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“THE COMPETITIVE FEMALE SKATER: WHAT MOTIVATES HER?”

by
Jennifer L. Pfeffer

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
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Approved by:

Dr. J. Klanderman & Dr. R. Dihoff

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ABSTRACT

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“THE COMPETITIVE FEMALE SKATER: WHAT MOTIVATES HER?”
2002/03

Dr. J. Klanderman & Dr. R. Dihoff
Master of Arts in School Psychology

The present study explored motivational orientation of 12 females (age 9 – 18) who participated in figure skating. The hypothesis used was that competitive skaters, with more demands on their time and finances, would more often exhibit an avoidance of failure motivation when participating in sport. This hypothesis was chosen to address the high burnout rates that are exhibited by child athletes at the elite level.

To determine the results of the study, skaters were administered the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments developed by Brent Rushall and Randy Fox in 2000. The scale asked 28 questions to which four response alternatives were provided. These were: always, frequently, sometimes or never. The scores that were generated indicated whether the respondent had a Motivation for Success orientation or a Motivation to Avoid Failure orientation.

To analyze the results of the survey, a Pearson’s Correlation was employed. The results determined that there was not a statistical significance between the motivation of the skaters and the amount of time skated per week. It was also concluded that the mean scores for Motivation for Success and Motivation to Avoid Failure indicated that most of these skaters continue participating with a motive to achieve success.

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I would like to thank my advisors for their help and guidance during this process. Furthermore, I would like to express thanks to the skaters at the rink who took time out of their hectic schedules to help me complete this study. Most of all, however, I would like to thank my fiancé, Robin Campbell, for his unconditional support and dedication to helping me achieve this goal in my life.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

While many children in America today remain “sadly unfit” (Hinkle, 1994, p. 55), there are still a significant number of children involved in youth sports. For those that are involved in youth sports, most specifically the sport of figure skating, the question should not be whether or not they are physically fit, but whether or not they are mentally fit and whether or not their involvement in that sport is healthy. Interest in the sport or in activity is not always the reason a child continues to skate. Pressure to perfect their skills, move up to the next level or to be the best in their group are some of the reasons a child may continue to skate. Other pressures may be the parents wanting the child to continue what they started or the monetary investment that has already been made in the skater’s favor. In any event, it is important for the child to be mentally capable of handling the stress and external pressures associated with this sport in order to avoid overtraining, burnout and possibly injury, as well.

For purposes of this study, there are two types of skater that need to be described. The first type of skater is called the recreational skater. This child is one who enjoys the sport at a minimal activity level (between one and five hours per week). He/she practices their skills, participates in some lessons (be it group or private) and may enter a yearly competition or recital to showcase their talents. The time commitment and monetary investment remains minimal for this type of skater. For the second type of skater, the competitive skater, the time commitment and monetary investment is more intense than that of the recreational skater. A competitive skater may spend in the very least 5 hours per week at the ice-arena. He or she will participate in at least one, if not two or three

private lessons per week and often complement on-ice training with off-ice training, as well. Off-ice training can consist of dance classes, gymnastics, weight training, cardiovascular training, and/or Yoga or Pilates. It is obvious for this type of skater that his/her free time is compromised by the pursuit of goals set in that chosen sport. In addition to the training that they incur, these skaters also compete between three and five times (if not more) per year. The cost for the on and off-ice training, skates, costuming and competition and travel fees can easily become a major expense for the family of the competitive skater.

While there are obvious differences between the two types of skater, it is the exploration of those underlying differences that needs to take place. The main underlying difference to be explored is motivation of the skater. Do both types of skater have the same motivation to participate in the sport? Or, are they influenced by different motives? Some athletes participate in their sport for their own achievement and enjoyment. These skaters are considered to have an achievement-success motivation. Other skaters are motivated by the avoidance of failure and are thus considered to have an avoidance-failure motivation. Another difference that should be explored is whether or not both types of skater enjoy the time they spend focusing on their sport. The reason these questions need to be explored is that “exercise has become a major industry” and because of that there is “enhanced opportunity for overtraining, burnout and injury” (Hollander & Meyers, 1995, p. 3). If parents and coaches can become more aware of the subtle differences between the motivation of the recreational skater and the competitive skater to continue participation in the sport, they may be better able to help their child avoid overtraining and burnout in the future.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine the underlying motivation of both the recreational and competitive types of skater (approach-success person or avoidance-failure). Furthermore, the purpose is also to determine whether the amount of time spent on the sport has an affect on which type of motivation the skaters choose. The recreational skater should report more enjoyment in their sport and thus be deemed to have an approach-success motivation. On the other hand, the competitive skater with a higher level of stress should report less of an approach-success motivation and more of an avoidance-failure motivation in most instances. This result would support the hypothesis that competitive skaters experience more external pressure in their sport. Should the study support the hypothesis, stress management and/or removal of some of the external pressures on the skater may be used to help these athletes avoid overtraining or burnout and injury.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study is that children who are more competitive (who participate in more on-ice and off-ice training and are involved in more events, causing more of a financial burden on the family income) have a higher level of anxiety and stress and an avoidance-failure type of motivation than that found in a recreational skater. The hypothesis also suggests that recreational skaters, with less pressure on his or her time and financial investment have a lower stress level and hence an approach-success type of motivation to learn. The independent variable for this study is the amount of time the

skater commits to this sport. Furthermore, the dependent variables are the scores the skater obtains on the Achievement Motivation Scale for Sporting Environments.

Theory

Many a time a little girl watches television and sees someone like Dorothy Hamill or Michelle Kwan twirling and jumping on the ice with ease - princesses of the ice. That little girl decides then and there that she wants to do that too. Little does she know how much work, time and money go into becoming the best in a sport where very few actually make it to elite status. New books line the shelves of the bookstores every day, presenting accounts of these elite skaters' lives. More often than not, the tale focuses on the behaviors that were conditioned into these children to make them what they are today. There are accounts, too, of children who have rebelled against the behavioral routines pacing them for elite status. These skaters never became household names because they changed their behavioral patterns. They either modified their goals in the skating realm or stopped skating altogether because the elite status was no longer something that they wanted to achieve. It was no longer a behavior that could be reinforced.

Behavioral theorists such as B.F. Skinner would be interested in the training phenomena of elite figure skaters because he and his colleagues held that "behavior is the tool or instrument by which a desired outcome is obtained" (Carver & Scheier, 2000, p. 323). This particular arena presents real-life examples of children whose behaviors are conditioned to "live the life of a competitive skater." Early morning practices and late nights at another complementary training facility leave little room for homework, friends and much needed sleep. Yet, these children are reminded that these are the sacrifices one

must make and the behaviors necessary to succeed in this sport. It would have been unethical for Skinner to place such restraints on a child in his/her development so as to observe the manifestation of behavioral conditioning. But here, in this sport, the examples are abundant.

