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THE EFFECT OF THE STAR SPORTSMANSHIP EDUCATION MODULE ON PARENTS' SELF-PERCEIVED SPORTSMANSHIP BEHAVIORS IN YOUTH SPORT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how the STAR Sportsmanship education module affected parent behavior attached to their experience of their child's sporting endeavors. The Parent Experiences in Youth Sport (PEYS) was utilized to collect data on 95 parents' self-perceived behavior in youth sport. The PEYS consisted of an 18-item survey focused on how each participant rated their behavior as he/she experienced their child's participation in some type of youth sport activity. Psychometric testing (e.g. content validity, known-group validity, test-retest reliability, and internal consistency) was conducted on the PEYS to provide validity and reliability evidence. The results indicated that 1) the PEYS is a reliable and valid survey for the assessment of parent sportsmanship behavior in youth sport and 2) the STAR Sportsmanship education module was an effective tool in teaching sportsmanship concepts to parents.

Keywords: STAR Sportsmanship Education Module, Sportsmanship, Youth Sports, Parent Experiences in Youth Sport, self-perceived sportsmanship behavior

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Introduction

Unruly parent behavior and violent confrontations at youth sporting events have become increasingly frequent (*Learning Through Sports*, 2007). Consequently, these behaviors have damaged parents' relationships with coaches, officials, spectators, other parents and even their own children (Singh, 2006). Parental violence and parental sports rage (Clifton, 2003; Fiore, 2003; Heinzmann, 2002) paint a portrait of the youth sport environment as one lacking in moral and ethical conduct. Examples of parental violence at youth sporting events include the following:

- 2005: An angry father came out of the stands onto the field at an elementary football game in Washington, Indiana. The referee instructed him to return to the stands, but when the referee turned around to walk away, the parent reportedly pushed him to the ground. As a result the parent was charged with battery (Topp, 2005).
- 2004: Four parents involved in an argument with the coach at a youth football game in Lower Burrell, Pennsylvania were cited for disorderly conduct after supposedly fighting during the game. The four parents were charged with a summary count of disorderly conduct (Hayes, 2004).



- 2003: The parent of a basketball player in Iowa, upset about a call, assaulted a referee, who was getting ready to shower after the game (Topp, 2005).
- 2002: Two parents engaged in a fist fight at a rugby tournament after consuming alcohol (Singh, 2006).
- 2001: A parent in Pennsylvania was criminally charged for biting a coach and shoving the official after his seven year-old son lost a pee wee wrestling match (Topp, 2005).
- 1997: Twenty-six police units responded to a riot among parents fighting at a youth football game. The incident occurred after a parent hit the referee, who marked the ball out of bounds (Topp, 2005).
- 1996: A dentist in Albuquerque, New Mexico sharpened the face guard of his son's football helmet so he could slash opposing players. Five players and a referee were hurt, and the father was sentenced to two days in jail and community service (cited in Dahlberg, 2001; Palmquist, 2003).
- 1975: A mob of adults in Kissimmee, Florida attacked four coaches of a winning team of 12-year-olds with clubs and pipes, sending one coach to the hospital (Underwood, 1975). This particular example was documented as one of the first reported incidents of violence in youth sport.

Dahlberg (2007) stated, “Bad calls can lead to attacks and near riots. Sometimes, though, parents become dangerous by using misguided logic to try to help their children” (p. 1). Children are an extension of their parents; thus, they tend to see their child’s faults and successes as their own. Unfortunately, in some situations, parents get so involved in the it’s about me attitude that they lose sight of what is really important (Sanders, 2005) to the child – to have fun (*Learning Through Sports*, 2007).

In the August 2001 edition of *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, 3,000 youth were surveyed about their perspective on parental violence in sports. The survey showed that 74% of the respondents said they witnessed out-of-control adults at their games, and the two most common behaviors observed were those of parents yelling at children and parents yelling at officials or coaches (Bach, 2006). Continual exposure to such conduct reinforces to the youth athlete that aggression is the best way to resolve conflict.

