

Parental Involvement and Adolescents' Plans for Future Children



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Introduction

A variety of research has been done on parental involvement in numerous areas such as academic achievements, participation in sports, and civic development (e.g., Elder, Fletcher, & Mekos, 2000). Past research on parental involvement has identified a relationship between parental involvement and adolescent participation in extracurricular activities, such as sports, choir, clubs, or band (e.g., Hoyle & Leff, 1997). Accordingly, a majority of the research which focuses on parental involvement also looks at parental influences and the effects they have on adolescents' extracurricular participation. Efforts have been made by researchers to further the understanding of just how much parents play a role in what adolescents' plans are for their future children and if they plan to reflect how much their own parents were involved in their extracurricular activities. The purpose of our study is to investigate the impact parent/guardian/mentor involvement in extracurricular activities has on adolescents and their plans for their children's future.

Method

- **Participants:** We recruited Austin College students who are currently enrolled in Psychology course by email. The survey was sent out to 270 students and 176 students responded (65%). See Table 1 for further demographic information. Twenty-five participants were taken out of the analysis due to not finishing the survey. Participants were compensated 15 minutes of extra credit to contribute to their overall grade in a Psychology course.
- **Instrument/Procedure:** The participants had to first read what the study was about and provide informed consent in order to answer the questions. The questionnaire contained a series of 14 closed-ended questions designed for the present study. The questionnaire was designed so participants who did participate in sports had an additional five.
- **Analyses:** A multinomial logistic regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the impact parental/guardian/mentorship involvement in extracurricular activities has on adolescents and their future plans of involvement with their children. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data.



Table 1.

Frequencies of Categorical Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Year in School</i>		
Freshman	36	23.8
Sophomore	51	33.8
Junior	28	18.5
Senior	35	23.2
Missing	1	.7
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Caucasian/White	93	61.6
Not Caucasian/White	58	38.4
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	30	19.9
Female	121	80.1
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	100	66.2
Not Married	50	33.3
Missing	1	.7
<i>Parents Yearly Income</i>		
Less than 60,000	29	19.2
60,000-100,000	44	29.1
Greater than 100,000	63	41.7
Don't know	15	9.9
<i>Kids Planned to Have</i>		
None	17	11.3
Only 1	14	9.3
2 or More	119	78.8
Missing	1	.7
<i>Siblings</i>		
Only Child	29	19.2
Not Only child	121	80.1
Missing	1	.7
<i>Participation Outside of School</i>		
Yes	145	96
No	5	3.3
Missing	1	.7
<i>Start of Participation</i>		
Elementary	115	76.2
After elementary	32	21.8
Missing	4	2.6
<i>Influenced Participation</i>		
Parents Decided	67	44.4
I Asked My Parents	47	31.1
I Decided	22	14.6
Other	11	7.3
Missing	4	2.6
<i>Time Spent Participating Per Week</i>		
10 or Less Hours	91	60.3
10-15 Hours	35	23.2
15 or More	21	13.9
Missing	4	97.4
<i>Who Influenced the Amount of Time</i>		
I Decided	58	38.4
Parents Decided	19	12.6
Sometimes I Did,	69	45.7
Sometimes Parents Did	5	3.3
Missing	1	0.7
<i>Impact of Parental Involvement</i>		
Positive	138	91.4
Negative	12	7.9
Missing	1	0.7
<i>Reflection For Future Involvement</i>		
Yes	140	92.7
No	10	6.6
Missing	1	0.7
<i>Statement Applicable to You</i>		
Plan To Be Less Involved	18	11.9
Plan To Be As Involved	106	70.9
Plan to be More Involved	26	17.2
Missing	1	0.7
<i>Wishes of Parental Involvement</i>		
Wish Parents Were More	31	20.5
Involved		
Wish Parents Were Less	12	7.9
Involved		
Content with Parents' Involvement	107	70.9
Missing	1	0.7

Table 2.

Final Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Participants' Ideal Parental Involvement

Variable	B	SE	Wald's z	df	p	OR
<i>Predicting desire for more involvement</i>						
Intercept	4.56	1.60	8.11	1	.00	
Caucasian	-.29	1.19	.06	1	.80	0.74
Male	2.29	1.86	1.52	1	.22	9.96
Married	-3.4	2.92	1.42	1	.23	0.03
Don't know parents income	6.17	3.21	3.70	1	.05	481.75
Less than \$60,000	-2.3	3.17	.54	1	.46	0.10
\$60,000-100,000	-1.9	2.81	.50	1	.48	0.14
Not planning on having kids	-2.2	1.952	.00	1	.99	2.26
One kid	-1.9	3.36	.34	1	.56	0.14
Only child	-5.0	3.64	1.94	1	.16	0.01
Elementary	-4.6	3.14	2.17	1	.14	0.01
Parents decided	24.5	1642	.00	1	.99	444873
I asked	19.8	1642	.00	1	.99	397619
I decided	-2.5	1223	.00	1	1.00	0.78
10 or less hours	-5.0	2.13	.06	1	.81	0.61
10-15 hours	.92	2.11	.19	1	.67	2.50
I decided	4.08	3.27	1.56	1	.21	59.46
Parents decided	4.73	3.55	1.78	1	.18	113.98
Too little	33.3	1952	.00	1	.99	318776
Right amount	9.48		1			13196
Positive	-1.7	4.01	.19	1	.66	0.17
Involvement	-4.0	2775	.00	1	.99	1.00
Less involved	-2.5	4156	.00	1	.99	1.28
The same	-6.7	3.39	3.98	1	.05	0.001
<i>Predicting desire for less involvement</i>						
Intercept	-142	785.6	.03	1	.86	
Caucasian	-44.5	199.0	.05	1	.82	1.00
Male	-23.0	343.9	.00	1	.95	1.00
Married	8.44	69.37	.02	1	.90	4635.91
Don't know yearly income	45.08	198.8	.05	1	.82	3805944
Less than \$60,000	49.39	422.3	.01	1	.91	2839387
\$60,000-100,000	-17.6	122.2	.02	1	.89	2.19
Only child	-17.3	113.4	.02	1	.88	2.79
Elementary	55.87	370.6	.02	1	.88	1839339
Parents decided participation	17.37	112.6	.02	1	.88	3514783
I asked	21.92	356.7	.00	1	.95	3326949
Less involved	113.4	687.4	.03	1	.87	1.89
Same involvement	6.62	590.6	.00	1	.99	750.60

Table 3.

