

Parents' Value Assessments, Outcome Expectations and Support Towards their Child's Recreational Sport Participation Experiences

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was two-fold: 1) to investigate parents' perceptions of value and outcome expectations in connection with their child's recreational sport participation and 2) to investigate whether or not the child's gender influenced parents' perceptions of value and outcome expectations with regard to their child's recreational sport participation. Each parent had at least one child under the age of 13 who participated in an organized, recreational sport. Data were collected through demographic surveys and semi-structured interviews. Eccles' (1984) expectancy-value model was utilized as the theoretical framework for this study. Participants generally supported their children's participation; however, one father did not view his daughter's long-term participation in recreational sport activities as appropriate. In addition, one mother was less supportive of her daughter's participation than her son's and held lower expectations with regard to the level of success her daughter would achieve in this domain. Because children who are physically active as youth are more likely to be active as adolescents and adults, parents are encouraged to be supportive of their children's engagement in recreational sport activities, regardless of the child's gender.

Key Words: Parents, children, recreation, sport, gender

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Introduction

Parents often introduce their children to various recreational activities and also screen their participation opportunities (Howard & Madigral, 1990). By engaging in these actions, parents serve as gatekeepers in relation to their children's participation experiences (Hultsman, 1993; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). As gatekeepers, parents provide support for their children's activities in a variety of ways, including financial, logistical, and emotional support (Cote, 1999; Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006). Financial support could include paying for expenses associated with participation such as registration fees and required equipment. Logistical support could include provision of transportation to and from games and practices. Lastly, emotional support could be displayed through positive feedback and encouragement. Ultimately, children's opportunities to engage in various recreational activities are contingent upon whether or not their parents support involvement in the activity.

Parental provisions of support could be influenced by a number of factors. First, the value assessments parents hold with regard to their children's activities could influence provisions of support that will enable participation. When parents value and subsequently support their children's engagement in certain activities, the likelihood of commencing as well as continuing the activity increases (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Bois, Sarrazin, Brustad, Trouilloud, & Curry, 2002). Conversely, if parents do not value participation, the child will likely engage in that activity with less frequency and for shorter durations (Greendorfer, 1992).

Parental expectations with regard to their children's participation outcomes could also influence their desire to provide access to and support for their children's activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002). Parents form expectancies with regard to their children's abilities in various domains. These expectancies are shaped by per-

ceptions parents hold in association with their children's temperament, interests, and talents. A parent who holds high expectations with regard to his/her child's potential to achieve in a particular domain might be more likely to provide access to as well as support for participation compared to if s/he does not expect desired outcomes will occur (Dixon, Warner, & Bruening, 2008).

In summation, parents are often the primary providers of various types of support for their children's recreational sport involvement. Their perceptions of value as well as the expectations they hold with regard to their children's activities can positively influence their children's participation opportunities. If parents perceive value in their children's participation, they will provide the support necessary to enable the experience. Furthermore, support will be given if parents possess positive expectations with regard to their children's involvement.

Although several factors can serve to enable participation, various other factors can serve to constrain children's involvement in recreational sport activities. Jackson (1988) defined a constraint as "anything that inhibits people's ability to participate in leisure activities" (p. 204). Several categories of constraints can affect one's opportunities to participate in an activity. Those categories are intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). Intrapersonal constraints are created within the individual. These constraints could include internal perceptions of incompetence that could preclude an individual from participating in an activity. Interpersonal constraints are those placed upon the individual by outside social forces. These forces could include individuals who are central in the life of the participant such as parents, peers, and siblings. Lastly, structural constraints consist of environmental, financial, or logistical factors that can influence one's ability to engage in various ac-

tivities. Lack of time, money, or placement in a geographic location that makes engagement difficult constitutes structural constraints.

The influence of interpersonal forces could significantly influence one's opportunities to engage in various activities. Those forces could have a positive or negative impact upon those opportunities based on whether or not they hold positive perceptions with regard to engagement in an activity. If interpersonal forces having an influence upon shaping participation opportunities are not supportive, those forces can serve as an interpersonal constraint to participation (Jackson & Henderson, 1995). This occurrence has been identified as social disapproval. In their examination of constraints upon participation opportunities, Shaw and Henderson (2005) stated, "social disapproval of activities considered to be inappropriate may be a type of interpersonal constraint through friends, family members, or others making their disapproval evident" (p. 26). They argued that when social disapproval by these interpersonal forces exists, the likelihood one would commence and/or continue participation in an activity would not be strong because of the strength of influence these forces possess.

