Abstract

My research investigates the relationship between extracurricular participation and deviance. The two extracurricular activities are athletic participation and other organized school activities. Deviance is measured by grouping a variety of behaviors called major deviant acts and grouping a variety of behaviors called minor deviant acts. This research was taken from a sample of 2,375 students between ages of 11-17 from the 1976 Delbert Elliot National Youth Survey. There is no statistically significant relationship between major deviant activity and either of the two extracurricular activities. However, there is a negative relationship which approaches significance between the major deviant activity and organized school activities. There is a positive relationship between minor deviance and athletic membership. While males committed more acts, there is a stronger positive relationship among female participants in athletics.
Key words: deviance, sports participation, organized school activities

Past research examines how extracurricular participation effects deviance. This research is important because it can lead to changes in school policy that allow for a larger number of students to be involved in athletic and non-athletic extracurricular activities. It could limit deviance among adolescents. Some research (Landers and Landers, 1978; Agnew and Peterson, 1989) has established support for a negative relationship between non-athletic extracurricular participation and deviance and athletic participation and deviance. The majority of research on extracurricular activity and deviance focus on interscholastic sport. Therefore it is difficult to assess the relationship between organized school activities and deviance. My research separately examines the relationship between deviance and organized school activities and deviance and participation in sport.

Sample

Literature Review:

Landers and Landers (1978) found a relationship between athletic participation and deviance among males. This particular study looked at 521 boys from one high school. They gathered data from senior directories contained in high school yearbooks from 1959-1972. Landers and Landers separated their data into four different categories: athletic participation, service-leadership participation, both athletic and service-leadership participation, and no participation in either activity. Self-reports or court records were used to measured deviance. The researchers hypothesized that the number of deviant acts is based on athletic status. Results indicate that there is an association between deviance and extracurricular participation. Of the 87 deviant acts, 10 were felony convictions, all of which were found among boys who were non-participants in

athletics or service leadership activities. The males involved in both sport and service activities recorded even fewer deviant acts than males who were involved in only one of the two. Landers and Landers (1978) suggest other possible explanations as to why participation in extracurricular activities decreases deviance. The explanations include voluntary participation, less delinquent-prone individuals' attraction to organized activities, and perceived peer status.

Jeanne Jenkins (1996) also researched extracurricular activities, however she examine their effects on gateway and hard drug use. Her research is based on 2,229 randomly selected students in eight, tenth, and twelfth grades from seventeen different school districts in Northeastern Ohio. All students selected completed a 163-item questionnaire assessing drug use. Jenkins found that across all age levels there was a positive correlation between participation of extracurricular activities and gateway drug use. However, when she examined the relationship between hard drug use and extracurricular involvement, the relationship was not significant. It is important to note that the correlation between extracurricular participation and gateway drug use was much smaller then the correlation between gateway drug use and gateway drug using friends.

Jenkins studied one deviant activity, but other studies have examined deviance as a whole. Agnew and Peterson (1989) used their research to examine how different leisure activities effected deviance. The study took place in 1974 using a sample of 600 white high school students in suburban DeKalb County, Georgia. Agnew and Peterson examined a variety of leisure activities. However, my primary focus is data on organized activities, sports-competitive activities, and non-competitive sports. Deviant acts ranged from anything as minor as stealing inexpensive items, to anything as serious as assault.

Sample

Agnew and Peterson found a negative relationship between both students involved in organized activities and deviant activity and non-competitive sports and deviant activity. The negative relationship between competitive sports and deviant is not significant. The researchers controlled for age, sex, parental education, and size of community. In doing this Agnew and Peterson found that none of these variables changed the relationship. Focusing on participation of sport and its effects on schools is another way to look at this same relationship and find similar results.

Langbein and Bess (2002) looked at the impact of deviance on schools. They used data from suspensions and other reported incidents in Montgomery Country public high schools. The research design is a cross section of 21 schools with three years of data. Langbein and Bess found that schools with greater athletic participation had fewer disturbances. However, increasing participation in sports increased the number of disturbances in small schools, whereas in larger schools, as enrollment increased the number of disturbances decreased. Thus, per number, larger schools had a greater number of disturbances; however bigger interscholastic sports programs and participation were able to mitigate the number of acts.

