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PATTERNS OF EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION IN HIGH SCHOOL

By

Adrienne McDermott

A Master's Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
At  
Rowan University  
May 2002

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved 5/1/02

## ABSTRACT

Adrienne McDermott  
PATTERNS OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION  
IN HIGH SCHOOL

2002

Dr. John Klanderman  
Dr. Roberta Dihoff  
School Psychology Program

Participation in extracurricular activities is associated with higher educational aspirations and expectations, higher levels of academic achievement, higher levels of self-esteem and a lower likelihood of dropping out of high school. There is extensive research documenting the value of extracurricular activities.

The primary purpose of this study was to write a descriptive analysis of the patterns of participation in high school extracurricular activities among the various ethnic groups. The secondary purpose of this study was to examine patterns among each ethnic group and each extracurricular activity. The patterns of participation were examined in 10 High Schools. Participants of each activity were identified as African American, Asian, Caucasian, Indian or Latino.

The percentage of participation was identified for each ethnic group. The results indicate that the ethnic groups studied do not participate equally in extracurricular activities. The results also reveal patterns within each ethnic group and extracurricular activity.

## MINI-ABSTRACT

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# Chapter 1

## NEED

Participation in extracurricular activities is associated with higher educational aspirations and expectations (Otto, 1976), higher levels of academic achievement, higher levels of self-esteem and a lower likelihood of dropping out of high school.

Extracurricular activities enable students not only to explore interests and make new friends, but also to develop a large range of physical, interpersonal, leadership, and intellectual skills (Spady, 1970). Studies have associated participation with academic achievement, social characteristics and identity formation.

There is extensive research documenting the value of extracurricular activities. The research clearly demonstrates the variety of benefits gained by students when they participate in high school extracurricular activities. However, there is not much known about the patterns of participation.

It is the researcher's intention to identify who is participating in high school extracurricular activities. The research will identify whether or not extracurricular activities are equitably participated in by various ethnic groups 10 New Jersey High School. There is a need to ensure that students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds have equal access and participation in extracurricular activities.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study is to write a descriptive analysis of the patterns of high school student participation in extracurricular activities. The patterns of participation will be examined in 10 New Jersey High Schools. The subgroup of the high school population will be divided by race (African-American, Asian, Caucasian, Indian, and Latino). The extracurricular activities that will be studied will include, football, cheerleading, baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, track, field hockey, wrestling, golf, tennis, band, drama, National honor Society, yearbook and the math club.

## **HYPOTHESIS (RESEARCH QUESTIONS)**

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 1**

How much does each ethnic group participate in high school extracurricular activities?

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

What patterns exist within each ethnic group?

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

Which extracurricular activities are dominated by certain ethnic groups, which activities are more diverse?

## **THEORY/BACKGROUND**

Participation in high school extracurricular activities is usually not considered to be a central part of an adolescent's education. Extracurricular activities for public school students were not generally accepted by educational leaders prior to 1900 (Camp, 1990).

Between then and about 1920, these activities became at least mildly important as a result of a powerful educational reform movement (Camp, 1990). It was not until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century those extracurricular activities began to be considered as important by educational leaders (Camp, 1990).

These activities (athletics, cheerleading, fine arts, academic organizations, newspaper/yearbook, student government, and vocational activities) are often the first to be cut due to budget problems. However, the students who participate in these activities gain a variety of benefits. Extracurricular activities are associated with increased academic achievement and a reduced likelihood of dropping out of high school.

Extracurricular activities are an important aspect of the student's social world and contribute to personal development and identity formation (McNeal, 1997). Membership in a club, sport, or other activity requires cooperation. According to McKown (1962), social cooperation is not taught in the usual subjects of algebra, history, or languages. Extracurricular activities provide numerous situations that the regular academic day lacks.

Several school districts have mandated minimum qualifications for students to participate in extracurricular activities (Joekel, 1985). Proponents of extracurricular activities argue that student participation is an extremely important part of the overall high school experience. The benefits gained from extracurricular participation should be for all students, and not just for those whose grades average above a C (GPA= 2.0) or for students that pass all their courses (Camp, 1990).

If extracurricular activities are good for one student, they are probably good for all students (McKown, 1962). This is theoretically true, but may not be a reality. A

number of studies have shown that participants in extracurricular activities differ from nonparticipants in areas such as race, gender and socioeconomic status (Camp, 1990). The availability of extracurricular activities does not ensure that students will take advantage of them (Camp, 1990). To increase student involvement in these activities, high schools must seek ways in which to engage students of all ethnic groups (Kuh). Required participation would destroy some of the attractiveness of extracurricular participation. However, the ideal is to include as many as possible (McKown, 1962). This is especially important for minority groups who may perceive that certain opportunities are not open to them (Camp, 1990).

## **DEFINITIONS**

*Extracurricular activities* The term originates from the idea that students themselves organized and promoted activities that were considered “extra” to the regular curriculum. These activities do not fall within the scope of a regular curriculum (carrying no academic credit). Today these activities include classrooms, time, equipment, transportation, materials and many full-time professional directors of activities. There are hundreds of different extracurricular activities. Some of the basic activities include athletics, cheerleading, fine arts, academic organizations, newspaper/yearbook, student government, and vocational activities.

*Socialization* The process by which individuals selectively acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and motives current in the groups of which they are or will become members.

*Socioeconomic Status* This term relates to an individual's social and economic status. It refers to a combination of income and social position.

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

In performing research, it is important to recognize and acknowledge the assumptions made by the researcher. The researcher is making the assumption that patterns of participation found in extracurricular activities during the 2000-2001 school year are representative of other years. The researcher also assumes that the high school yearbooks will accurately represent the patterns of participation of the extracurricular activities. Finally, the researcher assumes each student's ethnicity will be able to be determined by looking at a picture and considering their full name.

### **LIMITATIONS**

The high schools used for this research are all located in Southern New Jersey. This sample is not representative of other areas. The students themselves are not available for this research. Instead, the researcher will use high school yearbooks to collect data.

One concern of this study was related to demographics. The researcher was unable to obtain the ethnic demographics in each school. This information would be very useful for the present research. Without this information it is difficult to assess the diversity of each of the schools.

