied.

Marsh & Kleitman (2003) went further and studied the outcomes for different combinations of the four types of participation studied. Intramural and individual sports participation led to more time on homework and higher postsecondary educational aspirations. Extramural and team sports participation equated to the students having higher grades, strong educational aspirations, more time spent on homework, and more universities to which they applied. The athletes participating in extramural and individual sports had higher educational aspirations while in Grade 12, and applied to more universities. The fourth combination, intramural and team sports, only led to the participants having high educational aspirations while in high school.

There were some additional key findings. Team sports participation had a higher number of benefits compared to individual sport participation. Extramural sports participation was much more beneficial than intramural participation. Athletic participation, especially in extramural sports, and to a lesser extent team sports, complemented rather than competed with traditional curricular goals to enhance academic and nonacademic outcomes. Team sports participation had

more benefits in a few areas including parental and educational aspirations in Grade 12, and the intensity and duration of university enrollment. A negative outcome associated with team athletic participation was lower standardized test scores. One negative outcome for individual sports participation was getting into trouble. Additionally, intramural and individual sports participation led to those students being more likely to be in trouble at school during their senior year (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

Fredricks and Eccles (2006) focused on the association between three different types of activity participation and evidence of academic and psychological progress at the beginning and two years later among a diverse group of African American and European American adolescents. The research questions included whether activity participation would link to positive adolescent adjustment, if the adjustment happening during participation was more prominent than the adjustments two years later, the size of the effects, whether the effects were stronger for low-income students, and whether a variety of activities would have had positive outcomes. The data was collected from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS), a community-based longitudinal study of adolescents and their families in multiple contexts. An interesting aspect of the sample is that the data was from a county with low-income communities, high-risk urban neighborhoods; middle-class suburban neighborhoods, and rural, farm-based communities.

Academic adjustment during their junior year of high school was forecasted for students that participated in either club activities or athletic activities. Participation in both clubs and athletics also predicted educational status two years later. Students that participated in either prosocial activities or clubs were likely to engage in civic activities two years after participation. Lower alcohol use and marijuana use were predicted for students that were involved in either

clubs or athletics (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Hoffman (2006) found that nonathletic activities were the best protective against alcohol use amongst all of the different extracurricular activities.

Eccles and Barber (1999) conducted a study examining the gains and setbacks linked to participation in five different types of activities. These types included prosocial activities, team sports, school involvement, performing arts, and academic clubs. The study reviewed the involvement and participation tendencies of adolescents during the time of the research. The study also looked at short and long-term behaviors and engagement as they related to activity participation. The data was collected using the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions (MSALT), which began in 1983. The initial group included sixth graders from ten school districts in Southeastern Michigan, which resulted in 1,259 students used for the sample.

Students that took part in all of the five types of activities experienced stronger than anticipated GPAs during high school. The students that competed on sports teams saw a higher GPA and increased the likelihood of enrolling in college full-time, yet the male athletes were more prone to riskier behaviors like drinking alcohol. Students that participated in school-related clubs or organizations experienced positive academic trajectories, but they were also equally as likely as nonparticipants to consume alcohol and they also demonstrated a trend toward growing rates of skipping school while attending high school. Also, school club or organization participants did have higher GPAs. Female prosocial activity participants and male performing arts members both had lower levels of alcohol and drug use in high school. Students that participated in prosocial activities had a higher number of friends who were academically invested, and a smaller number of friends that engaged in riskier behavior (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Broh (2002) also looked at a variety of different types of activity participation and their impact on adolescent outcomes. One finding was that participants in music had higher math and English grades, as well as better scores on math tests. Participation in school sports also strengthened academic success and standardized math test scores. Student council participation also helped boost grades. The drama club was the only activity where participants saw improved reading test scores. Overall, music activity participation was linked with achievement benefits, and participation in student council, drama club, and yearbook or journalism club saw limited academic gains. Interscholastic sports participation had the highest level of benefits amongst the broader categories of participation. Intramural activity participants did not have the same positive outcomes as interscholastic. Students that participated in intramural activities lost academic ground compared to nonparticipants. Broh noted that all of the different types of extracurricular activities had different outcomes, which is why it was important to distinguish the type of activity in future studies and when schools are making policy and funding decisions.

