PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SPORT INVOLVEMENT WITH LATE ADOLESCENT STUDENT ATHLETES

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Table of Contents

Chapter One ......................................................................................................................... 4

Introduction.......................................................................................................................... 4

Statement of Problem ........................................................................................................... 6

Significance of the Research ............................................................................................... 7

Delimitations ........................................................................................................................ 8

Assumptions ......................................................................................................................... 8

Limitations ........................................................................................................................... 8

Operational Definitions ..................................................................................................... 8

Chapter Two ....................................................................................................................... 10

Literature Review ............................................................................................................... 10

Parental Involvement .......................................................................................................... 10

Parental Involvement Theories .......................................................................................... 13

Parental Involvement in Sport ............................................................................................. 18

Theoretical Foundation ...................................................................................................... 23

PAR Theory Personality Subtheory .................................................................................. 23

Testing PAR Theory in Sport .............................................................................................. 24

Chapter Three .................................................................................................................... 27

Methods ............................................................................................................................... 27

Participants ......................................................................................................................... 27
Chapter One

Introduction

Parents are an essential influence on an adolescent. Parental involvement reflects a dedication to the child and positive attention to the child-rearing process. Parental involvement can be defined in at least three ways: direct interaction with the child, also known as engagement (e.g. having a discussion), being accessible to your child but not directly (e.g. children are in one room and parents are in another room), and responsibility for children (e.g. making sure that homework is completed; Day & Lamb 2004; Phares, Fields, & Kamboukos, 2009).

Literature suggests mothers and fathers have unequal roles in the family setting. More specifically, mothers are more often responsible for daily supervision and medical care in infancy and early childhood (Lewis and Lamb, 2003). When fathers are involved, they spend more time in playful interactions than mothers. Consequently, fathers tend to serve more as a playmate rather than a caretaker (Lewis and Lamb, 2003). Fathers tend to engage their children in tactile, physical, and stimulating activities. As the children grow older fathers tend to engage in less rigorous recreational activities, such as walks, outings, and private talks (Child Trends, no date). Mothers are seen as the providers of food and love while providing a relationship of sensitivity in the environment that emphasize cognitive and language outcomes (Hirsh-Pasek & Burchinal, 2006). All in all mothers are the nurturers and fathers are the entertainment. However, there are limited studies that examine these types of trends in athletics. Conventional images of motherhood and fatherhood could push couples toward unequal parenting (Deutsch, 1999). In most studies regarding parental involvement mothers show greater involvement than fathers (Parke 2000). For example, Deutsch (1999) combats the ideology of intensive motherhood which states that mothers have an exclusive responsibility to children, while fathers are the
second-best substitutes. Deutsch contends that equally sharing parental roles transforms gender-based roles of mothers and fathers into human roles. This would result in a world where fathers are involved in the day-to-day care of children as much as the mothers (Deutsch, 1999). Human roles that allow for daily chores of doing laundry, cooking, and cleaning are not designated to a mother or a father. Equally sharing is not role reversal. Allowing family obligations to overtake career intentions while still maintaining a commitment to work should be the norm.

In sport, Hellstedt (1987) describes parental involvement on a continuum ranging from underinvolvement to overinvolvement. On this continuum moderate involvement seems to facilitate a positive sport career, while both disinterested parents and overly engaged parents may play a disruptive role. It is no surprise that athletes of disinterested parents are more likely to drop out and need more support from other socializing agents such as teachers or coaches (Hellstedt, 1987). On the other hand, athletes with overinvolved parents do not complain about lack of interest or support, but they may perceive high levels of parental pressure (Hellstedt, 1987).

The subsequent study will use the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PAR Theory; Rohner & Khaleque, 2002) to extend the research of parental involvement in sport. The PAR Theory predicts that parental rejection has consistent negative effects on psychological adjustment and behavioral functioning of both children and adults. PAR Theory is divided into three subcategories: the personality subtheory, coping subtheory, and the sociocultural systems subtheory (Rohner & Khaleque, 2002). When applied to athletics, the negative consequences of the personality subtheory highlight some characteristics of children who have been pressured to participate and perform well in athletics. Parents that are extremely critical of their children’s athletic performance are often perceived as being negative (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004). This
extreme pressure from parents may contribute to the child feeling anxious during competition and create a sense of failure due to not meeting parents’ expectations (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004). Therefore, the current study will examine the gendered differences in perceived parental involvement and sport experience.

**Statement of Problem**

The purpose of this study is to explore parents’ perception of involvement within high school athletics. Investigating the perceived involvement parents have in their child’s athletic experience can help them recognize when they are overly involved, as well as add to the literature about parental influence in sport, thus improving the overall athletic experience for both parents and children. Based on the purpose of the study the following three research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated.

**Research Question #1:** Are there differences between mothers and fathers regarding their perceived involvement in sport?

**Hypothesis #1:** Mothers will have less perceived active involvement in sport than fathers.

**Hypothesis #2:** Mothers will have less perceived directive behavior than fathers.

**Hypothesis #3:** Mothers will have more perceived praise and understanding than fathers.

**Research Question #2:** Are there differences between parents of male athletes and parents of female athletes regarding their perceived involvement in sport?

**Hypothesis #4:** Parents of female athletes will have less perceived active involvement in sport than parents of male athletes.
**Hypothesis #5:** Parents of female athletes will have less perceived directive behavior than parents of male athletes.

**Hypothesis #6:** Parents of female athletes will have more perceived praise and understanding than parents of male athletes.

**Research Question #3:** Are there differences between parents with a high level of sporting experience and parents with low sporting experience regarding their perceived involvement in sport?

**Hypothesis #7:** Parents with a low level of sporting experience will have less perceived active involvement than parents with a high level of sporting experience.

**Hypothesis #8:** Parents with a low level of sporting experience will have less perceived directive behavior than parents with a high level of sporting experience.

**Hypothesis #9:** Parents with a low level of sporting experience will have more perceived praise and understanding than parents with a high level of sporting experience.

**Significance of the Research**

Overinvolvement and underinvolvement are problems that begin in youth sports and remain through collegiate sports (Hellstedt, 1987). This study will expand on the limited research regarding parental involvement of high school athletes. To date, no research has specifically investigated parental involvement in sport using the PAR Theory. Results will add to the literature on scholastic parental involvement while providing empirical data on the applicability of the PAR Theory to scholastic sport.
Delimitations

1. The sports that will be studied are boys and girls basketball, swimming and girls volleyball.
2. The participants are from Indiana high schools.

Assumptions

1. All participants will answer the Parental Involvement Sports Questionnaire (PISQ) honestly.
2. Each participant understands what is being asked of them.
3. Each participant understands they are not bound to this study and can withdraw from the study at any time.
4. All participants understand their participation is voluntarily.

Limitations

1. The PISQ was modified from its original form.
2. Results will be limited to the sample of parents from Indiana High Schools in the sports of basketball, volleyball and swimming.