## **OVERVIEW**

Chapter one addressed the purpose of this study. Chapter two will contain a review of the available research on the subject of extracurricular activities. It will also consider issues of adolescents, high school, racial and ethnic differences academic achievement, socialization, drop out rates and identity formation. Chapter three will include the design of the study. Chapter four will contain an analysis of the results. Chapter five will summarize the results and discuss all the findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Extracurricular programming appeared to have been a response by educational systems in industrialized nations to rapid increases in secondary school enrollments (Mcknown, 1962). Extracurricular activities for public school students were not generally accepted by educational leaders prior to 1900 (Camp, 1990). Between then and about 1920, these activities became at least mildly important as a result of a powerful educational reform movement (Camp, 1990). American educators became more tolerant of student-planned social and athletic activities. Principals and teachers began writing opinion articles which reflected their awareness of the value of extracurricular activities. It was not until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century those extracurricular activities began to be considered as important by educational leaders (Camp, 1990).

Although the extracurricular movement existed in the educational systems of many developed nations, in no country did it develop and flourish as it did in American high schools. For this reason, it has been called “an American innovation” (Graham, 1969). Fraternities and sororities were prevalent in American high schools during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. These groups were condemned because of their exclusionary practices. School-sponsored activities were regarded as a way to include all students. It was suggested that faculty supervised organizations should be “democratic in spirit” (Graham, 1969). The current position stresses that school programs should provide experiences that further the total development of individual students. Extracurricular activity planning must consider the development of all individuals.

There is also research linking extracurricular activities to the values participants learn (McNeal, 1998). There are fundamental differences between what values and behaviors are learned depending on the activity. For example, athletics tend to focus on competitiveness and aggression while the fine arts focus on poise and knowledge.

Researchers studying extracurricular activities have correlated student participation in these activities with variables related to desirable characteristics and outcomes of schooling (Thomas & Moran, 1991). Gholson (1985) stated that students believed they gained immediate and long term benefits from their participation in extracurricular activities.

Without doubt, the degree and kinds of student involvement in the non-academic segment of school can be significant. Those organizations and activities which have historically been considered 'extracurricular' appear to have significant and lasting value as one move beyond the formal classroom experiences. (p. 18)

Extracurricular activities enable students not only to explore interests and make new friends, but also to develop a large range of physical, interpersonal, leadership, and intellectual skills (Spady, 1970). Studies have associated participation with academic achievement, social characteristics and identity formation.

## **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

A great deal of research on extracurricular activities has dealt with educational aspirations and achievement. Researchers have studied whether participation in activities has an impact on academic achievements. The results have shown a positive relationship between activity participation and increased educational aspirations and expectations



(Otto, 1976); higher levels of academic achievement (Camp, 1990) and higher levels of self esteem (McNeal, 1998).

Otto (1975) believed that extracurricular activities should provide students with opportunities to acquire skills. Otto (1975) researched the effect of extracurricular participation on educational attainment while controlling for the effects of socioeconomic status, academic ability, and academic performance. He studied 17-year-old, male high school students. Otto (1975) found that extracurricular participation was significantly related to later educational achievements. Otto found that fifteen years after graduation, students that participated in extracurricular activities were more likely to have gone onto college.

A descriptive study was conducted using a national sample of high school students by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Sweet, 1986). The study found that participants of extracurricular activity had higher grade point averages than those who did not participate. Holland and Andre (1987) also found a significant relationship between participation and grade point averages. Camp (1990) used the High School and Beyond sophomore cohort data set to determine the relationship between extracurricular participation and academic achievement. Camp's study confirmed the findings of Otto (1975), Sweet (1986), and Holland and Andre (1987) that participation in extracurricular activities has a positive relationship to grades.

This research indicates that participation in extracurricular activities has positive relationship with all areas of academic achievement.

## **DROP OUT**

There are severe consequences associated with dropping out of high school. There has been a great deal of research on who drops out of high school. Students with low academic ability, from lower social class, and from racial-ethnic minority groups typically have increased chances of dropping out of high school (McNeal, 1995). McNeal (1995) reports that dropping out is related to a student's level of integration (student's involvement in school-based extracurricular activities). This view finds the school dynamics to have a major role in student dropouts. McNeal (1995) studied whether a student's participation in extracurricular activities significantly affects the student's chances of dropping out. The research found that certain extracurricular activities (athletics) significantly reduces a student's chances of dropping out, while participation in other types of activities has no effect.

Bell (1967) found a significant difference between high school drop outs and non drop outs in the number of activities they participated in. The lack of participation in extracurricular activities was a significant characteristic of the drop out (Bell, 1967). Bell concluded that high schools should make a great effort to have all students involved in extracurricular activities because a "meaningful experience in a chosen activity may make the difference between a dropout and a graduate" (Bell, 1967).

## **SOCIAL**

Many factors influence the development and socialization of American adolescents. Socialization has been defined as "the process by which individuals selectively acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives current in the

groups of which they are or will become members” (Otto, 1975). Although family provides the dominant influence, the culture provided by high schools also influences adolescent development (Holland & Andre, 1987). Sewell and Armer (1966) provide evidence that high school student’s social environments are a source of influence on student aspirations. They also found that the nature of the social context of the student’s community influences aspirations, even with family socioeconomic status and student I.Q. and grades held constant (Sewell & Armer, 1966).

The extra curriculum plays a key role in developing a school’s culture. By collecting adolescents into large groups, high schools provide a context for peer interaction during adolescence. Schools create a culture that revolves around the groups that the students form, which may be dependent on extracurricular activities. The importance of high school peer groups is further documented by Spady (1970). His study has shown that over a four year period, students with high peer status raise their aspirations while the aspirations of others drop.

*Self-esteem.* During the teenage years acceptance is established by peers. Coleman (1961) found that participation in extracurricular activities is associated with greater peer approval and with higher self-esteem. Several studies have researched the relationship between participation and self-esteem. Phillips (1969) studied athletics, clubs, music, and other activities. He found that for boys, across all activities, a significant positive relationship existed between extracurricular participation and self-esteem scores (Phillips, 1969).

Grabe (1981) measured self-esteem as related to extracurricular activity participation in 15 small and 5 large high schools. Participation was more predictive of self-esteem in small schools than in large schools.

