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High School Sophomores' Perceptions of the Role of Extra-Curricular Activities as Preparation for College Admission

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HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AS PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

by

John Earl Wyble

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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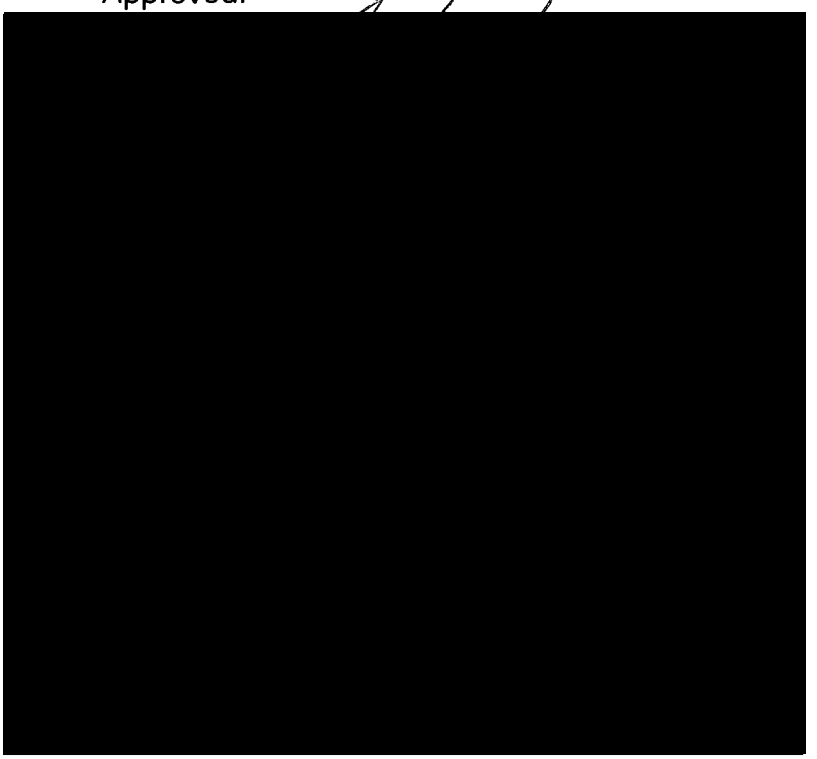

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ABSTRACT

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR

ACTIVITIES AS PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

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While there is significant interest and emphasis on student participation in extra-curricular activities, limited research on such participation and the benefits it may possess toward preparing students for college admissions exists. A survey of 312 high school sophomores in a rural, southeastern Louisiana school district was conducted. Data were collected through the survey on the students' participation in extra-curricular activities and their perceived value of such participation toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institution. The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and the perceived value of such participation toward gaining admission to college as reported by the students. Additionally, the relationship was further analyzed when controlled for gender, academic performance (GPA), and religious participation.

The research found a statistically significant relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the perceived value of such participation toward gaining admissions to a postsecondary institution. The

research also found the relationship to be statistically significant when controlled for gender, grades, and religious participation.

From this study, the researcher concluded that the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the value held of such participation toward obtaining admission to college was evident but did not exhibit a strong relationship. Additionally, when controlled for religious participation, gender, and GPA, there was no effect on the correlation of the two variables.

Students valued, however, participation in extra-curricular activities as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution. Students in this survey agreed that such participation did prepare them for the college admissions process. Particularly, students who participated in extra-curricular activities held a higher value of their participation toward college admission than students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities. Students surveyed did recognize their respective schools' efforts in preparing them for college overall, but indicated their high school rarely acknowledged the relationship between extra-curricular activities and the admissions process into a postsecondary institution.

While this particular study produced many more questions than it did answers, the information gained can play a critical role in making decisions regarding extra-curricular activities. School and district administrators should utilize the information in this study for any future decisions made regarding extra-curricular activities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....iv

LIST OF TABLES.....vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION.....1

Background
Statement of the Problem
Research Questions & Hypotheses
Definition of Terms
Delimitations
Assumptions
Justification

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....9

Introduction
Theoretical Framework of Extra-Curricular Activity
Research on Positive Outcomes of Extra-Curricular Activity
Academic Outcomes of Extra-Curricular Activity
Gender & Participation in Extra-Curricular Activity
Religious Participation and Extra-Curricular Activity
Beyond Academia: Pro-Social & Leadership Qualities of Extra-Curricular Activity
Athletics: A Prominent Component of Extra-Curricular Activity
Engaging in At-Risk Behaviors and Extra-Curricular Activity
Negative Impact of Extra-Curricular Activity Participation
Summary

III. METHODOLOGY.....54

Purpose
Participants
Instrumentation
Procedures
Pilot Study
Data Analysis

IV. RESULTS.....60

Summary
Study Participants
Results of Statistical Analysis

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS.....67

Summary
Discussion
Conclusions
Recommendations

APPENDIXES.....85

A. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

B. LETTER OF APPROVAL, WASHINGTON PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

C. PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

D. STUDENT CONSENT FORM

E. IRB APPROVAL

REFERENCES.....94

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Means and Standard Deviations for Items Used to Calculate Value of Extra-Curricular Participation.....62
2. Means and Standard Deviations for Participants and Nonparticipants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Activity.....63
3. Means and Standard Deviations by Gender for Participants and Non-Participants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Participation.....64
4. Means and Standard Deviations by Religious Participation for Participants and Non-Participants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Participation.....65
5. Means and Standard Deviations by GPA for Participants and Non-Participants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Participation.....66

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

This study seeks to add to a growing body of literature that suggests that success in school is not merely a feature of personal attributes and school processes. Rather, success in school is shaped by a broad array of interrelated contexts, including family, community, inter-, and intra-generational ties (Goddard, 2003; Crosnoe, 2004).

Participation in extra-curricular activities serves as an additional context in which to interact with unrelated, supportive adults (Broh, 2002; Darling, 2005) and likely aids in parental and adult monitoring in that it organizes students' time. Extra-curricular participation also likely shapes friendship networks in ways that connect participants to more conventionally and academically oriented adolescents (Broh 2002).

However, there is no consensus on how to classify activities. For example, classifications for school-based extracurricular activities include sports versus nonsports (Guest & Schneider, 2003); team sports, school involvement (student government, pep-club, or cheerleading), performing arts (band, drama, dance, or art), and academic clubs (e.g., subject clubs and debate) (Eccles et al., 2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005); sports (including supporting activities such as cheerleading and pep-club), academic (subject matter clubs and debate), fine arts (music related, dance, drama), and vocational (vocational and hobby clubs);

and interscholastic sports, intramural sports, cheerleading, music, drama, student council, yearbook, and vocational clubs (Broh, 2002).

Some researchers code the extra-curricular activity measures dichotomously, indicating any level of participation (Broh, 2002; Eccles et al., 2003; Darling, 2005), whereas others use a count of the number of activities within each category of participation. Regardless of how to classify or quantify the depth of participation, studies regularly indicate that students who participate in extra-curricular activities, including athletics, derive a host of benefits: better grades, a higher likelihood of college attendance, a lower likelihood of dropout, higher educational aspirations, more satisfaction with schools and teachers, higher life satisfaction, broader conventional peer networks, less involvement in delinquent behavior, and less drug and alcohol use (Crosnoe, 2002; Eccles et al., 2003; Hoffmann & Xu, 2002; Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

Past scholarship provides a starting point for speculating on what developmental processes might occur in extra-curricular activities. First, it has been proposed that extra-curricular activities provide students with opportunities for exploration, which are used to facilitate identity work.

Participation in service activities can provide "reflective material" that students use in their process of identity exploration and identity development (Youniss et al., 1999; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Waterman (1984) suggested that students try out different extra-curricular activities as part of their process of

identity exploration, and that these activities are a primary source of material for identity exploration.

This deliberate use of extra-curricular activities for identity work is suggested by findings that many students mention their involvement in sports or another extra-curricular activity when they are asked to describe their personal strengths (Williams & McGee, 1991). However, accounts from students are needed to obtain a better sense of how they use experiences in activities in an active process of identity work and educational goal setting and attainment.

Second, it has been proposed that extra-curricular activities are a context in which students develop initiative, which Larson (2000) defines as the capacity to direct attention and effort over time toward a challenging goal. Larson suggests that teens in extra-curricular activities learn about how to make plans, overcome obstacles, and achieve desired ends.

The primary focus of this research addresses the value of extra-curricular participation held by high school sophomore students toward obtaining educational goals. The perception of value, particular to this study, specifically references the ability to gain admission into a postsecondary institution.

While this literature has been somewhat studied and analyzed, there is a need to engage in this study in order to understand if this research is applicable to students participating in extra-curricular activities and its connectivity with gaining admission to a postsecondary institution.

Without question, the primary indicators that postsecondary institutions will examine to determine whether or not to accept a student are academic

performance in the high school classroom and standardized testing. However, many institutions are factoring in the student's ability to contribute to the institution as a whole and not just through academic courses (Sitley, 2001).

Louisiana State University recently indicated they were exploring strategies to increase enrollment. In the article, university officials expressed the need to look at a student's complete body of work, including awards, honors, and participation in extra-curricular activities (Blum, 2008).

Many postsecondary institutions have given credibility to the importance of participating in extra-curricular activities. Northeastern University in Massachusetts recently began an admissions program that examines the student's ability to work in a team setting; leadership experiences and development; and self-motivation to take on initiatives (Hoover, 2007).

At DePaul University there is an increased emphasis placed on extra-curricular activity. According to the director of undergraduate admissions, "We know that being a part of a school band requires hours of practice each day. It shows that these students can make a commitment, and it reveals a bit about their character" (Sitley, 2001, p.20).

Statement of the Problem

While there is some research on the value of extra-curricular participation for students, there is a scarcity of work specific to the correlation between such participation and gaining admission to college. Particularly, what is the value that students in high school place in extra-curricular participation with applying for, and obtaining, admission to a postsecondary institute? The purpose of this study

was to determine if high school sophomore students attending public school in a rural, Southeastern region of Louisiana valued participation in extra-curricular activities as part of the preparation for applying toward, and gaining, admission to a postsecondary institution.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

The researcher examined the following questions:

1. Is there a correlation between high school sophomores who participate in extra-curricular activities and their reported value of such participation as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institute?
2. Is there a correlation between high school sophomores who participate in extra-curricular activities and their reported value of such participation as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institute when controlled for the following variables: Religious Participation, Gender, and Grade Point Average (GPA)?

The researcher hypothesized high school sophomores in Southeast Louisiana who participated in extra-curricular activities would exhibit a significant, positive correlation between such participation and its value as a component to obtaining admission into a postsecondary institute. Further, the study will show a significant, positive relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and value toward obtaining admission into a postsecondary institution when controlled for religious participation, gender, and GPA.

Definition of Terms

Extra-Curricular Activity -- An activity in which a student chooses to participate; for the purpose of this study, extra-curricular activity includes athletics, arts, vocational clubs, student organizations, volunteering, and leadership clubs.

Grade Point Average – Academic ranking or grading system based on a 4.0 scale.

High School and Beyond Data Set (HSB) – One of three major studies of the National Center for Education Statistics beginning in 1980 with sophomore and senior students who were surveyed every two years through 1986 and another survey in 1992 of the 1980 sophomore class.

High School Sophomore – a student in secondary (high) school who is in the tenth (10^{th}) grade according to the school's policy on the number of course credits earned.

National Education Longitudinal Studies (NELS) – a program of the National Center for Education Statistics established to study the vocational, educational, and personal development of students from elementary to adulthood.

Perception – One's own thought or value of an idea or concept; Insight, intuition, or knowledge gained by perceiving.

Postsecondary Institute – Any college or university; include junior or community college, four year college or university; public, parochial, or private.

Pro Social Activities – Activities which engage individuals in their social and community development, such as voting, volunteer, religious participation, and participation in clubs, sports, and extra-curricular activities.

Religious Participation – For the purposes of this study, attending a religious service at least one time per month.

Delimitations

The study was delimited by the following conditions:

1. This study was delimited to high school students in one school district in Southeast Louisiana.
2. This study did not solicit input from personnel at any postsecondary institution.
3. Only students in public school participated in this study.
4. Only sophomore students participated in this study.

Assumptions

The researcher assumes the students will answer the survey questions honestly and thoroughly. Further assumption is made that the students will be administered the survey on a school day with a typical schedule, with no or only limited external distractions (special events or activities, extended or reduced class periods, special testing).

Justification

The researcher intends for the results of this study to serve as a resource for administrators and educators in the Southeast Louisiana school district in preparing students for the postsecondary application process. The researcher

further intends for this study to contribute to the limited body of work examining participation in extra-curricular activity and gaining admission to college.