If parents are the critical factor in shaping both the meaning of sport and the role that sport plays in their child’s life, then educators and youth sport administrators must create a system that addresses both the youth leagues’ expected values and subsequent behaviors surrounding the production and consumption of sport. Essentially, educators and youth sport administrators must facilitate sportsmanship education for youth athletes and their parents. Sportsmanship education would articulate what sportsmanship is and why sportsmanship is needed in youth sport.

Sportsmanship is taught through educational resources and programs implemented by sporting agencies, schools, community sport and recreational programs. Currently, there are several programs that attempt to deliver sportsmanship education to parents; two of the most widely used include the Parents Association for Youth Sport (PAYS) and the American Sport Education Program (ASEP). The National Association for Youth Sport (NAYS) created PAYS, an educational program that offers a simple, effective way to make parents aware of



their roles and responsibilities as they experience their child's sport. This program offers traditional educational material such as a handbook, a parent card and a subscription for *SportingKid Magazine*.

The American Sport Education Program (2008) has educated more than one million coaches, officials, sport administrators, and parents. The ASEP model provides traditional learning resources such as video tapes, workbooks, and CD-ROMs. In addition to the traditional learning resources, ASEP also provides online sportsmanship courses available for purchase and download to a person's personal computer. Online courses have increasingly become the chosen method of learning, especially for those whose lifestyles do not permit sitting in an actual classroom. Online courses give end-users the flexibility to learn subject matter at their own pace not being restricted to time and space. These end-users are often less intimidated learning material online than in a traditional classroom.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how the STAR Sportsmanship education module affected parent behavior attached to their experience of their child's sporting endeavors. The STAR module educates parents on sportsmanship concepts in the context of youth sport. This module seeks to facilitate the immediate application of information presented by its users. This particular teaching tool provides multi-media that illustrate key principles, contiguity, modality, redundancy, coherence, and personalization to get the point across to parents without condemnation. Without question, as time and energy costs continue to be depleted, for parents this educational tool could serve as the most efficient and effective way to articulate those values and behaviors that better define the meaning and purpose of sport for both parents and children.

Hypothesis

Parents will report a higher sportsmanship behavior score following the use of the STAR Sportsmanship education module for parents.

Significance of Study

Sportsmanship is a behavioral concept worthy of exploration because of the seemingly disconnect between the understanding of it and its practice in youth sport. Most people identify sportsmanship with the mindset of "I know it when I see it" (Vandenabeele, 2004, p 1). With the disruptive, sometimes dangerous behavior and shameful violence that has become so commonplace (Vandenabeele) in sport, the question that remains--do people really know what sportsmanship is and why sportsmanship is important?

A challenge expressed in the literature regarding research on sportsmanship is the absence of a clear-cut definition of sportsmanship (Brafford, 1998; Vallerand, Deshaies, Cuerrier, Briere, & Pelletier, 1996). Researchers and authors (The Josephson Institute for Ethics, 2008; Keating, 1978; Miscisco, 1976; Feezell, 1986; Shea, 1978; Stoll & Beller, 1993) have developed definitions to illustrate sportsmanship. Definitions suggested by Vallerand et al. (1996) include ideas related to general attitudes toward sport, ethical norms within athletic contexts, positive social interaction related to game play, and moral reasoning in light of constraints related to success. However, for the purpose of this study, sportsmanship is defined as showing respect to others in everything one says and does (*Learning Through Sports*, 2007).



Past studies examined youth athletes and their sportsmanship behavior as it related to team members, coaches, and officials. However, there is a lack of quantifiable research regarding parents and sportsmanship. This study will enable all who participate in youth sport to better understand parents and their knowledge or lack thereof of sportsmanship values and behavior in this setting. Products like *Learning Through Sports* STAR Sportsmanship education module for parents will force parents to turn the camera on themselves, take a snapshot of exactly what they value, and how their subsequent behaviors may manifest while experiencing their child participation in sport.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine how the STAR Sportsmanship education module affected parents' behavior as it related to their child's sporting endeavors. The only requirement for a person to be a participant in this study was to have at least one child, 18 years and under, whom participated in some type of sport activity. Participants were identified through the researcher's personal and professional contacts across Middle Tennessee.