The gender of the potential participant could serve as a factor leading to social disapproval. The impact of social disapproval held by these interpersonal forces has been found to influence recreational activity opportunities for both female as well as male children and adolescents. Culp (1998) found that peer and family expectations with regard to appropriate roles for females constrained recreational opportunities for young girls. These forces supported involvement in activities perceived as appropriate for females. Furthermore, expectations held by interpersonal forces were found to affect females' opportunities by serving as a constraint toward participation in ice hockey, football, or other activities perceived as masculine (Wiley, Shaw, & Havitz, 2000).

Social disapproval of activities could also in-

fluence participation opportunities for males. Interpersonal forces might influence males to gravitate toward participation opportunities they approve of as well as deter involvement in activities that are inconsistent with dominant ideologies of masculinity (Sage & Eitzen, 2012). Males could be influenced to avoid an activity such as dance because it is perceived to have artistic and aesthetic attributes that contrast traditional hegemonic masculine attributes of power and aggression. Conversely, sports in which muscular strength and aggression are perceived as critical to one's success in an activity (e.g., rugby, football) are encouraged for young males (Coakley, 2009).

Parents are oftentimes the gatekeepers who provide their children with access to various recreational sport participation opportunities. Permitting access to and support for their children's involvement is more likely if they value their children's engagement in a particular activity. In addition, parents would be more likely to permit access to and provide support for their children's involvement if they expect positive outcomes to occur.

Conversely, parents can be interpersonal forces that serve to constrain their children's recreational sport opportunities. If parents possess disapproval of their children's involvement in particular activities because they perceive the activities are not congruent with their perceptions of appropriate activity, then it is unlikely access will be granted to commence participation. Furthermore, they might not value participation because they do not anticipate positive outcomes stemming from participation. As a result, it is unlikely parental disapproval toward an activity would result in access to as well as provisions of support that would enable their children's ongoing engagement.

This study investigated the perceived value and outcome expectations parents possessed with regard to their children's recreational sport involvement. Furthermore, this study examined whether or not a child's gender would

serve as a constraint upon participation and if the child's gender would influence parental perceptions of value and outcome expectations associated with engagement in recreational sport activities. Within this study, the term "recreational sport" refers to organized participation endeavors (e.g., a community soccer or baseball league) that rely upon parental volunteer assistance. The skill level of the teams within these organized leagues varied but the leagues focused upon the physical, social, and psychological (e.g., build self-confidence) benefits children could gain through participation.

The purpose of this study was two-fold: 1) to investigate parents' perceptions of value and outcome expectations in connection with their child's recreational sport participation and 2) to investigate whether or not the child's gender influenced parents' perceptions of value and outcome expectations with regard to their child's recreational sport participation. Parents were focused on in this study because they have not been the focus within much of the research related to youth sport participation. Brustad (1992) stated, "Although they are a critically important and highly visible component of the youth sport experience, little information has been obtained directly from parents about their beliefs, attitudes, values, and expectations regarding the sport experiences of their sons and daughters" (p. 72). Qualitative data collection procedures were utilized in order to address the purposes of the study because the use of qualitative measures could better uncover the reasons why parents valued their children's participation as well as the outcome expectations they possessed. In addition, qualitative measures could uncover reasons why parents might not approve of their children's involvement.

Theoretical Framework

Parental perceptions of value and positive expectations associated with participation are important factors that shape children's activity

experiences. The framework for this study was shaped by Eccles' (1984) expectancy-value model. This model has been used to a significant extent as a framework to examine academic achievement behaviors; however, this model provides useful perspectives to understand youth sport and physical activity participation experiences. This model has also been used in order to examine the influence socializing agents' values, expectations, and role modeling has upon a child's entrance into as well as continuation of extracurricular activities (Dixon, Warner, & Bruening, 2008). One source of socialization, parents, contributes to a child's socialization into sport because they serve as role models as well as providers and interpreters of experience (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002).

The expectancy-value model has been used to examine competence beliefs as well as importance values held by parents (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Jacobs & Eccles, 2000; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Sabiston & Crocker, 2008). It has been used to explain how parental values and expectancies of abilities shape children's experiences and their choices to begin, continue, or end participation in various activities. The model assumes parents are likely to provide encouragement and support for activities they deem important as well as perceive their children will experience success (Bois et al., 2002). With regard to sport-related activity, parents who value their children's engagement in a particular activity would be more likely to lend their support. In addition, if parents expected their children to be successful within a particular sport-related activity, they would be more likely to support participation.