Research already exists to support educators' suggestions that students begin preparing for their postsecondary plans immediately upon entering high school. In fact, experts recommend that high school sophomores begin conversations with counselors about interest and possible long term goals. Another primary recommendation, in addition to doing some basic research on colleges and other options, is to immediately get involved in extra-curricular activities (Freund, 2000). This research further explores that concept in an attempt to support local planning and prioritizing within the public school district targeted in this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The traditional task of school has been to educate students in literary and professional activities. Nevertheless, during the past century educational researchers in America have introduced many vocational activities of a manual character into the school system. Education has proceeded on the theory that school work should definitely be training for life in the adult community after school has been finished, and that any socially acceptable activity which is found in the adult community may very well be represented in the work of the school. While progress has been made upon this theory, there have remained beliefs by some educators and administrators that extra-curricular activities are not contributing to the academic expectations of high school. Rather, as some would believe, extra-curricular activities are merely a distraction for students (Rose, 2000).

Considering survey participants for this study were high school students much of the review of research literature focused on outcomes for students in high school. Particularly, the researcher examined outcomes specifically around educational goal setting by high school students for their postsecondary education. Unless otherwise noted, the reader should assume studies discussed in this review focus on high school students.

In consequence of changing social attitudes, some of these distracting influences have found their way into the curriculum while others have remained

partially or wholly outside. It is only a comparatively short time since literary and debating societies were frowned upon by educators as being types of activities to distract the students from the more serious work of a school (Schneider & Guest, 2003).

Regardless of this belief by some, many educators and administrators have come to recognize extra-curricular activities as having a positive educational value and have attempted to organize them in such a way that the educational value can be not only realized, but maximized (Fairburn, 2008). Such extra-curricular activities are athletics of all kinds, student publications, various social activities, debate teams, drama, music and band, student organizations, vocational clubs, and the arts to highlight just a few.

There is some movement on college campuses across the nation to develop more engaged, civic minded students. While there is no argument that institutions continue to place much of its emphasis on standardized test scores and academic achievements, more universities and colleges are closely scrutinizing and selecting students who have the potential to be active and engaged students on campus. That potential is most often measured by the student's past experiences of engaging in activities outside of the classroom (Hoover, 2007).

Educators suggest that students begin preparing for their postsecondary plans immediately upon entering high school. In fact, education research experts recommend that high school freshmen begin conversations with counselors about interest and possible long term goals. Another primary recommendation,

in addition to doing some basic research on colleges and other options, is to immediately get involved in extra-curricular activities (Freund, 2000).

Theoretical Framework of Extra-Curricular Activity

The range of extra-curricular activities offered in schools and the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and academic outcomes has stimulated research activity since the 1930's (Davalos et al., 1999; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Silliker & Quirk, 1997). Although interest in this area has been maintained, research related to the extra- or co-curriculum is generally of lesser interest compared to research investment in the formal curriculum. Considering the limited research specific to extra-curricular activity and college admission, the researcher reviewed studies which considered participation in extra-curricular activities and educational goal setting including admission to a postsecondary institution.

It is also noted that extra-curricular research is largely confined to studies based on secondary data gathered from longitudinal studies carried out in the United States since the 1980's, namely the National Education Longitudinal Studies of 2002, 1992, and 1988 (NELS: 2002, NELS:92, & NELS:88) and the High School and Beyond longitudinal study (HSB) (Broh, 2002; Marsh, 1992). These studies and data are provided by National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) of the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

An exploration of national and international literature has revealed a chasm in research examining the theoretical justifications for extra-curricular

programs (Shulruf, Meagher-Lundberg, & Timperley, 2006). However, it is noted that the theoretical frameworks all suggest that participation in extra-curricular activity has positive rather than negative effects on student outcomes (Barber et al., 2001; Broh, 2002; Davalos et al., 1999; Shernoff et al., 2003; Valentine, et al., 2002).

Credentialing theory (Gilroy, 2007) views arts training as one among many signals college admissions officers use to assess applicants. Presumably, admissions officers view such activities as markers of applicants' drive, versatility, and commitment to personal growth, all sought-after attributes in the American university system. This view also relates to Bourdieu's (1973) notion of cultural capital and educational gate keeping. The chief difference is that credentialing theory stresses the superficial nature of cultural capital. In other words, one does not actually need cultural capital to get into college as long as one's resume makes it look as if one has it through extensive extra-curricular and social activity (Bourdieu, 1997).

A longitudinal study research conducted and reported in the mid 1970's formed the basis for the theory of student involvement according to Astin (1975). The study, focused on college drop outs, showed that students who participated in extra-curricular activities were less likely to drop out.

Based on his findings in this study and his continued research, Astin (1995) presented his theory of student involvement. In theory Astin referred to student involvement as the investment of students in their college experience through diverse forms, one of which included extra-curricular activities.

According to this theory, a student's intellectual and social growth correlated to their depth of involvement on campus.

Feldman and Matjasko (2005) argue that a theoretical foundation is lacking for K-12 student participation in extra-curricular activities although findings from several disciplines provide evidence of positive effects of participation in such. Here, a comprehensive review of studies on the academic and social effects on students participating in extra-curricular activities is provided (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005).

Research on Positive Outcomes of Extra-Curricular Activity

For over a century proponents have argued that extra-curricular activities, such as sports, arts groups, and organizations provided a rich context for positive development. Research is beginning to substantiate this claim, showing relationships between students' participation and positive outcomes in controlled longitudinal studies (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Larson, 2000).

In one of only a few studies to examine extra-curricular activity participation into young adulthood, Barber, Eccles, and Stone (2001) examined the association between activity types and educational and occupational outcomes. The longitudinal study of 900 individuals found that participation in any type of activity was related to completing more years of education. However, these authors found that activity participation was no longer influential in determining young adult outcomes once controls for maternal education and prior math and verbal ability scores were included in their models. In addition to being attributed to positive educational and occupational outcomes, the participants

also reported higher self-esteem and lower substance abuse (Barber et al., 2001).

Rates of college graduation were positively related to participation in all activity types, and sports participation was related to feelings of "having a job with a future" and having more job autonomy. In a similar analysis, all types of activity participation were related to better educational outcomes (college enrollment and years of education), but only sports and academic club participation were related to better occupational status (having a career path job and job autonomy) at 25-26 years of age (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003).

Spreitzer (1994) conducted a similar study, but his sample allowed him to examine race more closely. Spreitzer (1994) also found, in a similar manner, that student athletes' educational attainment was higher than that of non-athletes; however, the research found that this relation was weaker among minority group students and concluded that such students do not draw particular educational benefits from high school athletics.

In addition, Marsh and Kleitman (2003) used the ELS: 2002 and NELS:88 data sets and found that high school sports participation was related to college enrollment, more months attending college, and higher levels of postsecondary education even after controlling for gender, socioeconomic status, race, educational level of parents and standardized test scores.

These research findings were particularly strong among students with initially low test scores and low educational aspirations, indicating that participation might alter educational attitudes and values in positive ways. Also,

extramural/team sports had stronger effects than intramural/individual sports. This study makes an important contribution to the literature by lending support to the notion that there are distinct educational benefits of activity participation for at-risk individuals (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney et al., 2002; Schmidt, 2003).

A longitudinal study of over 12,000 high school students utilizing data from ELS:2002 and NELS:88 reported that students who engaged in extra-curricular activities had completed and submitted more university applications and participation in sports led to higher rates of college enrollment. According to Marsh & Kleitman (2003), high school students in extra-curricular activities had higher grades and were more likely to set educational goals.

According to Zaff et al. (2003), a longitudinal study with a national sample of 8,600 students supported the theory that participation in extra-curricular activities in high school had sustained benefits after high school. The study reported that consistent participation in activities during the 8^{th}-12^{th} grade years predicted academic achievement two years after graduating from 12^{th} grade in addition to sustaining pro-social behaviors such as voting and volunteering. One of the measures of the study was academic achievement in terms of sustaining enrollment in a postsecondary institution for at least two years beyond high school.

Large, nationally representative data sets that capture participation at each stage of educational attainment –middle school, high school, and college— are rare but such data are needed to generalize the effects of consistent

participation. Zaff (2003), utilizing data from NELS, was one of those few studies.

A descriptive study involving a national sample of 1,700 high school students reported that students involved in extra-curricular activities performed better than students who did not participate in such activities (Sweet, 1986). Other studies have been consistent in their findings: high school students involved in school, church, and community activities do better academically than those students who do not (Mahoney et al., 2003; McCarthy, 2000;). Those higher performance levels were also found to transfer into postsecondary education. A study of over 1,000 college freshmen found that those students who had participated in activities in high school were doing better in their first year of college than those who had not (Camp, 1990).

Other research has addressed whether participation in the extra-curricular activities has a positive effect on student's plans for post-secondary education. In one study, analyses show that involvement in other activities contributes significantly to student's post-secondary plans and the process students engage in toward college admission. To narrow down this broad topic, this particular research article produced findings from a population of 170 suburban students that indicated extra-curricular involvement was as beneficial for students in low socioeconomic circumstances as it was for middle and upper class students (Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003).

In an article addressing extra-curricular activities and academic achievement, the amount of participation in extra-curricular activities was

positively related to academic achievement. In this article, analyses were performed separately for African Americans and white students. In most cases academic achievement generalizes to increased achievement in extra-curricular activities for both African American and Caucasian children (Gerber, 1996).

Several studies have indicated a similarly positive relation between increased activity participation and attitudes towards one's educational goals. Higher levels of school satisfaction, more positive attitudes toward education, and more likely to plan and set goals for educational attainment in a postsecondary environment have all been linked to participation in extra-curricular activities (Gilman, 2001).

Longitudinal data sets (NELS: 92) that track individuals into young adulthood have provided a unique opportunity to examine the extent and efforts of extracurricular activity across one's life. The number of years that students spend in extra-curricular activities might determine whether such participation exerts an influence on their adjustment into young adulthood and into continuing their education. Additional trends from this longitudinal data set were the increasing rates of students attending college after high school. In 1972, 34 percent of high school students indicated they planned to attend college compared with 61 percent in 2004. (Ingels et al., 2008; Mahoney, 2003).

Two researchers used a longitudinal sample of 45 individuals who attended rural high schools in Pennsylvania, following them for more than 45 years. Scott (1989) and Willits (1998) found continuity in activity participation

across life stages and found that adolescent participation was a significant predictor of later participation.

Extra-curricular activities may provide a challenging setting for students outside of academics that help them maintain contact with the school environment (Finn, 1989). For some students, activities offer a place to develop additional skills and recognition that extend beyond academic achievement. However, for others, activities may be the only place to obtain success tied to the school context, in that such success would not be obtained through academics (Brown & Theobald, 1998).

While support for this notion is largely theoretical, one study comparing students who were athlete-scholars, athletes only, scholars only, and neither athletes nor scholars showed that members of the "athletes only" group had more friendship nominations and were more likely to part be part of the "leaders" than members of the "scholar only" group (Coleman, 1961).

In considering the link between extra-curricular activity participation and academic performance, researchers have hypothesized that such activities may boost the students' connectedness with their school, which may in turn improve achievement and attainment (Brown & Evans, 2002; Calabrese & Poe, 1990). In the area of educational aspirations and attainment, early literature also demonstrated a generally positive relation between extra-curricular activity participation and increased educational goal setting and achievement (Holland & Andre, 1987).

An exhaustive review of literature discovered a general support of the positive relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and academic achievement and attainment (Broh, 2002; Crosnoe, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Hanson & Kraus, 1998; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney et al., 2003; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001; McNeal, 1998; Melnick, Vanfossen, & Sabo, 1992; Spreitzer, 1994). However, it should be noted that at least one analysis of the NELS: 2002 data showed that academic achievement had a stronger relationship to educational attainment beyond high school than participation in extra-curricular activities (Dumais, 2009).

Studies focusing on gender differences reported similar findings for male and female students. Overall, girls participate in extra-curricular activities more than boys, but boys are more likely to participate in athletics (Antshel & Anderman, 2000; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney et al., 2003; McNeal, 1998; Posner & Vandell, 1999). Among girls, sports participation has been associated with a higher GPA and desire to attend college (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Feltz & Weiss, 1984; Melnick et al., 1992; Perry-Burney & Takyi, 2002). Among boys, sports have been related to positive academic outcomes (Broh, 2002; Crosnoe, 2001). Specifically, football participation has been related to valuing academic achievement, and football or basketball participation has been related to higher educational aspirations (Rees & Howell, 1990).