Gerber (1996) looked at differences between activities outside of the school realm compared to school-related activities. Her study found that school-related club participants had a constructive association with academic success for both African American and white students and that the relationship was even stronger for white students. Participation in activities outside of school was also positively linked to the different achievement measures for white students. White students who participated in outside of school activities saw benefits greater than those obtained via participation in school-related activities. Looking at both groups together, school-related activities had a stronger relationship with achievement compared to activities outside of school.

Some additional studies regarding the type of activity included an article from Holland and Andre (1987), which explained that students who participated in either athletic or non-athletic activities saw a positive link to important personality or social characteristic development. Fejgin (1994) found that competitive sports participation led to a variety of positive academic outcomes including higher grades, higher educational aspirations, and fewer discipline problems. Eide and Ronan (2001) noted that, for some of the racial or gender groups included in their study, future studies should look closer at whether or not their participation in varsity sports is associated with positive experiences and skill development. Gilman et al. (2004) highlighted the importance for school psychology professionals to work closely with adolescents when they choose activities to ensure that they look at all of their options and choose activities that will benefit them.

Another study conducted by Barber et al. (2001) fit participants into different social identities through type of activity participation to assess levels of substance use, educational and occupational attainment, and psychological adjustment during adolescence. The different identity groups included Princess, Jock, Brain, Basket Case, and Criminal (aligned with characters from the *Breakfast Club* movie). Based on activity participation and social alignment choices, the students revealed relationships with different risks and adjustments. The data was collected using the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions, which began with sixth graders from ten school districts in Michigan in 1983. The sample included 900 participants, and the questionnaires were administered during tenth and twelfth grade, and two and six years after high school.

Performing arts participants showed signs of more years of education and a greater chance of graduating from college. Performing arts participation was also associated with higher

alcohol consumption between the ages of 18 to 21, plus higher rates of suicide attempts and visits to a psychologist by age 24. Prosocial activity participants did not have positive relationships with educational or occupational success, aside from a higher rate of college graduation. Prosocial activity participation during the sophomore year was also linked to less substance abuse and higher self-esteem for up to eight years after participation. Athletic participants used marijuana less often than non-athletes did, but drank alcohol at a higher rate. Those categorized as Jocks and Criminals were similar in the level of alcohol consumption. Jocks and Brains demonstrated the highest amount of positive adjustment (Barber et al., 2001).

Gender

There is a relationship between gender, activity participation, and academic outcomes. Some studies reviewed causal links between gender and activity selection, and others assessed findings and data with gender as a predictive factor. Fejgin (1994) noted that gender was the strongest determinant of participation in school sports, and a great deal of work in the sociology and history of sport has been devoted to explaining such findings. Mahoney et al. (2003) found that for both boys and girls that began their study with varying levels of interpersonal competence, regular extracurricular activity involvement was positively associated with educational status at young adulthood. They also found that females had a higher likelihood of being involved in activities in early adolescence compared to males. For males, educational aspirations were positively linked to activity participation during early adolescence.

Hanson and Kraus (1998) took a look at two areas, science and sports, where a common theme is that they both are traditionally male-dominated. The researchers were interested in learning if female athletic participation helped boost academic success in science courses by placing them in nontraditional settings. The research included longitudinal data from the

nationally representative High School and Beyond (HSB) study. The base year of the study took place in 1980 and included approximately 30,000 high school sophomores from 1,015 high schools nationwide. The 11,683 students involved were interviewed in the base year, then two, four, and six years later.

The study found that sophomore male students had a higher likelihood than sophomore females to engage in athletics (63% compared to 46%). The amount of participation decreased for both males and females during their senior years (45% for males, 26% for females). The survey results showed that male students had a higher likelihood of being noticed as athletes. In regards to science outcomes, sports participation had a higher likelihood of having a larger impact on science experiences for girl students compared to males, and this positive relationship was more significant during their senior year. In the first year of the study, sophomore female athletic participation had a notable positive impact on access to science, but a strong negative impact on attitudes towards science. Sophomore male students that played sports saw a noticeable negative impact on science achievement. Females that participated in athletics during their senior year saw major positive impacts on their access to and attitudes towards science. Athletic participation during sophomore and senior years had the largest impact in terms of science experiences for both white and upper-socioeconomic female students (Hanson & Kraus, 1998).