Spady (1970) studied the effects of peer status and extracurricular activities on goals and achievement. This research found that the student's role in the high school is a main source of success. Participation in certain extracurricular activities (especially athletics) is related to having high peer status (Spady, 1970). This positive feeling that the students have during high school creates a desire for further recognition after high school.

## **IDENTITY**

The identity formation that takes place during adolescence is presumed to have a significant impact on later life. Thus, researchers attempt to increase our understanding of identity formation. Researchers stress the importance of considering the sociocultural context of individual identity development.

Prominent psychologists have viewed a supportive adolescent peer group as the primary social arena in which adolescents develop a positive identity (Douvan & Adelson, 1966). Douvan and Adelson (1966) argued that “teenagers are about to crystallize an identity, and for this they need others of their generation to act as models, mirrors, helpers, testers, foils”.

Kinney (1993) conducted in-depth interviews with teenagers to collect information regarding everyday experiences that shape their identities. The research found that adolescents' daily negotiation between groups produced powerful emotions

that had a significant impact on their perceptions of themselves (Kinney, 1993).

Moreover, adolescents that participate in school activities were able to affirm a positive personal identity (Kinney, 1993).

Brown and Lohr (1987) have found that membership in teenage crowds and extracurricular participation have had a significant affect on self evaluations. They found that the most “popular” teens participated in the most prestigious extracurricular activities. The most prestigious activities include male basketball and football teams, the student government, cheerleading, and the yearbook). Brown and Lohr (1987) also report that the popular students express higher levels of self esteem than those who do not participate in extracurricular activities.

## **RACE**

In general, low socioeconomic and minority students receive less attention from teachers, are placed in lower academic tracks, and learn less during the school year (McNeal, 1998). McNeal points out that high schools demonstrate the same inequalities as our society. Research supports the claim that access to the extracurriculum is inequitably distributed among students from various social, racial and ethnic backgrounds. It is important to research the inequalities in extracurricular activities given the potential benefits that students may receive from participation (McNeal, 1998).

The popular conception is that extracurricular activity participation is voluntary and open to all students (McNeal, 1998). According to McNeal (1998), students may be selected into these activities by teachers, peers, and GPA criteria, and therefore

participation may not be voluntary or open. If teachers are involved in selection, it is possible that students are not selected equally. McNeal (1998) states that teachers may have certain beliefs about students and activities. Teacher's preconceptions may affect which students they select for particular extracurricular activities. Also, many schools have policies that require students to maintain a minimum GPA to be able to participate in activities (Joekel, 1985).

McNeal (1998) researched patterns of participation among high school students. Based on raw data, African Americans and Latinos seem to have more restricted access to extracurricular activities (McNeal, 1998). The extra curriculum also stratifies students based on social class, ability, and to some extent gender (McNeal, 1998).

Stereotypes. Grace Kao (2000), examined group images and stereotypes along racial and ethnic lines pertaining to educational achievement, aspirations and extracurricular activities. Interviews with Asian, Black, White and Hispanic high school students revealed prevalent stereotypes that link ethnic group membership to academic ability and other skills. Kao found that Asian youth are believed to be especially gifted in their academic abilities, while blacks are seen as less gifted academically. Kao also found that stereotypes about Hispanics focused on their manual labor skills rather than academics. Kao states that "these images form the reference point for the construction of success among youth" (2000). This research supports the idea that adolescents define their goals depending on the stereotypes attached to their ethnic group. Kao believes that these stereotypes maintain racially and ethnically segregated extracurricular activities. Kao argues for the importance of socialization with other races in order to eliminate conceptions of success within racial groups.

## **SUMMARY**

A review of the literature surrounding extracurricular activities reveals the many benefits associated with participation. Participation in extracurricular activities is associated with higher educational aspirations and expectations, higher levels of academic achievement, higher levels of self-esteem and a lower likelihood of dropping out of high school. Extracurricular activities enable students not only to explore interests and make new friends, but also to develop a large range of physical, interpersonal, leadership, and intellectual skills. Studies have associated participation with academic achievement, social characteristics and identity formation.

Researchers have studied whether participation in activities has an impact on academic achievements. The research indicates there is a positive relationship between activity participation and increased educational aspirations and expectations and higher levels of academic achievement. Research has also found that participants of extracurricular activity had higher grade point averages and were more likely to have gone onto college than those who did not participate. McNeal (1995) reports that dropping out of high school is related to a student's level of integration (student's involvement in school-based extracurricular activities). The lack of participation in extracurricular activities is a significant characteristic of the drop out.

The extra curriculum plays a key role in developing a school's culture. By collecting adolescents into large groups, high schools provide a context for peer interaction during adolescence. Schools create a culture that revolves around the groups that the students form, which may be dependent on extracurricular activities. According

to research, membership in teenage crowds and extracurricular participation have had a significant affect on self evaluations. Adolescents that participate in school activities were able to affirm a positive personal identity.

All of the available research relating to this topic documents the value of extracurricular activities. The research clearly demonstrates the variety of benefits gained by students when they participate in high school extracurricular activities. There was very limited literature available on ethnic patterns of extracurricular participation. One researcher believes that high schools demonstrate the same inequalities as our society and that access to the extracurriculum is inequitably distributed among students from various social, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Research supports the idea that adolescents define their goals depending on the stereotypes attached to their ethnic group. These stereotypes may maintain racially and ethnically segregated extracurricular activities. It is important to research the inequalities in extracurricular activities given the potential benefits that students may receive from participation.



## Chapter 3

### SAMPLE

This study did not use actual subjects. Data was collected using existing material. Ten high school yearbooks were obtained to collect the data. The high schools selected are all located in Southern New Jersey. Only public high schools were used in this study. The researcher attempted to choose the schools that were most representative of Southern New Jersey. The schools chosen were large, middle class and suburban. The ten schools each have a mix of ethnic groups that is representative of Southern New Jersey. The yearbooks were obtained from Jostens Yearbook Company. Yearbooks are public documents that are available for use in research. To maintain anonymity, the high schools and students studied will not be identified.

Participation in extracurricular activities is voluntary. New Jersey has a written policy for extracurricular activities. All New Jersey participants must:

1. Have passed a physical examination.
2. Be passing in 20 hours of high school work.
3. Be enrolled in school for at least one semester.