Operational Definitions

These definitions were modified from the original Parental Involvement in Sports Questionnaire (PISQ) by Lee and MacLean (1999):

1. Active Involvement- is the extent to which parents reported they were actively involved in their child’s high school athletic experience.
2. Directive Behavior- is the extent to which parents reported they controlled their child’s behavior in athletics
3. Praise and Understanding- is the measure of praise and empathy parents reported displaying toward their child.
4. Sporting Experience-the amount of years and sports that a parent played. For the purposes of this study, sporting experience was categorized as high and low. High sporting experience was defined as having played 3 or more high school sports, or playing sports beyond high school. Low experience was defined as playing less than two high school sports and no sport experience beyond high school.

5. Parental Involvement- perceptions about direct interactions (having discussions about practice and game performances), accessibility (being accessible to take the child to practice and games), and responsibility (making sure that the child has everything they need for a game or practice, cleats, jerseys, etc.) for a child’s needs, specifically their athletic needs.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

With the intention of sufficiently understanding perceived parental involvement in sport, as well as gender differences in parental involvement, it is essential to review previous literature on the topic of parental involvement. In addition to literature on parental involvement in sport, this chapter will highlight other ways parents are involved in a child’s life, specifically in regards to parental involvement in education. Furthermore, this chapter will describe the gendered differences in parental involvement in sport and beyond. Finally, a theoretical foundation will be discussed to help examine perceived parental involvement in high school sports.

Parental Involvement

Involvement has been conceptualized as “the extent to which a parent is interested in, knowledgeable about, and takes an active role in the child’s life” (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, p. 114). Involvement in a child’s life often reflects a parent’s dedication to the child and positive attention to the child-rearing process. More involvement is generally better than less involvement when parents provide children with resources and support that facilitate a sense of autonomy (Holt & Neely, 2011). Conversely, the use of controlling behaviors (e.g., extreme rules, withholding benefits due to performance, psychological abuse based on performance) can make children feel negatively about the extent of their parents’ involvement; and therefore undermine children’s autonomy (Grolnick, 2003). It is generally understood that when parents are nurturing and form a secure relationship with their children, that children benefit socially, emotionally, physiologically, and personally (Grolnick, 2003). For example, in a study done by Lagacé-Seguin and Coplan (2005), 100 mothers from Halifax, Nova Scotia were examined to determine how parenting styles and maternal emotional styles are related to child regulation and social
development. The conclusions showed that parenting styles and maternal emotional styles were interrelated to such a high degree that a research instrument was created to test these variables.

In another study by Lagacé-Seguin (2006), researchers examined 98 children, mothers, and preschool teachers to document the interactions between parenting styles and children’s negative affect in play behaviors such as rough-and-tumble play or solitary play. The purpose of this study was to explore the links of parenting styles and parental involvement in children’s play behaviors. Results reported that lower levels of parental pessimism were associated with higher levels of well-being in young children. On the contrary, parents that reported high levels of authoritarian parenting were more likely to exhibit negative play behaviors and lower levels of well-being. This is important because parents that are generally negative could influence their children in a way that produces unwanted behaviors, and serves to create a stressful parent-child relationship.

Regarding parental involvement, there is a surplus of research that examine the areas of education, sexual activity, and other facets of a child’s life (e.g., smoking and alcohol use; Simons-Morton, Haynie, Crump, Eitel, Saylor, 2001; Jackson, 2005; Ying-Chih, Ennett, Bauman, & Foshee 2009). The current study will focus on parental involvement within education and sport. Among all parental involvement literature there is significant evidence that positive parental involvement has a constructive influence on many aspects of a child’s psychological functioning and performance, particularly in education. Research conducted on extracurricular activity and parental involvement by Lagacé-Seguin and Case (2010) demonstrate the importance of a balance in parental involvement. Results from seventy-two children and their parents demonstrated that parental involvement and support, when paired with extracurricular activity participation, can successfully predict children’s well-being (e.g. better social skills,
healthier, happier) and academic success (e.g. better attendance records and grades) for high school and elementary school children (Lagacé-Seguin & Case, 2010).

Additionally, parental involvement has been observed to be positively associated with student behaviors and attitudes in such areas as increased school attendance, fewer discipline problems, and higher scholastic aspirations (McBride, Dyer, Liu, Hong, & Brown, 2009). During high school, however, parents become less involved with monitoring student’s behaviors and more concerned with their learning opportunities at school (McBride et al., 2009). This study is relevant to the present study because it brings to light the fact that a moderate amount of parental involvement is hard to obtain. The moderate amount of parental involvement is essential for the parents to communicate interest and care to the child (Cummings & Ewing, 2004). Parents are often either too involved or they are too distant. Translated into the world of sport, this study would suggest mothers and fathers of student-athletes need to gain a moderate amount of involvement to ensure that their child’s sporting experience is one of pleasure and joy.

From a roles perspective, conventional images of motherhood and fatherhood push couples toward unequal parenting (Deutsch, 1999). In most studies regarding parental involvement mothers show greater involvement than fathers (Parke 2000). In a review of literature on conventional images of motherhood and fatherhood done by Deutsch (1999), she combats the “ideology of intensive motherhood” (p. 1) which states that mothers have an exclusive responsibility to children, while fathers are the second-best substitutes. Deutsch contends that equally sharing of parents is transforming gender-based roles of mothers and fathers into human roles. Furthermore, conclusions from Deutsch suggest that parental involvement should be an equal and balanced part of the family structure.
Lamb, Peck, Charnov, and Levine (1985) were the first to coin a definition for parental involvement. Lamb and colleagues (1985) described parental involvement as: direct interaction, accessibility, and responsibility. Their model of paternal involvement can be used synonymously with parental involvement. No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2004) defines parental involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities” (p.1).

These activities could include assisting in their child’s learning, being actively involved in their child’s education at school; serving as full partners in their child’s education and being included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child. (NCLB, 2004, pg. 1)

Direct interaction with the child, also known as engagement, is where a parent and child have discussions about the day’s event, school, or anything pressing on the child’s mind. Being accessible to a child is different than direct interaction because the parent is physically in another place but the child is still able to access their parent if they need them. Finally, being responsible for children in their academic life is the last conceptualization of parental involvement (e.g. making sure that homework is completed; Day and Lamb 2004; Phares, Fields, and Kamboukos, 2009; Lamb, Peck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985). It can be seen that these definitions are similar. Both concluded that participation or engagement, accessibility, and responsibility are important for both maternal and paternal involvement.

**Parental Involvement Theories**

Several theories on parental involvement have emerged. Epstein’s Theory of Parent Involvement (1987) argued that cooperation between home and school can heighten children’s development by promoting consistency and mutual reinforcements. This means that parental
involvement should be both consistent in school life and in their home life. Epstein proposed several types of family-school involvement that may influence children’s educational outcomes, such as parents (a) being involved at school by volunteering or attending events and (b) participating in school-related activities at home by helping with homework or checking that homework is done. Researchers often cite this typology when attempting to conceptually categorize different involvement practices and behaviors (Astwood, 2009; DeMoss & Vaugh, 2000; Ringerberg, McElwee, & Israel, 2009).