Gerber (1996) found that females participated in more school-related activities, whereas male students participated in more activities outside of school. Camp (1990) explained that female students participated in more activities, studied more, and earned better grades than their male counterparts after controlling for other background variables. Marsh and Kleitman (2003) noted that participation rates were lower for girls.

Fox et al. (2010) found that the mean GPA for male students that participated in athletics during middle school was higher compared to nonparticipants. This was not the case for female middle school students. Male and female high school athletic participants saw a distinguishable link to increased GPAs, and also saw their GPA climb as participation increased (Fox et al., 2010). Eitle and Eitle (2002) explained that male students might have chosen athletic participation because they were lacking in academic resources necessary for success.

Gore, Farrell, and Gordon (2001) conducted a study that expanded on previous research and looked further at athletic involvement related to depressed moods amongst male and female adolescents. The research focused on the first two waves of a five-wave longitudinal study examining stress, protective factors, and mental health in adolescence. The participants were from three Boston-area high schools and included ninth, tenth and eleventh graders. The first wave collected in 1988 included 1,208 students, and the second wave included 1,036 students a year later.

Male students that participated in athletics only saw a minor link between participation and GPA. Female athletic participants had a somewhat stronger association, but it was still considered weak. The study did find that sports participation might have served as a protective experience that offset the negative impacts of low grades among female students (Gore et al., 2001).

Videon (2002) found that female students are only about half as likely as boys to participate in interscholastic sports. The gender participation gap in interscholastic activities was even greater for black students compared to white students. This was primarily due to the lack of participation amongst black females. The impact of sports participation was almost twice as strong for male athletes than for female athletes. Male athletic participants experienced much

stronger benefits compared to females when looking at unexcused absences and academic expectations.

At-Risk Outcomes of Extracurricular Activities

At-risk student outcomes were another area frequently addressed in a lot of the extracurricular activity participation research. Many studies have attempted to understand if activity participation could provide positive avenues for student growth, or if activities exacerbated already existing academic challenges. The related research is organized into dropout rates, mental health, negative outcomes, and alcohol use. Gilman et al. (2004) highlighted that getting at-risk students involved in activities that were structured and had a positive environment could have led to higher levels of positive adolescent outcomes. Gilman et al. (2004) also noted that at-risk students could benefit in the area of mental health through activity participation. Holland and Andre (1987) explained that the association between activity participation and positive outcomes were much stronger for male students from lower socioeconomic homes and lower academic ability. Marsh (1992) found that total extracurricular activity participation was closely linked to background variables and that students who came from lower socioeconomic families experienced greater benefits compared to students from higher socioeconomic families. Eccles and Barber (1999) noted that extracurricular activity participation during high school provided an environment that helped protect against risky behaviors. Likewise, DeMeulenaere (2010) added that participation in sports gave at-risk athletes a form of justification for doing well academically to participate, which alleviated some of the social pressures aligned with strong academic performance.

Dropout rates

Dropout rates were a more specific area concerning at-risk students, and there were a handful of articles that directly addressed this topic. McNeal (1995) conducted a study that addressed the types of school settings and peer groups that the different school extracurricular activities created, and the impact on student dropout rates. Some of the guiding questions for his research included the importance of the activity being engrained in the school's culture, the importance of peer groups, whether the type of activities were important, and which activities ultimately had a larger effect on dropout rates. The study included 14,249 high school students from 735 public high schools nationwide. The initial wave took place in 1980, and the follow-up took place in 1982.

The data showed that the prototypical student had an estimated .0487 probability of dropping out. This probability decreased to .0299 if the student participated in athletics and decreased to .0415 if the student participated in a fine arts activity. The adolescents that participated in sports activities were an estimated 1.7 times less likely to drop out in comparison to nonparticipants. Participants in fine arts activities were an estimated 1.2 times less likely to drop out, and student organization participants were an estimated 1.15 less likely to drop out compared to nonparticipants.