Behavioral theory presents that operant conditioning or the idea that “behavior is followed by a consequence, and the nature of the consequence modifies the organism’s tendency to repeat the behavior in the future” (Boeree, 1998). Furthermore, behavioral theory also presents that “behavior tendencies are determined by reinforcement patterns” (Carver & Scheier, 2000, p. 329). For a competitive skater, the behavior of attending daily practices and giving up other interests brings about desirable consequences when they receive praise from parents, coaches and/or peers for doing well at their sport. Further desirable consequences may also take the form of winning at the competitions in which they participate. These consequences are desirable to the skater because they support the notion that their hard work and sacrifice is bringing them closer to their goals. The reinforcement with praise and success for exhibiting behaviors necessary to endure strenuous practices and survive early mornings and late nights so as to accomplish tasks not related to skating are saved for use in the future. They precipitated favorable reactions. If these reinforcement patterns did not bring the child success or favorable reactions, the behaviors would then be discarded because of their ineffectiveness in helping the child achieve his/her goal.

Shaping, which is controlling rewards and punishments in order to precipitate certain behaviors, is used by parents and coaches throughout training (Boeree, 1998). Each time a jump or spin is attempted, the coach observes the technique and modifies it

so that the next time the jump or spin is attempted the result comes closer to the desired effect than before. The coach guides the behavior of the student by giving increased reinforcement for each correction made that brings the student closer to his/her goal. This type of shaping is called positive reinforcement. Shaping can be done through punishment or negative reinforcement, too. Since “punishers reduce the tendency to do the behavior that came before them” (Carver & Scheier, 2000, p. 323), they increase the positive behaviors of practicing and focusing on the child’s skating goals, and reduce the occurrence of any behavior that detracts from the skater’s path to the top. In this sport as in others, punishers often deal directly with distractions from the outside world. In an ice-arena one day, a conversation was overheard wherein a child was being told that she must complete her practice or she will not be able to see her friends that weekend. In this example, the parent was withdrawing something good from the child’s life to precipitate the desired behavior of the child finishing her practice. In the negative form, punishers “add pain thereby moving the present state of affairs from neutral to negative” (Carver & Scheier, 2000, p. 323). If the parent were to shape behavior with a negative punisher, he/she might have said that the consequences for not finishing practice would be staying for an extra hour of practice. The parent in the above example, knowing the child well, went with the punisher that would withhold something the child would be more motivated to obtain - time with friends.

The behavioral concept of instrumental conditioning of conflict is one that has not been addressed yet. This concept states that “a given act can be reinforced at times and punished at other times” and if occurring in the “same setting, the person experiences conflict” (Carver & Scheier, 2000, p. 337). This conflict causes discomfort in the skaters

and may be one reason why children begin to experience additional stress in their skating careers as they mature. Their conditioned behaviors of intense practice and training are a benefit to their skating career. However, as they mature and want to develop friendships and relationships with the opposite sex, the primary goals of these skaters begin to change. The behavioral patterns that they have created, however, have not changed and still support the original path to elite skating. In effect, the behaviors of practicing and training, which are good for the skating career, are punishment when they relate to the new goals the child or adolescent has begun to develop. The person becomes conflicted within the ice arena because it represents so many things to the skater, both good and bad. Stress level for the child/adolescent increases and overall enjoyment of the sport decreases. The skater may experience overtraining, which is defined as a “chronic syndrome where systemic function is disrupted by tension, emotional instability, diminished concentration, distractibility, personality shifts, and apathy. Depression, loss of self-esteem, vulnerability to environmental stress, fear of competition and ease in giving up are commonly observed.” (Hollander & Meyers, 1995, p. 4) In order to reduce the occurrence of conflict and overtraining, the coach may reduce the intensity of the training regime. If this does not lower the amount of stress on the skater, he/she may need to work on setting new, more realistic goals and also work on behavior modification to support those new goals. This should prove to lessen the level of stress and conflict on the person during their developmental stages and bring more enjoyment back into his/her life. Ultimately, it is the focusing of the behavioral patterns on the person’s goal or goals and the continuous reinforcement of those behaviors that are necessary to keep stress at a minimum throughout life.

Definitions

1. Recreational skater – A skater who enjoys the sport at a minimal activity level (between one and three hours per week). He/she practices their skills, participates in some lessons (be it group or private) and may enter a yearly competition or show to showcase their talents.

2. Competitive skater – A skater who spends in the very least 5 hours per week at the ice-arena. They participate in at least one, if not two or three private lessons per week and often complement their on-ice training with off-ice training, as well. For this person, the time commitment and monetary investment are quite substantial.

Assumptions

There are a few assumptions that will be made in completion of this study. For one, the reader must understand the importance of 'free time' to an adolescent. Parents try to keep their children busy by involving them in healthy activities, namely sports. However, there is a point when the involvement becomes too much and the child may suffer. Children need their free time to explore their environment as well as develop other skills outside of the chosen sport arena. Secondly, it will be assumed that the children who take the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments will be honest and forthright with their answers. If not, the study will not be providing true results. Finally, it will also be assumed that the children are able to think for themselves and that the answers they give are their own and not those of their parents. This would skew the results of the study, as well.

Limitations

There will be a number of limitations pertaining to this study. First of all, there will be a limited number of skaters able to participate in the study as it is competition season. Moreover, it will involve children and adolescents who (by nature) are unstable in their moods. Persons at this age are easily subject to mood swings and therefore may answer questions about their sport differently on different days depending on his or her mood at the time one takes the test. The results of this study are subject to further limitations because the children may not feel able to answer the survey on stress truthfully for fear of their parents' response. The children will be prepared before taking the survey that their results will not be passed to anyone for any reason in an effort to facilitate truthful responses. Finally, the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments should only be administered to children over the age of 12. It has been determined that a slightly younger person can take the test, however, the authors report that the validity for these younger age groups has not yet been determined.

Overview

This study was completed to examine whether skaters who are competitive have a more negative or avoidance of failure motivation than that found in the recreational skater. The study also attempted to support that a recreational skater, with less pressure on time and financial investment, will have a more positive or achievement-success oriented motivation to remain in the sport and a lower stress level, as well. In the chapters following this introduction, the reader will be exposed to a review of current research information related to this study (Chapter 2). The reader will also be given a

better understanding of the effect of sports related stress on the life of a young athlete. Information pertaining to the actual study itself will be presented in Chapter 3. In that chapter, there will be specific information listed as to the sample, the measure and the design and analysis of the study. Chapter 4 will provide the reader with an analysis of the results of the study that was performed. Finally, Chapter 5 will summarize of all of the information from the previous chapters and present the final conclusion of this study. Before any results information can be presented, however, it is pertinent to have a solid understanding of similar research being done in this area.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

The literature review will review three areas pertaining to the experience of the youth athlete: (a) children in sports – developmental issues, (b) sports related stress - impact on young athletes and (c) motivation for youth athletic involvement. The review below will address these issues in regard to the child athlete who is considered to be specialized in their chosen sport and who has limited their training and competitive focus to that sport alone.