One study conducted by Hara and Burke (1998) utilized Epstein’s model of parental involvement in conjunction with student achievement. Hara and Burke (1998) surveyed 175 students and their parents in search of developing a parent involvement program. Using Epstein’s six effective program characteristics (i.e., parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaboration with the community at large) they found that participating parents reported three very significant outcomes. First was that their interest in and appreciation for education, teachers, and learning did in fact increase. Second, the level of interest their children has in school improved as did their attitudes about school and about their teachers. Finally, parents’ respect for the role of teachers and for the impact they have on children changed dramatically. All in all the study attested to the validity of Epstein’s model and how this model can be adapted to the needs of schools, parents, and communities.

Another model of parental involvement comes from Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler created a model, grounded primarily in psychological literature, representing decades of research on family involvement structured in five levels which consist of:
Level 1: parental involvement decision, which are influenced by: parent’s construction of the parental role, parent’s sense of efficacy for helping child(ren) succeed in school, general opportunities and demands for parental involvement presented by the parent’s child(ren) and child(ren)’s school(s)

Level 2: parents’ choice of involvement forms which is influenced by specific domains of parents’ skills and knowledge;

Level 3 - mechanisms through which parental involvement influences child/student outcomes. Mechanisms include modeling, reinforcement, and instruction;

Level 4 - tempering/mediating variables which deals with parents’ use of developmentally appropriate involvement strategies and the fit between parents’ involvement actions and school expectations; and

Level 5 - Child/Student Outcomes that include skills and knowledge as well as efficacy for doing well in school (p.1).

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model is centered on three essential questions; why do parents become involved in their children’s education?; How do parents choose specific types of involvement?; And does parental involvement have positive influences on children’s educational outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997)? To answer these questions Hoover-Dempsey, Battato, Walker, Reed, DeJong, and Jones (2001) reviewed research on parental involvement in student homework. Overall, parental involvement was found to be a multifaceted concept that makes it difficult to draw conclusions across studies. Therefore, Fan and Chen (2001) concluded that parental involvement should be treated with a holistic approach that combines behavioral dimensions of involvement and psychosocial dimensions. They believe that the idea that parental involvement and its positive effect on academic achievement is complex
and should consider the elements of communication, supervision, and parental expectations.

**Gendered Parental Involvement**

In addition to general parental involvement theories, differences in parental involvement have been found to exist between mothers and fathers. Phares, Field, and Kamboukos (2009) researched parental involvement in all facets of a child’s life. Phares et al (2009) studied a total of 272 families with adolescents aged 11-18 years old to determine the level of family functioning during adolescence. The study examined how much time mothers and fathers spend with their adolescents on an average week day and on an average weekend day. Results found that mothers’ and fathers spend less time with their children as they grow older. Focus shifts from the family dynamic to activities such as sports and their peers.

With regards to the definitions of parental involvement (i.e., direct interactions, accessibility, and responsibility for children’s needs) mothers show greater involvement than fathers as well as hold the majority of the responsibility for such tasks as daily care, and medical care in infancy and early childhood (Parke 2000). Examining the aforementioned definition of parental involvement more closely, especially direct interaction and accessibility, mothers and fathers spend less time with their children as the children grow older (Phares et al, 2009 & Hofferth, S. L., Stueve, J. L., Pleck, J., Bianchi, S., & Sayer, L., 2002).

Within a sporting environment, the influence of mothers and fathers is quite different (Wuerth, Lee, Alfermann, 2004). According to Ede (2012) this could be due to ideologies within the American society that suggest a father participates in the coaching, teaching, and scouting of a child's sport participation (Coakley, 2006). On the other hand, coaching, teaching, and scouting are not considered behaviors routinely practiced by mothers. A mother is considered to excel in motherhood if she serves as the nurturer of a child's sport participation (Coakley, 2006). For
example, Chafetz and Kotarba (1999) examined the role mothers play during a Little League season. They found that “mothers socialize their sons into, and reinforce their own commitment to, gender values particular to their upwardly mobile community through activities that stress female management of family-oriented conspicuous consumption, the cult of the male child, and gender segregation” (p. 217). Chafetz and Kotarba found that it was simply expected that the mothers of the boys participating in Little League would provide the labor necessary to complete tasks and activities traditionally done for the players. These tasks and activities included facilitating enjoyable sport experiences for their sons and husbands; the mothers laundered uniforms, bought and cooked meals, served as chauffeurs and social directors, and organized their daughters as cheerleaders (Chafetz & Kotarba, 1999). The basic reasons for providing this labor were noted by Chafetz and Kotarba as “displaying one’s competence as a mother” (1999, p. 224) and for the community. “They upheld prevailing values concerning how to act as competent mothers in their particular community” (Chafetz & Kotarba, 1999, p. 239).

Fredricks and Eccles (2005) explored the gender differences in children’s beliefs and participation, as well as the effects of parents on these differences. The study used data from the Childhood and Beyond Study, which is a longitudinal study of the development and socialization of children’s achievement-related behavior. Fredricks and Eccles had children complete self-administered questionnaires that measured their competence and value beliefs in sport, math, reading, and instrumental music. There were 121 children in 2nd grade, 117 in the 3rd grade and 126 in 5th grade (Fredricks and Eccles, 2005). Results showed that both mothers and fathers reported gender-stereotyped beliefs and behaviors. Parents perceived that their sons had more athletic ability and that sport was more important to their sons than their daughters. Additionally
Fredricks and Eccles documented that mothers and fathers provided more support, involvement, and opportunities to their sons than their daughters.

**Parental Involvement in Sport**

Youth sport participation has been on the rise with recent evidence suggesting that 90% of children take part in some form of organized sport between the ages of 5 to 17 (Jellineck & Durant, 2004). For most families sport constitutes a central role in parent-child interaction, parent-child time together, and family leisure time (Jellineck & Durant, 2004). Parental involvement is of utmost importance to parents and children alike (Jellineck & Durant, 2004). It has been lamented that “everybody talks about parents in sport, but nobody does any research on them!” (Brustad, 1992, p. 72). Henceforth, research more should be conducted on parents’ perceptions in the parent-athlete relationship. Such an investigation will provide a perspective not otherwise seen in the literature.

Parents and coaches play the most distinct role influencing adolescent athletes. Parental influence has been emphasized, especially with regard to the positive and negative involvement they can exert on their children (Wuerth, et al., 2004; Anderson, J. C., Funk, Elliot & Smith 2003; Hoyle & Leff, 1997). For example, Wuerth, et al. (2004) examined the pattern of involvement of parents in youth sport. The study reinforced the fact that children tend to report enhanced sport enjoyment when they perceive their parents are positively involved and satisfied with their sport participation. Then again, when parents are over-involved, hold excessively high expectations, and exert too much pressure, children report heightened anxiety and less sport enjoyment (Hellstedt, 1987). This means the over-involved parents are child-centered and are best described as those who frequently attend practices, provide unsolicited coaching from the sidelines, give frequent directives to their child to try harder, and engage in conflict with the
coach over their child’s playing time (Hellstedt, 1987). The over-involved parent poses the greatest risk to the long-term development of young athletes. Athletes of over-involved parents experience greater parental pressure argue more frequently with coaches and officials, experience more problems with eating and sleeping, show less effort and enjoyment during training sessions, and are more likely to drop out of sports than athletes of normal, supportive parents (Cumming & Ewing, 2004).