These are the only written rules of eligibility. However, there are many expectations for each of the extracurricular activities. For example, athletes generally demonstrate athletic talent. There is no information available with regards to “tryouts” or recruitment.

## **MEASURE**

A review of the literature did not indicate the existence of an instrument to specifically measure patterns of extracurricular participation. As a result, the researcher used a checklist system to collect data. The checklist sheet included the name of the school and the extracurricular activity. The 5 ethnic groups had a space for check marks. The researcher chose extracurricular activities that were found in all ten high schools. Each high school yearbook was used to collect data individually. The researcher studied each extracurricular activity individually. Each extracurricular activity was described using the checklist system. The researcher determined the race of each member of the extracurricular activity and recorded the data on the checklist. Every member of each of the extracurricular activities was classified.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to write a descriptive analysis of student participation in extracurricular activities in middle class, Southern New Jersey High Schools. The research focused on the patterns of participation of various racial and ethnic groups. The subgroups of the student population were divided by race. These groups include:

1. African American
2. Asian
3. Caucasian
4. Indian
5. Latino

The extracurricular activities that were studied include football, cheerleading, baseball, softball, track, basketball, field hockey, wrestling, soccer, drama, band, National Honor Society, student government, yearbook and the math club. These activities exist in all 10 high schools studied. The examination of student participation covers the 1999-2000 school year. The researcher obtained all data with the use of high school yearbooks. The researcher did not actually visit the high schools studied.

### **HYPOTHESIS (RESEARCH QUESTIONS)**

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION 1**

How much does each ethnic group participate in high school extracurricular activities?

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

What patterns exist within each ethnic group?

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

Which extracurricular activities are dominated by certain ethnic groups, which activities are more diverse?

### **ANALYSIS**

A nonparametric test will summarize the data into interpretable form. Percentages and means will be reported for all research questions.

## **SUMMARY**

The present research is an in-depth examination of ethnic differences among students participating in high school extracurricular activities. The data has been collected from ten New Jersey high schools. This large amount of data will give an accurate description of patterns of participation. The researcher will identify use a variety of descriptive statistic to draw conclusions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

The primary purpose of this study was to write a descriptive analysis of the patterns of participation in high school extracurricular activities among the various ethnic groups. The secondary purpose of this study was to examine patterns among each ethnic group and each extracurricular activity.

### RESULTS

#### RESEARCH QUESTION 1

How much does each ethnic group participate in high school extracurricular activities? Table 4.1 presents the means and standard deviations for participation levels of each of the ethnic groups. These results show that the ethnic groups studied do not participate equally in extracurricular activities. The mean participants for Caucasian is a high 118.5, while the Latino mean is merely 3.6.

Table 4.1

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
African American	20	.00	172.00	57.5500	51.3435
Asian	20	6.00	125.00	39.9500	40.4832
Caucasian	20	39.00	363.00	118.5500	83.0691
Indian	20	.00	110.00	16.3500	28.2755
Latino	20	.00	13.00	3.6000	4.3213

Figure 4.1 is a visual breakdown of the percentages of extracurricular activity participants in each of the ethnic groups. This includes the participation levels of African American, Asian, Caucasian, Indian and Latino students in 20 extracurricular activities in 10 different high schools. 65% of participants are Caucasian, 19% are African American,

9.5% are Asian, 5% are Indian and 1.5% are Latino. When looking at the entire sample it is evident that Caucasian students alone represent a larger percentage of participants than African American, Asian, Indian and Latino students combined.

Figure 4.1-Overall Participation Levels



## RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What patterns exist within each ethnic group? Table 4.2 presents an ethnic breakdown of all twenty extracurricular activities. Each activity identifies what percentage of participants are African American, Asian, Caucasian, Indian and Latino.

Patterns existing within each ethnic group are better seen when looking at each group separately. Figures 4.2 – 4.6 present the mean participation of each of the ethnic groups separately.