Participants were asked to complete a survey indicating their experience in their child's sport participation as well as complete the STAR Sportsmanship education module for parents. The following paragraphs presents the research methodology utilized during the investigation detailing the description of participants, data collection procedures, instrumentation, psychometric testing, and data analysis strategy.

Participants

Participants selected for this study consisted of 95 male and female parents of children who participated in some type of youth sport activity in the Middle Tennessee area. Participants were selected for participation by virtue of their having at least one child involved in a sport during the time of data collection. Participants were contacted by e-mail explaining the research and asking for their participation in the study. Participants who agreed to participate in the study were directed to the website via a link included in the email to complete the online survey and sportsmanship module.

Procedures

Approval for the proposed research was obtained through proper Institutional Review Board processes to administer both the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport survey created by the Center for Sport Policy and Research (2008) and the STAR Sportsmanship education module. Potential participants were sent an email that included a web-link to the PEYS survey. Informed consent was provided to each participant on the website's homepage. The informed consent stated the purpose, voluntary nature, and confidentiality of the study as well as clear instructions for completing the PEYS. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and any information obtained kept confidential. Participation in completing the instrument signified a participant's consent in the study; however, the participant had the opportunity to decline participation at any time during the study.

After the participant read the informed consent, the participant then proceeded through the instrument in following order: 1) Parent Experiences in Youth Sport (PEYS) survey (pretest), 2) the STAR Sportsmanship education module, and 3) Parent Experiences in Youth Sport (posttest). Upon completion of the post-survey, participants answered demographic



questions. The entire process took participants approximately 25 minutes to complete. Participants were also asked at the conclusion of the study if they wanted to be included in a drawing for three gift cards. Participants provided their email address to signify their inclusion in the drawing. These gift cards were offered for participants taking time out of their schedule to participate in the study.

Data was collected via Key Survey (www.keysurvey.com), an online survey software company, for research purposes only. Key Survey provides intelligent survey technology that helps the end-user to automate the online data process and ensures complete accuracy. This company also enables the end-user to create, manage, deploy, and dynamically manipulate surveys. Security functions provided by Key Survey keeps the researchers results confidential and accessible to those who have need of access to data. This company is designed to collect and store responses as well as provide immediate data analysis. The data in this study was stored on a secured server provided by Key Survey where only the researcher and researcher's advisor had access via username and password. Only data from the PEYS was included in this study.

Instrumentation

Participants were asked to complete the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport (PEYS) online survey and the *Learning Through Sports* STAR Sportsmanship parent module. The PEYS was an assessment and evaluation instrument designed for this study to measure parent self-perceived sportsmanship behaviors in the youth sport setting before and following the STAR Sportsmanship parent module. The PEYS, developed by the Center for Sport Policy and Research (2008), is based on past literature and similar instruments that measured sportsmanship behaviors in other groups (i.e. athletes, coaches, and officials).

The PEYS instrument was administered pre and post STAR Sportsmanship education module for parents. The response categories for the scale parts were labeled on a 5-point Likert-type scale as 5 = always, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, and 1 = never. A higher average score by the respondent from pretest to posttest indicated the respondent's strong sportsmanship behavior. Questions 9, 11, 16, 17, and 24 were reversely scored (e.g. 1 = 5; 2 = 4; and 3 = 3) prior to data analysis.

A demographic section, found at the conclusion of the instrument, was composed of one dichotomous, four Likert-types, one short answer, and five choose all that apply items. Questions required responses for participant's age, gender, education level, income level, number, age, and gender of children participating in sport, and in what sport the child participated.

Psychometrics Evidence for the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport

A priority in this research was to develop an instrument that would accurately measure the construct of parent sportsmanship behaviors. Validity and reliability issues were addressed during the conceptualization, design, implementation and analysis of the PEYS.

Evidence based on test content. To establish content validity, two content experts examined each test item. Items were critically reviewed against prior sportsmanship literature, including studies and articles (e.g. King, 1992; Barber, Sukhi, and White, 1999; Taylor, 2002) on sportsmanship reflected issues with parents behavior and how those behaviors influence their children. Therefore, the PEYS determined to adequately represent the content



area of sportsmanship in the context of youth sport. The 18-item test was also determined to be a uni-dimensional representation of sportsmanship.