Mahoney and Cairns (1997) looked at early dropout rates concerning school extracurricular activity participation. The article investigated whether extracurricular activity participation had a larger impact on at-risk student school dropout rates. The students involved were interviewed each year starting in sixth grade through their senior year of high school. The study broke up the activities into nine categories including athletics, academics, fine arts, student government, school service, press activities, school assistants, vocational activities, and royalty activities.

Early school dropouts equated to 16% of the students, and as a whole, those dropouts were involved in significantly fewer extracurricular activities throughout the years. For students that were considered at-risk for early dropout, a large decrease in dropouts was linked to increased activity participation. Across all of the students included, a large decrease in dropouts was associated with extracurricular activities involved and this even stronger for at-risk students during early high school. All of the nine types of activities were related to a reduction in the dropout rate, and athletic participation was the most notable. Except for one participant, at-risk students who engaged in any activity domain during early high school graduated from high school (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997).

Mental health

Social-emotional learning and mental health were also among the topics addressed in the research. Extracurricular activities provided a unique social setting outside of the school space where students can come together and learn a variety of skills such as collaboration or teamwork. The fitness and mental aspects of activities provided another area in which a student could develop their mental health. Gore et al. (2001) conducted research that focused on depressed moods among adolescents and the potential protective environment that athletic participation can provide. The study included a five-wave longitudinal study that assessed stress, protective factors, and mental health in adolescence. Participants were from three Boston-area communities and were first interviewed in 1988. The first wave included 1,208 students, and the second wave had 1,036 students.

Females in the top quintile of depressed mood exhibited significantly lower levels of sports participation than all other females combined. Compared to the 32.1% of all other males included in the study group, 46.3% of male students in the lowest quintile of depressed mood

participated in sports “some” or “a lot” of the time. Female students that were considered having a high level of depressed mood were linked with low levels of sports participation. Male students that had a high level of psychological wellbeing had higher levels of sports participation. For students that were considered low achievers, higher athletic participation was positively associated with a much lower depressed mood (Gore et al., 2001).

Fredricks and Eccles (2006) found that participation in extracurricular activities during high school was linked to multiple indicators of psychological and behavioral adjustment. Mahoney et al. (2003) explained that students with low levels of interpersonal competence were less likely to attend college unless they had more than one year of activity participation. Barber et al. (2001) found that athletic participation was positively associated with a lower level of social isolation, but that performing arts participation was linked to increased suicide attempts and psychologist visits.

Negative outcomes

Some negative outcomes include a finding that black students who participated in sports other than basketball and football experienced lower grades (Eitle & Eitle, 2002). That research also found that male students sometimes chose to pursue athletics because they may not have experienced high achievement in the classroom, but this tended to create even more obstacles and distracted them from academic success. Hanson and Kraus (1998) noted that athletic participation harmed the science experiences for young African American women and had no effect on the science experiences of young Hispanic women. Mahoney et al. (2003) explained that aggression was very much related to activity participation for the low-competence students. Fejgin (1994) concluded that athletic social distribution was not equal and that society should increase participation opportunities. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds had

fewer opportunities to take advantage of the benefits that activity participation offers. In looking at public school offerings, some schools either offered fewer opportunities or did not encourage participation as well as others (Fejgin, 1994).

Broh (2002) explained that extracurricular participation could have significantly raised disadvantaged students' academic success and that certain activities had the potential to create connections for disadvantaged students, their parents, and the school. Gilman et al. (2004) stated that school psychologists should have assisted schools in understanding the benefits that extracurricular activities could provide. Marsh (1992) noted that school policies that promoted extracurricular activity participation could invoke many positive academic outcomes for a variety of students from diverse backgrounds. Eide & Ronan (2001) found that in consideration of the positive results for black males in their study, athletic programs designed for inner-city minority youths could have provided lasting benefits to these youths and society.