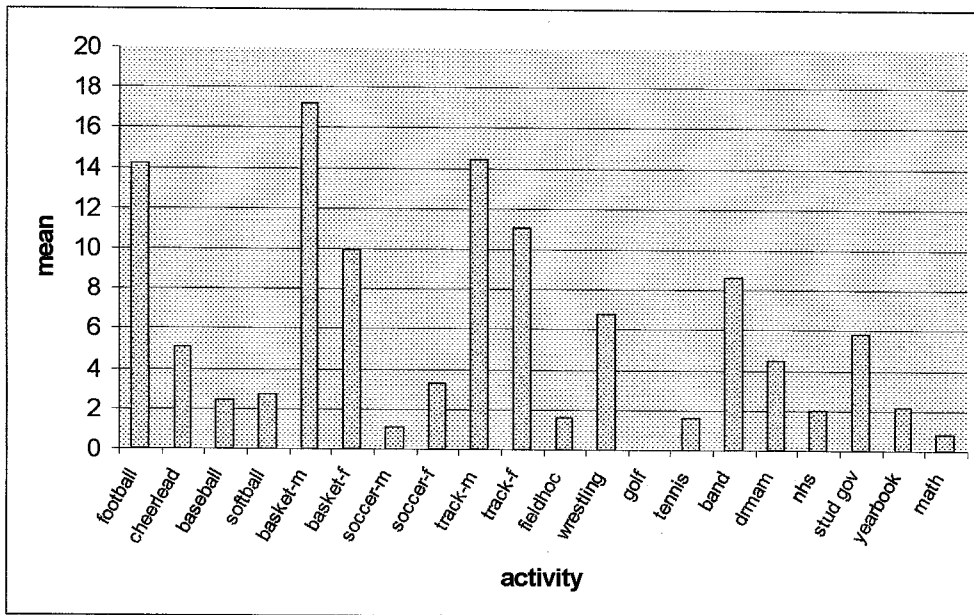
Table 4.2

## Percentage of Participation

Activity	African American	Asian	Caucasian	Indian	Latino
Football	33.5%	3.25%	59.25%	1%	3%
Cheerleading	20.75%	5%	73.5%	0.75%	0%
Baseball	8.5%	2%	87.75%	0%	0%
Softball	10.75%	2.5%	81.5%	0%	5.25%
Basketball(m)	60.75%	3%	34.25%	0%	2%
Basketball(f)	35.75%	4.25%	60%	0%	0%
Soccer (m)	3.5%	9.25%	83.75%	3%	0.5%
Soccer(f)	11.75%	8.75%	77%	1%	1.5%
Track (m)	37%	9.25%	48.75%	2.75%	2.25%
Track (f)	33%	6%	58.5%	0.25%	2.25%
Field hockey	5.5%	8.25%	84.5%	1.75%	0%
Wrestling	26.5%	2.5%	68%	1.5%	1.5%
Golf	0%	8%	92%	0%	0%
Tennis	8%	18%	66.5%	7.5%	0%
Band	16.25%	21%	58.5%	4.25%	0%
Drama	8.25%	15%	69.25%	6.5%	3%
NationalHSoc	4.75%	29.75%	39.25%	26.25%	0%
Student Gov	17.25%	8.25%	72.75%	1.5%	0%
Yearbook	8.25%	38.25%	43%	10.5%	0%
Math	3.25%	48.25%	16.75%	31.75%	0%

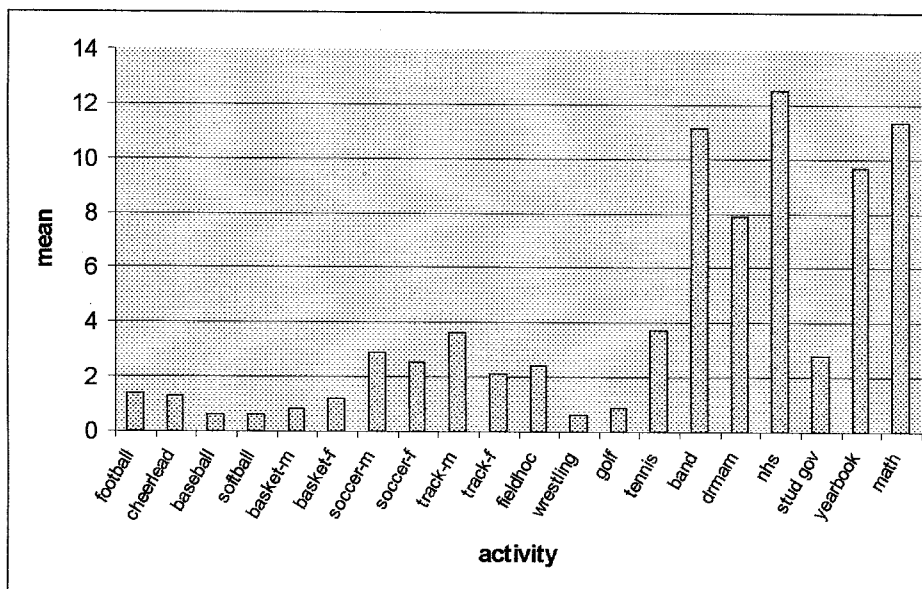
African American. Figure 4.2 presents the mean number of African American participants in extracurricular activities. African Americans had the highest participation means (14.2 to 17.2) in male basketball, football and male track. African Americans had the lowest participation means (0 to 1.1) in male soccer, golf and math club.

Figure 4.2- The mean number of African American participants.



Asian. Figure 4.3 presents the mean number of Asian participants across extracurricular activities. Asians had the highest participation means (11.1 to 12.5) in band, National Honor Society and the Math Club. They had the lowest means (0.6 to 0.9) in baseball, softball and male basketball.

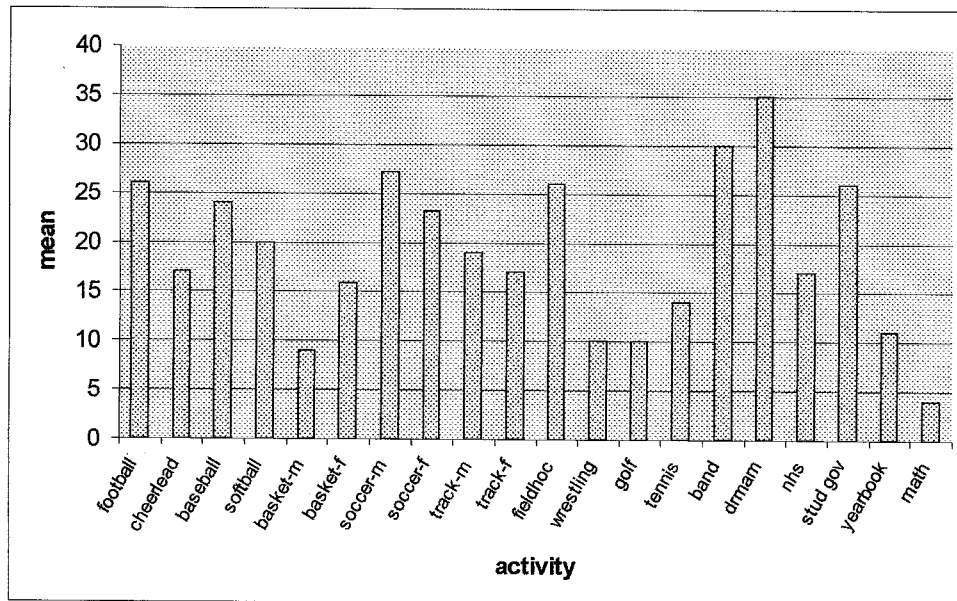
Figure 4.3- The mean number of Asian participants.