Using previous research suggest that organized activities and participation in sport have similar effects on deviance. However, I suspect that organized school activities promote values and beliefs that are able to mitigate deviant activity, whereas the values promoted in sport actually either have no effect or increase deviant activity. In my research, I focus on the relationship between extracurricular participation and deviance in a sample of adolescents ages 11-17. Based on this research I have formulated the following three hypotheses: students involved in sports are likely to commit fewer

Sample

deviant acts than those not involved in sports. Students involved in organized school activities are less likely to commit deviant acts than those not involved in organized school activities. My final hypothesis is controlling for gender, students involved in sports will commit fewer deviant acts than students not involved in sports.

Agnew and Peterson (1989) found competitive sport is a weak predictor in reducing deviance. However, there is a stronger negative relationship between non-competitive sport and deviance. Langbein and Bess (2002) findings support that participation in sport provide a positive influence on kids and increased participation decreased the number of disturbances in schools. These findings suggest that I will likely find a negative relationship between participation in sport and deviance.

Jenkins (1996) found a weak positive correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and gateway drug use. Because the correlation is not very strong, it provides some support suggesting that extracurricular participation reduces gateway drug use. The correlation between hard drug use and participation in extracurricular activity was so weak that it also provides support for extracurricular participation negatively effecting hard drug use. Of all the leisure activities Agnew and Peterson (1989) studied, organized activities and non-competitive sport were the best predictors in reducing deviance. These finding suggest that extracurricular involvement decreases deviant behaviors.

My final hypothesis has not been addressed by past research. Agnew and Peterson (1989) found that when controlling for sex, age, gender, parental education, and size of community the relationship between leisure and delinquency remained the same.

Sample

However, I believe my research will support my hypothesis. It will show that female adolescents are less delinquent-prone then adolescent males. (Elliott, 1976) I also feel males validate themselves to their peers through deviant activity, while girls validate themselves through other means.

Methods Section:

The data for my research is taken from the 1976 Delbert Elliott National Youth Survey. The data was gathered through multi-stage clustered sampling, a type of area probability sample. Youths and adults were personally interviewed in their homes about events and behaviors occurring during 1976. However, I will only use the data from the youths. The sample consists of 2, 375 youths between the ages of 11 and 17 from the continental United States. The response rate is unknown. (Elliott, Delbert)

In his research, Elliott (1976) focused on many characteristics including the personal behaviors and attitudes of the students toward certain events, as well as their views on how friends, family, and peers would react to these behaviors and attitudes. The data includes, "demographics, socioeconomic status, disruptive events in the home, neighborhood problems, parental aspirations for youth, integration of family, and peers, deviance, parental discipline, community and school involvement, and drug use." (Elliott, 1976) The focus of my research was on different school activities and deviant acts.

The sample can be described by sex, age, and ethnicity. By sex, 53.2% were male and 48.2% were female. After breaking down the sample by age, 45.1% were between ages 11-13 and 54.9% were between ages 14-17. Ethnicity was broken down into five different response categories: Anglo (79%), Chicano (4.4%), Blacks (15.1%), American Indians (.5%), and Asian (1%).

Sample

I studied the effects of extracurricular participation on deviant activity. My two independent variables were organized school activities and athletic membership. The two questions were, "Have you been a member of any athletic team at school?" and "Have you taken part in any activities at school, for example, service clubs, recreational or hobbies, clubs, student government, newspaper and or/ yearbook (not counting athletic teams and honor societies)?" The answers given by the students were broken down into yes or no response categories. 46.2% of the students were involved in organized school activities and 53.2% were not involved in organized school activities. 48.3% of the students participated in sports and 51.7% did not participate in sports.

My dependent variable was the number of deviant activities or behaviors. I measured this by choosing a variety of questions that represent both major and minor deviant acts. The major acts studied in my research were "carrying a hidden weapon, attacking somebody with the idea of seriously hurting or killing, been involved in a gang fight, stealing or attempting to steal a motor vehicle, and hard drug use" (Elliott 1976). The minor acts studied were "running away from home, stealing or attempting to steal something less than five dollars, suspension from school, lying about age to gain entrance or purchase something illegal, alcohol use, and marijuana use" (Elliott 1976).