Method

Data Collection

Participants needed to fit some criteria; therefore, criterion sampling was utilized. Within criterion sampling, all cases must meet some pre-determined criterion of importance (Patton, 1990). Participants needed to have a least one

child under the age of 13 who was active in at least one organized, recreational sport at the time of data collection. Cote's (1999) three stages of sport development model were used in determining the criteria for participants in this study. The stages of sport development include the sampling stage (ages 6-12), specializing stage (ages 13-15), and investment stage (ages 16 and above). The sampling stage is characterized by involvement in a wide range of activities. During the sampling stage, participation is often focused upon having fun and developing a liking for physical activity. Children within the sampling stage were focused upon for this study because of the intent to investigate parents' expectations with regard to their children's involvement. Because children's participation is less likely to have played out entirely during the sampling stage as opposed to latter stages, parents of children within the sampling stage were selected for this study.

In order to locate parents who had children in the sampling stage and active in organized, recreational sport activities, a local school district and several branches of the YMCA were contacted. Personnel at the school district's central administrative office granted permission to contact principals of area elementary schools. Fifteen principals were contacted. They were provided with an introduction to and purpose of the study. Furthermore, they were asked if permission could be granted in order to distribute information about the study to parents. Two principals of the fifteen responded and subsequently granted permission to distribute information to parents who had children enrolled in their schools.

The schools in which the data collection occurred consisted of children in grades K-5. Approximately 300 students were enrolled in school "A" and approximately 125 were enrolled in school "B." Students enrolled at the schools were given a letter of introduction and a response form to take home to their parent or legal guardian. The letter explained the purpose

of the study and criteria needed for inclusion into the study. Seventeen parents from school "A" and four from school "B" signed the response form, provided their contact information, and returned it to the school. Although the criteria for participation was clearly stated in the correspondence sent to the parents, several did not fit the criteria but still chose to return the form. They were not contacted for an interview. Several other parents who returned the form fit the criteria but did not return repeated phone calls and/or e-mails to arrange an interview. Four parents affiliated with school "A" and one parent affiliated with school "B" did respond to requests for an interview.

General managers at four branches of the YMCA were contacted and asked for permission to enter the facility in order to solicit potential participants for the study. One general manager responded and referred the primary investigator to an assistant manager. This individual granted permission to speak with parents whose children were enrolled in their sport-related programs. At the YMCA, a verbal announcement was made to parents attending their children's basketball games. The league consisted of 8 teams and consisted of children ranging from 8 to 12 years of age. Approximately 100 attendees were present. Attendees who had at least one child participating in the league were invited to take part in the study. They were asked to approach the primary investigator if they had an interest in participating. Six parents from this YMCA indicated an interest in participating. Contact information was exchanged and arrangements to meet were made.

Data collection consisted of two elements at each meeting. First, each participant was provided with a demographic survey at the beginning of his or her interview. Details on each participant's age, education level, ethnicity, household income, and occupation were requested. In addition, semi-structured interviews were utilized. Interviews were audio taped, lasted between 45-60 minutes each, and were conducted

at a time and place of each participant's choice. Participants were interviewed individually and were asked a series of pre-formatted, closed-end questions as well as open-ended questions. Participants were asked questions that focused upon the history of their children's recreational sport involvement, the ways in which they supported that involvement, as well as the value and expectations they held in association with their children's participation.

With regard to gaining insight into how their children's recreational sport involvement came to fruition, participants were first asked to identify the sport or sports in which their children participated and then were asked about circumstances or conversations with their children that helped commence participation. A sample question included, "Think back to when your child indicated an interest in participating. What do you think led to him or her getting started?" Participants were then free to elaborate upon factors such as their own sport experiences or the influence their children's peers had upon the start of this involvement.

Participants were asked questions that encouraged them to elaborate on how they supported their children's recreational sport involvement. They were asked, "Please describe the ways in which you are involved with your children's sport activities." The goal was to get them to elaborate on the emotional, financial, instructional, and logistical support they provided for their children's recreational sport activities. Participants were also asked if there were any examples where they did not support one of their children's sport-related interests. A question that was asked in order to gain insight into potential restrictions and the reasoning behind it was, "Recall a time when your kids came to you and said they wanted to play a sport and you said 'no.' What led to that response?"