Children in Sports- Developmental Issues

Despite numerous articles indicating that American children have become increasingly inactive and overweight, it has been recorded that about one-half of this country's children between 6 and 18 years of age actually do participate in non-scholastic sport programs. When calculated in numerical terms, that population actually exceeds 20 million. In addition, there is another population of America's children (in the same age range) that participate in interscholastic athletic programs, as well. (Chambers, 1991; Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996; Martens, 1988; McCarthy, 1998; Smith & Smoll, 1996; Walker, 1993) This information not only provides a valid rebuttal to the argument that American children have become inactive, but it also opens many doors for researchers studying child development. In fact, according to Smith & Smoll in 1996, "the sport environment is an ideal naturalistic laboratory." (p. 3)

In 1995, Wong & Bridges asserted that the large number of children involved in organized sports "necessitated an understanding of what this participation meant in terms of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development." (1995, p. 437) Some

researchers such as Smith and Smoll believe that “sports can have direct relevance to (child) development in important domains such as self-concept development, cooperation and competitiveness, attitudes toward achievement, aggression, sex-role development, stress management skills, risk-taking and the abilities to tolerate frustration and delay gratification.” (p. 3) On the other hand, some researchers feel that sports participation does not impact development at all. They claim that both athletes and non-athletes are similar in terms of socialization, leadership and team skills and also in terms of self-image and moral character. (Fine, 1987; Frey & Eitzen, 1991; Spreitzer, 1994) Obviously there are conflicting views as to whether or not youth sports participation is beneficial to the development of the children involved. Even as recent as the year 2000, Kozlowski reported that the youth sports community was (still) split on whether sports were “good for kids and at what age (they were appropriate).” (p. 147)

One of the major reasons for this divide is that ideally a child should be both physically and mentally ready to endure the rigors of intense sport participation before being exposed to a taxing training regime. The question remains, however, at what age is the child considered ready to start this type of training? It has been noted that mentally and physically, “by the age of 4, a child has acquired approximately fifty percent of everything ever learned and by the age of 6, is capable of executing all of the fundamental movement patterns.” (Sparkman and Carmichael, 1973; Walker, 1993, p. 108) Just because the child has the ability to learn new skills between the ages of 4 and 6, however, does not mean that he or she can rely on the skills to achieve set goals. In actuality, by forcing a child to learn basic motor skills before he or she is ready, which is commonplace in youth sports, the child may experience feelings of failure and frustration

if he or she is not able to achieve the desired result. (Pediatrics, 2001) Sport involvement introduced to the child who is not yet comfortable with his or her skills, will only serve to negatively affect the development of the child.

What is highly important in the early stages of development is that the child is able to use and obtain a comfort level with his or her newly learned skills. The child needs to explore the environment and to test out his or her capabilities and limitations, as well. (Kozlowski, 2000) The best way for children do this is (quite simply) through playing. When children engage in playing, they are not only learning about the environment around them but they are also developing their individuality and creativity and nurturing the growth of their problem solving skills, too. (Walker, 1993) They have no interest in following the rules for extended periods of time as their attention span will not allow it. In light of this, it is not strange to find that children from the ages of three to six have little concern for organized games or competition. Children from the ages of six to eleven tend to exhibit more of an interest in organized games than they did earlier in life and they begin to enjoy competition at moderate levels. (Hurlock, 1971) It seems that while young children may naturally have an interest in sports participation for fun and physical fitness, their focus on the more intense rigors of sport are brought about by the adults in their lives. Unfortunately, adults tend to see play time as “time spent in a non-functional manner.” (Walker, 1993, p. 107) Without knowing it, they change the focus from fun and play in sports to intense competition and winning. They believe that they are acting in their child’s best interest when they enroll their child in numerous related activities to enhance their skills for their chosen sport instead of letting the child have free time to play. It is common knowledge that those involved in elite or Olympic

sports try to identify future champions and prospects as early as possible – even before the child finishes elementary school (in some cases). (Pediatrics, 2000) Therefore, adults tend to challenge and drive their children to excel in sports so that the future may bring opportunities for athletic success. (Walker, 1993)

A major question concerning the development of young athletes is, “how much is too much?” According to Kozlowski “the American ideal tells us that there is no point in playing if you aren’t trying to win.” (2000, p. 147) This means that child athletes will need to put in sufficient practice time to achieve their sometimes unrealistic goals, as well as balance their home life, academics and friends, too. Pressure to ‘get it all done’ may leave children feeling overwhelmed, overburdened and ‘stressed out.’ (Bennetts, 1999; Kantrowitz et al, 2000; Meigs, 1999) On the other hand, when introduced to a child as a way of meeting new people, learning a new skill and promoting physical fitness, youth sports can actually influence moral development and academic achievement. (Chambers, 1991) As stated in the paragraph above, the focus of this involvement however, needs to be on mastering a skill and having fun in the process. When that is taken away, and the focus becomes winning or pleasing others, and the child is denied exploration of other activities or free time due to their intense training regime, then the benefit of the activity becomes null. (Kozlowski, 2000; Pediatrics, 2000; Walker, 1993)

Sports Related Stress – Impact on Young Athletes

Studies have shown that between 73 and 80% of children drop out of sports programs by the age of 12 or 13. (Lindner & Johns, 1991; Martens, 1978; McCarthy, 1998; Roberts, 1986; Walker, 1993) One reason for this is that the child is developing socially and psychologically and may be having new interests outside the sports arena.

Johns (1980) described some of these new interests as leisure pursuit activities. New hobbies, new friendships and/or pursuing a relationship with a new boy or girlfriend are some of the activities that adolescents yearn to experience. Furthermore, the child may also be experiencing cognitive developmental changes and a desire for more autonomy. This is not something that is easily attained within the limitations of such a regimented schedule. (Feigley, 1987) In any event, the incentive to participate in sports generally decreases during these years as the level of responsibility in the athlete's life increases. Role conflict as to where the child should focus their energy (on athletics or on their new "adult" responsibilities) and the emotional stress that comes with that conflict tends to compel the child to withdraw from the sport.

For the young athlete, there are tremendous pressures to balance the demands of training, competition and school (as well as family and friends). (Brettschneider, 1999; Pediatrics, 2000) In order to combat these pressures and keep the experience enjoyable, the athlete must be able to rely on one major factor in the sport, and that is the "fun factor." Researchers polled over 1500 children and the number one reason they choose to participate in organized sports is, quite simply, "for fun." (Chambers, 1991; Gill, Gross & Huddleston, 1983; Gould, Feltz & Weiss, 1985) When the demands of the sport supercede the demands that the athlete can realistically incur, and there is a belief that failure to meet these demands may result in negative consequences, interest in the sport wanes and the level of fun dramatically decreases. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McGregor & Abrahamson, 2000; Pediatrics, 2001) In fact, in 1989, Gordon completed a survey of 1300 children wherein the results indicated that "'lack of fun' would rank first as the motive for eventually dropping out." (Lindner & Johns, 1991. p. 7) Society, being

focused on winning and ultimately product oriented, tends to forget that fun and play do serve as important parts of child development. Children are placed in sports these days at such a young age and sports occupy so much of their time that 'play time' seems to have been forgotten or pushed aside for other activities. The playing experience, however, does distinctively allow for creative thought and growth of the imagination – two skills that are just as important to the development of the child as is physical development.