Evidence based on relations to other variables. Known-group validity determines whether or not the instrument has the capacity to distinguish different levels of knowledge (Chung, 2003). Known-group validity was conducted using a One-way ANOVA on the variable gender. The variable gender was selected based on literature denoting the differences in men and women in relation to sport. The expectation is that one group should possess more knowledge of sportsmanship behavior thus score higher on the test than the other group.

Test-retest reliability evidence. Test-retest reliability evidence provided the stability of the PEYS measure. Reliability was estimated by administering the PEYS to a sample of 35 participants. The respondents were tested twice within a period of one hour. The expectation was that scores would be the same when the PEYS was administered to the sample on two different occasions. The correlation coefficient between pretest and posttest sportsmanship behavior scores was a reasonable measure of the test-retest reliability for this study. The paired *t* test procedure was used to analyze test-retest reliability. The correlation coefficient was examined and noted that a coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as satisfactory or good.

Internal consistency evidence. The reliability of the PEYS was also conducted using internal consistency. The PEYS was estimated on how well the items reflected the same construct thus yielding of similar results. Internal consistency showed how consistent the results were for the 18-item PEYS construct. Cronbach's alpha was conducted for the overall PEYS.

Data Analysis

Participant's responses from the survey were retrieved from Key Survey. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0. A descriptive analysis was performed to evaluate the frequencies of questions relating to the participants demographic items. Validity analysis was performed using a One-Way ANOVA and reliability analysis was performed using a *t* test. The research question was addressed using *t* test to examine parents' sportsmanship behavior in pre and post data.

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine how the STAR Sportsmanship education module affected parent behavior attached to their experience of their child's sporting endeavors. It explored possible reason why parents may not conceptualize sportsmanship.

Relation result for the variable gender. In addition to providing content validity for the PEYS, it was determined that known-group evidence would assist in strengthening the validity of the PEYS. With the known-groups validation design, data was collected for each participant's gender to find whether the measure showed the expected difference. A One-way ANOVA was conducted on the pretest data. The One-way ANOVA was significant for the respondent's gender on the pretest score $F(1, 90) = 8.275, p = .05$.

Test-retest reliability result. To obtain test-retest reliability data, 35 additional parents completed the PEYS. Test-retest reliability of the PEYS was $t(34) = 0.937, p = 0.356$. The test-retest correlation was high (0.81).

Internal consistency result. To further strengthen the PEYS measure, reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to insure internal consistency of the overall



PEYS instrument. An alpha coefficient of 0.70 was used as the minimum level of acceptance (Nunnally, 1978). The uni-dimensional test result obtained for internal consistency was a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70.

Parent Experiences in Youth Sport Descriptive Summary

Women made up over 68% of the sample and males made up 31% of the sample. A total of 95 participants were in this study; however, three participants did not provide gender data, one participant did not provide data for their relationship with the youth athlete or their age, and four participants did not provide their education level or annual income. Of the remaining responses, over 95% reported being a parent. Over 70% of the population was between 45 and 54 years of age. No participant reported being 24 and under or 54 and older. Almost 70% of the participants reported having obtained a bachelor's degree or more advanced degree. Participants who reported an annual household income level of \$75,000 or more accounted for more than 67% of the population (see Table 1).

Children Sports Participation

One parent did not indicate how many of his/her children participated in sport. Among the parents and legal guardians who responded to the survey, over 85% reported having at least two children participating in some type of sport (Table 2). Parents reported that 38.64% of the children were girls and 63.92% of the children were boys. Parents reported that 15.82% were between four and six years of age ($n = 25$), 59.49% were between seven and twelve years of age ($n = 94$), and 24.68% were between the ages of thirteen and fifteen years of age ($n = 39$). No child was reported to be younger than four years of age or older than fifteen years of age.

T test Results for the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport

The research question for this study was what effect does the STAR sportsmanship education module have on a parent's sportsmanship behavior in experiencing their child's sport? The hypothesis was parents will report a higher sportsmanship behavior score following the use of the STAR Sportsmanship online course module for parents.