The questions originally were broken down into nine different response categories. First, I recoded the questions so that there were only two responses, 1=never and 2-9= did it. I did this because the age range of the sample was young and it would have been difficult to find a large enough number of young people who would answer yes to certain deviant activities. I grouped the questions regarding hard drug use into one category for the same reason I mentioned above. The final scale for both major and

Sample

minor acts is 0=did not do the deviant activity, 1=committed one activity and 2=committed two or more deviant activities. The percentage of students who committed zero minor acts was 67. 4%. The percentage of students who committed one act was 24.1%. The percentage of students who committed two acts was 7.0%. The percentage of students who committed three acts was 1.2%, four acts .2% and five acts .1%. The mean was .4290 and the range was 0-5. When looking at major activity, 83.1% committed zero acts. 13.0% committed one, 3.0% committed two, .6% committed three, .2% committed four and .1% committed 5. The mean number was .2187 and the range was 0-5.

Findings

Table 1 examines the relationship between athletic participation and major deviant activity. 82.3% of students on athletic teams committed no deviant activity, whereas 83.9% of students not on athletic teams committed no deviant activity. 13.4% committed one deviant act and 4.3% committed two or more deviant acts. The percentage of students who are members of athletic teams and commit deviant acts is very similar to the percentage of students who are not members of athletic teams and commit deviant acts. Looking at the students not members of athletic teams, 12.6% committed one deviant act and 3.5 % committed two or more deviant acts. This relationship is not statistically significant.

Sample

Table 1: Contingency table presenting the relationship between being on an athletic team and number **major** of deviant activities,

Member of an Athletic Team

Major Activity

	Yes	No
O deviant activity	631 82.3%	719 83.9%
1 deviant activity	103 13.4%	108 12.6%
2 or more deviant activities	33 4.3%	30 3.5%
Total deviant activities	767 100%	857 100%

Table 2 presents the relationship between athletic participation and minor deviant activity. 61.7% of students on athletic teams committed no deviant activity. In comparison, 83.9 % of students who are not members of athletic teams committed no deviant activity. Of students on athletic teams who committed deviant acts, 27.5% of students committed one deviant act and 10.7% of students committed two or more deviant acts. 20.9 % of students who are not members of athletic teams committed one deviant act and 6.1 % committed two or more deviant acts. Interestingly, while athletic participation has no effect on major deviant activity, it increases minor activity. This relationship is statistically significant at a .001 level.

Sample

Table 2: Contingency table presenting the relationship between being on an athletic team and number **minor** of deviant activities.

Member of an Athletic Team

Minor Activity

	Yes	No
0 deviant activity	426 61.7%	528 73.0%
1 deviant activity	190 27.5%	151 20.9%
2 or more deviant activities	74 10.7%	44 6.1%
Total	690 100%	728 100%

Sample

Table 3 looks at the relationship between school activities and major deviant activity. 84.7% of students involved in school activities committed no deviant activity. 12.5% of students involved in school activities committed one deviant act, and 2.8% of students involved in school activities committed two or more deviant acts. Of students not involved in school activities, 81.8% committed no deviant activity, 13.4% committed one deviant act, and 4.8% committed two or more deviant acts. While this is not a statistically significant relationship, there is a trend that suggests participation in school activities reduces major deviance.

Table 3: Contingency table presenting the relationship between participation in school activities and **major** deviant activities.

Participation in Organized School Activities

Major Activity

	Yes	No
0 deviant activity	636 84.7 %	714 81.8%
1 deviant activity	94 12.5%	117 13.4%
2 or more deviant activities	21 2.8%	42 4.8%
Total	873 100%	751 100%

Table 4 presents the relationship between school activities and minor deviant activity. Of students involved in organized school activities, 68.7% committed no deviant activity, 23.3% committed one deviant act and 8.0 % committed two or more deviant acts. In contrast looking at students not involved in school activities, 66.4% committed no deviant activity, 24.9% committed one deviant act, and 8.7 % committed two or more deviant act. This relationship is not statistically significant.