The High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE), a project of Indiana University's Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, considers the student's level of engagement as a relationship within the context of the school setting. According to HSSE, engagement includes three broad areas: the people students interact with including adults and peers; the academic curriculum and pedagogy; and the opportunities for participation. While the "opportunities" component examines extra-curricular it also includes co-curricular and curricular activities (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007)

In 2006, the HSSSE reported 81,499 respondents from 110 schools in 26 states, providing a snapshot of students' perception of engagement as defined by the project. HSSSE Project Director, Yazzie-Mintz, (2007, p. 1) admits "measuring and understanding student engagement is a challenge for both schools and researchers. Studying student engagement....can seem like measuring the 'un-measurable,' as engagement is heavily dependent on interaction, collaboration, and perception."

The 2006 results did indicate a lack of long term commitment by students toward extracurricular activities. Rather, the belief held by high school students was that postsecondary institutions prefer many activities as opposed to great depth in one activity (Yazzie-Mintz, 2008).

The HSSSE results from 2006 also indicated that 73% of students reported they attend school because of a desire to attend college. Of those students surveyed, 68% indicated they attend school to be with friends. Exactly 50% of the students surveyed indicated that school was boring and not relevant

to their daily lives and 50% also indicated they have skipped school at least one or two times. The 2006 results also indicated that students on full price lunch reported higher levels of engagement than those students on free or reduced lunch. (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007).

Academic Outcomes of Extra-Curricular Activity

Participating in school extra-curricular contexts also has been shown to be more strongly related to academic outcomes than participating in out-of-school activities (Darling, 2005). The pattern of associations also may vary by individual characteristics such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status, though surprisingly few studies have examined this question (Fredricks & Eccles 2006). Currently, the literature generally supports the findings that there is a positive relationship between extra-curricular activity participation and academic achievement (Broh, 2002; Crosnoe, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Hanson & Kraus, 1998; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney et al., 2003; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001; McNeal, 1998; Melnick, Sabo & Vanfossen, 1992; Spreitzer, 1994).

Reviews of a variety of types of after-school activities and programs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Roth et al., 2007) reveal a dearth of studies on participation duration. A few recent studies, however, have identified associations between participation in organized activities over multiple years and positive adolescent and young adult outcomes— particularly educational outcomes.

An examination of data collected from over 30,000 high school students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1986) who participated in the High School and Beyond (HSB) project was conducted to examine casual relationships of participation in extra-curricular activities with academic performance and educational goal setting. A two year follow up was also conducted with over 14,000 students participating.

Hunt (2005) discovered that academic performance was an indicator of higher and more frequent participation in extra-curricular rather than the reverse. The analysis of the data indicated a strong and consistent correlation of participation in extra-curricular activity during the sophomore year of high school with both academic performance and educational goal setting during the senior year of high school. However, the casual factor and effect were opposite of what was theorized. Exceptions, however, included vocational and project clubs which correlated with lower grades and educational goal setting for the students while students who were in cheerleading or some spirit club during their sophomore year had lower grades their senior year.

Analyses of data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88) indicated that participation in extra-curricular activities during high school predicted higher grades in 12th grade and higher rates of college attendance 2 years later, even after controlling for prior grades. The study of over 12,000 students also discovered that students who participated in extra-curricular activities submitted admissions applications to more postsecondary institutions (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

Similar analyses of NELS data indicate that more intensive participation in extra-curricular activities is positively associated with attending a competitive postsecondary institution (Swanson, 2002). In contrast, other longitudinal studies have found that youths who participate in extra-curricular activities demonstrate similar educational outcomes (Casey, Ripke, & Huston, 2005), and at least one cross-sectional study found that participation in extra-curricular activities is associated with better educational outcomes (Brown & Evans, 2002).

Longitudinal analyses of a large sample of high school students indicate that although there are no differences in grades or attitudes toward school between nonparticipants and 1-year participants in school-sponsored activities, students who participate for 2 or 3 years earn higher grades, demonstrate more positive attitudes toward school, and have greater academic aspirations than nonparticipants (Darling, 2005; Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005). Finally, analyses of data from the Carolina Longitudinal Study demonstrate positive associations between participation in extra-curricular activities over 2 years – as opposed to one year of participation-- and college attendance at age 20 (Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003).

Findings on the relations between participation intensity and student development are also limited and somewhat mixed. For instance, some have found significant positive associations between the number of hours that students devote to extra-curricular activities and varied academic outcomes such as high school grades, academic attitudes and aspirations, and postsecondary attendance (Darling, 2005; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), whereas others have

identified only marginally significant relations between time spent in extra-curricular activities and academic performance (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999). Although some evidence suggests that the intensity of students' participation in extra-curricular activities is positively associated with achievement test scores (Cooper et al., 1999), studies have also found negative (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) and no significant relations (Cooper et al., 1999). It is quite possible that students over-participating in extra-curricular activities are finding limited time for concentrating on academics.

Recent studies of participation intensity measured without regard to sponsorship suggest that intensity may be positively associated with concurrent (Rose-Krasnor, Busseri, Willoughby, & Chalmers, 2006) but not longitudinal (Busseri, Rose-Krasnor, Willoughby, & Chalmers, 2006) measures of high school academic functioning. Further complicating the picture, findings from a few studies indicate that at high levels, intensive participation may be associated with adverse adolescent and young adult outcomes, particularly in the academic domain (Cooper et al., 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

These findings have been used to make the argument that too much time in organized activities distracts students from other important experiences (family time, schoolwork) and hinders development. This position, termed the "over scheduling hypothesis" (Mahoney, Harris, & Eccles, 2006), draws support from a tempered version of a zero-sum theoretical model, which suggests that at high levels of intensity, commitments to extra-curricular activities compete with

commitments to academic activities and adversely affect academic performance (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Gender and Participation in Extra-Curricular Activity

Studies focusing on gender differences have reported similar findings for male and female students. Among girls, sports participation has been associated with a higher GPA and desire to attend college (Eccles & Barber, 1999, Feltz & Weiss, 1984; Melnick et al., 1992; Perry-Bumey & Takyi, 2002). Among boys, sports have been related to positive academic outcomes (Broh, 2002; Crosnoe, 2001). Specifically, football participation has been related to valuing academic achievement, and football or basketball participation has been related to higher educational aspirations (Rees & Howell, 1990). One possible explanation for the different outcomes observed by type of sport is that different "types" of boys play different sports.

These possible differences in individual characteristics that go unaccounted for in research represent an example of selection, or the extent to which pre-existing differences are driving the relation between participation and achievement. In the example just described, pre-existing differences were driving the students' educational aspirations, not the fact that the students happened to be a member of a certain athletic team. Broh (2002) attempted to control for these pre-existing differences and found that sports participation was linked to improved math and English grades and increased time spent on homework net of key background, family, and school characteristics. Broh's study controlled for pre-existing differences such as team sports and individual sports (tennis or

track). Similar findings have been reported by other researchers (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; Zill et al., 1995).

Research suggests that females garner more benefits from athletic participation than do males, whereas males derive more benefits from other extra-curricular activities (Crosnoe, 2002; Dodge & Jaccard 2002). Numerous studies suggest that the association between extra-curricular activities and various outcomes, ranging from academic achievement to sexual behavior, differs by gender. Because female students are twice as likely to participate in extra-curricular activities as males (Eccles et al., 2003) it is important to examine the differences in outcomes by gender. For instance, athletic participation is associated with less sexual behavior among females but more sexual behavior among males (Miller et al., 1998, 2002).

As shown by Crosnoe (2002), there appears to be gender-based distinctions in the relationship between athletic participation and alcohol use. Crosnoe finds that male athletes do not differ from male non-athletes in their level of alcohol use, but female athletes are less likely than male athletes or nonathletes to use alcohol. Because alcohol use is affected by peer associations, group norms, gender roles, and the subcultural climates within which they are embedded (Dorius et al., 2004) alcohol consumption may be an important cultural marker for some male athletes but may not be germane to the lives of female athletes. However, these results are not conclusive.

Focusing on another nationally representative sample, Melnick, Vanfossen, and Sabo (1988) found that sports participation was unrelated to

girls' academic achievement and was positively related to their educational aspirations. While numerous studies, including those in the education and sports literature, have documented the positive association between sports and academic achievement, other studies have expanded on the prior literature by reporting on the relation between additional activity types-such as whether activities occurred in or outside of the school setting and whether they were structured or unstructured and educational achievement.

It is unclear whether the same gender-distinct processes extend to nonathletic extracurricular activities. Research has not examined whether there are gender differences in the association between participation in nonathletic activities and alcohol use. However, recent research suggests that there may be school level differences in the association between extracurricular activities and alcohol use (Klomsten et al., 2004).

Early literature has shown gender-specific patterns, demonstrating that educational attainment among male students was related more to socioeconomic status, intellectual ability, and social relationships and that attainment among female students was related more to grade performance and teacher and peer contacts, which were also directly associated with activity participation (Holland & Andre, 1987).

The total number of extra-curricular activities in which students engage has also been shown to be an important determinant of educational and social development. In early research, it appeared that the more activities, the better the outcomes. These studies demonstrated that girls who engaged in five or

more activities had higher levels of educational achievement than those participating in four or fewer activities (Feltz & Weiss, 1984).

A similar pattern was observed for boys: those who participated in more than one athletic or service activity had higher educational aspirations and achievement than those who participated in only one activity (Spady, 1970). Several studies have indicated a similarly positive relation between increased activity participation and attitudes toward school. Higher levels of school satisfaction and more positive attitudes toward the high school experience have been linked to the total number of structured extracurricular activities in which an adolescent participates (Gilman, 2001) as well as, among boys, the total number of sports activities engaged in (Rees & Howell, 1990).

This gender specificity extends to other school activities as well: Females are more likely than males to be involved in school clubs and organizations. For example, approximately 30 percent of females and 18 percent of males are involved in music or performing arts; 17 percent of females and 12 percent of males are in academic clubs; and 13 percent of females and 8 percent of males participate in student council/government (Eccles et al., 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

Although there may be no gender differences in the amount of participation in structured (athletic) activity involvement, the effects of this participation for male and female students may differ. Klomsten et al. (2004) studied elementary and secondary aged boys' and girls' physical self-description as related to general self-esteem and sports participation. These researchers

found that boys felt better about how they looked, particularly at the secondary level, and that the most important predictors of general self-esteem were students' perceived sports competence, physical appearance, and satisfaction with their physical selves, generally.

If, as Eccles et al. (1999) reported, individuals perceive that highly competitive activities run counter to their feminine-goal values, then some extracurricular activities may not benefit their general self-esteem. These ideas reflect earlier research by Bem and Lenney (1976) that showed that individuals who identified with their own gender experienced negative outcomes when participating in cross-gender activities.

Klomsten et al. (2004) argued that sports represent an opportunity for male students to exhibit masculinity. Whereas for female students participation in sports could lead to a decrease in physical self-esteem, particularly if they use their male counterpoints' performance as a point of comparison.

The discussion of Klomsten et al. (2004) implied that gender role orientation might influence the relationship between sports participation and self-esteem. Therefore, individuals who describe themselves in more feminine terms may not benefit from participating in activities that are perceived to be masculine in nature such as athletics.

Similarly, individuals with a more masculine self-description may not benefit from participating in some extra-curricular activities associated with femininity such as certain vocational and home economics organizations. In fact, research has shown that a masculine gender role orientation is positively

associated with physical and athletic competence and with general self-esteem (Bowker et al., 2003).

A study by Bowker et al. (2003) of teen age adolescents examined the relationship between sports participation and general self-esteem, taking into account the type of athletic activities in which individuals participated and their self-descriptions (traditionally masculine and feminine attributes). That study demonstrated no gender difference in general self-esteem, although boys reported greater physical self-esteem than girls did. Further, individuals who described themselves with a majority of feminine attributes and who participated in competitive sports reported lower perceived athletic competence and lower general self-esteem, but higher general self-esteem if they participated in recreational athletic activities.

In a longitudinal study of the relationship between participation in both athletic and non-athletic extra-curricular activities and measures of social self-concept and attitude towards oneself, Barber et al. (2001) showed that self-esteem increased for adolescents who participated in extracurricular activities, both athletic and non-athletic. Also, in Barber et al. (2001) study of grade 10 students' extracurricular activities involvement, higher reported self-esteem was associated with participation in school teams than with participation in activities such as school band, drama, or student government.

In addition, Eccles et al. (2003) showed that, in general, participation in a range of extra-curricular activities (both athletic and non-athletic) resulted in better academic outcomes regardless of social class, gender, and intellectual

aptitude. Participation in activities such as volunteer work, drama, and school clubs was associated with lower rates of drinking and drug abuse over time, whereas participation in school athletics was associated with higher rates of drinking, though also associated with better academic and occupational outcomes. However, boys and girls did differ in terms of the number of combined years of non-athletic extracurricular activities in which they participated.