An independent t test was used to determine whether there was a difference in parent behavior scores between the parent's pretest score and posttest score. Parent behavior scores from the posttest ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.313$) were significantly higher than their behavior scores from the pretest ($M = 3.94$; $SD = 0.267$), $t(94) = 3.84$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed), $d = 0.344$.



Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Female	63	68.50
Male	29	31.50
Relationship to youth athlete		
Parent	91	96.80
Legal Guardian	3	3.20
Age range		
25-34	18	19.10
35-44	7	7.4
45-54	69	73.40
Highest level of education completed		
High School	16	17.00
Associate's	13	13.80
Bachelor's	39	41.50
Master's	18	19.10
Doctorate or other terminal degree	8	8.50
Income		
Up to \$39,000	7	7.80
\$40,000 to \$74,999	22	24.40
\$75,000 to \$99,999	22	24.40
\$100,000 or above	39	43.30

Table 2
Parent Report of Children Sport Participants

Characteristics	n*	%
1 Child	35	37.23
2 Children	45	47.87
3 Children	9	9.57
4 Children	4	4.25
5 or more Children	1	1.06

*N = 94, *number of parents*



Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how the STAR Sportsmanship module affected parent behavior as they related to their child's sporting endeavors. This study utilized parents who provided feedback on the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport (PEYS) survey regarding their behavior and experience as they were engaged in their child's sport. The 18-item survey was developed specifically for this study because of the lack of assessment tools that could accurately measure parent sportsmanship behavior. The development of the PEYS provides future researchers a tool to measure parent behavior in the context of youth sport. Because the test can be administered online, researchers can acquire parental behavior feedback in a timely manner from anywhere in the world.

Participants were 95 parents and legal guardians from various socioeconomic backgrounds who had at least one child participating in some sport activity at the time the study was conducted. Each participant completed the PEYS survey and provided demographic information related to the participant's gender, relationship to the youth athlete, age, education, income, number of children in youth sport, age, and gender. This chapter discusses the significance of the study's findings.

The present data demonstrated that the PEYS is a valid, reliable, and internally consistent test to measure parental sportsmanship behaviors. The PEYS was a self-report. The test was created specifically for this study. According to Kuh, et al. (2001), self-reports are likely to be valid if they meet five general conditions: 1) the information requested is known to the respondents; 2) the questions are phrased clearly and unambiguously; 3) the questions refer to recent activities; 4) the respondents think the questions merit a serious and thoughtful response; and 5) answering the questions does not threaten, embarrass, or violate the privacy of the respondent or encourage the respondent to respond in socially desirable ways (p. 9).

The participants in this study responded to all items in the survey, however, some participants did not provide responses to the demographic questions. No participant was excluded from the study based on every item having a response. Being that the PEYS relied on self-reported information, two general concerns came forth: 1) the inability of respondents to provide accurate answers and 2) the unwillingness of respondents to provide truthful information (Kuh, et. al. 2001). Those who did not respond to the demographic questions were part of the analysis; however, their lack of response to the demographic questions was analyzed with those who did provide a response.

Known-group validity was significant for the variable gender. The significance suggests that the scores differed for men and women. In this case, the men scored higher than the women in pretest data. Sports have been traditionally geared towards men. The realm of athletics has held on to the mindset that women are not as intelligent or strong to handle the tough and very competitive nature of athletics. Men are more engrossed with sport than women are engrossed with sport, thus men know more of the expected behaviors, values, and rules of a particular sport. Men or fathers, in the context of involvement with their child's sport participation, tend to spend more time engaged in physical play (sport participation) with their children than women or mothers spend time in physical play with their children (Lamb & Oppenheim, 1989).

Limitation of the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport



A limitation of the instrument is that it has, prior to the proposed study, not been used in parent behavior research. Versions of parent behavior questionnaires (Michaels, 1977; Ortiz, 1999) and checklists have been used in scholarly research. However, three studies have incorporated parent sportsmanship behavior (Ortega-Samper, 1984; Kidman, McKenzie, & McKenzie, 1999; Davis, 2005), but the inventory has not been measured in the proposed field.

Conclusion

Hypothesis: Parents will report a higher sportsmanship behavior score following the use of the STAR Sportsmanship online course module for parents.