Alcohol Use

Hoffman (2006) conducted a study that assessed the link between extracurricular activity participation and adolescent male and female alcohol consumption. Hoffman first looked at some of the participation differences between sports and other types of activities. These activities had unique social environments that could either add to or detract from positive outcomes. The study also investigated if gender patterns existed, and to what extent characteristics of schools and culture impacted different outcomes. Hoffman used data from the 1990-92 NELS longitudinal study when the participants were in the tenth and twelfth grades. A total of 9,893 students were included, which broke down to 5,398 females and 4,495 males.

For male and female students, a better GPA was positively associated with athletic and nonathletic extracurricular activity participation. Sports participation was related to increased

alcohol use over two years for both males and females. In fact, for every one percent increase in sports participation, both male and female students experienced an eight percent increase in alcohol use. This trend was partially due to the notion that male sports environments tend to involve additional social scenes, such as parties, where alcohol was available. Both males and females can encounter these situations, and it had become a very normalized aspect of weekend social life for athletic participants. Nonathletic activity participation appeared to protect against alcohol use during adolescence. For every one percent increase in nonathletic activity participation, male and female students decreased their alcohol use by four percent. In regards to socioeconomic status, the positive association between athletic participation and alcohol use occurred among males in higher socioeconomic schools and females in lower socioeconomic schools (Hoffman, 2006).

Post-Secondary Outcomes of Extracurricular Activities

The effect that participation in extracurricular activities has on adolescent outcomes extends beyond the high school years. Post-secondary achievement is another important outcome that researchers addressed often. Marsh (1992) found that total extracurricular participation was positively linked to postsecondary educational aspirations and college attendance. Fredricks and Eccles (2006) explained that athletic and school club participation both contributed to educational status two years after high school. Lipscomb (2007) noted that both sports and club participation was positively linked to a five percent increase in bachelor's degree attainment expectations. Eccles and Barber (1999) found that participation in athletics, school-based leadership, school-spirit activities, and academic clubs all were associated with an increased likelihood of being enrolled full-time in college at age 21. Further, team sports participation was associated with an increased probability of attending college full-time. The following sections

covered include educational attainment and labor market. Mahoney et al. (2003) reported that the group in their study with low interpersonal competence experienced a variety of undesired outcomes, but with anywhere between two and four years of activity participation, college attendance became a higher possibility. Interpersonal competence was a measurement of both academic and social behavior.

Educational attainment

Mahoney et al. (2003) conducted research that looked at extracurricular participation during adolescence and its relationship with long-term educational attainment. The main areas addressed were whether activity participation built interpersonal competence and personal initiative, which they believed both created the foundation necessary for academic achievement after high school. One of the cohorts included in the study began as fourth graders, and the other began in seventh grade. Both cohorts were tracked annually until their senior year of high school. All participants were from the southeastern region of the United States and attended eight different public schools across five different counties.

Regular extracurricular participation during both early and middle adolescence was positively associated with understanding the educational attainment process. Consistent involvement in activities during high school led to above average college attendance. College attendance was unlikely for a student that had low interpersonal competence at the beginning of the study unless they participated in more than one year of activities. The consistency of extracurricular activity participation in both early and middle adolescence showed positive, significant links to interpersonal competence in middle adolescence, educational aspirations in late adolescence, and educational status at age twenty. For boys, early adolescent activity participation was highly linked to educational aspirations. An important finding was that regular

participation in extracurricular activities across adolescence was linked to educational status at young adulthood. This was true for both boys and girls with high and low interpersonal competence at the beginning of the investigation (Mahoney et al., 2003).

Marsh and Kleitman (2003) found that students who participated in more athletics experienced higher university enrollment, months in university, educational aspirations, and achieved the highest levels of postsecondary education. Extramural activity participation led to higher educational aspirations in grade twelve and postsecondary, the number of universities applied to, university enrollment and duration, and the highest level of education reached two years after high school. Team activity participation resulted in greater intensity and duration of university enrollment, and the highest level of postsecondary education attained (Marsh & Kleitman).