In an article entitled “The coach/parent/athlete relationship” by Hellstedt (1987), parental involvement is described on a continuum ranging from underinvolvement to overinvolvement. Underinvolved refers to a relative lack of emotional, financial, or functional investment on the part of parents. Moderate levels of involvement are characterized by firm parental direction, but with enough flexibility so that the young athlete is allowed significant involvement in decision-making. Parents are supportive, but ultimate decisions about participation and levels of achievement are made by the athlete. Overinvolved parents have an excessive amount of involvement in the athletic success of their children. Overinvolved parents are thought to support their own hidden agenda, hoping the children’s success will provide later opportunities in education or careers. Moderate involvement seems to facilitate a sport career, whereas underinvolvement (e.g., disinterested parents), and overly engaged parents may both play a disruptive role. It is no surprise that athletes of disinterested parents are more likely to drop out and need more support from other socializing agents such as teachers or coaches. On the other hand, athletes with overinvolved parents do not complain about lack of interest or support but they do perceive high levels of parental pressure to perform at their highest level (Hellstedt, 1987). These parents would be those who are excitable and fanatical. According to Lee (1993),
The excitable parent is typically supportive but tends to get ‘caught up in the heat of the moment’. During practices or competitions they are typically loud, yelling encouragement or instructions to players, coaches, and/or officials. The excitable parent also tends to be overly concerned with the physical welfare of their child. This is the type of parent that runs on to the field every time their child takes a bump or bruise. Although such actions are taken in the best interests of the child, they can be embarrassing and distracting. The children of excitable parents often try to discourage their parents from attending practices or competitions (Cummings & Ewing, 2004, p.3).

Research suggests that the parent who poses the greatest risk to the long-term development of young athletes is the fanatical parent. These children of fanatical parents exhibit greater parent pressure, argue with coaches and officials, have a familiarity with difficulties eating and sleeping, experience less effort and enjoyment during training sessions, and more likely to drop out of the sport (Cummings & Ewing, 2004). Fanatical parents are those who are controlling, confrontational, and preoccupied with wins and losses.

An effective parent should be one that understands their role and expectations with being a sport parent (Cummings & Ewing, 2004). Their primary role of the parent is to provide emotional, financial, and provisionary support for their children. Examples of emotional support include helping the child deal with winning and losing, talking sport strategy, offer verbal encouragement, and helping the child understand the lessons that sport can teach (Cummings & Ewing, 2004). Examples of financial and provisionary support include paying sport club fees, buying new sport equipment, and any other ancillary or provisional needs that a child will encounter (Cummings & Ewing, 2004).
In the field of sport psychology, researchers have used several developmental theories to examine the influence of parents. The word influence in this case, is used synonymously with the word involvement. Harter’s (1999) competence motivation theory indicated that children reported higher levels of athletic competence and intrinsic motivation when they received frequent positive comments from their parents and perceived positive parental beliefs about their competencies. Harter’s competence motivation theory has been one of the most commonly used motivational theories in sport (Horn & Amorose, 1998). Many scholars in the field of sport psychology have used Harter’s competence motivation theory to address difference facets of the sport psychology paradigm. One study that is pertinent to purposes of the current was conducted by Babkes and Weiss (1999) and examined the relationship between 227 youth athletes and parents regarding the children’s perceptions or parental influence and their psychosocial responses to competitive soccer participation. The first hypothesis proposed that children who perceive their parents’ behaviors and attitudes as more supportive would have more positive attitudes sporting experiences. For example, children will have higher perceptions of competence, enjoyment and intrinsic motivation. Babkes and Weiss’ (1999) second hypothesis proposed that the, “children’s perception of their parent’s behaviors and attitudes will be more strongly related to their self-perceptions of competence, enjoyment, and motivation that reported parental behaviors and attitudes” (p. 47). Their results demonstrated that mothers and fathers who perceived themselves as positive role models, who demonstrated positive beliefs about their child’s capability, and who frequently gave positive responses to performance successes were associated with athletes who had higher perceived competence, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation (Babkes & Weiss, 1999).
Another noted theory in sport psychology is the Eccles’ expectancy model (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). The Eccles’ expectancy model is a model of sporting achievement and activity choice in which key components are expectations (i.e. how well individuals are expected by others and themselves to do), social environment, gender roles, and individual differences. The model has been used to explain male/female differences in sport participation and success. Eccles expectancy-value model (Eccles et al., 1998) has demonstrated parents’ beliefs and behaviors influenced their children’s psychosocial development in sport (Holt, Tamminen, Black, Mandigo, & Fox, 2009; Brustad, 1996; Eccles & Harold, 1991, Kimiecik & Horn, 1998). All in all, generally high enjoyment, contribution to achieving goals, perceived importance, and low perceived costs facilitates continued participation on different activities. The Eccles’ expectancy model translates to parental involvement because parents would behave in ways according to the expectations they have of their children’s successes or failures in sport. For example, if a parent would rate a daughter's potential for success in a sport lower than a son's, the parents may demonstrate more supportive behaviors towards the son's sport participation. Conversely, if the daughter is expected to achieve at a low level, parents might demonstrate less supportive behavior, which in turn might drive the daughter away from sport.

Finally, an evidence-based theory that is rooted in parenting and attempts to predict major causes, consequences, and other correlates of interpersonal—especially parental—acceptance and rejection, is the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PAR Theory; Rohner, 1986, 2004; Rohner and Rohner, 1980). The use of the PAR Theory in sport has been limited, however this theory has influenced the work of numerous researchers examining conceptual parenting models stretching as far back as 1930 (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2005). In turn, PAR Theory has been used as a theoretical perspective in hundreds of studies covering all major American ethnic
groups in over 60 countries (Rohner & Khaleque, 2002; Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer 2005). This theory has been tested multiculturally, across ages and genders, and is reliable in predicting negative affect and worldviews among children perceived to be rejected (Rohner & Khaleque, 2002; et al., 2005; Rohner, Kean & Cournoyer, 1991).

**Theoretical Foundation**

PAR Theory is a theory of socialization that aims to predict and explain major causes, consequences, and correlates of parental acceptance and rejection (Rohner & Khaleque, 2002). PAR Theory predicts that parental rejection has consistent negative effects on the psychological adjustment and on behavioral functioning of both children and adults. PAR Theory is divided into three subcategories: the personality subtheory, coping subtheory, and the sociocultural systems subtheory (Rohner & Khaleque, 2002).