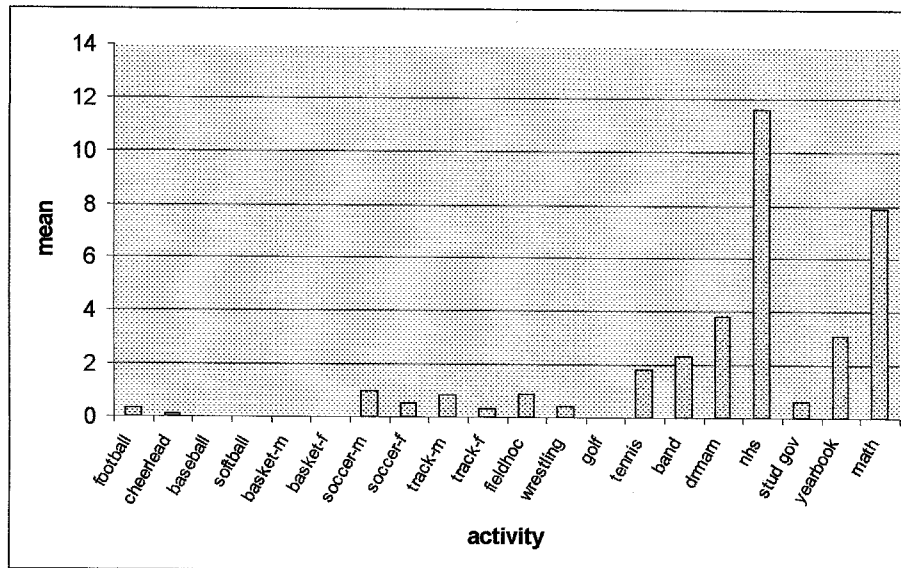
Caucasian. Figure 4.4 presents the mean number of Caucasian participants in the various extracurricular activities. Caucasians had the highest participation means (15.05 to 17.1) in football, band and drama. They had the lowest participation means (1.95 to 4.15) in the math club, male basketball and yearbook.

Figure 4.4- Mean number of Caucasian participants across activities.



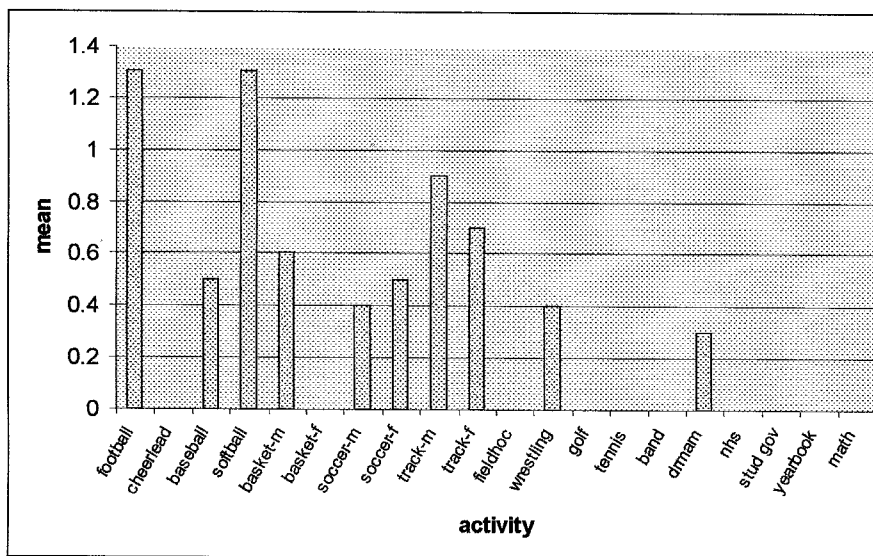
Indian. Figure 4.5 presents the mean number of Indian participants in the various extracurricular activities. Indian students had a no participants in baseball, softball, basketball, and golf. They had the highest participation means (3.7 to 11.1) in drama, National Honor Society and the math club.

Figure 4.5- Mean number of Indian participants across activities.



*Latino.* Figure 4.6 presents the mean number of Latino participants in the various extracurricular activities. Latino students had a no participants in cheerleading, female basketball, field hockey, golf, tennis, band, National Honor Society, student Government, yearbook and the math club. They had the highest participation means (0.8 to 1.3) in track, softball and football.

Figure 4.6- Mean number of Latino participants across activities.



### RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Which extracurricular activities are dominated by certain ethnic groups, which activities are more diverse? Figures 4.7 to 4.10 presents all 20 activities with the participation of each ethnic group. This figure along with table 4.2 (percentages) presents data about each of the 20 activities. Most of the sports are not diverse at all, rather they are dominated by one ethnic group. Golf participants are 92% Caucasian, baseball participants are 87.75% Caucasian, soccer participants are 83.75% Caucasian, field hockey participants are 84.5% Caucasian, student government participants are 72.75% Caucasian and cheerleading participants are 73.5% Caucasian. Caucasians are the majority of every activity except for 2. Male basketball participants are 60.75% African American. The math club is 48.25% Asian and 31.75% Indian. The most diverse activities are band, drama, National Honor Society, yearbook and the math club.