Religious Participation and Extra-Curricular Activity

There has been much speculation that religious participation shapes numerous health and developmental outcomes for adolescents through its effect on social capital (Smith, 2003; King & Furrow, 2004). By changing the nature of the relationship investments, aspects of religion are thought to influence educational outcomes and whether one chooses, or is influenced, to participate in more extra-curricular activities as well (Muller & Ellison, 2001).

About half of American students in high school regularly participate in some kind of religious organization (Smith et al., 2002). Therefore it is practical to mull over how such participation may influence the development of these students.

Several studies suggest that religious involvement enhances educational outcomes for particular groups of adolescents as well. For example, involvement in religious institutions predicts greater verbal ability among girls (Parcel & Geschwender, 1995) and higher grades among rural teens (Elder and Conger, 2000). Other research observes an inverse relationship between religious involvement and delinquency and other high-risk behaviors. Students involved in

religious services and activities engage significantly less in these high-risk behaviors (Donahue & Benson, 1995).

Among adults, religious participation often leads to involvement in secular voluntary associations (Lam, 2002). There are several reasons why this dynamic may connect teenage religious involvement and extracurricular involvement as well. It is possible that sociability generated within a congregation facilitates joining school social activities.

Additionally, most churches provide religious incentives for involvement in outside social groups. Many conservative Protestants may consider it important to "witness" to a secular world (Smith et al., 2002), and mainline Protestants and Catholics have religious interests in participating in civic activities as a form of service to humanity (Wuthnow & Evans, 2002). In addition, some religious groups, especially conservative Protestant denominations, have promoted sports activities as an important part of self-discipline (Mathison, 2001).

It is also important to point out that religious congregations of all varieties are "focused on the family" (Wilcox et al., 2004). Utilizing various forms of communication, church media, and social networking, congregations continually encourage student participation in the community and at school, recognizing and celebrating extra-curricular activities. These recognition and celebration activities represent an extension of a student's family to include their church family. This encouragement and support from the extended, church family encourages increased participation in extra-curricular activities (Smith et al., 2002).

Perhaps most importantly, religious participation may help integrate teenagers into groups marked by conventional norms and behaviors. This orientation toward convention facilitates participation in extra-curricular activities, which are generally closely linked with school authority (Wilcox et al., 2004).

Other findings suggest that religious socialization may increase extra-curricular participation, especially non-sports participation, which provides a partial explanation for the positive effect of religion on educational outcomes. Religious involvement provides a unique setting for recruitment to school extra-curricular activities, and recruitment may play a larger role in non-sports participation (Arum, 2003).

It seems plausible that integration into a religious community would facilitate integration into a school community, since both require some level of submission to collective identities generally and adult authority specifically. This relationship may provide an important pathway through which religious participation positively impacts school outcomes (Regnerus & Elder, 2003).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher focuses on the effects of religious attendance, rather than other aspects of religiosity, such as the importance of religion, because attendance is more likely to shape social networks. Previous research has observed that attendance, but not the importance of religion, contributes to better educational outcomes (Regnerus, 2000; Regnerus & Elder, 2003).

One way that religion may affect educational outcomes is through adolescent relationships with adults. Religious participation may influence the

structure of adolescent social networks by increasing intergenerational closure, or the extent to which parents know the friends of their children and know the parents of their children's friends (Muller & Ellison, 2001; Smith, 2003).

Religious involvement may enhance intergenerational closure because it is one of the few settings in which adolescents regularly interact with adults outside of the family (Muller & Ellison, 2001; Smith, 2003). Most religious activities involve multiple generations, increasing the likelihood for active youth to form relationships with adults, such as parents of friends.

Church activities can provide a context in which parents get to know their children's friends as well as parents of those friends. Besides the opportunity for creating cross-generational ties, participating in religious communities may foster norms that encourage active efforts to create such ties because religious groups encourage adult commitment to the socialization of children (Muller & Ellison, 2001; Wilcox, 2002; Wilcox et al., 2004).

Beyond Academia: Pro-Social & Leadership Qualities of Extra-Curricular Activity

Involvement in pro-social activities is linked to positive educational achievement and low rates of involvement in risky behavior. According to "Student Council, Volunteering, Basketball, or Marching Band: What Kinds of Extra-curricular Involvement Matter?" (Eccles & Barber, 1999), besides having the opportunity to go to college by obtaining a scholarship, extra-curricular participation allows students to associate themselves with peers interested in the same types of activities, behaviors, and goals. Having students of the same age

and interests reinforcing one another through positive peer pressure helps students who do not feel socially accepted. Students experience this reinforcement through their connection with groups of peers who share common interests and goals.

For over a century proponents have argued that extra-curricular activities, such as sports, arts groups, and organizations, provide a rich context for positive development. Research is beginning to substantiate this claim, showing relationships between students' participation and positive outcomes in controlled longitudinal studies (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Larson, 2000). What is missing, however, is research on the processes whereby development occurs in these activities (Benson & Saito, 2000). Information on processes is ultimately critical to science-based practice: to the design of programs that are fitted to individuals and effectively facilitate development for all participants.

In considering the link between school-based activity participation and academic performance, researchers have hypothesized that extracurricular activities might boost the students' connectedness with their schools, which might in improve achievement and attainment (Brown & Evans, 2002; Calabrese & Poe, 1990; Hendrix, Sederberg, & Miller, 1990; Jenkins, 1997).

In the area of educational aspirations and attainment, early literature also demonstrated a generally positive relation between extra-curricular activity participation and increased educational aspirations and attainment (Holland & Andre, 1987). In the case of both male and female students, athletic participation was positively related to plans to attend college. Among male students, the

relation between activity participation and educational attainment was found to be independent of moderator variables such as socioeconomic status and academic ability (Hanks & Eckland, 1976; Otto, 1975, 1976; Otto & Alwin, 1977).

Total extra-curricular activity participation has also been positively related to social and academic self-concept, educational aspirations, coursework selection, completion of homework, absenteeism, academic achievement, and subsequent college attendance (Gerber, 1996; Marsh, 1992). An individual's participation in at least one extra-curricular activity in which members of her or his social network also participate has been linked to a decline in antisocial patterns (Mahoney, 2000), and a similar link has been shown for 1-4 hours per week of extracurricular activity (Zill et al., 1995).

Out-of-school activities, including structured activities (in this study, private lessons and classes and religious activities) and time spent alone have been positively associated with student achievement, while spending non-constructive time with peers, working for pay, and spending time with adults have been negatively associated with achievement (Jordan & Nettles, 2000). Another study (Schreiber & Chambers, 2002); involving NELS:88, showed that nonacademic activities, regardless of in- or out-of-school status and whether they were organized or not organized, were not related to academic achievement after other factors had been taken into account.

Separating extra-curricular activities into structured (supervised by an adult) and unstructured (not supervised by an adult) categories, McHale et al. (2001) reported a positive relation between structured activity participation

(namely, sports) and school grades, while unstructured activity participation was negatively related to school grades. In a study focusing on school-based activities, intramural sports and vocational clubs were found not to afford students the benefits associated with interscholastic sports (Broh, 2002). Specifically, students in intramural sports experienced a decline in math and English scores.

Extra-curricular activities, it has been proposed, are a context in which students are particularly likely to be producers of their own development (Larson, 2000; Silbereisen et al., 1986). Prior research finds that extra-curricular activities stand out from other domains of students' daily lives as a unique setting in which they consistently report experiencing both high motivation and high concentration (Larson, 2000). This indicates that students are both emotionally and cognitively engaged in ways they are not in other parts of their lives, and thus suggests that students are likely to be involved in actively constructing personal change.

Heath (1999) discovered that "work" was a central metaphor for students' participation in the extra-curricular activities studied. It was discovered through observation that young people acquired a language of agency that included increased use of what-if questions, conditional sentences, constructing scenarios, and other linguistic tools for identifying problems, solving them, and achieving goals.

Separate from this literature is a burgeoning area of social psychological research concerned with goal-directed behavior among adults (Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Brunstein, 1996), and Larson (2000) asserts that extra-curricular

activities may be an important context for the development of the requisite skills. An important step to evaluating this assertion is to determine if students report this type of learning experience and, if so, to identify the language and concepts they use to describe these experiences.

An additional domain of possible growth, which has received less discussion, is learning emotional competencies. Brown and Theobald (1998) report that development of abilities such as managing feelings, controlling impulses, and reducing stress is a frequent objective of prevention and positive extra-curricular development programs and they report finding that some programs appear to increase emotional skills. It is not known whether this type of learning is salient in the wider domain of sports, arts, and other activities organized in schools and communities.

It is important to acknowledge that processes for student learning and growth are internal, social, and interpersonal. Prior research suggests that extra-curricular activities may be an important arena for forming new connections with and learning about peers. When a teen joins a team, club, or activity group, other participants often become part of that teen's peer friendship network (Brown, 1990).

In an interview study with 41 students, Patrick et al. (1999) found that over half reported making new friends, including friends from different grades, as a result of participation in an extra-curricular activity. Extra-curricular activities appear to be a context for students to meet and learn about peers who are different from them in ethnicity, race, and social class (Camp, 1990). Research is

needed to uncover the peer knowledge and meanings that students attribute to these relationships.

Furthermore, extra-curricular activities are often promoted as providing students with opportunities to develop social skills, including learning to work with others, developing leadership skills, and developing social competencies (Cassel, 2000). Rogoff (1991) propose that learning occurs through collaborative participation in activities of shared interest. Learning cooperation and teamwork has been described as part of the hidden curriculum of extra-curricular activities (Brown & Theobald, 1998).

In the process of coming together around achievement of a goal, it is believed that students learn to work with each other, handle each other's emotions, divide responsibilities, and give and take feedback. Students often gain social skills and confidence in relating to peers (Patrick et al., 1999). It is important to determine whether students experience this as a significant domain of growth and, if so, what types of learning experiences are salient for them.

Another developmental process that has been attributed to extra-curricular activities is acquiring social capital: the formation of valuable relationships with adult leaders and others in the community. Leaders of extra-curricular activities are often named when students are asked about adults who are significant to them (Hendrix et al., 1990).

Other researchers have described how students in some extra-curricular activities develop valuable connections to community members (Youniss et al., 1997). These various connections can become sources of emotional support;

can provide social and cultural capital in the form of knowledge (Eccles et al., 1993); and can help students in gaining access to jobs (Mahoney, 2000).

The personal feeling of being a part of some larger whole begins with a feeling of belonging by being part of a family and other heritage factors associated therewith. In a democracy that feeling of belonging must grow, and students must learn early that personal identity includes religion, race, culture, the high school, and the community (Schneider & Guest, 2003).

Later in marriage that feeling of belonging must cause individuals to be true to marriage and later family involvements in the same manner that they would to the traditional high school football team. When that true feeling of belonging emerges there will be less need to escape into the world of alcohol and drugs so characteristic of our present prison populations (Wren, 1998).

Pride is a feeling of personal gratification that derives largely from secure feelings of being a member of groups largely than self and flows directly from feelings of belonging. It is typically characterized by feelings of importance of present personal involvements thereby eliminating the immediate and urgent need to seek escape through the use of marijuana, alcohol and other drugs (Wren, 1998).

For too many young people during the highly emotional period of adolescence in a high school with an increasing emphasis solely on scholastic and curricular activities, they tend to seek relief by engaging in high-risk, destructive activities such as alcohol and drug abuse as well as unsafe sex (Cassel, 1990).

The personal pride typically associated with full and flowing membership in extra-curricular activities promises personal involvements as a real and meaningful substitute for escape into the world of alcohol and drugs. Our prisons are filled with more than 80 percent of inmates who only rarely have a history of extra curricular involvements in the high school during adolescent years (Wren, 1998).

If the person centered high school is to become a reality there must be carefully planned leadership training programs that are a basic requisite for high school graduation (Cassel, 2000). First and foremost students must learn the basic requisites for democratic leadership, and where the only modes acceptable are: (1) a democratic-cooperative pattern, and (2) the Autocratic-submissive pattern where committees are concerned with discovering the latest and best approaches to any social or educational problem. Students must learn early the basic effective principles for the use of reward and punishment discovered in actual research by Estes at Stanford (1) Praise: only when earned, otherwise praise loses psychological value; and (2) punish-only when begged for, then planned to be corrective in nature. Understand the functions of self-efficacy as to mean personal expectations based on careful organizing and planning.

Athletics: A Prominent Component of Extra-Curricular Activity

When investigating extra-curricular activity, and its value to high school students, much of the research focuses on student-athletes. Athletics, at both the high school and college levels, are often considered as a reflection of the institution. Further, there is intense pressure on administrators on having

programs that win while not sacrificing the academic integrity of the institution or the future of the student-athlete. This pressure comes in many different forms ranging from parents to teachers to the community at large (Adler & Adler, 1985).