(Walker, 1993)

Children are very interested in what their parents and coaches think of them and more often than not, tend to seek their approval on a daily basis. (Cratty, 1983; Fowler, 1981; Walker, 1993) With that knowledge, it is easy to understand how child athletes incur stressful feelings when trying to measure up to the goals and ideals of their parents and coaches. Often, these persons impose unrealistic expectations on them during this time of change in their young lives. (Widenhaus, 1995) In 1979, Yablonski and Brower studied organized sports teams in California and determined that parents often acted in negative ways when interacting with their child in the sports arena. What becomes a major problem is when the child believes that his or her performance in sports determines the quality of the relationship he or she has with his or her parents. (Coakley, 1990) This additional pressure, in conjunction with the pressure they already feel internally, can impede the child's overall satisfaction within the sport and may very possibly eliminate any passion the child may have had for the sport initially. (Anshel & Delany, 2001; Goyen & Anshel 1996; Scanlan & Passer, 1979; Smoll & Smith, 1996; Walker, 1993)

When the demands of the sport are believed to exceed the athlete's capability to meet those demands or interest in making further sacrifices for the sport, the athlete

begins to experience a type of mental exhaustion and decreased interest in the sport. (Fender, 1989; Hollander & Meyers, 1995; Lindner & Johns, 1991) This phenomenon is known as burnout and is defined as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, sport devaluation and reduced personal accomplishment.” (Maslach & Jackson, 1984; Raedeke et al, 2002, p. 181) Furthermore, burnout can and has also been defined as being “a response to chronic stress.” (Smith, 1986; Waldron, 2000, p. 3) While there is still much to be learned about burnout, some common factors arise in child athletes around the time of withdraw from the sport. Both physical signs and emotional signs ranging from back pain and/or migraines to lack of interest in the sport, boredom and/or sleeping problems manifest themselves telling the child that it is time for a break from the intense pressure they are under. In addition, approximately 1 in 10 children will experience so much stress (from sports) that it will lead to greater problems, as well. (Waldron, 2000)

Since most of these children are introduced to the rigors of one particular competitive sport very early in life, they have been denied the opportunity to experiment with a variety of different activities before making a decision as to which activity best suits their skill level and personal interests. Moreover, these children are often enrolled in activities related to their sport for many hours during the day and also year-round so as to enhance their skills in their chosen sport. This intense involvement, while it may prove fun at first, easily becomes a source of frustration and physical exhaustion to the young child. (McCarthy, 1998) At the point that the athlete experiences the aforementioned symptoms, withdraw from the sport is not the choice of the athlete so much as it is a choice made by the athlete’s body for him or her instead. At that point,

the child is most often a teenager and left without the familiar surroundings or support network that they had become accustomed to. They soon realize that choosing a new activity in their teen years is difficult, especially when the teen years are considered “too late” to even consider pursuing a serious career in a new sport. The compilation of frustrations does not subside easily as the child may also feel as if he or she let her parents down and that they failed to measure up and produce the results that were expected of them. These added pressures after withdrawing from a sport only make a serious situation more complex and can be quite a heavy burden for a youngster to endure. (Kantrowitz & Rogers, 1996; Stein & Raedeke, 1999)

Motivation for Youth Athletic Involvement

After reading the previous sections of this literature review, one might wonder what it is that motivates children to continue participating in youth athletics at all. Being that there are so many developmental issues and risks involved (in regard to stress and pressure on the child), what is it that holds the child’s interest? According to Stratton (1998), the typical reasons children stay involved are the same reasons they joined the sport in the first place. That is, they continue to play sports primarily because they are fun and they want to learn new skills. Children also continue to play so as to develop fitness and because some of them actually enjoy competition. (Barber et al, 1999; Gill et al, 1983; Stratton, 1998; Walker, 1993) There are additional reasons for continued sports participation that are gender specific. On one hand, girls reported that they continue to participate for “fun and friendship” with others. Boys, on the other hand, reported that their continued sports participation was due to their need for “achievement” and also recognition from their peers. (Chambers, 1991; Goldberg & Chandler, 1992)

Parents play an important role in motivating children to continue sports participation, as well. They know that the earlier they start their children on the road to sports excellence, the better the chances are that the child will cultivate the skills necessary to become an elite athlete. Thus, they often push their children to “utilize their time more productively” and to train as if they are going to pursue Olympic Gold. (Walker, 1993, p. 107) As mentioned earlier, “children tend to seek and require the approval of adults in many of their daily activities.” (Walker, 1993, p. 105) They therefore tend to model behavioral patterns and ideals set forth by their parents when participating in their chosen sport. At times, the child even believes that the relationship he or she has with his or her parents relies on the progress or achievement they make in their sport. The child, being that he or she wants to continue to please his or her parents, will then work even harder in order to bring success to his or her athletic career.

When a child makes his or her own decision to participate in sports at an early age and is guided by his or her own achievement motivation, that child is more apt to continue intense participation in sports. (Chambers, 1991) Moreover, when sports involvement continues to progress at a natural rate for the child and he or she is able to experiment with other activities throughout the elementary years, the child will most likely choose a sport that is best suited to his or her particular skills and interests and want to continue to participate at any cost. This type of control over the sports experience fosters within the child a feeling of autonomy and competence and brings about joy, excitement and other positive feelings in relation to his or her participation in the sport. (Whitehead, 2002) It is highly important that the young athlete perceives his or her competence level to be acceptable for that sport, as well. In fact, Harter (1982)

suggested that children who perceived they were competent would persist longer and maintain higher interest in a particular skill domain. (Wong & Bridges, 1995) This means that children who do not feel as if they are making progress or do not possess the skills necessary to excel in a given sport, are less likely to persist in their participation. Conversely, those children who had the ability to choose their sport based on previous experiences and interests, and who have parents who do not pressure them to continue participating if they do not want to, experience a higher satisfaction with themselves and their performance and achievement within their sport. They want to continue to participate because it brings them intrinsic or internal satisfaction and because (in light of the circumstances) the participation is still fun.

In 1984, Nicholls presented the motivational achievement model which stated that “the primary achievement goal of every individual is to maximize demonstration of high ability and to minimize revealing low ability both in social-comparison processes (outcome oriented) and in comparison with standards of excellence (performance oriented).” (Chambers, 1991, p 415) This supports Harter’s theory in that children need to feel competent in order to pursue higher levels of achievement in any arena. They do not want to look foolish in the presence of their peers who may be more skilled at the sport than they are. For those children who can not demonstrate high ability or feel proud of their skills in the presence of others, the answer will often be to lose interest in the sport and ultimately drop out. That being said, Burton and Martens completed a supporting study in 1986 that analyzed the most frequently listed reason for athletes dropping out of youth athletics. Their study revealed that the most common reason for attrition was “conflict of interest” or better defined, an “issue of perceived ability and

perceived competence.” (Chambers, 1991, p. 415) The children were experiencing a conflict between what they perceived was their ability and what they perceived was the level of skill necessary to succeed and be socially accepted in their sport. Burton and Martens’ study supports Nicholls’ theory by showing that there is an emotional response (withdrawing from sport) when the child perceives that they are not going to measure up with their skills or look successful in the eyes of their family and peers. The study went on to show that those children who continue to participate in sports show more instances of having positive expectations and higher perceived ability in the realm of their chosen sport.