Troutman and Dufur (2007) studied the long-term effects of high school athletic participation related to females' postsecondary educational attainment. The goals were to determine if athletic involvement led to long-term consequences for women, and whether or not women who participate in athletics were more likely to graduate from college. The research used data from the national NELS study, which began in 1988. The study included 1,052 private and public schools, and a total of 5,103 female eighth graders were sampled. Follow-ups were conducted every two years.

Female students who participated in athletics during high school had a higher likelihood of completing college within six years after graduating from high school compared to nonparticipants. Female participation in high school athletics was positively associated with completing a bachelor degree. Female students that played high school sports were 73% more likely to finish a college degree compared to nonparticipants. Even after controlling for

individual variables, the likelihood of college completion was still 42% higher for female high school athletes (Troutman & Dufur, 2007).

Labor market

Barron et al. (2000) researched the relationship between participation in high school athletics and educational attainment, labor market results, wages, and employment. One goal was to create a simple theoretical model for predicting relationships between high school athletic participation and educational and labor market outcomes. They also sought to analyze data related to athletic participation, while utilizing controls that economists typically use. The data used was pulled from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) and the 1972 high school class of the National Longitudinal Study (NLS-72).

Male athletic participants saw a level of post-secondary education that was 25% higher in the NLS-72 data, and 35% higher in the NLSY data. More intense athletic participation equated to a stronger association between participation and subsequent educational attainment. Sports participation was linked to a higher postsecondary level of education for any given level of ability and high school rank. Higher subsequent educational attainment and higher wages were other benefits for sports participants. The study could not find any negative impacts on labor market outcomes or educational attainment for high school athletic participants (Barron et al., 2000).

Participation in extracurricular activities had a positive relationship with occupational aspirations (Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). Males who participated in high school sports received 31% higher wages compared to nonparticipants. Male athletic participants received wages that were 12% higher in the NLS-72 study, and 32% higher in the NLSY study. The more intense the athletic participation during high school, the stronger the association

between participation and earned wages were. The students that participated in sports had a higher likelihood of landing in a job where direct measures of performance were linked to establishing wages. The time devoted to athletics did not result in the acquisition of less human capital and lower subsequent wages (Barron et al., 2000).

Barber et al. (2001) studied the relationship between activity participation in high school and social identities to young adult pathways of substance use, educational and occupational attainment, and psychological adjustment. The research assessed activity and identity choices that students make in high school and the subsequent long-term risks and adjustments associated with those choices. More specifically, they dug into patterns of substance abuse, important behavior related to education and work roles, and psychological adjustment during the adolescent to adult transition. The study included data from the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions, which looked at sixth graders from ten school districts across Michigan in 1983. The 900 participants were questioned in tenth grade, twelfth grade, then two and six years after high school.

Students that participated in high school activities, especially athletics, received long-term benefits. Performing arts participants saw more years of education and a greater likelihood of college graduation. Athletic participants had positive educational and occupational outcomes eight years after high school, and lower levels of social isolation. Prosocial activity involvement only experienced a higher likelihood of graduation from college (Barber et al., 2001).

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this literature review is to study research on activity participation and the effects on adolescent outcomes, and the guiding question is: What impact does participation in organized extracurricular activities have on the academic outcomes of American high school students? Participation in extracurricular activities has become a large aspect of secondary school settings and spending. In a study that looked at students between ninth through twelfth grade, 48% of boys and 65% of girls participated in more than one activity (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). As the college application process has become increasingly competitive, modern high school students have looked for ways to set themselves apart from their competition through extracurricular activity participation. The financial investment in activities has also seen a steady climb over the recent decades, and some families are spending thousands of dollars a year. Both high schools and colleges have realized the importance of activities in trying to attract top students, and they have invested upwards of millions of dollars in facilities and opportunities in some cases.

There are two schools of thought in this area and most of the research has been aligned with one or the other. Coleman (1961) was a leader in the zero-sum theory and believed that extracurricular activities detracted from the importance of educational goals in schools. Holland and Andre (1987) played a large role in shaping the developmental model and the belief that activity participation complemented educational efforts.