**PAR Theory Personality Subtheory**

This particular subtheory suggests that parental acceptance-rejection has profound influence in shaping children’s personality development over the life span (Rohner & Khaleque, 2002). This subtheory states that humans have a biological need for positive response from significant others (parents or other attachment figures) and when this is not adequately met by attachment figures children are predisposed emotionally and behaviorally to respond in specific ways. Rohner & Khaleque (2002) proposed that rejected children are likely to feel anxious and insecure, experience hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or problems with the management of hostility and aggression; dependence or defensive independence, depending on the form, frequency, and intensity of rejection; impaired self-esteem; impaired self-adequacy; emotional unresponsiveness; emotional instability; and negative worldview.
When applied to athletics, the negative consequences of the personality subtheory highlight some of the characteristics of children who have been pressured to participate and perform well in athletics. Parents that are extremely critical of their children’s athletic performance are often perceived as being rejected. Rejection is used synonymously with overinvolvement. Rejection and overinvolvement are both negative attitudes of parents and unfavorable to a child’s sporting experience. This extreme pressure and value on performance from parents may contribute to the child feeling anxious during competition and create a sense of failure by not meeting their parents’ standards. Based on the review of literature and the PAR Theory, we can surmise that balanced involvement from parents can positively impact their child’s athletic experience. Therefore, this study will examine a gap in the literature that determines how gender and parental sport experience relate to the perceived amount of parental involvement in late adolescent (i.e., high school) student athletes.

**Testing PAR Theory in Sport.** In order to answer the questions purposed by this study the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (PISQ) will be used to test the perceived amount of parental involvement in high school student athletes. There have been other researchers who have used PISQ to assess youth athlete’s perception of their parent's level of involvement. Some noted authors include Lee and Maclean (1997) and Stroebel (2006), who both used the PISQ to assess swimmers’ perceptions of their parent's level of involvement. Additionally, Wuerth et al., (2004) used the PISQ to assess the perceptions of youth athletes who participated in track, swimming, tennis, handball, and hockey.

Stroebel (2006) conducted a study to examine how a group of competitive adolescent swimmers perceived parental involvement and how it affects their total sporting experience. The study was predicated on the belief that adolescent sport participation is inherently tied to parental
involvement. Participants were drawn from four swimming clubs in Bloemfontein, Free State Province of South Africa and included 93 swimmers that completed the PISQ. Results revealed that directive behavior and pressure had a significant negative correlation among both mothers and fathers. Mothers of this study showed a significant correlation in praise and understanding and no correlation with active involvement. Fathers showed a significant positive correlation with pressure and directive behavior, as well as scoring higher than mothers on praise and understanding and demonstrating a negative correlation with active involvement. All in all, Stroebel (2006) found that parents need not impose their ambitions on their children. Parents should be loyal and supportive of the club they and their child choose to be part of. Furthermore, it was recommended that parents should have a good understanding of their supporting role which would add positive value to the total sporting experience of the child.

Wuerth et al. (2004) studied the pattern of involvement of parents in youth sport across career phases and career transitions, as well as identifying this pattern from the perspective of athletes and both of their parents in Leipzig, Germany. The PISQ was administered to 193 athletes between the ages of 10-20 who competed at several levels of performance. Their mothers and their fathers were also given the PISQ twice over a 12-month interval. Results indicated that the young athletes perceive only low levels of pressure, but high levels of praise and understanding. Mothers see themselves primarily as a source of praise and understanding; fathers give a greater amount of directive behavior than mothers. Pressure was solely correlated with directive behavior. Athletes with successful career transition during the 12-month period report a higher amount of parental involvement than athletes with no transition. These results augment confidence to the cross-cultural validity of the PISQ. They corroborate the assumption that both parents play an important, though slightly different, role in an athlete’s career.
development. Although this study is similar to the presently proposed study it is different in the areas of data collection, demographics and patterns of the family dynamic.

Finally, Ede (2012) used the PISQ to assess youth hockey players’ perceptions of their parents’ involvement. The study consisted of 58 youth hockey players ages 13-15 that received parental consent to participate in the study. Ede found youth hockey athletes were dissatisfied with their parent's level of involvement including their directive behavior, praise and understanding, and active involvement. However, the youth hockey athletes did not let this displeasure of their parents’ involvement effect their enjoyment in the sport. Results compared mother’s level of involvement to their father’s level of involvement. When the mother’s level of involvement was compared with their fathers' level of involvement, athletes were satisfied with their father's level of praise and understanding, but dissatisfied with their mother's level of praise and understanding (Ede, 2012). The athletes were dissatisfied with both their mother's and father's levels of directive behavior and active involvement (Ede, 2012).

Overall, the literature indicates the PISQ should be used in multiple sports among multiple ages. Finding out what parents perceive their involvement to be in their child’s sporting experience can help them recognize when they are overly involved, as well as add to the literature about parental influence in sport, thus improving the overall athletic experience for both parents and children.
Chapter Three

Methods

Participants

After receiving IRB and individual athletic director approval, participants of this study volunteered from two high schools in Central Indiana. This was a nonprobability convenience sample. Participants included 30 parents from girls’ basketball, 40 parents from girls’ club volleyball, 50 parents from girls’ and boys’ swimming, and 30 parents from boys’ basketball. Participants volunteered for recruitment into the study at specific games and practices and then were briefed on the scope and nature of the study before completing the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire administered was the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (PISQ) designed by Lee and MacLean (1997). This is a 19-item instrument that includes three multi-item scales. This instrument was designed to assess children’s’ perceptions of their parents’ involvement in their sport. The PISQ was adapted from previous work by Wood and Abernathy (1991) and Power and Woolger (1994). Wood and Abernathy assembled a list of 24 behaviors, demonstrated by parents of swimmers, where the children participating in competitive swimming, were asked to rank desirability, frequency of their parents’ involvement, occurrence, and the resultant pressure and support provided (Lee and MacLean, 1997). Power and Woolger (1994) devised a 51-item inventory to measure aspects of parent behavior and attitudes toward their children in competitive swimming. Power and Woolger’s instrument was designed for completion by the parents only. Power and Woolger’s parental inventory was different than Wood and Abernathy (1991) based on the fact that Wood and Abernathy studied the child’s perception of their parents and Power and Woolger studied the parent’s own perceptions of their
involvement. Subsequently, items for the current study were selected from each instrument. Only items that dealt with parental behaviors were used. Lee and MacLean (1997) established the reliability and factor structure of the questionnaire. The established reliability for the three scales measured were 0.83 for directive behavior (DB), 0.60 for active involvement (AI), and 0.72 praise and understanding (PU).

The PISQ measures frequency and desirability of both parental support and pressure in forms of directive behaviors, praise and understanding, and active involvement. Participants are responsible for identifying the frequency with which certain behaviors were (a) exhibited by, and (b) desired of their parents on a five-point Likert scale anchored by “Always or Never.” Wuerth et al.’s 2004 study demonstrated validity of the PISQ (Ede, 2012). Lee and MacLean (1997) established the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Internal reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha, and three subscales were specified including directive behavior (.82), praise and understanding (.60), and active involvement (.66). Wuerth et al. found that all the subscales, except the active involvement subscale, showed internal consistency and retest reliability (Ede, 2012 & Stroebel, 2006).

For purposes of this study, this instrument was modified to ensure parental involvement is measured. First, the terminology of the PISQ was modified to be specific for parents of high school athletes. The stem of each question was change from, Do your parents... to Do you...