Final Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Planned Future Parental Involvement

Variable	B	SE	Wald's z	df	p	OR
<i>Less involved in future</i>						
Intercept	-8.67	2804.25	.00	1	.99	
Caucasian	1.84	1.59	1.34	1	.25	6.27
Male	3.09	1.59	3.88	1	.05	22.13
Only child	-4.32	1.96	4.85	1	.03	0.01
Elementary	-2.25	1.82	1.53	1	.22	0.11
Do not know parents income	-13.02	1236.74	.00	1	.99	2.21
Less than \$60,000	-30.59	1752.23	.00	1	.99	1.52
\$60,000-100,000	-1.58	1.71	.85	1	.36	0.21
No kids	-1.56	2.85	.29	1	.59	0.21
One kid	3.36	2.09	2.56	1	.11	28.67
Parents influenced participation	14.31	2804.25	.00	1	.99	--
I asked my parents	16.41	2804.25	.00	1	.99	--
I decided participation	11.16	2804.25	.00	1	.99	--
Less than 10 hours	-8.26	3.01	7.53	1	.01	0.00
10-15 hours	-6.42	3.07	4.36	1	.004	0.00
Positive	4.92	2.99	2.69	1	.10	136.35
I wish my parents had more involvement	-22.50	2750.69	.00	1	.99	1.69
I wish my parents were less involved	54.99	1792.23	.00	1	.98	--
<i>Same involvement in the future</i>						
Intercept	9.54	4.09	5.45	1	.02	
Caucasian	1.57	1.14	1.89	1	.17	4.82
Male	.87	1.08	.64	1	.42	2.39
Only child	-3.69	1.54	5.75	1	.02	0.03
Elementary	-2.58	1.27	4.09	1	.04	0.08
Do not know parents income	.70	1.68	.18	1	.67	2.02
Less than \$60,000	-1.86	1.37	1.85	1	.17	0.15
\$60,000-100,000	-2.22	1.27	3.07	1	.08	0.01
No kids	-8.5	1.78	23	1	.64	0.43
One kid	-.07	1.52	.00	1	.96	.093
Parents influenced me	-1.89	2.21	.73	1	.39	0.15
I asked to participate	-1.16	2.31	.25	1	.62	0.31
I decided to participate	-4.71	2.71	3.03	1	.08	0.01
Less than 10 hours	-6.12	2.71	5.19	1	.02	0.00
10-15 hours	-5.76	2.79	4.24	1	.04	0.00
Positive	6.19	2.14	8.38	1	.00	485.65
I wish my parents were more involved	-6.44	1.60	16.13	1	.00	0.00
I wish my parents were less involved	22.26	.00		1	--	

Results

The results showed various significant predictors of the participant's plans for their involvement in their future children's activities. Some of these predictors include when the participants started participating, whether or not they had siblings, the amount of time they spent and their future plans. As shown in Table 2, the significant predictors of wishing your parents had been more involved were parents being divorced ($p = .03$), having siblings ($p = .04$), started participating after elementary school ($p = .02$), and saying you plan to be as involved as your parents were ($p < .001$; overall Nagelkerke $R^2 = .85$). As shown in Table 3, the results showed when predicting how you plan to be with your potential children, the significant predictors of planning to be less involved than parents were being male ($p = .05$), 0-10 hours of participation ($p = .01$) or 10-15 hours of participation ($p = .04$), having siblings ($p = .03$), and starting after elementary ($p = .02$; overall Nagelkerke $R^2 = .81$). Participants who reported their parents having a positive impact ($p = .03$) were more likely to plan to be as involved as their own parents were with them.

Conclusions

- **Wishing your parents had been more involved** was predicted by parents being divorced and having siblings. This can be explained because divorced parents have to split time with their children, which may cause less involvement. Similarly, if the participant has siblings, the parents have to split their time with each child, which may also cause less involvement.
- **Participants who reported their parents having a positive impact are more likely to plan to be as involved** as their own parents were with them. If the participants are as involved in their child's activities than their children will have the same positive experience.
- **Planning to be less involved than parents** this participant may not spend a lot of time in the sport, so they did not deem it that important and they did not start at a young age so they were not fully involved.
- **This study is important because it can be used by parents and coaches.** Parents may alter their decisions if they think about their past experiences. Coaches can better communicate with their players and offer more support for their players.
- **Limitations:**
 - Sample size: it was Caucasian, Austin College, middle class families and therefore, can not be generalized back to a population.
 - Time limited: we only had a semester to conduct our research. Participants might not have remembered their activities correctly because it was so long ago: how they started the sport or what grades count as elementary or middle school.
 - Social desirability: participants may have said their parents make more than they really do.

Future Directions

- Investigate the differences and effects of parental involvement in married families and divorced families.
- Investigate the differences of parental involvement based on the socioeconomic status of the family and the yearly income of parents.

References

Fletcher, A. C., Elder, G. H., & Mekos D. J. (2000). Parental influences on adolescents involvement in community activities. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10, 29-48.

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