The research in this thesis indicated that there were many positive outcomes from extracurricular activity participation. Marsh (1992) explained that activity participation usually aided academic outcomes versus taking away from them. Fredericks and Eccles (2006) noted that all groups of students gained from extracurricular participation. Hoffman (2006) found that,

for both male and female students, participation in both athletic and nonathletic extracurricular activities was associated with a higher GPA. Marsh (2003) claimed that there are positive effects for participation as it related to school grades.

The type and amount of participation were also important when looking at outcomes. Barron et al. (2000) discovered that students who were extremely involved in sports activities earned better high school percentile class ranks. Marsh (1992) found that higher amounts of total activity participation were connected with increased gains for all the studied outcomes. Marsh and Kleitman (2003) asserted that those who were involved in more sports had better grades, higher educational aspirations, spent more time on homework, and applied to more universities.

The research also covered activity participation and its effect on at-risk students. Gilman et al. (2004) noted that getting at-risk students involved in activities that were structured and had a positive environment could have led to higher levels of positive adolescent outcomes. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) found that, except for one participant, at-risk students who engaged in any activity domain during early high school graduated from high school.

Post-secondary outcomes were the final areas addressed in the research. A study found that years after high school, wages were higher for male students that participated in high school athletics, and this impact on wages grew stronger as the intensity of athletic participation increased (Barron et al., 2000). Marsh and Kleitman (2003) found that students who participated in more athletics experienced higher university enrollment, months in university, educational aspirations, and achieved the highest levels of postsecondary education.

Professional Application

The important findings can be applied to both teachers and coaches in their interactions with students and parents. The research is relevant in the secondary school setting as a whole due

to the size and cost of most extracurricular programs.

Teacher and Coach

I am a classroom teacher, a Varsity Head Coach, a youth coach, and a DECA Advisor. This research is important and relevant to my career and the students that I work with. My students are balancing a variety of sports, academics, and clubs on a daily basis. I wanted to have a more extensive background in this area as I guide and help my students navigate through their secondary education.

This research has highlighted the many positive outcomes aligned with extracurricular activity participation, and I can speak to those when working with students and their parents. This work can also help me focus conversations with parents. As noted earlier, many parents are hoping their son or daughter can earn a scholarship through activity participation. Scholarships are a possibility, but there are so many other benefits to bring to their attention. I now feel as if I have a better grasp of the full scope of those many benefits, and speak to them with confidence.

I am a firm believer in the notion that, if you hone important skills and characteristics, and preach the process of planning and working towards goals, then the end result will take care of itself. I practice this in my coaching and it has impacted my teaching as well. This research has only strengthened this idea, and I would like to be more intentional in how I address the developmental aspects of activities with my student athletes. Mental training has become a notable trend in competitive sports. I can take time to help my student athletes distinguish and dissect how their participation is impacting their academic outcomes. For example, as a part of our mental training exercises, I can have them respond to prompts that ask them to explain how their participation has impacted their determination. Then I can have them explain to me how

that determination can affect their academics and success in life. This process can help the student athletes make the connection between their activity and their overall development.

The other side of student athletes bridging the gap between their activity and their academics is having students partake in a similar process in the classroom. With so many students participating in extracurricular activities, they can reflect on how those activities impact their learning. I can create prompts for my students that have them, for example, explain how they learned the concept of work ethic outside of the classroom and how their understanding of work ethic impacts their education. This approach can be even more powerful for students that may be struggling in the classroom but excelling in an activity.

An additional tactic that I can utilize is highlighting and calling out important developmental characteristics in practices. Instead of telling a student athlete that they took a great shot, I can tell them that I appreciated their self-confidence to take that shot. I can tell a student athlete that I noticed their dedication to reaching a goal. This will instill and remind the athletes what the ultimate goals of activity participation truly are.

One negative outcome that was associated with athletic participation was alcohol use during high school. Understanding this has already created a heightened sense around this topic. I have incorporated more talks with my student athletes and have opened up more channels for them to approach me if they need further counseling. My goal is to provide an experience that concentrates on the many potential positive benefits, and help my student athletes navigate away from the negative or detrimental effects.