Many veteran and less experienced educators believe a school should provide only those extra-curricular activities which have a clearly identified educational value. Some believe that if such an activity has an educational value it is doubtful whether one can logically exclude any student from participation except upon the same basis that one use in excluding students from the regularly established courses in the curriculum (Patrick et al., 1999).

The best arrangement for coordinating athletic teams and maximizing student participation in such activities is to appoint an athletic director who is primarily interested in the educational value of his work. As such, an athletic director given full responsibility could quickly achieve the desired academic and social results for students. This could also be achieved more effectively in compliance eligibility rules and requirements, illustrating the best interests of students are the primary concern (Rogoff, 1991).

Recently, as an outgrowth of the undue emphasis upon inter-collegiate athletics in high schools and colleges, there has been a general tendency to raise the minimum scholastic requirement for athletes. This tendency is based upon the theory that by reducing the number of students who are eligible for the athletic teams interest in athletics will somehow be decreased (Patrick, 1999).

At the University of Wisconsin, for example, there has recently been much dialogue of increased scholastic requirements of students for athletic

participation. Even if one is not opposed to athletic contests in general one may at least be disturbed by the large attendance at football games, the great amount of student interest in such contests; and the large financial interests in the game (Mahoney, 2000).

The ideal method for facilitating the challenges of eligibility for any extra-curricular activity seems to be to place the responsibility in the hands of an educator who has a good understanding of students and their needs, and to give that individual the authority to work with students as individuals. For participation in athletics a student should be required to be making an earnest effort to maximize his academic experience by adhering and mastering the requirements of the curriculum (Silbereisen et al., 1986).

It is true that the members of athletic departments are under pressure to turn out winning teams. On this account administrators may be inclined to overlook the presence of athletes who are academically undesirable. If the pressure for winning games can be removed by having security of tenure for coaches and by having an administration which will support them in an attempt to gain the educational values from athletics rather than to concentrate their effort only on winning games, then the coaches will be much more than willing to eliminate all athletes who are not at the same time bona fide students. This problem has been very successfully met in high schools; it is true that in high schools outside pressure of alumni and "friends of the school" is not so great and it is easier to give precedence to educational values (Mahoney et al., 2003).

Eligibility requirements for participation in extra-curricular activities, particularly athletics, are another dimension in a complex, philosophical debate on the role and value of extra-curricular in a school setting. These reasons for exclusion are: the inability of the student to pursue the activity profitably; the elimination of the activities which are of least value to the individual student since he or she does not have time to participate in all; and exclusion by reason of limitation of numbers imposed by lack of equipment and other facilities (Power, 1999).

The real basis for excluding any bona fide student from athletics, for example, should be first of all the lack of the needed physical and mental qualities on the part of the student, together with the probability that the student would be unable to develop these qualities after a reasonable course of training. Furthermore, the student might be excluded from athletics if it could be shown that he or she has greater ability and talents in other kinds of work so that participation in athletics is for the student, in a sense, a waste of time other than purely recreational value. Additionally, the student might be excluded from athletics if there were not sufficient facilities and opportunities to permit engagement in them (Youniss et al., 1999).

The same thing may be said of participation in debating teams, dramatics, student publications, or any of the many other extra-curricular activities. If the activity lacks educational value it should be excluded from the school; no student should be permitted to waste time upon it. If it has educational value students

should be encouraged to participate according to the principles just enumerated (Jarrett, 1998).

It is assumed that since the student is greatly interested in the extra-curricular activity he or she will make a special effort to increase his scholarship standing so that they may participate. The extra-curricular activity is held out as a kind of bait or reward to induce the student to swallow the less desirable scholastic work (Rogoff, 1991).

Whether students do work more industriously for the sake of becoming eligible for extra-curricular work is a debatable question. At most, only a few students are affected, so that there can be little effect upon the school as a whole. Outside activities can be used most effectively for promoting scholarship when they are not used solely as a bargaining tool or reward, but are made an integral part of the school work, as is done in the project method of teaching. This method has been used mainly in the elementary school and has not been applied effectively in high school or college except in isolated cases (Rogoff, 1991).

During recent years, many attempts have been made to apply knowledge of individual differences to educational problems. What should be the prevalent attitude toward scholastic requirements for participation in extra-curricular activities, based upon our knowledge of individual differences, and in particular, upon the knowledge which we have of the correlations between motor and mental skills? It is a common practice to enforce certain minimum scholastic requirements for participation in a variety of extra-curricular activities (Shernoff et al., 2003).

When one approaches these requirements from the standpoint of the correlation between motor and mental skills, considerable doubt is thrown upon this assumption. The correlation between two mental skills such as knowledge in mathematics and history, or knowledge in history and ability in debating, dramatics, student publication, or the like, is high. On the other hand, the correlation between the academic subjects, such as history and mathematics, and the motor activities, as found in shop work, manual work, and athletics, is low (Schneider & Guest, 2003).

On account of this high correlation between the academic subjects and the extra-curricular activities such as debating, dramatics, and student publication, few students who have sufficient ability to participate in these extra-curricular activities fail to meet scholastic eligibility requirements. On the other hand, on account of the low correlation which exists between motor skills and mental skills, many students who have good motor ability can be expected to fail to meet the minimum scholastic requirements (Benson & Saito, 2000).

The eligibility problem is most acute in the case of the student who has good motor ability and is able to participate successfully in athletics, but who lacks sufficient ability of the so-called mental type to enable him to maintain a sufficiently high scholastic average to meet the eligibility requirement. If such a student fails to maintain an acceptable scholastic standard on account of laziness, there can be no question but that a minimum requirement should be applied. If the student, however, fails to maintain the minimum scholastic standing not because of laziness or indifference, but simply because of low ability

for that kind of work, there is reason for doubt as to whether the minimum scholastic eligibility requirement should be applied in his case (Rogoff, 1991).

When the educational society is willing to accept a student who has a low degree of ability in the academic subjects, it should assume certain obligations toward him or her. It is the educational district's duty to give the student the kind of education for which he or she is best fitted. Educators recognize this duty and attempt to fulfill it in connection with that part of the school system which belongs to the regular curriculum. School counselors do not exclude a student from the study of mathematics on the ground that they have made a low grade in history; nor do we refuse to permit a student to study French and German when he likes them and gets along well in them, merely because they does not get good grades in history (Power, 1999).

Toward participation in extra-curricular activities educators have adopted a very different attitude. When a student demonstrates an ability or natural talent in basketball, football, baseball, or some other sport, one does not at once grant the student permission to do so. First, one examines the student's scholastic standing, and, in many cases, refuses permission to receive any benefits from athletics because the student has failed to get the expected amount of benefit from one or more of the subjects in the regular curriculum (Rose, 2000).

When educators feel that a student is spending an undue amount of time on athletics and neglecting other things of importance, he or she is properly denied permission to participate in them until they remedy the academic deficiencies to a sufficient level. In the case of the student who is working

industriously but is nevertheless failing to reach high standards in his or her regular curricular work, education may be doing an injustice when by preventing the student from participating in athletics or any other extra-curricular activity (Rose, 2000).

Standardized, minimum requirements for participation in extra-curricular activity may be forcing students to spend time engaging in work for which he or she has little ability while refusing permission to spend time working at the things which can be done well. This state of affairs is certain to have an extremely harmful effect upon personality and character development. Because of the low correlation between athletic ability and ability in academic subjects, there are certain to be many students who are thus harmed by scholastic requirements for participating in athletics. A new approach to the problem of eligibility is needed to take care of the interests of this group of students (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Educators are obligated to objectively approach extra-curricular activities in an effort to determine the real educational value. Further, there should be a sense of obligation to accept the responsibility for treating students as individuals in determining whether they shall be permitted to participate in these activities. There is no educational reason why all students should be treated alike (Youniss & Yates, 1997).

A few such general rules and regulations may be needed to enable the educational machinery to run smoothly, but their effect if they increase too much in number and importance is to defeat the primary aims of education. What education needs at the present time is the acceptance by educators of a larger

measure of responsibility for the direction of individuals in the school system (Fairburn, 2008).

Many of the activities of pupils which were frowned upon as distractions a few years ago have found their way into the curriculum, and many others have been organized under the sponsorship of the school as extra-curricular activities. This change is an outgrowth of the abandonment of the disciplinary conception of education and the substitution of the ideal of education as training in the activities of the contemporary adult community (Lane, 2000).

Classroom teachers absorbed in curricular teaching are likely to regard extra-curricular activity as distracting from the "more important" scholastic work. In consequence, scholastic standards of eligibility for extra-curricular activities have been set up. Teachers have become alarmed at the increasing interest of students in extra-curricular activities, especially athletics and social organizations; and have sought to lessen this interest by raising scholastic eligibility requirements. Some educators have rationalized this attitude by attempting to make the students real representatives of the school. Eligibility requirements, however, are ineffective instruments for combating undue interest in extra-curricular work (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Prohibition of participation in an extra-curricular activity because of low scholastic standing violates the modern tendency to treat students as individuals and violates the principle that students should be encouraged to develop along the lines of their special abilities. The program of individualized instruction should be extended to include extra-curricular activities and teachers should assume the

responsibility for advising students according to their individual needs. Blanket prohibitions should be discarded as educational instruments (Schneider & Guest, 2003).

The success of many competitive team sports and organizations within a school depends in a large degree to which each and every member executes properly the expected role that has been clearly defined for such activities. Early in such competitive settings, including intramural sports, all participants learn that no team is stronger than the weakest link, and that each person in a team is as important as every other person. This value translates for the student into the classroom (Gerber, 1996)

This, of course, is also the basic principle for success in the family structure, in the community, and in the nation as a whole. The precise manner in which all team members compliment each other is the single determinant for achieving success and victory in any competitive match. The JROTC program, band, intramural and competitive sports, debating teams and the like tend to build the basis for real success in a competitive economic society, and where there must be full recognition and acceptance of all individuals regardless of race, religion or color (Cassel, 2000).

Engaging in At-Risk Behaviors and Extra-Curricular Activity

With much consideration toward the positive outcomes of extra-curricular activity participation, the researcher wished to acknowledge that negative affects have also been identified. Therefore, discussions follows on some of these possible, negative affects.

More often than not when high school students begin involvement in the use of alcohol and drugs it is because they are not heavily involved in other acceptable and satisfying social pursuits. Often they sit in long rows of seats with no personal involvement that is acceptable to them in any manner; many because they have lost contiguity with the present subject matter. Almost all of the standards for the hard core subjects in high school are based on contiguity; so that if a student misses or fails to understand one part, succeeding parts have little or no meaning (Broh, 2002).

Motivation and personal goals are inter-related conditions in life; so that when there are no scientifically tested job-career plans there is a lack of personal motivation for hard core subject matter areas. Motivation and personal goals are inter-related psychologically. When students are in a high school without any career goals and objectives, the need is to round out personal development through the use of extra curricular activities. Otherwise, the inclination is to find social solace in the use of alcohol and drugs and to become involved in other deviant behavior, and sometimes just for purposes of getting attention (Wren, 1998).

Negative Impact of Extra-Curricular Activity Participation

Although most research indicated positive affects of participation in extra-curricular activities, there were some negative results discovered. Students participating in extra-curricular activity were more likely to be exposed to consuming alcohol (Larson, 2000).

Another study, concerned with the relationship between athletic participation and academic performance among athletes involved in college sports, had interesting results. This particular study found that the students' athletic, social, and classroom experiences lead them to become progressively detached from academics (Adler & Adler, 1985).

How these student-athletes abandoned their earlier aspirations and expectations while giving themselves up to inferior academic performance was discovered through Adler's (1985) study. Already having researched whether or not students benefited from participation in extra-curricular activities; the researcher wanted to determine whether athletic or pro-social extra-curricular activities benefited students more than the other.

From a universal aspect, however, overall involvement has more of a positive effect then negative. Thus, the intent of this research is to focus mostly on the beneficial aspects of participating in such activities as indicated in the research discovered (Adler & Adler, 1985).

Summary

When examining the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and the student's perceptions of the value of that participation toward obtaining admission to a postsecondary institute, little relevant research exists. However, Chapter II does provide a theoretical framework upon which to base the purpose and research of this study.

The relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and educational outcomes has been researched since the early 1900's. Astin's theory of student involvement (1995) stated that college student's academic and social growth correlated to their level of involvement on campus.