Summary

In conclusion, child athletes should be allowed to experience fun and a variety of new challenges throughout their elementary years in regards to sports participation. During that time, the child will explore his or her environment and learn to hone the skills that they feel they perform the best. Also during that time, the child should (if interested) be able to choose a sport that allows for his or her skills to further develop and his or her interests to peak. Although a child’s parents may want him or her to be the next Tiger Woods, it is important that they let their child take control of their athletic experience. If parents pressure the children with their own competitive beliefs and ideals, the child will come to experience stress in the athletic environment. This stress may precipitate burnout or even withdraw from the sport altogether. Since athletics are good for many reasons (fitness, team building skills, friendship, etc), it is wise allow the child to experience their sport in the way that they choose. Children have their own motivational reasons for participating in sport, and when allowed to foster their own choices and

interests, they will have the opportunity to experience a long and healthy career in the sport that they choose to call their own.

Chapter 3 – Design of the Study

Sample

The present study was conducted using a population of female figure skaters from an ice arena in southern New Jersey. The population that participated consisted of a total of twelve female figure skaters from middle to high socioeconomic status. Six of these figure skaters reported skating more than five hours per week and were thus considered to be competitive skaters as was defined in chapter one. Furthermore, six of these figure skaters were considered recreational type skaters because they reported skating between one and five hours per week. The skaters' ages ranged from 9 to 18 years. In regards to the timing of the survey distribution, the skaters received these scales during a period of time just before the major competitions began to take place.

Measures

The tool used in this study was the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments (AMSSE). Developed by B. Rushall and R. Fox in 1980, this scale was intended to measure levels of motivation in sporting or athletic environments specifically. Originally, however, this type of scale was developed in 1970 by Gjesme and Nygard and was specific to an academic environment (the Achievement Motives Scale). In that setting, Gjesme and Nygard measured achievement motivations, motives to approach success and motives to avoid failure. Their research revealed that persons who scored high in the motive to approach success were more likely to put forth more quantity and quality in their efforts to succeed. Conversely, those who scored low in approach but

high in avoidance orientation were less likely to put forth the quality and/or quantity of work necessary to achieve their goal. Taking these results into consideration, Rushall and Fox thought it logical then to reinterpret the underlying concepts of the tool for sporting or athletic environments. They hypothesized that the results would be more predictive of behavior in a sporting environment than in an academic setting. Therefore, they developed the AMSSE to measure motivations for three aspects of sport participation: 1. overall sporting experience, 2. training circumstances and 3. competitions.

Reliability and validity were calculated for this test (the AMSSE), as well. In regards to the reliability, each question was put through a test-retest procedure. Per an article by Rushall and Fox in 1980, 29 physical education students were administered the test on two occasions three days apart. For any question in the pool to remain in the test, it must have elicited the same response from the same subject at least 64% of the time. For this test, the researchers preferred to evaluate each item separately rather than the scale as a whole because “scale scores are more likely to consist of the same items rather than just the same total score (Fox & Rushall, 1980).”

As far as validity is concerned, the scale with the items that were deemed reliable was sent to a panel of experts in the field of motivational or sport psychology. The panel was asked to assess the content validity of each item and determine whether each item alluded to achievement motivation and /or expectation for success and also which items referred to training or competition or both. All of the items that remained in the scale (28) were deemed by the panel to apply to competition and training and to also contain elements of achievement. Thus, all of the items remained in the scale. One final step the

panel took was to determine whether each question applied to the positive or negative side of the spectrum. The positive statements were to be applied to the success approach orientation and the negative statements were consequently applied to the failure avoidance orientation.

The administration of the test was created to be fairly straightforward. The researcher needed only to provide a quiet setting in which to take the test, a pencil and a copy of the test. During administration, the student needed to fill in the blanks with their first initial, last name, age and date of the test. Following those questions, the student was then asked to circle the category of student that best described him or her (ex: female high school student, male college student, etc.). One additional question was also asked of the students in the beginning of the test. It was a question that was added to the original answer sheet for purposes of this particular study which asked how many hours per week the student skated. The students filled out these questions on the answer sheet and were then allowed as much time as necessary to complete the 28 questions provided in the test booklet. Each question asked provided four response alternatives from which the skater was to circle the one that best fits her feelings on the statement provided. Some of the statements that were presented were: "I enjoy tasks in my sport that are a little difficult" and also, "When my abilities are tested in practice, I do not like it." The response alternatives provided for each of the 28 statements were: always, frequently, sometimes or never. In general, the test was to have taken approximately 20 minutes to complete and for purposes of this particular study, as long as was necessary to complete the task.

Scoring of the test was created to be fairly simple, as well. Each of the 28 items, as stated above, was oriented to either success or failure factors. Moreover, each item was given four alternative responses and each response was given its own numerical value (always =3, frequently =2, sometimes =1 and never = 0). The overall scores indicated the positive and negative reasons for sport participation. After computing the overall scores, scores of certain questions within the scale were then combined to produce four more scores for each subject. These scores further defined the subject's motivational approach in the training realm and also in the realm of competition. Three more factor scores were also able to be computed for each subject from the numbers, as well. Those scores were the approach-avoidance difference scores for the sport, for training and for competition, too.

Design

Since the attempt of this study was to discern whether there was a pattern or relationship between the amount of time spent on youth athletics and the motivational orientation of the skater, the experimental design that was used was that of a correlation. Both categories of skaters' responses to the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments were calculated and compared to one another so as to produce a Pearson Correlation. The factors that were compared were the reported hours of practice time versus the approach-success and avoidance-failure scores for the sport in general.

Hypotheses for Study

For purposes of this study, the null hypothesis was that there was not a relationship between the amount of time a skater practiced per week and the motivation orientation he or she reported on the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments. The alternate hypothesis was that there was a relationship between the amount of time a skater practiced per week and the motivation that he or she reported on the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments. More specifically, it was hypothesized earlier in this paper that those who practiced more than 5 hours per week would report a score that more closely resembles a motivation to avoid failure. Because this study was descriptive in nature, there was no testable hypothesis which would provide any quantitative results.

Analysis

The type of analysis that was used in this study was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (or Pearson's Correlation for short). This was the best type of analysis for this study because the null hypothesis proposed a relationship between the amount of time spent on youth sport and motivational orientation and this analysis could examine pertinent information to identify relevant patterns and relationships. Being very systematic, correlation analysis examined whether motivational orientation moved from a success to a failure orientation as hours of training increased. Another reason that this test was chosen was because the study was qualitative in nature and because the sample size of the study was less than 30 persons.

Summary

In closing, the study presented in this paper examined the relationship between the amount of time spent on youth athletics, figure skating in particular, and the motivational orientation of that skater. Therefore, the design that was chosen was descriptive in nature and did not attempt to make any predictions about other skaters and future involvement in youth sports. Through correlation analysis, this study simply described the population of skaters that were involved so that further study may be done on this topic. The qualitative design of this correlation analysis required the use of the Pearson Correlation parametric test to identify any relationship between the variables described. The next chapter (Chapter 4) will provide a more in depth review of the analysis that happened in this study.