With regard to participants' value assessments and expectations associated with their children's recreational sport involvement, several questions designed to encourage elaboration

on their motivations behind allowing participation were asked. For example, participants were asked questions such as "What would you like to see you child get out of his/her sport experiences" and "Is it important to you that your child is involved in sport?" Participants were then encouraged to elaborate as to why they wanted their children to be involved in sport-related activities as well as elaborate on their expectations regarding their children's experiences. They were not asked if their child's gender influenced those expectations; instead, the influence of the child's gender upon those expectations emerged through the participants' elaboration.

Upon completion of the interview, participants were asked debriefing questions. In addition, they chose a pseudonym. All names used in this study were pseudonyms selected by the participants.

Participants

Participants were parents of at least one child who was in the sampling stage age range and was participating in an organized, recreational sport. Eleven parents participated in the study. Seven were female (four self-identified as Caucasian and three as African American) and four were male (each self-identified as Caucasian). Their ages varied, as four of them were between 30-34 years of age, three were between the ages of 35-39 and four were between the ages of 40-44. Four of the participants held master's degrees, two held bachelor's degrees, and three held associates degrees. One of the participants completed a technical program at a trade school and one participant held a high school diploma.

All of the participants in this sample were biological parents of their children. None of the participants were related to another participant and each of them had their own households and families. All of the male participants were married to their wives at the time interviews were conducted. Five of the female participants were married to their husbands. Two of the female

participants were single parents.

The household income levels varied among this group of participants. Five reported household incomes in excess of \$60,000 annually. Two reported annual household incomes ranging from \$50,000-\$55,000. Household incomes of \$40,000-\$45,000 and \$35,000-\$40,000 were reported by one participant for each group. Lastly, two participants reported annual household incomes of \$25,000-\$30,000.

Data Analysis

First, interviews were transcribed verbatim. After transcribing, the process of data analysis began. Analytic induction was the approach that was utilized in this study in order to analyze interview data. The process of analytic induction is employed when some specific problem, question, or issue becomes the focus of research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). A focus of this research was to learn if the gender of the child influenced parents' perceptions of value in association with their child's participation, outcome expectations, and provisions of support.

An important component of qualitative inquiry includes establishing trustworthiness. This process entails utilizing various procedures in order to convince the reader that measures were taken to ensure the material s/he is reading is consistent with what the participants actually said and experienced (Patton, 1990). Trustworthiness was accomplished through the process of member checking. This process allows participants to confirm their statements were reported accurately (Glesne, 2006). Each participant was provided with a copy of the transcript and manuscript. Participants were requested to analyze the documents in order to ensure their statements were reported accurately. Eight of the participants responded to a request for feedback and indicated their statements in the transcript and manuscript were recorded accurately. The remaining participants did not respond to several requests for feedback.

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate parents' perceptions of value and outcome expectations in connection with their child's recreational sport participation and to investigate whether or not the child's gender influenced their perceptions of value and outcome expectations. The themes shared in this section reflect this purpose as they focus upon parents' perceptions of value and outcome expectations and the influence of their child's gender upon those perceptions and expectations.

Value Toward Participation

Eccles' (1984) expectancy-value model posits that parental behaviors are influenced by subjective perceptions of value associated with their children's engagement in an activity. Favorable behaviors would be more likely if an activity was perceived as valuable. Several of the participants initiated their children's involvement in recreational sport activities because they valued the positive effects an active lifestyle could have upon their children's health. Paul had four children who were active in various recreational sport activities. He perceived value in association with their participation for that very reason. He said, "I want them to develop the habits of valuing activity and realize it is healthy and necessary to stay active and I want them to be concerned about their fitness and health." Several other participants also indicated they valued their children's participation in this domain because of the benefits that could be obtained from living a physically active lifestyle.

In addition to obtaining health-related benefits, participants also perceived value in their children's involvement because they believed participation would help their children learn skills and abilities that would prepare them for various challenges they might encounter later on in life. For example, Theresa valued her daughter's participation in basketball because she believed her daughter would need to have a

competitive spirit in order to be successful throughout her life. She stated,

It's important to me that she has a lot of physical activity and that she has to play something competitive, whether it's basketball or not. I think the competitive aspect is not just about sports but for jobs and life. Competitiveness and self-confidence go together. I don't see how you could have a lot of self-confidence if you're not competitive.

Since participants valued their children's participation, they made their best efforts to enable it through their provisions of financial, logistical, and emotional support. They paid participation fees, provided transportation, and provided positive feedback after a performance. Instructional support was also offered. Kevin's statement was typical of the instructional and emotional support participants provided for their children. He said,

I feel it's my duty to encourage them but also instruct them and help them get better. On the way to the game, I'm talking to them about their weaknesses like not paying attention, making sure they keep their eye on the ball. I'm talking to them about what they can do better next time and encouraging them to give them a confidence boost.