For example, in the original PISQ by Lee and MacLean (1999) there is a question that states, “Do your parents tell you how they think you can improve your technique (i.e., strokes, starts, turns, etc.). For purposes of this study, the modification will read as follows; “Do you tell your child how they can improve their technique (i.e., sport specific skills). For specific modifications refer to Figure 1 and Figure 2. These questions need not be sport specific.
Design and Procedure

The current study was a non-experimental design that examined the perceived parental involvement of high school parents. Gender and parental sport experience were the independent demographic variables of interest. The PISQ subscales (i.e., active involvement, praise and understanding, and directive behavior) were the dependent variables used to evaluate parental involvement.

After securing permission from the two athletic directors of high schools in Central Indiana, as well as IRB approval, a table was placed near the entrance of basketball games, volleyball practices and swimming meets. There were two boxes on the tables that had the new surveys, as well as a box for the completed surveys. There were several pens and clipboards to aid the parents with completing the surveys. The researcher approached parents as they enter into the sporting arena to ask if they will take a few minutes to fill out the survey. The participants took the survey and a clipboard back to their seats to complete the survey. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. After participants completed the PISQ they place the completed survey into the completed survey box.

Analysis

Data analyses of the demographic variables were tested through descriptive statistics by use of frequency counts and measures of central tendency. After initial demographic and descriptive analysis, each hypothesis was tested using an independent t-test computed using SPSS version 20.
Chapter Four

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Frequencies

The purpose of this study was to explore parents’ perception of involvement within high school athletics. Investigating the perceived involvement parents have in their child’s athletic experience can help them recognize when they are overly involved, as well as add to the literature about parental influence in sport, thus improving the overall athletic experience for both parents and children.

Descriptive statistic results on the PISQ indicated participants had mean score of 16.87 (SD = 7.32) in directive behavior (DB), a mean score of 13.59 (SD = 2.88) in active involvement (AI), and a mean score of 12.19 (SD = 2.60) in praise and understanding. Frequency counts were used to describe parent gender, child’s gender, and sport experience. A total of 150 parents (75 males and 75 females) participated in the study. Refer to Table 3 for more frequency information.

Nine independent-sample t-tests were conducted to evaluate all hypotheses for the study. The first hypothesis predicted that mothers would have less perceived AI than fathers. This hypothesis was not confirmed, \( t(148) = -.255, p = .80 \). This result indicates mothers (\( M=13.65, SD=2.98 \)) and fathers (\( M=13.53, SD=2.80 \)) do not differ in active involvement. The second hypothesis predicted that mothers would have less perceived DB than fathers. This hypothesis was not confirmed indicating mothers (\( M=16.77, SD=6.81 \)), and fathers (\( M=16.96, SD=7.84 \)) do not differ on DB, \( t(148) = .156, p=.88 \). The third hypothesis predicted mothers would have more perceived PU than fathers. Similar to the preceding hypotheses, no significant differences existed between mothers (\( M=12.55, SD=2.42 \)) and fathers (\( M=11.84, SD=2.73 \)), \( t(148) = - \).
1.676, $p = .096$, indicating mothers and fathers believe they are demonstrating the same amount of praise and understanding.

An independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to evaluate all hypotheses for the second research question which posited whether there are differences between parents of male athletes and parents of female athletes regarding their perceived involvement in sport? The fourth hypothesis predicted that parents of female athletes will have less perceived active involvement in sport than parents of male athletes. This hypothesis was not confirmed, $t(148) = 1.855$, $p = .066$. The results indicated that parents of female athletes, ($M=13.20$, $SD=2.49$), and parents of male athletes, ($M=14.07$, $SD=3.28$) had no difference between active involvement. The fifth hypothesis anticipated that parents of female athletes will have less perceived directive behavior than parents of male athletes, $t(148) = -.831$, $p = .407$. This hypothesis found no significant results. Parents of female athletes, ($M=17.31$, $SD=7.61$) and parents of male athletes, ($M=16.31$, $SD=9.67$) do not differ in the area of directive behavior. Finally, the hypothesis that predicted that parents of female athletes will have more perceived praise and understanding than parents of male athletes was not confirmed, $t(148) = .255$, $p = .799$. This means that parents of female athletes, ($M=12.14$, $SD=2.64$), and parents of male athletes ($M=12.25$, $SD=2.57$) do not believe they differ in the area of praise and understanding.

To answer the last proposed research question, an independent-samples $t$-test was conducted to evaluate all hypotheses. The hypothesis that predicted parents with a low level of sporting experience will have less perceived active involvement than parents with a high level of sporting experience, $t(148) = 1.708$, $p = .090$, found no significant results. This indicated that parents with a low level of sporting experience ($M=13.19$, $SD= 3.05$) and parents with a high level of sporting experience ($M=13.99$, $SD= 2.67$) do not differ in regards to active involvement.
The hypothesis that proposed parents with a low level of sporting experience will have less perceived directive behavior than parents with a high level of sporting experience was not confirmed, \( t(148) = .940, p = .349 \). Parents with a low level of sporting experience (\( M = 16.30, SD = 7.61 \)) had no difference in directive behavior than parents with a high level of sporting experience (\( M = 17.42, SD = 7.03 \)). Finally, the last hypothesis that predicted parents with a low level of sporting experience will have more perceived praise and understanding than parents with a high level of sporting experience found no significant results, \( t(148) = - .169, p = .866 \). This results indicated that parents with a low level of sporting experience (\( M = 12.23, SD = 2.68 \)) had no difference than parents with a high level of sporting experience (\( M = 12.16, SD = 2.54 \)) with regards to praise and understanding.
Chapter 5

Discussion

The present study sought to determine if there were gendered differences in perceived parental involvement and sport experience. Results suggested there are no statistically significant gendered differences in perceived parental involvement and sport experience for parents of high school athletes. The results indicated that mothers and fathers do not differ in their directive behavior, active involvement, and praise and understanding based on the gender of their child or their previous sporting experience.

The existing literature solidified the idea that parents do play a major role in their children’s sport experience and that their involvement is important to their children (Hellstedt, 1990; Lee & MacLean, 1997; Hoyle & Leff, 1997; Wuerth et al., 2003). Literature also suggested that parental involvement has been observed to be positively associated with student behaviors and attitudes in such areas as increased school attendance, fewer discipline problems, and higher scholastic aspirations (McBride et al, 2009). McBride et al. (2009) stated that a moderate amount of parental involvement is needed to ensure a child’s sporting experience is one of pleasure and joy. The moderate amount of parental involvement is essential for the parents to communicate interest and care to the child (Cummings & Ewing, 2004).

The first research question asked if there were differences between mothers and fathers regarding their perceived involvement in sport. The three corresponding hypotheses predicted mothers would have less perceived active involvement and directive behavior than fathers, but more perceived praise and understanding than fathers. None of the first three hypotheses were confirmed which indicated no significant differences between mothers and fathers. These findings were most closely related to those results found in a study done by Wuerth et al (2004)
as well as Wilson (2005). Wuerth et al. (2004) examined the pattern of involvement of parents in youth sports across career phases and career transitions. This study consisted of 347 young athletes who participated in both team sports and individual sports. In addition to the young athletes, 265 mothers and 215 fathers were also surveyed. This study is different than the proposed study because the study by Wuerth et al. was a longitudinal study across two years, the participants were German athletes, both the athletes and their parents took the PISQ, and the PISQ was adapted differently for this study.