Chapter 4 – Analysis of Results

The following chapter presents the findings of this study. The findings were structured to reveal the relationship (if any) between the amount of time a skater reported training per week and the type of motivation orientation that was expressed. As mentioned previously, the independent variable for this study was the amount of time the skater commits to this sport. Furthermore, the dependent variables were the two scores the skater obtained on the Achievement Motivation Scale for Sporting Environments. These scores were the Motivation for Success Orientation or MSO and the Motivation to Avoid Failure Orientation or MFO.

In total, of the 25 surveys distributed, 12 were returned. This represented a response rate of 48%. Participants ranged in age from 9 to 18 years (Mean = 12 years and 7 months) and were all of female gender. The amount of time spent on the sport (as reported by the participants) ranged from 2 to 10 hours per week (Mean = 6 hours per week). Table 4.1 on the next page shows the distribution of this information.

As mentioned above, two scores for this population were determined using the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments (MSO and MFO). Calculated using the answers to particular questions from the survey, each set of numbers was used to identify the respondent under one of the two specific types of motivation orientation. To determine the Motivation of Success Orientation score, points for questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16, 19, 21, 22, 26 and 27 of the survey were tallied and listed below. To determine the score for Motivation to Avoid Failure, points for questions 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25 and 28 were added and placed

below, also. The higher of the two numbers determined the orientation that best described that particular respondent. Table 4.2 below indicates the scores found for each respondent.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Sampled Population

Respondent	Age	Practice Hrs./Week
A	15	10
B	11.5	3
C	11	5
D	9	5
E	14	10
F	14	5
G	18	6
H	11	6
I	10	7
J	12	3
K	9	2
L	18	10

Table 4.2: Respondent Scores on Motivation for Success Orientation and Motivation for Avoidance of Failure Orientation

Respondent	MSO	MFO
A	31	19
B	32	11
C	32	19
D	36	10
E	39	6
F	27	16
G	31	23
H	30	9
I	31	23
J	32	21
K	20	37
L	39	6

When correlating the number of hours spent training at the ice arena to the motivation orientation there was not a significant relationship as was hypothesized.

Specifically, the significance of the relationship between the hours of skating and the Motivation for Success Orientation was non-significant. Moreover, the significance of the relationship between the hours of skating and the Motivation to Avoid Failure Orientation was also non-significant. These numbers were close to zero which also meant that there was a chance that these findings happened at random. Although statistical significance was not present, the numbers did show a slightly closer relationship between the hours spent training and the Motivation to Avoid Failure scores than the Motivation for Success scores. An example of this was respondent K who reported the highest MFO score (39 when the maximum MFO score was 45) also had the lowest reported hours spent in training (2 hours per week). To review more on these relationships, please review the following Table 4.3 which shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and statistical significance between the hours spent training in skating and the MSO and MFO scores.

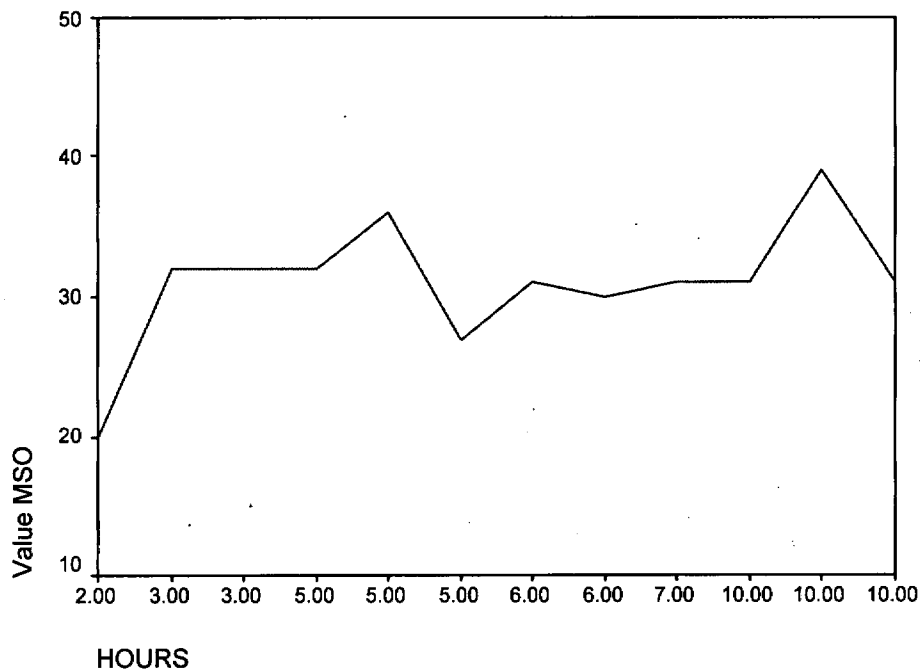
Table 4.3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Statistical Significance

		HOURS	MSO	MFO
HOURS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.483	-.351
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.111	.263
	N	12	12	12
MSO	Pearson Correlation	.483	1.000	-.789
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.111	.	.002
	N	12	12	12
MFO	Pearson Correlation	-.351	-.789	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.263	.002	.
	N	12	12	12

Another way to look at these findings was to chart them on a graph. Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 below each exhibit the motivational scores in relation to the number of

hours spent practicing skating separately. For purposes of the Motivation for Success chart, the maximum MSO score that could be attained was 39. What one can see here is that as the number of hours spent training increased, there was an increase in the Motivation for Success in most instances. When calculated, the Mean score for MSO was 31.67. When compared to the average number of hours spent practicing for this population (6 hours), this number was relatively high and indicated that most of these skaters skated with intentions to succeed.

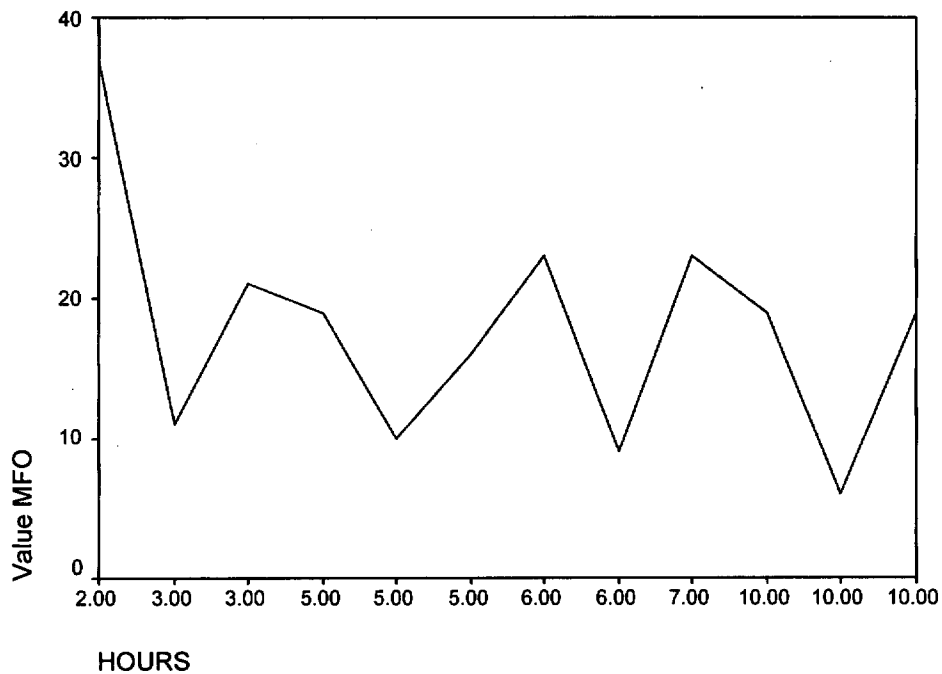
Table 4.4: Motivation for Success Scores in Relation to Number of Hours Spent Training



