Family Financial Investment in Organized Youth Sport

Michael King
Utah State University

Kevin Rothlisberger
Utah State University

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Most American youth are involved in organized sports. A breadth of research has described the benefits and consequences of this participation. Likewise, much research has been conducted to investigate the impact of involvement in organized youth sport on the parents-child relationship.

Recent studies show that parental involvement in their children’s sport of choice increased the child’s enjoyment in that sport. They also found that the child’s commitment to the sport increased with the support of their parents. To our knowledge, existing research does not specifically address the relationship among family financial investment, the enjoyment youth have in organized youth sport, and their subsequent motivation to continue participation. The present study aims to address this gap in knowledge.

### Methods

**Participants**

163 parent-child dyads were recruited through organized youth sports leagues throughout the United States. PARENTS were 78 fathers and 85 mothers aged 27 to 59 years (M = 41.02, SD = 5.63). Participants represented biological, step, and adoptive parents, identified primarily as White or Caucasian (61.3%), and reported relatively high gross annual incomes (M = $110,085, SD = $66,885).

ATHLETES were 126 males and 37 females aged 8 to 18 years (M = 16.32, SD = 2.39). Athletes were drawn from a variety of sports (n = 14) and the majority (74.2%) reported participating in two or more sports.

**Procedures**

After obtaining IRB approval, coaches were emailed to explain the details of the study. Permission was requested to survey parents and athletes on respective travel and recreational teams. If permission was granted, the ONLINE SURVEY INSTRUMENT was disseminated to parents via Email.

### Results

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics for study variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>10.28</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Correlation Matrix for study variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Enjoyment</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td><strong>0.20</strong></td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td><strong>-0.53</strong></td>
<td>-0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td><strong>0.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1. Path Analysis depicting family financial investment, parent pressure, child enjoyment and child motivation to continue participation**

**Discussion**

Through our research, we were able to measure the correlation family financial investment and athlete motivation via parent pressure and child enjoyment. This study informs PARENTS who have children participating in organized youth sports as well as SPORT ADMINISTRATORS and COACHES. Specifically, these providers of sport should be aware of the link of financial investment, parent pressure, child enjoyment, and motivation to continue in sports.

**References**