Analysis of the *t* test found a significant difference in the parent's sportsmanship behavior score from pretest to posttest. This significance confirmed that the module is an effective learning tool for parents to learn sportsmanship concepts. Studies (Wantland, Portillo, Holzemer, Slaughter, & McGhee, 2004; Kerfoot, Conlin, Trivison & McMahon, 2007;) that have examined the effect of web-based intervention on particular behavior confirm that people learn subject matter better than using the traditional means of learning.

Implications of the Study

This study can be used as additional knowledge for future researchers in hoping to implement effective sportsmanship education and training for parents in youth sport. One important area to study would be the continued impact of the STAR Sportsmanship education module on parents around the country. Strategies for implementing sportsmanship should include defining and emphasizing sportsmanship, stressing participation rather than results, teaching values as part of the program, and educating and involving parents (Vandenbeebe, 2004). Sportsmanship among those involved in sport at all levels could be enhanced by leagues, teams, and sport personnel by inclusion of the following suggestion:

Leagues and teams should create community of good sportsmanship where they play. The sporting outlets in which they compete should utilize banners about the league's and team's commitment to sportsmanship at any and all sporting events. This should assist to strengthen personal commitment to good sportsmanship (Wells, Ruddell, & Paisley, 2006).

Sportsmanship education programs can influence the behaviors of their parents by including the STAR Sportsmanship education module to their curriculum. Parents significantly influence their child's perception of sportsmanship and have seemingly lost sight of what youth sports were originally intended to do. Gone are the days when children would gather and play a game just for pleasure. Now fun has been replaced with a win-at-all-cost, skill development, and championship attitude perpetuated by the parent. This mindset, in effect, creates a climate for unsportsmanlike behavior that is recognized by sport administrators as a problem.

There is a lack of studies where parents self-report their own behaviors and attitudes. Sportsmanship can be taught, learned and even required, but without careful examination of the athletic environment and why parents behave the way they do, the desired behaviors will not be perpetuated or valued by those for whom the sport activity was created for in the first place – the child.



Recommendations for Future Studies

For future research, the following recommendations can be made based on the results of this study. First, expand the demographics to include parent's ethnicity and nationality. Second, examine parent's sportsmanship behaviors at different levels of their child's youth sport participation. It would be interesting to note how parents adjust their behavior as their child grows and moves from one age group to the next age group when participating in sport. Third, utilize the STAR Sportsmanship education module in research to collect continuous time data of parents for specific sport behaviors. An individual's behavior can change dependent upon the revelation one receives regarding a particular subject matter. The results of this research would provide information as to whether or not the parent's behavior changed as well as whether or not the behavior is sustained.

This study did not focus on participants' socioeconomic backgrounds; however, studies that examine the socioeconomic backgrounds of parents could provide youth sport administrators with insight on possible factors that motivate parental behavior. Another idea would be to examine parents who are professional athletes and how they engage in their child's sport. Athletes are competitive and research could possibly benefit from observing what type of sportsmanship messages these parents send to their own children. Researchers could also observe parent sportsmanship behaviors based on the region of the United States in which they reside (i.e. North, South, Southeast, West, East, etc.). On a global level, researchers could examine parental sport behaviors in different countries. Countries around the world have their own cultural norms and it would be interesting to note the similarities and differences in parent behavior as their children participate in sport.

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THE EFFECT OF THE STAR SPORTSMANSHIP EDUCATION MODULE ON PARENTS' SELF-PERCEIVED SPORTSMANSHIP BEHAVIORS IN YOUTH SPORT



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MANAGEMENT WHITEPAPER

Research Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine how the STAR Sportsmanship education module affected parent behavior attached to their experience of their child's sporting endeavors.

Sportsmanship is a behavioral concept worth exploration because of the seemingly disconnect between the understanding of it and its practice in youth sport. Most people identify sportsmanship with the mindset of "I know it when I see it" (Vandenabeele, 2004, p 1). With the disruptive, sometimes dangerous behavior and shameful violence that has become so commonplace (Vandenabeele) in sport, the question that remains--do people really know what sportsmanship is and why sportsmanship is important?