For purposes of the Motivation for Avoidance of Failure chart, the maximum MFO score that could be attained was 45. What can be shown on the next page (in Table 4.5) is that as the number of hours spent training increased, there was not an apparent pattern that could be determined in the scores. The scores, as can be seen in Table 4.5 fluctuated across the board. When calculated, the Mean score for MFO in this study was

16.67. This was a relatively low number considering the maximum score on this scale was 45. The respondent who obtained the highest MFO score as mentioned before was actually the person who had the lowest amount of reported training hours. Three respondents who reported the same amount of time put into training (which represented the highest reported training time at 10 hours each) attained scores which varied, as well. This indicated that other factors may have been involved, too. Once again, because the significance of this correlation was close to zero, this fluctuation could also have been due to random occurrences.

Table 4.5: Motivation to Avoid Failure Scores in Relation to Number of Hours Spent Training



Further scores were able to be calculated from the responses to the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments. Two scores in particular, the Motivation for Success in Training and the Motivation for Success in Competition were of specific

interest when compared to the Motivation for Success Orientation scores. One final table listed below (Table 4.6) shows that there was an interesting trend when comparing these three scores together. What one can see from the chart below was that the Motivation for Success Orientation scores were higher than the scores produced by the other factors even though they were all related to one another in that they were success orientations. The fact that the Training and Competition scores were lower may have been due to the pressures imposed on the skater in those certain situations and these pressures did not get reflected in the skater's perception of the sport itself. This may be an issue that researchers would want to explore in the future.

Table 4.6: Motivation for Success Scores as Compared to Motivation for Success Scores in Training and Competition

Respondent	MSO	MST	MSC
A	31	25	22
B	32	25	24
C	32	25	23
D	36	28	27
E	39	30	30
F	27	21	22
G	31	23	24
H	30	23	23
I	31	26	23
J	32	25	23
K	20	17	16
L	39	30	30

Summary

After administering the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments to 12 female skaters between the ages of 9 and 18, it was determined that

there was not a strong relationship between the number of hours spent training at the ice arena and the skaters' motivation orientation. Furthermore, the statistical numbers were close to zero which also meant that there was a chance that these findings happened at random. Looking more closely at the generated scores on the Motivation to Approach Success and Motivation to Avoid Failure charts, the mean scores were 31.67 and 16.67 respectively. The maximum MSO score that could be attained was 39. Therefore, a score of 31.67 was relatively high and seemed to indicate that a majority of the group skated with a motivation to succeed. The maximum MFO score that could be attained was 45. Since the Mean score for MFO in this study was 16.67, what was determined was that as the number of hours spent training increased, there was a decrease in the motivation to avoid failure. This supports the previous scores on the MSO chart, however, for MFO the scores did fluctuate across the board. What these findings indicated was that there may be other factors involved which would require more in-depth research than is provided by this particular study.

Chapter 5 – Summary and Conclusions

In summary, this paper was written with the intent to review the concept of youth athletics and motivation in a competitive environment. It was hypothesized that children who were competitive in figure skating (who participated in more than 5 hours of on-ice and off-ice training) would have more of an avoidance of failure type of motivation than that found in a recreational skater. The study also intended to support that a recreational skater, with less pressure on time and financial investments would have more of an approach-success type of motivation to continue sport participation. By using the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments developed by Brent Rushall and Randy Fox in 2000, scores for 12 skaters were assessed to determine their motivational orientation. It was concluded that there was not a significant relationship between the hours of practice time given to the sport and the motivation that was reported by each skater. Furthermore, it was also concluded that as a group, the skaters reported a high mean score for motivation to approach success and a low score for motivation to avoid failure in skating. Therefore, it can be said that most of these skaters continued their participation with a positive motivation of achieving success.

Discussion

Despite numerous articles indicating that American children have become increasingly inactive and overweight, about one-half of this country's children between 6 and 18 years of age have been reported to participate in non-scholastic sport programs. When calculated in numerical terms, that population exceeded 20 million. There was

also another population of America's children (in the same age range) that participated in interscholastic athletic programs, as well. (Chambers, 1991; Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996; Martens, 1988; McCarthy, 1998; Smith & Smoll, 1996; Walker, 1993) This information provided a valid rebuttal to the argument that American children have become inactive, and it also opened many doors for researchers studying child development.

In 1995, Wong & Bridges asserted that the large number of children involved in organized sports "necessitated an understanding of what this participation meant in terms of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development." (1995, p. 437) Some researchers, such as Smith and Smoll believed that "sports can have direct relevance to (child) development in important domains such as self-concept development, cooperation and competitiveness, attitudes toward achievement, aggression, sex-role development, stress management skills, risk-taking and the abilities to tolerate frustration and delay gratification." (p. 3) However, one major question concerning development of young athletes that remained unanswered was, "how much is too much?"

Since the American ideal continuously tells us "there is no point in playing if you aren't trying to win." (Kozlowski, 2000, p. 147), child athletes are often expected to put in sufficient practice time to achieve sometimes unrealistic goals, as well as balance home life, academics and friends, too. This pressure to 'get it all done' may leave these children feeling overwhelmed, overburdened and 'stressed out.' (Bennetts, 1999; Kantrowitz et al, 2000; Meigs, 1999) This intense involvement may seem fun at first but it has also become a source of frustration and physical exhaustion to young children, as well. (McCarthy, 1998) Often, at the point that the athlete experiences these symptoms, burnout and withdraw from the sport take place.

Another major factor involved in youth athletics was that of motivation.

According to Stratton (1998), the typical reasons children stayed involved were the same reasons they joined the sport in the first place. That is, they continued their involvement because they were having fun and learning new skills. Children also continued playing sports so as to develop fitness and because some of them actually enjoyed competition. (Barber et al, 1999; Gill et al, 1983; Stratton, 1998; Walker, 1993) Parents also played an important role in motivating children to continue sports participation. They know that the earlier they start their children on the road to sports excellence, the better the chances are that the child will cultivate the skills necessary to become an elite athlete. Thus, they often push their children to “utilize their time more productively” and to train as if they are going to pursue Olympic Gold. (Walker, 1993, p. 107) “Children tend to seek and require the approval of adults in many of their daily activities” (Walker, 1993, p. 105), and often take their parents’ investment of time and finances into consideration, too. At times, children even believe that the relationship they have with his or her parents relies on the progress or achievement they make in their sport. Therefore, the child being that he or she wants to continue to please his or her parents, then works even harder in order to bring success to his or her athletic career.