Figure 4.7- Participation of all ethnic groups: A

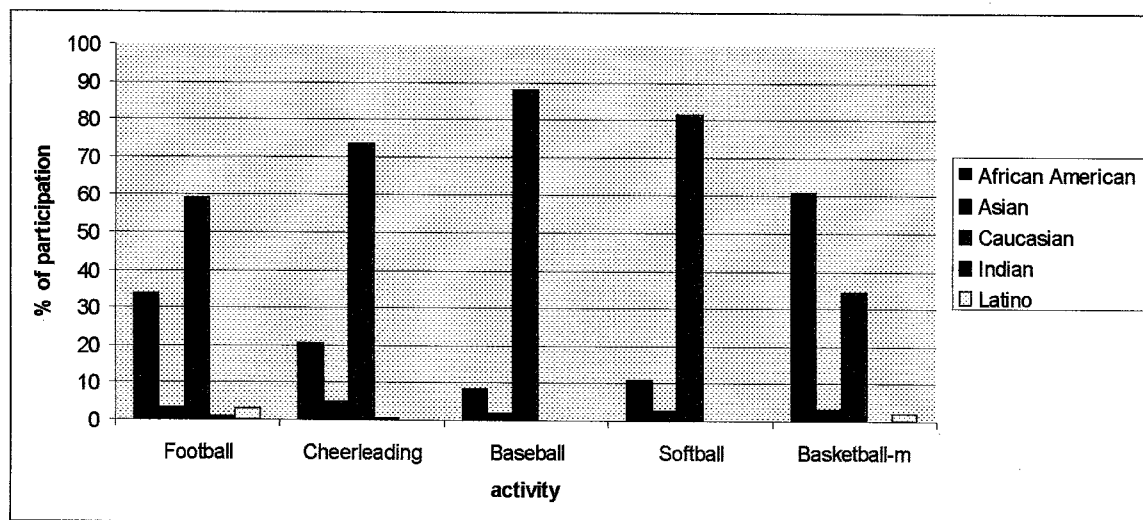


Figure 4.8-Participation of all ethnic groups: B

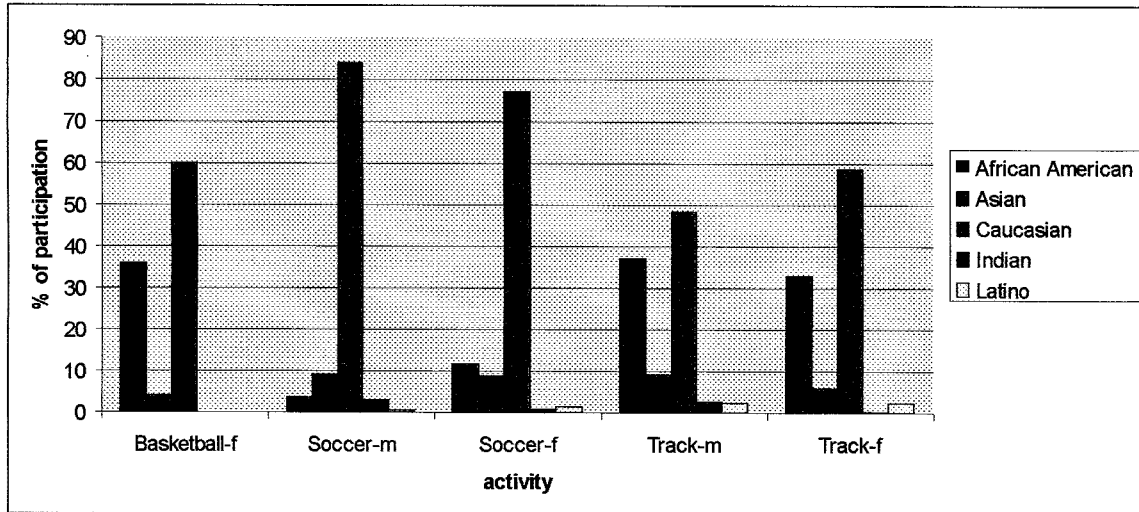


Figure 4.9 – Participation of all ethnic groups-C

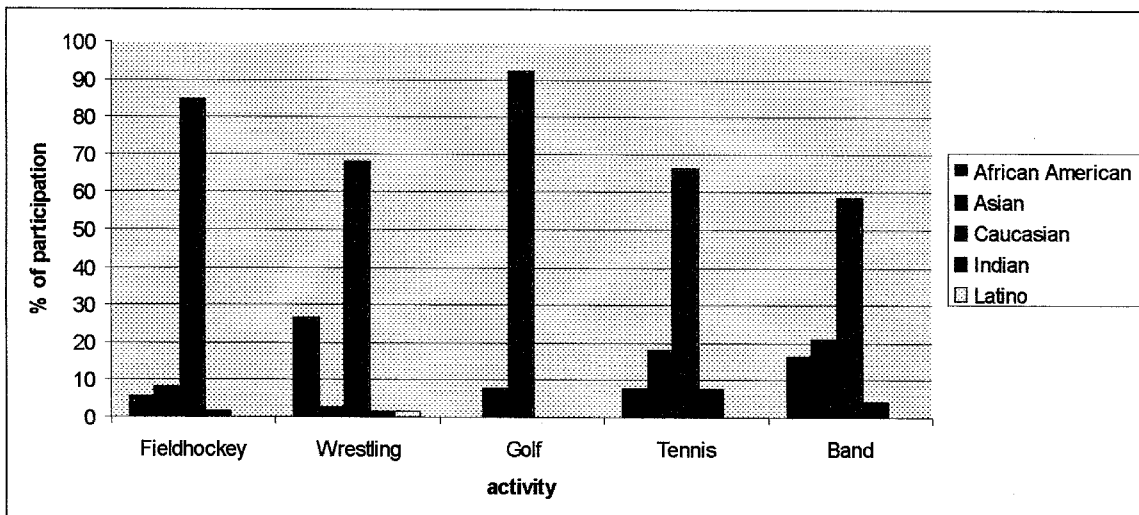
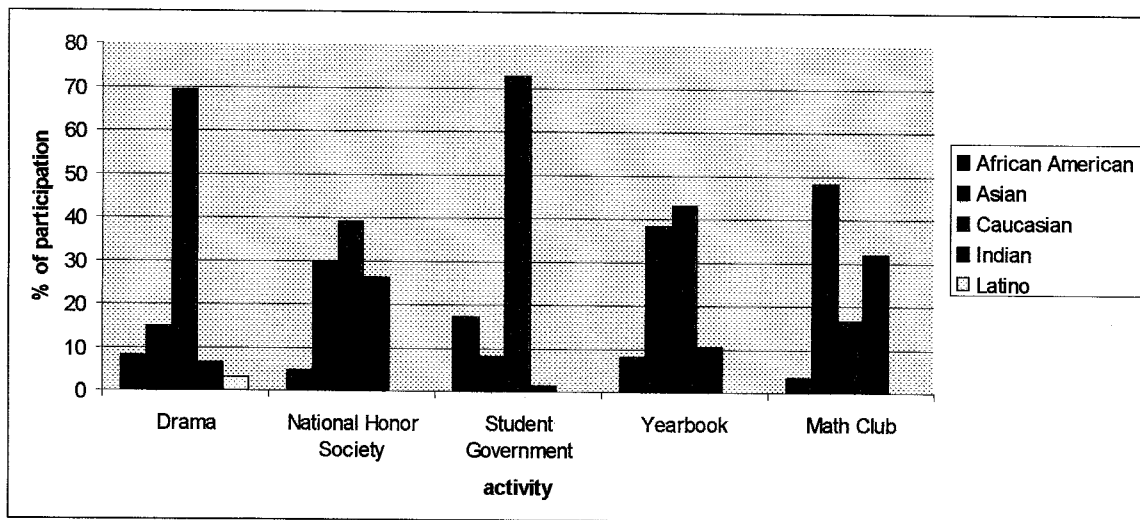


Figure 4.10- Participation of all ethnic groups-D



**SUMMARY**

This study described the patterns of participation in extracurricular activities in high school. The study was able to answer all of the proposed research questions. These results show that the ethnic groups studied do not participate equally in extracurricular activities. Caucasians are the majority of every activity except for 2. The results also reveal in which activities each of the ethnic groups tend to participate. Most of the sports are not diverse at all, rather they are dominated by one ethnic group. The most diverse activities are band, drama, National Honor Society, yearbook and the math club.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY

Participation in extracurricular activities is associated with higher educational aspirations and expectations, higher levels of academic achievement, higher levels of self-esteem and a lower likelihood of dropping out of high school. There is extensive research documenting the value of extracurricular activities.