This article would likely be useful to recreational programs that are looking to implement a parent education module into their leagues. Part of the parent education program would be to implement a sportsmanship module into the program. This article would also be useful for motor developmentalists who research and study moral and motor development in youth sports. The most important individual who would benefit from this article would be the parents. If a quality sportsmanship program could be implemented in youth sports; strategies could be developed for implementing sportsmanship, which include, defining and emphasizing sportsmanship, stressing participation rather than results, teaching values as part of the program, and educating and involving parents.

Issue

Unruly parent behavior and violent confrontations at youth sporting events have become increasingly frequent. Consequently, these behaviors have damaged parent's relationships with coaches, officials, spectators, other parents and even their own children. Parental violence and parental sports rage paint a portrait of the youth sport environment as one lacking in moral and ethical conduct.

Children are an extension of their parents; thus, they tend to see their child's faults and successes as their own. Unfortunately, in some situations, parents get so involved in the, it's about me attitude that they lose sight of what is really important to the child – to have fun.

In the August 2001 edition of *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, 3,000 youth were surveyed about their perspective on parental violence in sports. The survey showed that 74% of the respondents said they witnessed out-of-control adults at their games and the two most common behaviors observed were those of parents yelling at children and parents yelling at officials or coaches. Continual exposure to such conduct reinforces to the youth athlete that aggression is the best way to resolve conflict.

If parents are the critical factor in shaping both the meaning of sport and the role that sport plays in their child's life, then educators and youth sport administrators must create a system that addresses both the youth leagues' expected values and subsequent behaviors surrounding the production and consumption of sport. Essentially, educators and youth sport administrators must facilitate sportsmanship education for youth athletes and their parents. Sportsmanship education would articulate what sportsmanship is and why sportsmanship is needed in youth sport.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how the STAR Sportsmanship education module affected parent behavior attached to their experience of their child's sporting endeavors. The STAR module educates parents on sportsmanship concepts in the context of youth sport. This module seeks to facilitate the immediate application of information presented by its users. This particular teaching tool provides multi-media that illustrate key principles, contiguity, modality, redundancy, coherence, and personalization to get the point across to parents without condemnation. Without question, as time and energy costs continue to be depleted, for parents this educational tool could serve as the most efficient and effective way to articulate those values and behaviors that better define the meaning and purpose of sport for both parents and children.

Summary

Participants were asked to complete the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport (PEYS) online survey and the *Learning Through Sports* STAR Sportsmanship parent module. The PEYS was an assessment and evaluation instrument designed for this study to measure parent self-perceived sportsmanship behaviors in the youth sport setting before and following the STAR Sportsmanship parent module. The PEYS, developed by the Center for Sport Policy and Research (2008), is based on past literature and similar instruments that measured sportsmanship behaviors in other groups (i.e. athletes, coaches, and officials).

In addition to providing content validity for the PEYS, it was determined that known-group evidence would assist in strengthening the validity of the PEYS. With the known-groups validation design, data were collected for each participant's gender to find whether the measure showed the expected difference. A One-way ANOVA was conducted on the pretest data. The One-way ANOVA was significant for the respondent's gender on the pretest score $F(1, 90) = 8.275, p = .05$.

To obtain test-retest reliability data, 35 additional parents completed the PEYS. Test-retest reliability of the PEYS was $t(34) = 0.937, p = 0.356$. The test-retest correlation was high (0.81).

To further strengthen the PEYS measure, reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to insure internal consistency of the overall PEYS instrument. An alpha coefficient of 0.70 was used as the minimum level of acceptance. The uni-dimensional test result obtained for internal consistency was a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70.

An independent t test was used to determine whether there was a difference in parent behavior scores between the parent's pretest score and posttest score. Parent behavior scores from the posttest ($M = 4.04, SD = 0.313$) were significantly higher than their behavior scores from the pretest ($M = 3.94; SD = 0.267$), $t(94) = 3.84, p = .000$ (two-tailed), $d = 0.344$.

Analysis

This study utilized parents who provided feedback on the Parent Experiences in Youth Sport (PEYS) survey regarding their behavior and experience as they were engaged in their child's sport. The 18-item survey was developed specifically for this study because of the lack of assessment tools that could accurately measure parent sportsmanship behavior. The development of the PEYS provides future researchers a tool to measure parent behavior in the context of youth sport. Because the test can be administered online, researchers can acquire parental behavior feedback in a timely manner from anywhere in the world.