The study presented in this paper attempted to discern whether there was a pattern or relationship between the amount of time spent on youth athletics, figure skating in particular, and the motivational orientation of the skater. More explicitly, the hypothesis of the paper stated that children who were competitive (who participated in more than 5 hours of on-ice and off-ice training) would have more of an avoidance of failure type of motivation than that found in a recreational skater. The study also intended to support

that a recreational skater, with less pressure on time and financial investments would have more of an approach-success type of motivation to continue sport participation. On the surface, it would seem that the competitive skater would have more pressures on her (both internally and externally) to do well in the sport. However, because of a study done by Burton and Martens in 1986, research argues that assumption. That study showed that the children who continue sports participation often show more instances of having positive expectations and higher perceived ability in the realm of their chosen sport

After administering the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments to 12 female skaters between the ages of 9 and 18, it was determined that there was not a strong relationship between the number of hours spent training at the ice arena and the skaters' motivation orientation. Furthermore, the statistical numbers were close to zero which also meant that there was a chance that these findings happened at random. Looking more closely at the generated scores on the Motivation to Approach Success and Motivation to Avoid Failure charts, there was a general indication that as the amount of training increased, there was a move toward a more approach-success motivation and a move away from the avoidance-failure motivation. The fact that the scores for the avoidance-failure chart were rather random tells the reader that there may have been other factors involved that would require more in depth research than is provided by this particular paper.

There were a number of limitations that affected this study. One limitation that was a factor was that the sample only included 12 skaters. It would have been interesting to see whether the pattern in which skaters who gave more time to the sport continued to

have a more approach-success motivation in a larger group. Secondly, the results of this study were subject to further limitations because the children were asked to complete the Achievement Motivations Scale for Sporting Environments in their free time (at home). Because of this, the respondents may not have answered these questions truthfully for fear that their parents may review it before turning it back to the researcher. Furthermore, the respondents may have completed the survey in an environment that was full of distractions (i.e.: television, friends, phone ringing, etc) and therefore the answers may not have truly reflected the skaters' true feelings on the sport.

In wrapping up, child athletes need to experience fun and variety throughout their early years in order to avoid burnout at an early age. During these developmental years, the child should explore his or her environment and experience many different games, venues, etc. so as to understand which skills he or she most enjoys performing. Based on that knowledge, the child can then choose a sport that allows for further development of skills and the opportunity for fun, too. Although a child's parents may want him or her to be the next Tiger Woods, it is important that they let their child take control of his or her athletic experience. Otherwise, there is greater risk for stress, burnout and ultimate withdraw from the sport. Since athletics are good for many reasons (fitness, team building skills, friendship, etc), it is wise allow the child to experience sports in the way that they choose. In doing so, children who have their own motivational reasons for participating in sport will have the opportunity to experience a long and healthy career in the sport that they choose to call their own.

Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that figure skaters have many internal and external pressures on them. From the internal motivations that this person has to the external pressures to dedicate enough time for practicing this intense sport and the monetary investment that is made by the skater's parents, a figure skater needs to be sure that this is an investment he or she wants to make. If the skater does not find enjoyment in the sport, then he or she is subject to the experience of stress, frustration and burnout and possible withdraw from the sport after investing so much time and money into it. What the numbers of this study show is that there is not a direct relationship between skaters who are more competitive (who skate more than 5 hours per week) and any Motivation to Avoid Failure. In fact, what was found was that overall, the skaters in this study reported a higher motivation to approach success than to avoid failure. Since the mean number of hours skated in this group was 6, and a competitive skater is defined as one who skates more than 5 hours per week, one can conclude that those who are competitive are more often influenced by a Motivation to Approach-Success. Further examination of the numbers indicated that in comparison to the scores for Motivation for Success overall, the scores for Motivation for Success in Training and also in Competition were slightly lower. Hence, while the added pressures seemed to be reflected in these numbers, further research would be necessary to identify the true reason that these scores differ from the Motivation for Success overall.

Implications for Future Research

In light of this paper, there are a few areas in which further research would be helpful. The study completed within attempted to see whether a figure skater's motivation was more the avoidance of failure type as the amount of time spent practicing the sport increased. Because there was not a significant correlation between the time spent on the sport and the motivation expressed by the skater in this study, it would be interesting to research what it is about skating that causes them to maintain an approach-success orientation. Furthermore, it would be interesting to incorporate more elite level skaters into the sample to see if those who skate longer than ten hours per week (which was the maximum number of hours skated by a respondent in this paper) had the same motivations as those who skate less. One other issue that the results of this study brought to light was that in comparison to the Motivation for Success scores, the Motivation for Success in Training and Competition were lower. Future researchers may want to create a survey to determine what it is specifically that causes these skaters to find less success under the training and competition mode of sport. Perhaps it is those factors that change the perception of the sport for the skater that contribute to overall feelings of frustration and subsequent burnout and withdraw from sport.

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January 31, 2003

Dear Parent/Guardian:

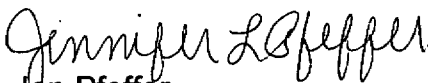
Most of you know me as a staff coach at your ice arena but I am also a graduate student in the School Psychology Department at Rowan University. Under the supervision of Dr. John Klanderman, I will be conducting a research project as part of my master's thesis that explores the types of motivation skaters use when participating in their chosen sport. I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this research. The goal of the study is to determine whether or not there is a difference in motivational styles between recreational and competitive skaters.

Each child will be given an Achievement Motivations Scale and a score sheet to take home. The skater will be asked to complete this survey over the weekend and bring it back to me within a week. (The return date will be written on the upper right hand corner of the form.) The survey is comprised of 28 questions to which the child will respond with an answer of always, frequently, sometimes or never. The child will then circle his/her response on the corresponding score sheet. The survey should only take about 30 minutes to complete.

To preserve each child's confidentiality, each incoming survey will be assigned a letter I.D. and will from that point on be referred to only by that I.D. Furthermore, all data will be reported in terms of group results; individual results will not be reported.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing at the ice arena. At the conclusion of the study a summary of the group results will be made available to all interested parents. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me or you may contact Dr. John Klanderman. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Jen Pfeffer

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this letter to me or in my mail box along with the child's completed survey.

I grant permission for my child _____ to participate in this study.

I do not grant permission for my child _____ to participate in this study.

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

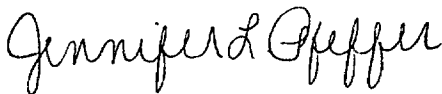
(Date)

March 11, 2003

Dr. Dihoff,

Per our conversation this evening, I am writing to confirm that in approaching the students and their parents regarding my study, I did verbally inform them that they have the option of discontinuing participation in this study at any time. I hope this is sufficient information for you, however, if it is not, please feel free to contact me at the above number, address or email address. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer L. Pfeffer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jennifer L. Pfeffer