Youth Sport Outcome Variables Influence on Parent's Program Valuation

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Parents and youth have similar motivations for participating in youth sport (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001). Millions of youth in the US participate in some form of organized youth sport program annually (Smoll, Cumming, & Smith, 2011; Brinton, Hill, & Ward, 2017); understanding the variables that influence the parent’s valuation of participation in sport programs will help guide program coordinators in long term program operation and delivery. Youth sport coaches and parents play vital roles in keeping youth athletes engaged in sport and preventing the burnout of athletes (Horn, 2002). Parents provide extensive contributions to organized youth sport programs, including payment of services, transportation, and instructional assistance (Harwood & Knight, 2015; Knight, Berrow, & harwood, 2017; Vargas, Flores, Beyer, & Weaver, 2019). Many parents believe that youth participation in organized sports, helps prepare their children for adult life by training life skills (Green & Chaliph, 1998). Specifically, parents sign their children up for youth sport programs because of a desire to gain a new skill, to join a team environment, and to be physically active (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001; Schwab, Wells, & Arthur-Banning, 2010). Sports specialization has grown into younger generations in an effort for the children to receive an athletic scholarship to college (Hecimovich, 2004). With parents having the final say in whether or not to enroll their child in a specific program (Green, 1998), the specific motives for originally registering a child for a sport program provides valuable information in predicting parents valuation of a youth sport program. This analysis attempts to identify how specific outcome expectation variables influence overall parental program valuation.

Method

Upon receiving permission from IRB, parents that attended two youth sporting events (N= 1150) were approached prior to their child’s first game at the end-of-season tournament. The 336 participants (29.2%) completed a survey that contained questions relating to coaching behaviors, parental motivations in registering children in the program, an item evaluating how parents value the program, and demographic questions.

Analysis/Results

In order to evaluate the explained variance of parental program valuation, a multiple regression analysis was completed. The independent variables were the different motivations for registering a child in youth sports and the dependent variable was parent program valuation.

Results of the omnibus regression analysis proved to be statistically significant at α=.05, F (4, 334)= 62.213, p<.001, with a moderate effect of R2=.430 and an adjusted R2=.423, indicating slight shrinkage due to a theoretical correction for sampling error. All independent variables were significantly correlated, at p<.001 level, to the dependent variable. Analysis identified that parental motivations for wanting a child to be a part of a team and to be physically active explain the most variance of the predicted valuation variable.

Conclusion

This analysis explains how specific youth sport participation outcome expectation variables delivered through a youth sport programs influences overall valuation of the program. This research provides a strategy to evaluate parental motivations and the influence these motivations have on the valuation of different youth sport program styles.