Further review of research indicated a theoretical foundation for extra-curricular activity for K-12 students was not evident (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Several studies, however, have identified positive outcomes for student participation in extra-curricular activities. Some positive outcomes included increased number of college applications and more years of educational attainment beyond high school (Gilman, 2001; Mahoney et al., 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

As the research continues to point toward positive outcomes relative to educational goal setting and attainment, additional research will contribute toward establishing a widely accepted theory of student involvement and educational goal setting and attainment for students in high school.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if high school sophomore students attending public school in a rural, Southeastern region of Louisiana valued participation in extra-curricular activities as part of the preparation for applying toward, and gaining, admission to a postsecondary institution. Specifically, the study examined the affect of participation in extra-curricular activities on the value high school students placed on such participation as a component for gaining admission into a postsecondary institute. The study also examined the affect of participation in extra-curricular activities on the value high school students placed on such participation as a component for gaining admission into a postsecondary institute when controlled for religious participation, gender, and GPA.

Participants

For this study, a convenience sample population of high school sophomores in a particular region was used. Participants for this study were tenth grade students attending the four public high schools in the Washington Parish School system. The student population had a high rate of poverty, with the federal free and reduced lunch rate exceeding 80%. There were 312 participants who completed the survey.

Instrumentation

Following an exhaustive review of related research, an instrument addressing the specific questions of this study could not be identified. Although the High School Survey of Student Engagement (Yazzie-Mintz, 2008) instrument was considered as a model, it was necessary to develop an instrument particular to the purpose of this study.

The instrument developed (Appendix A) for this study includes forty (40) items and is divided into three sections: information on the student (Let's Talk about You); information on the student's school (About Your School); and statements on extra-curricular activities (About Extra-Curricular Activities). All items of the instrument have choices for the student to select; open-ended items designed for write-in answers were not included in the survey instrument design.

There are fifteen (15) items in the first section to obtain information and data about the student; six (6) items are included in second section to obtain information on the student's school; and nineteen (19) items in are included in the third section to obtain data on the student's perception of extra-curricular activities. To determine how a student valued participation in extra-curricular activities, a five point Likert Scale was used. The highest value, labeled strongly agree, was assigned a value of five (5) while the lowest value, strongly disagree, was assigned a value of one (1). For no opinion, or a neutral selection, three (3) was the assigned value.

For the purpose of this study, certain items on the instrument were designed to measure participation and the value of participation held by students

toward obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution. The variables for the study were participation in extra-curricular activities and the value of participation in extra-curricular activities as a component to gaining admission into a postsecondary institute.

Item 10 of the survey instrument was used to determine participation in extra-curricular activities. The responses were collapsed for the purposes of coding participation. A response of 0 was coded as 0 for no participation in extra-curricular activity. A response of 1, 2, 3, or "4 or more" on the survey instrument was coded as 1 for participation in extra-curricular activity.

Items 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, and 39 on the instrument were used to formulate a composite score for value for each participant. The Means ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.62$) were calculated by averaging the Means for the items identified.

Item 1 of the survey instrument was used to determine gender. For item 1, the data were coded 1 for female and 2 for male. Item 4 of the survey instrument was used to determine GPA. For GPA, the data were collapsed and coded 1, 2, and 3. For a GPA of 4.00 to 3.00, the item was coded 1; for GPA of 2.90 to 2.00 the item was coded 2; and for a GPA below 2.00 the item was coded 3. Item 9 of the survey instrument was used to determine religious participation. For religious participation, 1 was coded for participation and 0 for non-participation of a religious service. Students were instructed on the survey instrument that participation was defined as attending a religious service at least once per month.

Procedures

District and school administrators agreed to require all sophomore students to attend an assembly at each school (Appendix B). The researcher personally administered the survey at each school site.

A letter addressing the parents (Appendix C) was sent home describing the study and providing the parent or guardian with the opportunity to indicate that he or she did not want the student participating. Students were provided a consent form as well (Appendix D). All of this was done in accordance with the procedures and requirements, and approval, of the Institutional Review Board at The University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix E).

At each assembly, the administrator explained the collaborative effort of the school and the researcher. The researcher then informed the students of the purpose of the study and the reason they had been selected to participate.

The researcher also informed the students that participation was voluntary. Additionally, the researcher emphasized the anonymity of the student's responses and indicated that any identifying marks should not be placed on the instrument to connect students' names and responses.

The researcher, with assistance by school personnel, distributed the survey instrument to the students. The instructions on the instrument were read aloud to the students. The students were asked to fold their instrument in half with the blank side visible when they completed the survey. Once completed, the students were instructed to place the instrument in designated collection boxes that were clearly marked and strategically placed around the room.

The researcher worked with the appropriate school personnel to identify students who were absent. Once identified, the researcher then returned to the school within 10 school days to administer the survey to those particular students.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted. For the pilot study, 20 students in the eleventh grade at one of the four participating high schools were surveyed. The same procedures were followed. The Cronbach reliability coefficient was calculated at .84 which is acceptable.

After completing the survey, the students were engaged in discussion to determine clarity of instructions and process. Suggestions were incorporated into the survey instrument used. Suggestions included clarifying some of the instructions and adding the language "such as clubs, organizations and/or teams" at the end of the questions for items 10 and 11. The other suggestion was a formatting issue regarding the width of columns for responses to Items 22-41.

Data Analysis

The information collected was analyzed using SPSS data analysis software. The research questions analyzed and reported were:

1. Is there a correlation between high school sophomores who participate in extra-curricular activities and their reported value of such participation as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institute?

A correlation analysis, using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r), was conducted to assess the relationship between participation in

extra-curricular activity and the value of such participation toward gaining admission into a postsecondary institute.

2. Is there a correlation between high school sophomores who participate in extra-curricular activities and their reported value of such participation as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institute when controlled for the following variables: Religious Participation, Gender, and Grade Point Average (GPA)?

Partial correlation was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the value of extra-curricular activity and obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution when controlled for the same student's GPA. A descriptive analysis of the study participants was also presented.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Summary

Chapter IV presents descriptive statistics and analysis of the relationship between students who participate in extra-curricular activities and their perceived benefit toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institute. Analysis of the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and perceived value of such participation toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institute when controlled for religious participation, gender, and grade point average is also presented. For this study, participation in extra-curricular activity and the value of such participation toward attaining admission to a postsecondary institution were the variables considered.

Study Participants

Students in the tenth grade attending a high school in the Washington Parish School System were surveyed. A copy of the survey instrument is included in Appendix A.

A total of 312 students completed the survey. Of the students who completed the survey, 163 (52%) were female and 141 (48%) were male. Additionally, household income was measured utilizing the federal lunch program guidelines for public school students. There were 211 students (67%) who indicated they were on the free lunch program; 80 students (26%) on the full paid lunch program; and 20 students (7%) on the reduced payment lunch program. Of the participants, 195 students (62%) described their ethnicity as Caucasian

while 108 students (35%) selected African American. There were 8 students (3%) who selected Hispanic/Latino or Other when asked to describe their ethnicity.

Students responded to their most likely choice of plans for after high school if they were to decide the day of the survey. Choices provided were: Military, Trade School/Vocational Technical College, Work, and College. For this item, 239 students (76%) indicated their choice at the time of the survey was college. Meanwhile 34 students (11%) selected Trade School/Vocational Technical College; 23 students (8%) selected work; and 14 students (5%) selected military.

Results of Statistical Analysis

Two research questions were presented for this study. The first research question considered the relationship between high school sophomores who participated in extra-curricular activities and their reported value of such participation as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution. This question was analyzed using the response from item 10 of the survey to determine whether or not a student participated in extra-curricular activities.

The value of participation in extra-curricular activity toward gaining admission to college was determined by calculating a mean score using responses from the following items: 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, and 39. Table 1 presents the Means and Standard Deviation for each of these items. The Cronbach reliability coefficient was calculated at .83 which is acceptable.

A five point Likert scale was used for the items in Table 1. The scale ranged from a score of 5 for strongly agree to a score of 1 for strongly disagree. No opinion, or neutral, was represented by a score of 3. The item numbers in the table refer to the items in the survey instrument.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviation for Items Used to Calculate Value of Extra-Curricular Participation

	SAMPLE (n=311)	
Value of Extra-Curricular Participation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prepare for college admission (Item 23)	3.99	1.02
Success after high school (Item 24)	4.07	1.02
Important to colleges (Item 27)	3.86	1.04
More involved college student (Item 28)	4.00	0.97
Leadership experience (Item 30)	3.95	1.00
Community Service (Item 32)	3.64	1.13
Competitive for Scholarships (Item 33)	4.14	0.98
Begin Preparing for college (Item 34)	4.43	0.85
Begin thinking about college (Item 35)	4.16	1.12
More responsible in college (Item 38)	3.94	1.03
Teachers stress importance (Item 39)	3.17	1.23

The two variables examined for question one were: participation or non participation in extra-curricular activities and value of such participation as calculated using the survey items presented in Table 1. For the two variables,

the means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2 by participants and nonparticipants.

Correlation was used to examine the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the value of such participation toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institution. The results showed a statistically significant correlation, $r = .355$, $p < .01$. However, the correlation indicated a medium effect for the association between the two variables.

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation for Participants and Non Participants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Participation

Extra-Curricular Activity	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*N*
Participants	4.10	0.55	218
Non Participants	3.61	0.67	86
Total	3.99	0.62	304

Participants of extra-curricular activities ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.55$) indicated a higher value toward gaining college admission than nonparticipants ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.67$). Overall, survey respondents agreed ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.62$) that extra-curricular activities were important toward gaining admission to college.

The second research question examined the relationship between high school sophomores who participated in extra-curricular activities and their reported value of such participation as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institute when controlled for the following variables: Religious Participation, Gender, and Grade Point Average (GPA).

Partial correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between the value of extra-curricular activity and obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution when controlled for the same student's gender, religious participation, and GPA. The analysis (r=.326, p<.001) showed a statistically significant relationship when controlled for gender, religious participation, and GPA. However, the association between the two variables again had a medium effect.

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations by gender for participants and nonparticipants of extra-curricular activities. Female students indicated a slightly higher value for extra-curricular participation (M = 4.03, SD = 0.50) than male students (M = 3.88, SD = 0.74).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviation by Gender for Participants and Non Participants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Participation

Gender	*Participants*	*Non Participants*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*n*
Female	118	45	4.03	0.50	163
Male	100	41	3.88	0.74	141
Total	218	86	3.96	0.62	304

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they participated in a religious service on a regular basis. For the purposes of this study, participants were instructed on the survey instrument that regular participation include attendance of a religious service or activity at least once per month.

Of the respondents, 79% ($N = 247$) indicated they did participate in some religious service at least once per month. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations by religious participation for participants and nonparticipants of extra-curricular activity.

The participants were asked to self-report the range of grade point average that best reflected their own academic achievements. There was no independent verification of academic performance reported by students. Participants were provided selections based on a four point grading scale, with a 4.00 GPA representing all A's for academic performance.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviation by Religious Participation for Participants and Non Participants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Participation

Religious Participation	*Participants*	*Non Participants*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*n*
Attend	189	58	3.99	0.61	247
Do Not Attend	33	31	3.83	0.65	64
Total	222	89	3.96	0.62	311

Students reporting a higher grade point average ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.61$) held a higher value toward participation in extra-curricular activities than students reporting a grade point average of 2.00 or below ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.70$). The means and standard deviations by GPA are reported in Table 5 for participants and nonparticipants of extra-curricular activity.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviation by GPA for Participants and Non Participants of the Value of Extra-Curricular Participation

GPA	*Participants*	*Non Participants*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*n*
4.00-3.00	127	41	4.05	0.61	168
2.90-2.00	91	42	3.90	0.58	133
2.00 or below	5	6	3.16	0.70	11
Total	223	89	3.99	0.62	312

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if high school sophomore students attending public school in a rural, Southeastern region of Louisiana valued participation in extra-curricular activities as part of the preparation for applying toward, and gaining, admission to a postsecondary institution. This study examined the perception held by the students of the value of participating in extra-curricular activities on educational attainment beyond high school. For this study, the variables were participation in extra-curricular activity and the calculated value of participation in extra-curricular activity toward obtaining college admission.

Research studies on the academic and educational goal setting advantages of participating in extra-curricular activities have been ongoing since the early 20th century (Davalos, et al, 1999). Some theoretical frameworks suggest that participation in extra-curricular activity has positive rather than negative effects on student outcomes (Broh, 2002).

There has been much debate as to whether a solid theoretical foundation for K-12 participation in extra-curricular activities, and its positive effects academically and socially, can be acknowledged (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Some argument may remain among educational experts as to whether or not a significant theoretical foundation exist for high school student participation in extra-curricular activity (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005), however, a longitudinal

analysis of 900 individuals found student participation in extra-curricular activity did contribute toward increased college enrollment and years of education (Eccles et al., 2003).