Secondary Schools

Scholarships and college acceptance have dominated the conversation around activity participation and student outcomes. While those two areas are important and easy to track in

terms of data, there are so many other examples of positive development related to extracurricular activities. It is important that staff and administration recognize these aspects and elevate their importance in the activities discussion. If a student can learn how to master or develop a skill through participation in athletics and clubs, they can apply that approach to academics and it will have a positive impact on their overall success.

Educators, coaches and administrators need to keep the student's overall development in the forefront, and school boards need to hold them accountable. It is one thing to say all the right things, but there are still plenty of adults and leaders in education that place too high a value on winning, championships and athletic scholarships. It is easy to promote athletic successes and a community is eager to get behind a winning team. A successful extracurricular activity can help draw students to a particular school. Only a small percentage of high school athletes move on to compete at the DI collegiate level and an even smaller number of those athletes will play professionally. The majority of athletes will go on to pursue post-secondary education and a career. It is far more important that leaders in education are focused on the lessons and development that occurs in activities, and it needs to be supported through actions.

Limitations of the Research

There were a lot of articles concerning extracurricular activity participation and adolescent outcomes. It was difficult, however, to locate research that assessed causality or direction of effect when looking at this topic. A big question is if activity participation strengthened positive outcomes, or if adolescents that possessed positive traits tended to gravitate towards involvement in activities. Studies had a hard time concluding, for example, whether sports participation built self-discipline, or whether self-disciplined students chose to participate

in sport teams and were able to endure the strenuous training regime (Fejgin, 1994). There were only a couple articles that tackled this issue, but there is still a lack of research in this area.

The majority of the research was limited to more modern articles. There are studies dating back decades on this topic, but search parameters were set to focus on research conducted within the past twenty years. A couple of the articles that were reviewed were old, dating back as far as 1994. Some studies were repeatedly referred to by other sources. The use of older research was mainly due to their historical importance in the topic, and was coupled with more recent related articles.

The research was also limited to extracurricular activities that were not work-related or did not earn an income. The income aspect of a part-time job, for example, adds another layer due to the payment incentive and additional factors such as socioeconomic status. An adolescent might not have a choice as to whether or not they work outside of school hours. The research was intended to only review amateur extracurricular activities, or activities where the participant was not paid for their involvement.

Implications for Future Research

Based on this thesis work, there were more articles and research findings that found outcomes beneficial to student achievement and development. Future research should look further into two areas to gain a better grasp as to why this is the case. Eitle and Eitle (2002) suggested that the connection between athletic participation and student success was more complicated than earlier studies suggest, and future studies should look deeper into the different reasons behind sports participation. Understanding which students choose to participate in extracurricular activities and why they choose to participate will provide a lot important insight. Do parents have a major influence on participation? Are well-developed or well-rounded

students more inclined to sign up for activities? How much of an impact does socioeconomic conditions truly have on participation? All of these are important questions.

It is also crucial to better understand which aspects of extracurricular activities create positive outcomes for adolescents. There are so many lessons or takeaways, such as time management, goal setting, practicing, collaboration, and competition. It would be interesting and important to know how these different areas of activities impacts the overall development of adolescents. Doing so might help steer the conversation around this topic more towards the crucial beneficial outcomes. Currently, we see a lot of emphasis placed on getting athletic scholarships and the financial benefits. Should that be such a prominent focus? If we know what activity characteristics lead to the most impactful positive outcomes, we can design activities accordingly.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review was to examine research on extracurricular activity participation and its impact on adolescent outcomes. The guiding question was: What impact does participation in organized extracurricular activities have on the academic outcomes of American high school students? Extracurricular activity participation has increased in popularity and importance over the recent decades and this trend appears to be growing. During high school, 48% of male students and 65% of female students participated in more than one organized extracurricular activity. Research found positive outcomes linked to participation, including academic achievements, GPA and grades. There were notable positive impacts for students considered to be at-risk. Marsh (1992) noted that those involved in making policy decisions could promote extracurricular activity participation to strengthen outcomes for students

from a variety of backgrounds. One negative outcome was the relationship between athletic participation and alcohol use during high school.

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