The primary purpose of this study was to write a descriptive analysis of the patterns of participation in high school extracurricular activities among the various ethnic groups. The secondary purpose of this study was to examine patterns among each ethnic group and each extracurricular activity. The patterns of participation were examined in 10 High Schools. The extracurricular activities examined include football, cheerleading, baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, track, field hockey, wrestling, golf, tennis, band, drama, National Honor Society, student government, yearbook and the math club. These activities were available in all of the schools studied. Participants of each activity were identified as African American, Asian, Caucasian, Indian or Latino.

The percentage of participation was identified for each ethnic group. The results indicate that the ethnic groups studied do not participate equally in extracurricular activities. The results also reveal patterns within each ethnic group and extracurricular activity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study is a descriptive analysis of the patterns of participation in high school extracurricular activities among the various ethnic groups.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 1

How much does each ethnic group participate in high school extracurricular activities? According to this study, Caucasians make up the majority of participants (65%). This is expected due to the fact that Caucasians make up the majority of the population. African Americans are participating (19%) in activities much more than the other minorities. Asians make up 9.5% of the participants. Indians (5%) and Latinos (1.5%) barely participate in activities. This could be due to demographics of this area.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What patterns exist within each ethnic group? African Americans participate much more in athletics than the other activities. They have highest levels of participation in football, basketball and track. Asians participate most in academic organizations. They have the highest levels of participation in the National Honor Society, yearbook and the math club. Caucasians have high levels of participation in most of the activities. They have the lowest levels of participation in band, yearbook and the math club. Indians have very little participation in all activities except for the National Honor Society and the math club. Indian students participate in both of these academic organizations at fairly high rates. Latinos do not participate in many activities. There is some participation in softball, track and drama. It would be very helpful to know how many Latino students attend the high schools studied.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Which extracurricular activities are dominated by certain ethnic groups, which activities are more diverse? Most of the activities are dominated by Caucasians. Golf appears to be the most exclusionary activity with 92% being Caucasian. Field Hockey and soccer are also heavily dominated by Caucasians. Basketball is dominated by African Americans but still has many Caucasian participants. The National Honor Society is the most diverse activity. It is important to point out that this activity is not voluntary. This activity requires a high grade point average along with teacher nomination.

### **DISCUSSION**

Extracurricular activities enable students not only to explore interests and make new friends, but also to develop a large range of physical, interpersonal, leadership, and intellectual skills (Spady, 1970). Studies have associated participation with academic achievement, social characteristics and identity formation. It is important to research the inequalities in extracurricular activities given the potential benefits that students may receive from participation. In general low socioeconomic and minority students receive less attention from teachers, are placed in lower academic tracks, and learn less during the school year (McNeal, 1998). McNeal (1998) points out that high schools demonstrate the same inequalities as our society. Research supports the claim that access to the extra curriculum is inequitably distributed among students from various social, racial and ethnic backgrounds.



This researcher's findings seem to coincide with previous research on extracurricular activities. The results clearly indicate that the various ethnic groups do not participate in extracurricular activities equally. 65% of participants are Caucasian, 19% are African American, 9.5% are Asian, 5% are Indian and 1.5% are Latino. When looking at the entire sample it is evident that Caucasian students alone represent a larger percentage of participants than African American, Asian, Indian and Latino students combined.

Grace Kao (2000), examined group images and stereotypes along racial and ethnic lines pertaining to educational achievement, aspirations and extracurricular activities. Interviews revealed prevalent stereotypes that link ethnic group membership to academic ability and other skills. Kao found that Asian youth are believed to be especially gifted in their academic abilities, while blacks are seen as less gifted academically. Kao also found that stereotypes about Hispanics focused on their manual labor skills rather than academics. Kao states that "these images form the reference point for the construction of success among youth" (2000). This research supports the idea that adolescents define their goals depending on the stereotypes attached to their ethnic group. Kao believes that these stereotypes maintain racially and ethnically segregated extracurricular activities. Kao argues for the importance of socialization with other races in order to eliminate conceptions of success within racial groups.

The present research indicates that there are patterns existing within the ethnic groups and activities. Most of the sports are not diverse at all, rather they are dominated by one ethnic group. Golf participants are 92% Caucasian, baseball participants are 87.75% Caucasian, soccer participants are 83.75% Caucasian, field hockey participants

are 84.5% Caucasian, student government participants are 72.75% Caucasian and cheerleading participants are 73.5% Caucasian. Caucasians are the majority of every activity except for 2. Male basketball participants are 60.75% African American. The math club is 48.25% Asian and 31.75% Indian. The most diverse activities are band, drama, National Honor Society, yearbook and the math club.

The present research did not include an examination of any extracurricular activity that did not exist in all 10 high schools. It is interesting to note that most of the high schools had several “ethnic” clubs. One school had “Students Together Opposing Prejudice” which contained 44 African Americans and 10 Latinos. This was very high compared to participation in the other activities. There was also one particular high school that had a club/organization for almost every group possible. That school had a German Club (35 participants), French Club (26), Irish American Club (4), Italian Club (41), Spanish Club (11), Greek Club (9), Jewish Club (29), Asian Society (39), African American Club (22), Korean Culture Club (78) and the Indian Culture Society (51).

In summary, extracurricular activities are the vehicles that help students of all races develop their self-concept, interpersonal skills, organizational skills, leadership skills and life skills. It should be a priority to get as many students involved as possible.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

An important component that was missing from the present research was the total population demographics. One suggestion for future research is to obtain this information. This would allow the researcher to better assess the patterns of participation.

Another suggestion for future research involves conducting interviews with the students. It would be interesting to study the beliefs that students hold about extracurricular activities. Research could focus on why students do or do not participate. It could also assess what activities are important to parents or teachers. It is possible that students are too busy for extracurricular participation, or they may not want to participate. Conducting student interviews would be a wonderful addition to a study similar to the present study.

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