Participation in extra-curricular activities has shown a relationship with completing more years of education (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001) and improved college graduation rates (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). Examining the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and gaining admission to a postsecondary institution is further supported by research of over 12,000 students concluding that extra-curricular activities resulted in more university applications completed and higher rates of college enrollment (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

Extra-curricular activity participation has also been positively related to social and academic self-concept, educational aspirations, coursework selection, completion of homework, absenteeism, academic achievement, and subsequent college attendance (Gerber, 1996; Marsh, 1992). An individual's participation in at least one extra-curricular activity in which members of her or his social network also participated has been linked to a decline in antisocial patterns (Mahoney, 2000), and a similar link has been shown for one to four hours per week of extra-curricular activity (Zill et al., 1995).

Research findings supporting positive correlations among extra-curricular participation and educational goal setting and attainment has resulted in changes to admissions practices as well. Postsecondary institutions are acknowledging that more recognition of the value of participation in extra-curricular activities is

warranted. Institutions are more considerate of the student's complete body of work; their ability to interact and work with peers; leadership experiences; and social developments (Blum, 2008; Hoover, 2007).

Discussion

Results of this study indicated that the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the value of such participation toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institution was statistically significant ($r = .355$, $p < .001$). However, analysis of the results revealed a medium effect relationship between the two variables.

Participants were asked a series of questions to determine the value of extra-curricular activity participation. The means of the selected items were averaged to determine the overall value of extra-curricular participation toward obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution.

When asked to value the participation of extra-curricular activities, survey respondents agreed ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.62$) that such participation was important toward preparing for, and gaining admission to, a postsecondary institution. Results of this study indicated that high school students concurred that extra-curricular activities were valuable in obtaining educational goals.

The researcher also examined the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the value of that participation in obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution when controlled for gender, academic performance, and religious participation. The analysis showed a statistically significant correlation ($r=.326$, $p<.001$) when controlled for these variables.

Again, the researcher's analysis of the results discovered a medium effect of the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and the value of that participation toward obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution.

As stated, analysis of the results showed a statistically significant relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and reported value of such participation toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institution ($r = .355$, $p < .001$). Considering the medium effect, the researcher concluded participation in extra-curricular activity could not categorically be associated with the value held by high school students of such participation toward obtaining admission to college.

Additionally, analysis of results found a statistically significant relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and the value of such participation when controlled for gender, religious participation, and GPA (r=.326, p<.001). Again, considering this analysis, the researcher concluded participation in extra-curricular activity could not categorically be associated with the value held by high school students of such participation toward obtaining admission to college when controlling for gender, religious participation, and GPA. The researcher concluded that religious participation, gender, and GPA had almost no bearing on the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the value of that participation toward obtaining admission to college.

From analysis of the results, the researcher concluded that students who participated in the study agreed ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.62$) that participation in extra-curricular activity was important to their attainment of future educational goals,

particularly preparation for college admission. The researcher also concluded that the statistical analysis of the relationship represented a medium effect.

An influencing factor affecting the strength of relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the value of that participation may have been the age of the students used in this particular study. Tenth grade students, while having some sense of attending college, are typically not prepared and engaged in the college admissions process to the level recommended. Rather, students at this level of their high school studies are guided more toward the concept of attending college for career advancement and obtaining educational goals rather than connected with the realities and specifics of the admissions process for postsecondary institutions (Frederick & Eccles, 2006).

The researcher also considered the influence of school administrators and teachers on students' value of extra-curricular activities. Students who participated in this study indicated their respective schools did not generally recognize and encourage participation in extra-curricular activities as a component of preparation for college admission ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.08$). However, students agreed that their respective schools often ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.98$) provided opportunities to learn about the requirements for college admission and how to prepare for college admission. A five point Likert scale was used in this analysis, with 5 indicating "Very Often" and 1 indicating "Never" and 3 indicating "Sometimes."

The researcher concluded two potential scenarios for this finding. The apparent conclusion was that school influence over the relationship between extra-curricular participation and college admission was not particularly strong or effective from the students' perspectives. Another likely conclusion was schools in this study were more focused on college admissions preparation for students closer to graduation. Research literature has indicated that while educational experts agree college preparation should begin with freshmen in high school, often district resources limit their own ability to invest in effective strategies for engaging in proven practices for ninth and tenth grade students. Those resources are often invested more heavily for older students, almost to a point where the resources are too late to be as effective as possible (Benson & Saito, 2000; Broh, 2002; Busseri et al., 2006).

The researcher concluded that students surveyed for this study did support theoretical foundations which suggested participation in extra-curricular activities had positive effects on student outcomes and educational goal setting (Broh, 2002; Shernoff et al., 2003). The researcher's findings also further supported the concept that building cultural capital in extra-curricular settings increased the likelihood of students achieving educational success beyond high school (Bourdieu, 1973).

Of the 312 participants, 239 indicated a goal of attending college. Given a high percentage of students with a goal of attending college (76%) and the high percentage of students participating in extra-curricular activities (71%), the

researcher concluded that further examination and understanding of this relationship is warranted.

As previously discussed, the effect of the relationship may be attributed to the influence of teachers and administrators or may be attributed to the grade level of the students (sophomores) in this study. The association between participation and the value of participation in preparing students for obtaining educational goals was not as conclusive as some research literature had suggested.

Analysis of the study results did not entirely support prior research (Barber et al., 2001; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003) which concluded that participation in extra-curricular activities influenced an increased number of college applications, more months of college attendance, and higher levels of postsecondary education. Although a relationship between the two variables for this study was evident, the influence of participation toward the value of such participation was not conclusive.

For this study, gender was a consideration in the analysis of the relationship between extra-curricular participation and the value of that participation toward obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution. Research has long showed gender-specific patterns when examining extra-curricular participation and educational attainment (Holland & Andre, 1987).

One explanation offered to support the difference in relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and the value of that participation is that male students predominantly participate through athletics. Male students often

maintain a goal –regardless of their abilities and accomplishments through competition—of continuing their athletic aspirations in college. This may lead to higher importance placed on extra-curricular participation and college admission (Perry-Bumey & Takyi, 2002). Conversely, this theory contradicts previous research which found female students realized more benefits from athletic participation than male students (Crosnoe, 2002; Dodge & Jaccard, 2002).

Religious participation was also examined in analyzing the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activity and the value of such participation toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institution. Students who reported religious attendance valued the participation toward college admission only slightly higher (M = 3.99, SD = 0.61) than students who reported no religious attendance (M = 3.83, SD = 0.65). The researcher concluded there was no real difference in the value of participation between the two groups as both participants and nonparticipants of religious activities agreed that extra-curricular activities were valuable toward gaining admission to a postsecondary institution.

Religious participation has been identified in previous research studies as predictors for verbal ability, personal interaction among peers, and higher rates of participation in extra-curricular activities (Lam, 2002; Parcel & Geschwender, 1995). Speculation around religious participation lead to a thought process that such participation influenced involvement in extra-curricular activity and increased the likelihood of achieving advanced educational goals (King & Furrow, 2004).

With regard to religious participation the results of this study were consistent with prior research literature. Previous research literature found that attendance, not importance of religion, was a strong indicator of better educational outcomes (Regnerus & Elder, 2003). While more students in this study who attended a religious activity regularly participated in extra-curricular activities, the researcher could not definitively contribute such participation to religious attendance.

The increased likelihood of participation and value of such participation may be attributed to the inherent nature of the religious participation and networking itself. Utilizing various forms of communication, church media, and social networking, congregations continually encourage student participation in the community and at school, recognizing and celebrating extra-curricular activities and increased interactions with adults (Smith et al., 2002).

This particular study also examined the academic performance of students and its relationship with the value of extra-curricular activity and college admission. Researchers have hypothesized that extra-curricular activities link students with increased academic performances through an emergent connection between the student and their school which produces improvement achievement and attainment (Brown & Evans, 2002). Previous studies have found that participation in extra-curricular activities is associated with higher academic grades in school, increased number of applications completed and submitted for admission to colleges, and higher levels of postsecondary education completed. The results in this study which found a statistically

significant correlation between participation in extra-curricular activities and educational goal setting were further supported by previous research literature which also found similar relationships between extra-curricular participation and academic goal setting and achievement (Broh, 2002; Crosnoe, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Hanson & Kraus, 1998; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney et al., 2003; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001; McNeal, 1998; Melnick, Sabo & Vanfossen, 1992; Spreitzer, 1994).

Conclusions

The researcher concluded that the relationship between participation in extra-curricular activities and the value held of such participation toward obtaining admission to college was evident but did not exhibit a strong correlation. Additionally, when controlled for religious participation, gender, and GPA, there was no real effect on the relationship of the two variables.

Nevertheless, students valued participation in extra-curricular activities as a component for obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution. Students in this survey agreed that such participation did prepare them for the college admissions process. Particularly, students who participated in extra-curricular activities held a higher value of their participation toward college admission than students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities. The researcher also concluded that the age and grade level of the students likely had an effect on the strength of the correlation.

Interestingly, students surveyed did recognize their respective schools' efforts in preparing them for college overall, but also indicated their high school rarely acknowledged the relationship between extra-curricular activities and the admissions process into a postsecondary institution. It is likely that students at the tenth grade level have not yet internalized the process and specifics of information which colleges seek from applicants for admission.

Controlling for religious participation, gender, and GPA had no bearing on the correlation between participation in extra-curricular activity and the value of that participation toward obtaining admission to college. Students with higher academic performance (above 3.00 GPA) did value participation in extra-curricular activities while students who performed poorly academically (2.00 and below) were neutral, or had no opinion, on the value of extra-curricular activity participation toward college admission. This finding is consistent with other research which has shown that extra-curricular activities traditionally attract the better performing students academically (Broh, 2002; Crosnoe, 2001; Eccles &Barber, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Hanson & Kraus, 1998; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney et al., 2003; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001; McNeal, 1998; Melnick, Vanfossen, & Sabo, 1992; Spreitzer, 1994).

There was no effective difference on the value of participation in extra-curricular activities between participants and nonparticipants of religious services or between male and female students. These subgroups all agreed that extra-

curricular activities were valuable as a component of obtaining admission to a postsecondary institution.

Analysis of the results showed a substantial percentage of students at the tenth grade level in the school district were interested in attaining educational goals beyond high school. The data also showed a large percentage of students participated in at least one extra-curricular activity. Given these circumstances, and the value of extra-curricular participation held by students, the analysis of results showed that this topic warranted careful attention by administrators, teachers, and researchers.

Previous research studies showed increases in educational goal setting and attainment for students involved in extra-curricular activities. Although statistically significant, the results of this study were inconclusive and did not support a strong correlation between participation and value of participation toward obtaining college admission.

All educators and researchers --K-12 through higher education-- should continue discussions regarding shifts and trends in admissions requirements for postsecondary institutions as research literature have suggested (Hoover, 2007). Increased attention to a student's leadership and extra-curricular activities are more significant for many institutions in making decisions about whether or not to award admission to a potential student (Sitley, 2001).

With more dialogue and discussion, high school students can be more informed of the importance of planning their studies throughout their high school years and more informed of opportunities beyond high school including, but not

limited to, attending college. Of the 312 students surveyed, 76% indicated they currently planned to attend college after high school. While much effort is constructed to prepare students academically for college, what about the effort to prepare students for the process of gaining admission into college?

Considering the investment of resources into extra-curricular activities; the limitations of funding available to school districts in a struggling economy; and the environment of more stringent academic accountability, the researcher questions where exactly extra-curricular activity belongs on the list of priorities for policy makers and administrators. One would think that significant consideration would be given to research showing the academic benefits for students participating in extra-curricular activities when policy makers and administrators are forced to make tough, strategic decisions on curriculum and opportunities for students.

Equally important, however, educational leaders, practitioners, and researchers must address a more philosophical question: what is the purpose of education in a 21st Century, global economy and community in which we live? In the age of technology and instant access to information, should education prepare students to absorb and memorize information and knowledge? Should education, rather, equip students with the skills and competencies to access and utilize such information and knowledge? Perhaps education in the 21st century should be a hybrid of the two. If so, how can extra-curricular activities serve as a catalyst in this educational paradigm? How can educators and researchers reach across the many spectrums of teaching and learning so students are

engaged, prepared, and supported in their personal quest for success and sustainability?

Recommendations

Considering the vast amount of public funds and resources invested in extra-curricular activities, further understanding of the importance and role of extra-curricular activity should be closely examined. In 2005, Chicago Public Schools alone spent over $30 million on extra-curricular activities for students (Fredricks et al., 2006).