The results of Wuerth et al (2004) indicated that both parents and athletes reported high levels of praise and understanding, low to moderate levels of directive behavior, and active involvement was consistent with both parents and athletes. Wuerth et al.’s study focused on athletes throughout their careers, where one level of the athletic career phase was “development”. The development stage is the phase where there is increased commitment to the sport, and children focus increasingly on the improvement of skills and techniques with more competition at higher levels (Wuerth, 2004). This is the level of athlete that is most representative of the current study. The high school student athletes that participated in the study were not elite master level athletes, nor did the high schools take part in high level competitions. Thus, late adolescent athletes in the development stage of their athletic careers may have parents who do demonstrate the proper amount of involvement. This would make sense because high school student athletes have persevered long enough to have continued parental support as they progressed through youth sport, but are not elite level athletes that could have overly involved parents.

In Wuerth et al.’s study, the following scores showcased the numbers of the development stage: active involvement scores for mothers \(M = 1.39, SD = .57,\) and fathers \(M = 1.56, SD = \)
0.84); Direct Behavior scores for mothers ($M = 2.34, SD = 0.76$) and fathers ($M = 2.49, SD = 0.83$); and finally Praise and Understanding scores for mothers ($M = 3.76, SD = 0.61$) and for fathers ($M = 3.71, SD = 0.85$). These numbers were found to be significant in Wuerth et al.’s study whereas in the current study no significant results were found. This could be because in the Wuerth study there were more participants and more diversity of sports. In the current study, there was a relatively small amount of participants. The relatively small sample size of only 75 mothers and 75 fathers is not an adequate number to accurately represent the population. Due to the time and travel constraints of the proposed study, there were only a few sports in season at the time of data collection. This means that there could have been more benefit to the study if there were more sports from different areas of the country because of the cultural differences across the United States. In sports such as soccer diversity is booming. African American and Hispanic participation numbers have grown from 4 percent to 15-20 percent respectively (McDonald, 2012). In Wilson’s (2005) study, the purpose was to compare parental pressure to participate in athletics in rural and urban communities. The study sought to determine if there was a difference between urban and rural children’s perceived parental involvement. Participants of the study were 49 male and female undergraduate students who participated in one organized athletic team when they were in middle and/or high school. This study differs from the current study because Wilson looks at the difference between urban and rural communities; it is a retrospective study that required participants to recall their experiences with their parents’ involvement in the athletic realm; and it studied the frequency and desirability of behaviors of parental behaviors.

Results of Wilson’s study indicated that adolescents in both rural and urban communities perceived their parents to be supportive of their athletic participation. Specifically, Wilson
(2005) found that there is no difference between rural and urban groups in the frequency of parental behaviors. These were the self-reported behaviors of the participants. Both groups consistently ranked directive behaviors at a low frequency, praise and understanding as occurring very frequently, and active involvement as occurring at a moderate frequency. Wilson (2005) also tested the desirability of behaviors and found significant differences between the rural and urban groups. The rural group rated the desirability of directive behaviors and praise and understanding higher than the urban group. Wilson’s results solidify the fact that diversity is important when finding significant differences between tested groups. This finding is important to the current study because of the strong heterogeneity of the parents at the rural high schools sampled, especially regarding sport participation. This should be expected because the participants of the current study were all from the same rural area of Indiana. Wilson examined rural and urban groups; the current study looked at only a rural population.

The second research question asked if there were differences between parents of male athletes and parents of female athletes regarding their perceived involvement in sport. The hypotheses that were formulated predicted parents of female athletes would have less perceived active involvement in sport than parents of male athletes. Parents of female athletes would have less perceived directive behavior than parents of male athletes; and parents of female athletes would have more perceived praise and understanding than parents of male athletes. No hypotheses addressing the second research question were confirmed indicating no significant differences between parents of male athletes and parents of female athletes. These findings are contradictory to the findings of previous literature.

In a study done by Chafetz and Kortarba (1995), the role mothers played in Little League baseball was examined. They found that mothers reproduce traditional gender ideology and
encompass gender differences as they provide labor that makes youth sports possible. “ Mothers socialize their sons into, and reinforce their own commitment to, gender values particular to their upwardly mobile community through activities that stress female management of family-oriented conspicuous consumption, the cult of the male child, and gender segregation” (p. 217). In another study done by Ede (2012), the mothers were considered to excel in motherhood with duties such as laundry and cooking. These duties nurture the child’s sport participation. On the contrary, fathers participate in the coaching, teaching, and scouting of a child's sport participation (Coakley, 2006).

For centuries, sport has been well-regarded as a male-dominated realm. In the past, women have been described as inferior to men and have been denied access to equal opportunities in most social institutions, including sport (Gilbert, 2001). Obstacles for female sport participation and involvement were established centuries ago and limited by standards set by society (Gilbert, 2001). Near the end of the 19th century, there was a dramatic rise in the number of women participating in sport (Mawson, 1983). During this time, women were participating in leisure sports such as tennis, archery, bowling, and swimming more than ever before, but these were sports which displayed grace and beauty (Gilbert, 2001).

In the last several decades, female sport participation has grown at an exponential rate. There are female football leagues, professional basketball, and professional soccer leagues. Women's participation in college sports has exploded since Title IX was enacted in 1972, rising from less than 10 percent of participating college athletes to almost 40 percent. For example, women's tennis has soared from 22 Division I squads in 1982 to 131 today (Gavora, 1996). There are more opportunities for women in sport, and the results of this study seem to suggest
parents support their daughters in the same ways they only used to support their sons. This is a potentially groundbreaking finding that warrants continued research.

The third and final research question asked if parents with a high level of sporting experience differed from parents with low sporting experience regarding their perceived involvement in sport. The following three hypotheses predicted that parents with a low level of sporting experience would have less perceived active involvement than parents with a high level of sporting experience. Parents with a low level of sporting experience would have less perceived directive behavior than parents with a high level of sporting experience; and finally, parents with a low level of sporting experience would have more perceived praise and understanding than parents with a high level of sporting experience. Similar to research questions one and two, no hypotheses for research question three were confirmed. These findings indicate no significant differences for the variables under investigation due to parent's level of sporting experience.

The lack of significant results for this research question could be due to the fact that no studies to date have studied this particular population or used the variable of sporting experience with the PISQ. It could also be proposed that the level of competition of the parents and the student athlete could be a factor in a more diverse and eclectic sample size. For example, Wuerth et. al (2004) examined athletes in the mastery phase of the career development model. This phase is where athletes are considered to be ‘obsessed’ with their sport. In Wuerth’s study the mastery phase recorded the highest numbers on the PISQ. Using Wuerth’s results and applying the career development model to parents in the future could produce significant results and test sporting experience in more detail. The experience of the participants may play a role in the perception of parental involvement. No studies to date have studied the correlation of sport experience and
parental involvement. Thus, insignificant results from the proposed study could indicate that active involvement, direct behavior, and praise and understanding are important to all parents at any level. Additionally, splitting sport experience into an artificially created high and low category may have limited the effect of sporting experiences to influence the results. Future studies could examine this variable as a continuous variable instead of a categorical variable.

