

Extracurricular Activity Participation in Canadian Youth

What They Do and the Benefits They Experience

- ## Researchers
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- ## Purposes of this Research
1. What types of activities are they engaged in?
 2. How is this related to positive youth development?
 1. What is the nature of their personal experiences within these activities?

- ## Research Context
- Positive youth development stresses the importance of activity engagement to develop the skills needed to contribute to the community.
 - Emphasis on **structured activities** (both in and outside of school time)
 - Activities that are regularly scheduled, rule-based, typically adults in charge
 - Both **Sport** and **"non-Sport"**

- ## 3 Phases
- Phase 1: N=1827 (54% F; Grades 5-12)
 - Phase 2: N= 502
 - Phase 3: N= 123

- ## Phase 1
- What are they doing?
 - What activity are they 'most engaged' in?

Activities

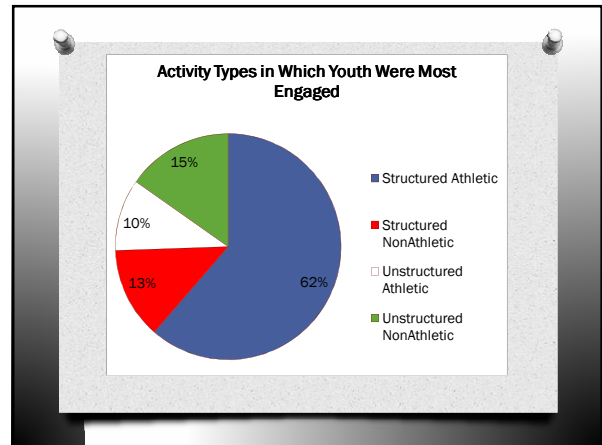
- o **What are they doing?**
- o **Most frequent (Hours per day):** Unstructured activities, e.g., Spending time with friends, Watching TV, Listening to music
- o **Organized Sports:** 87% are involved in at least 1 sport, 76% are involved in at least 2
- o 69% play at least one **competitive** sport

Activities

- o **What are they doing?**
- o 66% involved in at least one non-sport organized activity
- o 8% NOT involved in any structured activities
- o 48% involved in both sport and non sport, structured activities

Youth Engagement

- o "The meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of him or herself. "
- o Centres of Excellence for Children's Well Being



Phase 2

- o Most engaged activity
- o How is this related to positive youth development?
- o Possible Mediating Variables

Phase 2

- o 50% of participants named the same activity as 'most engaging' at both times
- o Sports participation was most stable (62%); least stable were unstructured activities (11%)

Phase 2

- Structured sports activities had most positive impact
- Role of Engagement as a mediator

Engagement

- What predicts engagement?
 - Sport activity (vs Non Sport activity)
 - Stability of activity
 - Parental Support
 - Peer Support (particularly for boys)

Conclusions

- Important role that structured activities play in youth development
- Particularly structured sports activities
- Role of Engagement ; Importance of Parent and Peer relationships

Future Directions

- Continue analysis of interviews
- What is it about sport activities that lead to greater engagement, and more positive outcomes?
- Individual differences and other contextual variables

Implications for Policy

- How can we increase Engagement in sports activities?
- Importance of adult support (parents and coaches) as well as peer support
- School vs community based experiences
- Accessibility for youth from low SES neighbourhoods