Participants were 95 parents and legal guardians from various socioeconomic backgrounds who had at least one child participating in some sport activity at the time the study was conducted. Each participant completed the PEYS survey and provided demographic information related to the participant's gender, relationship to the youth athlete, age, education, income, number of children in youth sport, age, and gender. The present data demonstrated that the PEYS was a valid, reliable, and internally consistent test to measure parental sportsmanship behaviors.

Known-group validity was significant for the variable gender. The significance suggests that the scores differed for men and women. In this case, the men scored higher than the women in pretest data. Sports have been traditionally geared towards men. The realm of athletics has held on to the mindset that women are not as intelligent or strong to handle the tough and very competitive nature of athletics. This is mostly due to the reassertion and legitimization of male power and privilege in sport as well as the socialization process that has defined distinct roles for men and women in society. Men are more engrossed with sport than women are engrossed with sport, thus men know more of the expected behaviors, values, and rules of a particular sport. Men or fathers, in the context of involvement with their child's sport participation, tend to spend more time engaged in physical play (sport participation) with their children than women or mothers spend time in physical play with their children. According to Wuerth, Lee, and Alfermann (2003), fathers tend to score higher than mothers in relation to directive behavior on surveys centered on parental behavior. This means father's give sport specific advice to their children (i.e. pointing out what their child did bad or telling the youngster how to improve) and push them to train harder and give their best.

Analysis of the *t* test found a significant difference in the parent's sportsmanship behavior score from pretest to posttest. This significance confirmed that the module is an effective learning tool for parents to learn sportsmanship concepts.

Discussion

For future research, the following recommendations can be made based on the results of this study. First, expand the demographics to include parent's ethnicity and nationality.

Second, examine parent's sportsmanship behaviors at different levels of their child's youth sport participation. It would be interesting to note how parents adjust their behavior as their child grows and moves from one age group to the next age group when participating in sport. Third, utilize the STAR Sportsmanship education module in research to collect continuous time data of parents for specific sport behaviors. An individual's behavior can change dependent upon the revelation one receives regarding a particular subject matter. The results of this research would provide information as to whether or not the parent's behavior changed as well as whether or not the behavior is sustained.

This study did not focus on participants socioeconomic backgrounds; however, studies that examine the socioeconomic backgrounds of parents could provide youth sport administrators with insight on possible factors that motivate parental behavior. Another idea would be to examine parents who are professional athletes and how they engage in their child's sport. Athletes are competitive and research could possibly benefit from observing what type of sportsmanship messages these parents send to their own children. Researchers could also observe parent sportsmanship behaviors based on the region of the United States in which they reside (i.e. North, South, Southeast, West, East, etc.). On a global level, researchers could examine parental sport behaviors in different countries. Countries around the world have their own cultural norms and it would be interesting to note the similarities and differences in parent behavior as their children participate in sport.

This study can be used as additional knowledge for future researchers in hoping to implement effective sportsmanship education and training for parents in youth sport. One important area to study would be the continued impact of the STAR Sportsmanship education module on parents around the country. Strategies for

implementing sportsmanship should include defining and emphasizing sportsmanship, stressing participation rather than results, teaching values as part of the program, and educating and involving parents.

Sportsmanship education programs can influence the behaviors of their parents by including the STAR Sportsmanship education module to their curriculum. Parents significantly influence their child's perception of sportsmanship and have seemingly lost sight of what youth sports were originally intended to do. Gone are the days when children would gather and play a game just for pleasure. Now fun has been replaced with a win-at-all-cost, skill development, and championship attitude perpetuated by the parent. This mindset, in effect, creates a climate for unsportsmanlike behavior that is recognized by sport administrators as a problem.

There is a lack of studies where parents self-report their own behaviors and attitudes. Sportsmanship can be taught, learned and even required, but without careful examination of the athletic environment and why parents behave the way they do, the desired behaviors will not be perpetuated or valued by those for whom the sport activity was created for in the first place – the child.