Although this particular study found no significant results with regard to gendered differences in parental involvement in high school student athletes, these results are in themselves valuable. Sometimes knowing there are no significant differences between groups is as informative as knowing there is a difference. Knowing that there is no gendered difference between mothers and fathers in sport could mean the study of parental involvement in sport should focus on different aspects of parenting. For example, studies could examine parenting styles compared to parental involvement, or examine parental involvement in school and non-athletic aspects of a child’s life versus parental involvement in sport.

The above results could be a stepping stone for future research. The use of the new variable of sporting experience in accordance with the PISQ could help extend the research in youth sports. The lack of significant results may be due to the lack of demographic diversity and sports under investigation. The majority of the current study had Caucasian participants from the same general vicinity of Indiana. Future studies should look at sports like soccer and football because of the growing numbers of diverse participants. Future studies could those aforementioned sports in different areas of the United States to obtain and a more diverse sample size. Wuerth et al (2005) had over 300 participants from different ethnic backgrounds and ages. Stroebel (2006), another author who administered the PISQ, had 95 participants with a variety of
ages. Each of the aforementioned authors had significant results with the PISQ. In contrast, the current study did not differ in race or ages of the athletes.

Another possible reason that the current study produced no significant results was because the study fails to measure parental behaviors that might be exhibited in a private environment. This means that some parents may be more likely to pressure and critique their child’s performance in the privacy of their own homes than in public places. It is also important to address the fact that PISQ has not been administered to parents at the high school level. The current study did not use the PISQ in its conventional manner. For example, the modification of the PISQ included adjusting the language (“Do your parents show that they understand how you are feeling about swimming,” was altered to, “Do you show that you understand how you are feeling about your child’s sporting experience?”) Furthermore, The PISQ was not used to address the desirability of parent behaviors. This would have required the student athlete to take the PISQ. The current study only focused on the parent’s perspective. The omission of using the desirability of parental behaviors on the PISQ may have enhanced the current study because all parents desire to be the ideal role model parent. Finally, and similar to the proceeding explanation, parents in the current study were likely exhibiting social desirability bias (Fisher, 1993). In other words, parents were completing the PISQ in a way that made them appear like a good parent. It may be unlikely to get truthful answers to questions that insinuate the parent could be berating or criticizing their child.

All in all, it is the researcher’s hope that the lack of differences could mean there is an increasing equality in the way parents influence their child's sporting experience. Mothers are taking more responsibility in all aspects of their families’ lives, and this now includes sport. In a study done by Deutsch (1999), the ideology of intensive motherhood is combated. The ideology
of intensive motherhood states that mothers have an exclusive responsibility to children while fathers are the second-best substitute. Deutsch believes that equally shared parenting styles are becoming the norm. Equally shared parenting avoids gender based decisions and reinforces equal division of labor at the home (Deutsch, 1999). Equally sharing parents create family careers by making choices compatible with primary parenting for two (Deutsch, 1999). This includes athletics, school, and job paths. These results seem to be demonstrating that in today’s age more and more parents are becoming equal in the sport realm.

Conclusion

To conclude, the following important aspects should be kept in mind. Parents that are extremely critical of their children’s athletic performance are often perceived as being negative (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004). This extreme pressure from parents may contribute to the child feeling anxious during competition and create a sense of failure due to not meeting parents’ expectations (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004). The current study found that neither directive behavior, active involvement, nor praise and understanding were significant factors with parents in this study. Therefore, the extreme pressure that is detrimental to a child’s enjoyment was not an influence to the child’s sporting experience in this study. The current study also showed that with a homogeneous sample size there may be a limited chance of discovering any significant findings. Although this makes generalizability difficult, it is important to note that these particular parents were consistently positive. Parents should continue to reach for the moderate level of involvement to facilitate a positive sport career demonstrated by the parents in this study. Since this is the first study of its kind to utilize the PISQ in a modified manner without utilizing the desired parental behaviors, and the first to test the high school population, future studies should continue to refine methodology to measure parental involvement in this population.
**References**


Appendix A

Figure 1.
Scale Structure of PISQ (Lee & MacLean, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Item (in the order it appears in the PISQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Directive Behavior</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>After a gala do your parents tell you what they think they need to work on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>After a poor race do your parents point out the things they think you did badly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Do our parents tell you how they think you can improve your technique (i.e, strokes, starts, turns, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>During training do your parents tell you or signal to you what you should do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Do your parents yell or cheer before a game or match?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Do your parents push you to train harder?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Do your parents get upset with you if they think your swimming is not going as well as it should be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Before a race do your parents tell you what particular things you need to work on in order to do well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Before a gala do your parents tell you how to swim your race?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>After a race do your parents tell you what you didn’t try hard enough?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Praise &amp; Understanding</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Even when you have sum a poor race do your parents praise you for the good things that you did?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>After a race do your parents praise you for trying hard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Do your parents show that they understand how you are feeling about swimming?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>After a race do your parents praise you for where you were placed (i.e. 1st, 10th, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Active Involvement</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Do your parents take an active role in running your club by doing such things as teaching, being on a committee, or helping with social events?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Do your parents volunteer to help at galas that you are swimming in as officials, whips, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Do your parents discuss your progress with your coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Do your parents encourage you to talk to them about any problems or worries that they have with your swimming?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Do your parents change mealtimes so that you can train and go to galas?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Figure 2.
Revised Scale Structure of PISQ (Lee & MacLean, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Revised Items (in the order it appears in the PISQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Directive Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>After a game do you tell your child what you think they need to work on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>After a poor performance in a game or match do you point out to your child the things you think they did badly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Do you tell your child what you think they can improve on in any aspect of their game (i.e., conditioning, smarter player, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>During training do you tell your child or signal to your child what you think they should do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Do you yell or cheer for your child before a game or match?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Do you push your child to train harder?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Do you get upset with your child if you think they are not doing as well in a match or game as they should be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Before a match or game do you tell your child what particular things they need to work on in order to do well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Before a match or game do you tell your child how to play their game?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Praise &amp; Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>After a game or match do your parents tell you what you didn’t try hard enough?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Even when your child has a poor game or match do you praise them for the good things that they did?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>After a game or match do you praise your child for trying hard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Do you show that you understand how you are feeling about your child’s sporting experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Active Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>After a game or match do you praise your child whether they win or lose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Do you take an active role in running your child’s high school athletic clubs by doing such things as concession work, working at the ticket booth, or booster clubs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Do you volunteer to help at games and matches that your child is participating in as officials, assistant coaches, etc.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Do you discuss your child’s progress with their coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Do you encourage your child to talk to you about any problems or worries they may have about participating in athletics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Do you change mealtimes so that your child can train and go to games or matches?</td>
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</tbody>
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## Appendix C

Table 3.

*Frequency and Descriptive Statistics*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>PU</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.19</td>
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