For many schools, especially schools in rural communities like those included in this study, extra-curricular activity is often the most likely point of interaction between the school and community. Though there is little or no argument that extra-curricular activities serve a primary function of educating students, there are certainly additional implications and benefits for such activities. Schools utilize extra-curricular activities and organizations, most notably athletics, to connect with its community and generate much of the financial and volunteer support needed to educate its students (Fairburn, 2008).

Further research would contribute to the knowledge and understanding of participation in extra-curricular activities and the value of the participation toward obtaining educational goals. It is important to note that students in this particular study were sophomores with a substantial part of their high school experience still yet to be realized.

Extra-curricular activities are a critical component in the evolutionary process of education. Students' expectations of extra-curricular activities are

much different today than years past (Mahoney et al., 2003). Consequently, further research is necessary to better understand the benefits of extra-curricular participation and to make strategic investments of limited financial and system resources. As such, future studies should consider the following research questions:

1. What is the value held by teachers and administrators for student participation in extra-curricular activities as a component of preparation for admission to a post secondary institution?
2. What is the value held by students in their junior and senior years of high school for participation in extra-curricular activities as a component of preparation for admission to a post secondary institution?
3. What is the value held by high school counselors for student participation in extra-curricular activities as a component of preparation for admission to a post secondary institution?
4. What is the relationship between K-12 administrators and teachers and their value of extra-curricular activities compared to that of admissions counselors and administrative personnel of higher education institutions?
5. What value do college graduates place on their own extra-curricular experience in high school toward achieving their educational goal of obtaining a degree?

Additionally, other socioeconomic demographics of students should be considered in broadening the research literature on extra-curricular activity and obtaining educational goals beyond high school. Extra-curricular activities

appear to be a context for students to meet and learn about peers who are different from them in ethnicity, race, and social class (Camp, 1990). Therefore, research should examine how these demographic factors contribute to a student's ability to identify, establish, and attain educational goals beyond high school.

This study examined academic performance, religious participation and gender. Additional studies should be replicated to examine ethnicity, the educational attainment of parents or guardians, and household income relative to extra-curricular participation and the value of such in preparing for admissions to a postsecondary institution. Further research studies would facilitate a better understanding of the effects and implications of extra-curricular participation for all students toward obtaining educational goals.

Recommendations for further exploration of this topic also include replicating this study on a statewide, regional, and/or national basis. While there is some national research on student engagement (Yazzie-Mintz, 2008), there is a lack of research specifically examining the relationship of participation in extra-curricular activity and the students' perceived value of such participation in gaining admission to a postsecondary institution.

The focal point of this particular study was on students' educational goals relative to attending a postsecondary institution of higher learning. However, considering that students who performed the lowest academically reported value for participation in extra-curricular activities, further studies should consider the implications for such participation on goal setting in other areas of development

and growth beyond high school. Such research should focus on students' goal setting and attainment in employment, vocational or technical education and workforce training, and civic and community engagement.

Extra-curricular activities are often promoted as providing students with opportunities to develop social skills, including learning to work with others, developing leadership skills, and developing social competencies (Cassel, 2000). Rogoff (1991) proposed that learning occurs through collaborative participation in activities of shared interest. Learning cooperation and teamwork has been described as part of the hidden curriculum of extra-curricular activities (Brown & Theobald, 1998).

In the process of coming together around the achievement of a goal, it is believed that students learn to work with each other, handle each other's emotions, divide responsibilities, and give and take feedback. Students often gain social skills and confidence in relating to peers (Patrick et al., 1999). It is important to determine whether students experience this as a significant domain of growth and, if so, what types of learning experiences are salient for them.

Another developmental process that has been attributed to extra-curricular activities is acquiring social capital: the formation of valuable relationships with adult leaders and others in the community. Leaders of extra-curricular activities are often named when students are asked about adults who are significant to them (Hendrix et al., 1990).

The personal feeling of being a part of some larger whole begins with a feeling of belonging by being part of a family and other heritage factors

associated therewith. In a democracy that feeling of belonging must grow, and students must learn early that personal identity includes religion, race, culture, the high school, and the community (Schneider & Guest, 2003).

To better understand this development and growth of students through extra-curricular participation, further studies should examine such participation in the contexts of career goals and community involvement. As previous research literature has suggested, the researcher agrees the complexity of benefits and risks of student participation in extra-curricular activities has effects for students in numerous areas of development.

Whereas this study produced many more questions than it did answers, the information gained can play a critical role in making decisions regarding extra-curricular activities. School and district administrators should utilize the information in this study for future decision making on policy regarding extra-curricular activities.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

INSTRUCTIONS

Read each question carefully and select the answer that best describes you. All answers are confidential. The purpose of this survey is to learn more about your choice on whether or not to participate in extracurricular activities.

WHAT IS EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY?

For this survey, think of extra-curricular activities as any activity, club, or sport that you participate in at school or in the community. Examples may be Art, Athletics, Band, Clubs, Volunteering, Leadership, and others.

Do NOT put your name anywhere on this paper!

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU...

For each of the questions below, Place an "X" on the box that best represents YOU

1. Are you...
   ☐ Female ☐ Male

2. Your racial or ethnic background is...
   ☐ African American ☐ Caucasian/White ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Other

3. Your lunch program can be best described as...
   ☐ Free ☐ Reduced ☐ Paid/Full

4. Your Grade Point Average (GPA) is best described as...
   ☐ 4.00 – 3.50 ☐ 3.40 – 3.00 ☐ 2.90 – 2.50 ☐ 2.40 – 2.00 ☐ 2.00 or below

5. If you decided TODAY, what would be your most likely choice of plans for after high school?

   ☐ Military ☐ Trade School/Vocational Technical College ☐ Work ☐ College

6. For each parent, check off their highest level of education completed:
   Mother: ☐ some school ☐ high school ☐ college ☐ graduate or professional

   Father: ☐ some school ☐ high school ☐ college ☐ graduate or professional

7. Do your parents or guardian volunteer with a church or community group on a regular basis?
   ☐ Yes ☐No

8. If you selected YES, about how many hours per month would say they spend volunteering?
   ☐ None, they do not volunteer ☐ Less than 2 hours ☐ 3-6 hours ☐ 7-10 hours ☐ more than 10 hours

9. Do you attend a church or religious service on a regular basis (1 to 2 times per month)?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

MORE ABOUT YOU...

For each of the questions below, Place an "X" on the box that best represents YOU

10. Do you participate in any extra-curricular activities such as clubs, organizations and/or teams?
    ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 or more

11. During a typical week, how many hours after school or on weekends do you spend participating in activities or practice as a member of a club, organization, or team?
    ☐ 0 hours, not a member of any club ☐ Less than 1 hour ☐ 2 – 3 hours
    ☐ 4 – 5 hours ☐ More than 5 hours

12. During a typical week, how many hours after school or on weekends do you spend volunteering to help others or serve your community?
    ☐ 0 hours ☐ Less than 1 hour ☐ 2 – 3 hours ☐ 4 – 5 hours ☐ More than 5 hours

13. I have participated in clubs, organizations, or teams since....(check only one)
    ☐ Never, I do not participate ☐ High School ☐ Junior High ☐ Elementary School

14. I participated in a service or volunteer project as part of my regular class...
    ☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

15. My high school plan can be best described as....
    ☐ General/Regular ☐ Special Education ☐ Technical College/Trade School
    ☐ Advanced/College Prep

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL...

For each of the questions below, Place an "X" on the box that best describes YOUR SCHOOL

16. My school encourages and stresses participation in clubs, organizations, or sports...
    ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

17. My school recognizes athletic achievement....
    ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

18. My school recognizes clubs' and organizations' achievements....
    ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

19. My school recognizes volunteering and community service achievements....
    ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

20. My school recognizes participation in clubs, organizations, or teams as important toward gaining admission to college....
    ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

21. My school provides opportunities to learn about the requirements for college admission and how to prepare for college admission...
    ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often

ABOUT EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES...

Select the response that is closest to how you feel for each of the following statements. To select a response, place a Check mark in the column for each statement. Select only one response for each statement!!

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO OPINION
22. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams will help me be a better student in the classroom.					
23. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams in high school will help prepare me for college admission.					
24. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams in high school will prepare me to be successful after high school.					
25. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams helps students to learn better in the classroom.					
26. Students who participating in clubs, organizations, or teams are smarter than those students who do not.					
27. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams is important to colleges when selecting students for admission					
28. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams will prepare me to be more involved as a student in college.					
29. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams will help me become a better leader.					
30. Leadership experience and qualities are important to colleges when selecting students for admission.					
31. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams will help me become a better citizen in my community.					

32. Community service is important to colleges when selecting students for admission.
33. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams will improve my chances of receiving scholarships to attend college.
34. It is important to begin thinking about college during my sophomore year of high school.
35. It is important to begin preparing for college admission during my sophomore year of high school.

36. It is too early to think about college during the freshman year of high school.
37. You should wait until your junior year before you begin preparing for college admission.
38. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams will help me be a more responsible student in college.
39. Participating in clubs, organizations, or teams will help me be a more responsible student in college.
40. Teachers at my school stress that participating in clubs, organizations, or teams is an important part of gaining admission to college.
41. Students who participate in clubs, organizations, or teams in high school will make better grades in college than those students who do not participate in clubs, organizations, or teams in high school.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!

AFTER YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL ITEMS, PLACE IN DESIGNATED BOXES!

PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK YOUR RESPONSES TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL ITEMS!!

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS PAPER!!

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF APPROVAL, WASHINGTON PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

DARRELL FAIRBURN
SUPERINTENDENT

FREDDIE JEFFERSON
PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM
P.O. BOX 587
FRANKLINTON, LOUISIANA 70438
(985) 839-3436 FAX # (985) 839-5464

May 12, 2009

TO: PRINCIPALS

FROM: DARRELL FAIRBURN, SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: SURVEY OF HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES

I am granting permission for John Wyble to work with our high school principals in administering a survey to sophomore students.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call my office.

DF:sm

APPENDIX C

PARENTAL CONSENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

DATE

Dear Parent(s):
Your child has been selected to participate in a survey at school on extra-curricular activities and whether your child thinks they are important toward gaining admission to college. The survey will be administered on **<INSERT DATE AND TIME>** at _____ High School. Participation in the survey has been approved by the Superintendent and the Principal. Participation should take no more than 30 minutes.

The purpose of the study is to determine if your child believes that extra-curricular activities, such as sports, clubs, music, and arts, are valuable to his or her education. A survey will be given to your child and will ask him or her to provide basic information about the student and about the school. The survey will also ask what he or she thinks and feels about extra-curricular activities.

All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, will be explained by the researcher. Information will be given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected. The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures will be given to the students. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to <PROJECT DIRECTOR, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL ADDRESS>. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research
projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

PLEASE SELECT "YES" IF YOU WILL ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE OR "NO" IF YOU DO NOT WISH FOR HIM OR HER TO PARTICIPATE AND RETURN THE SIGNED AND DATED FORMED TO _____ HIGH SCHOOL NO LATER THAN _____<DATE OF SURVEY HERE>. THANK YOU!

_____ **YES**, my child, _____, has permission to participate in this study.

_____ **NO**, I do not wish for my child,_____, to participate in this study.

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

APPENDIX D

STUDENT CONSENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
STUDENT ASSENT LETTER TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

DATE

Dear Student:
You have been selected to participate in a survey at school on extra-curricular activities and whether you think they are important toward gaining admission to college. The survey will be administered on **<INSERT DATE AND TIME>** at _____ High School. Participation in the survey has been approved by the Superintendent and the Principal. Participation should take no more than 30 minutes.

The purpose of the study is to determine if you believe that extra-curricular activities, such as sports, clubs, music, and arts, are valuable to your education. A survey will be given to you and you will be asked to provide basic information about yourself and your school. The survey will also ask what you think and feel about extra-curricular activities.

All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, will be explained by the researcher. Information will be given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected. The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures will be given to the students. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to <PROJECT DIRECTOR, PHONE NUMBER, AND EMAIL ADDRESS>. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research
projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

PLEASE SELECT "YES" IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE OR "NO" IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE AND SIGN AND DATE THE FORM. THANK YOU!

_____ **YES**, I, _____, have decided to participate in this study.

_____ **NO**, I,_____, do not wish to participate in this study.

_____ _____
Signature Date

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **29060102**
PROJECT TITLE: **Do Extra-Curricular Activities Prepare Students for Admission to a Postsecondary Institution? An Examination of the Perception of High School Sophomores**
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **03/01/09 to 11/01/09**
PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **John E. Wyble**
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**
DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & Research**
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **07/30/09 to 07/29/10**

Lawrence A. Hosman

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

8-06-09
Date

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