An aim of this study was to learn if a child's gender would influence parents' assessments of value in relation to their children's activities in this domain. It is sometimes perceived that participation holds more value for male as opposed to female children (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). Differences in value associated with participation on the basis of the child's gender emerged in Jason's comments. He had two sons and one daughter participating in recreational sport activities at the time of the interview. He valued

participation for his boys because he believed being competitive could be useful to them throughout their lives. He said, "My vision is that they have a competitive edge. I think boys need to be competitive."

The value Jason associated with his sons' and daughter's participation differed. His daughter was eleven years old and active in softball. He and his wife had been supportive of their daughter's efforts; however, he indicated that they would not value their daughter's participation to the extent they would value their sons' participation in the future and did not expect participation to be a significant part of her life moving forward. He stated:

Neither my wife nor myself support women's athletics later in the years. We envision a lady coming out of her (their daughter) so it doesn't match the model you see on TV. I want her to be a good lady first.

In summation, participants valued their children's participation in recreational sport activities because they believed many beneficial outcomes could result. Benefits to their children's physical health were frequently identified. Learning life lessons and acquiring an understanding of competition were identified as well. Because participants perceived value in association with participation, they provided financial, logistical, emotional, and instructional support. One notable exception to these results emerged in Jason's comments. He and his wife did not hold much value in association with their daughter's participation as she grows older.

Outcome Expectations

Participants often held similar expectations with regard to their children's participation outcomes, regardless of the child's gender. Participants' expectations were that their children would be able to perform with competence. Most of the participants did not expect their children to obtain external rewards such as

scholarships as a result of their competency in sport. Instead, they expected their children's participation to decrease as other life interests and responsibilities entered into their lives. The main expectation parents possessed with regard to their children's participation was acquiring the benefits of living a physically active lifestyle. Paul's statement paralleled the statements of the other participants with regard to the outcome expectations they held for their children. Paul said, "I never had visions of them being the star player or getting the scholarship. It was more of wanting them to be involved in something and wanting them to be active and out there doing stuff."

Gender differentiated expectations existed with one participant in particular. Kathy was one participant who held different outcome expectations for her son and daughter. At the time of the interview, she had a nine year-old daughter who was active in basketball and soccer and a seven year-old son who was active in football, basketball, and baseball. She anticipated both her children would continue to participate through adolescence and into early adulthood but indicated her son's current recreational sport involvement served as the starting point that could lead into opportunities at the intercollegiate and possibly professional levels of competition. She said,

I'll never say she'll never make it to pro. I don't expect her to.

My son, I expect him to play at least college ball. I expect through college and who knows after that. I expect something else after college.

In summation, participants' outcome expectations with regard to their children's recreational sport involvement typically did not include obtaining external rewards. They anticipated their children's experiences would "play themselves out" as their children would eventually become immersed in other ambitions. One participant, Kathy, held higher outcome expectations for her son as opposed to her daughter.

She anticipated that her son would be more likely to participate at a higher level of competition than her daughter.

Discussion

In this study, gender differentiated value assessments and outcome expectations emerged. For instance, Jason indicated that he and his wife did not anticipate valuing their daughter's participation as she grows older. In addition, Kathy held different expectations with regard to the outcomes associated with her son's versus her daughter's participation.

Why might parents hold different assessments of value in association with their children's participation and why might parents hold different outcome expectations based on the gender of their children? Social institutions such as the family could influence an individual's perspectives. Within this social institution, parents are sources of socialization that communicate value associated with participation into their children and can also communicate messages with regard to outcome expectations. They can play a role in determining which activities are appropriate or inappropriate for their child, based on the child's gender (Kremarik, 2000; MacPhail & Kirk, 2006). Consequently, gender role expectations could constrain children's involvement in certain activities because participation would violate perceptions of gender appropriate activity involvement. Parental perspectives with regard to gender appropriate activity involvement could influence their children not only during childhood but also as they proceed through adolescence and into adulthood (Brown, Frankel, & Fennell, 1989). Perceptions related to gender appropriate activity and outcome expectations that were part of the socialization process experienced by Jason and Kathy might explain why they held different expectations and valued participation for their male children to a greater extent than their female children.

Different assessments of value associated with his daughter's versus his sons' participation emerged in Jason's comments. Jason was supportive of his daughter's participation at the time of the interview but indicated he would not be supportive of her participation at a later time. In terms of provisions of support, Jason anticipated he and his wife would be less likely to outwardly encourage their daughter's participation as she grows older. The sentiments held by Jason and his wife illustrates disapproval of their daughter's future participation.

Social disapproval was discussed as an interpersonal constraint that could negatively impact one's opportunities to engage in various activities (Shaw & Henderson, 2005). This constraint results from gender ideologies, which consist of beliefs about masculinity and femininity, and influence perspectives of what is "natural" with regard to performing gender (Coakley, 2009). Messages Jason received as a child with regard to gender appropriate activity might explain why parents such as Jason might not support his daughter's participation as she grows older Jason indicated that he grew up in a household where participation was valued for he and his brother. His sister's participation, however, was not valued to the same extent. His parents valued his sister's proficiency in domestic activities to a greater extent.

Although his parents supported his participation in various activities, he indicated support was provided because he engaged in activities his parents perceived as appropriate. Jason participated in basketball and baseball and indicated that any attempt to participate in activities not perceived as masculine would not have been accepted. He said, "I could see some resistance if I went into something like that (e.g., cheerleading). There was a fine line with gender roles." If he wanted to engage in activities his parents did not view as gender appropriate, he indicated it was unlikely finan-

cial or logistical support would have been provided.

The different expectations and levels of value Kathy connected to her son's and daughter's participation endeavors could have been affected by the value assessments and expectations her father held toward her and her brother. Kathy stated,

My brother is five years younger than I am and he was a powerhouse. He played baseball and basketball. He was a very good athlete all-around. As far as my experiences were concerned, my father thought I was more academically inclined than athletically inclined and my brother was athletically inclined. He was always thinking I was more inclined to be academically challenged. He wanted me to be more involved academically.

Kathy's father perceived that she would be more successful in academic endeavors. Her father held higher outcome expectations for her brother in sport. His lower expectations with regard to Kathy's sport participation outcomes served as an interpersonal constraint to Kathy's experience. Her father went to greater lengths to support her brother's involvement, even permitting her brother to transfer high schools so that he could participate on the school's successful baseball team. On the other hand, Kathy was not provided with the accommodations made to her brother.

Unless children receive positive support from their parents, it is unlikely that participation in this domain will become a significant part of their lives (Greendorfer, 1992; Kimmel, 2004; Coakley, 2009). Kathy's experience illustrates how a parent's gender differentiated expectations and provisions of support could affect a child's experience. Perhaps the fact that her father held higher expectations for her brother's sport participation was responsible

for shaping Kathy's outcome expectations for her children.

Summary, Implications, and Future Recommendations

Parents have the potential to shape their children's participation experiences. The amount of value they attach to their children's endeavors and the expectations they hold in relation to their children's participation outcomes are factors that could shape their children's experiences. These factors could also influence the level of support they provide their children's sport-related endeavors. Parents can serve to either enable or constrain their children's experiences in this domain. If parents disapprove of or do not hold positive value assessments and outcome expectations with regard to their children's sport-related participation, they can serve as a constraint upon their children's experiences.

In this study, participants perceived value in their children's experiences because participation led toward the development of healthy habits and was useful in preparing their children for life's challenges. The participants generally valued participation, held similar outcome expectations, and provided similar levels of support, regardless of the child's gender. On the other hand, there were instances where participants valued their sons' involvement more than their daughters' and held higher expectations with regard to their sons' participation outcomes.

Because parents are such a critical component of the youth sport experience, it is useful to learn more about the factors that shape their perspectives. It is well known that participation in sport activities provides children with many benefits. Several physiological benefits such as weight maintenance and improved cardiovascular health could be gained. In addition, enhancement of self-image and increased confidence could result (Coakley, 2009; Sage &

Eitzen, 2012) Consequently, it is important to continue to gain knowledge as to how parents' perspectives shape their children's experiences because children have much to lose if their gatekeepers do not attach value to or provide support for their participation endeavors.

Value assessments, outcome expectations, levels of support, and perceptions of social appropriateness connected to children's sport activities could vary from parent to parent. Therefore, it is suggested that additional research focusing on factors that influence parental perspectives and actions related to their children's participation is conducted. Finally, anticipated assessments of value and anticipated outcome expectations emerged from participants' statements in this study. In order to confirm whether or not parents' anticipated assessments of value come to fruition or if their outcome expectations remain the same or change in some way, a suggestion would be to conduct longitudinal studies with families. Not only could insight be gained with regard to perspectives parents hold over the duration of their children's youth and adolescence, but it would also be helpful in learning why those perspectives might change as the child ages.

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