Sample

Table 4: Contingency table presenting the relationship between participation in school activities and **minor** deviant activities.

Participation in Organized School Activities

Minor Activity

	Yes	No
0 deviant activity	455 68.7%	499 66.4%
1 deviant activity	154 23.3%	187 24.9%
2 or more deviant activities	53 8.0%	65 8.7%
Total	662 100%	751 100%

Table 5 examines school activities and major deviant activity controlling for gender. 77.5% of males on athletic teams committed no deviant activity, 17.2% of males on athletic teams committed one deviant act, and 5.3% of males on athletic teams committed two or more deviant acts. In contrast, male who are not members of athletic teams 76.9% committed no deviant activity, 17.4% committed one act and 5.7% committed two or more acts. 89.2% of females who are members of athletic teams committed no deviant acts. 8.0% of females who are members of athletic teams committed one deviant act and 2.9% committed two or more deviant acts. When examining females who are members of athletic teams, results indicate that the percentages are similar to the females who are not members of athletic teams. 90.2% committed no deviant activity, 8.5% committed one deviant activity, and 1.3% committed two or more deviant acts. In both males and females, the results indicate there is no relationship. However, I did find that females commit fewer deviant acts.

Sample

Table 5. Contingency table showing the relationship between being a member of an athletic team and **major** deviant activities controlling for sex of respondent.

Gender of Respondent: Male

Member of an Athletic Team

Major Activity

	Yes	No	Total
0 deviant activity	351 77.5%	294 76.2%	645 76.9%
1 deviant activity	78 17.2%	68 17.6%	146 17.4%
2 or more deviant activities	24 5.3%	24 6.2%	48 5.7%
Total	453 100%	386 100%	839 100%

Gender of Respondent: Female

Member of an Athletic Team

Major Activity

	Yes	No	Total
0 deviant activities	280 89.2%	425 90.2%	705 89.8%
1 deviant activity	25 8.0%	40 8.5%	65 8.3%
2 or more deviant activities	9 2.9%	6 1.3%	15 1.9%
Total	314 100%	471 100%	785 100%

Finally, when exploring the relationship between participation in sport and minor deviant activity controlling for gender, the results are very different. 58.3% of males on athletic teams committed no deviant activity, 28.8% of males on athletic teams committed one deviant act and 12.9% of males on athletic teams committed two or more deviant acts. In comparison, males who are not members of athletic teams, 67.6%

sample

committed no deviant activity, 23.8 % committed one deviant act, and 8.6% committed two or more deviant acts. This is a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level. 67.0% of females on athletic teams committed no deviant activity. Of females who are members of athletic teams, 25.6 % committed one deviant act and 7.3% committed two or more deviant acts. Females who are not members of athletic teams, 77.4% committed no deviant activity, 18.5 % committed one deviant act, and 7.3% committed two or more deviant acts. This is a statistically significant relationship at the .01 level. In both relationships athletic membership increased minor deviant activity. Females involved in sports commit significantly fewer deviant activities

Table 6: . Contingency table showing the relationship between being a member of an athletic team and **minor** deviant activities controlling for sex of respondent.

Sample

Gender of Respondent: Male

Member of an Athletic Team

Minor Activity

	Yes	No	Total
0 deviant activities	243 58.3%	219 67.6%	462 62.3%
1 deviant activity	120 28.8%	77 23.8%	197 26.6%
2 or more deviant activities	54 12.9%	28 8.6%	118 11.1%
Total	417 100%	324 100%	741 100%

Gender of Respondent: Female

Member of an Athletic Team

Minor Activity

	Yes	No	Total
0 deviant activities	183 67.0%	309 77.4%	492 73.2%
1 deviant activity	70 25.6%	74 18.5%	144 21.4%
2 or more deviant activities	20 7.3%	16 4.0%	36 5.4%
Total	273 100%	399 100%	672 100%

Discussion:

I hypothesized that students who participate in sports are less likely to commit deviant acts than students who do not participate in sports. My results indicate that students involved in school activities are less likely to commit deviant acts than students not involved in school activities. Finally, I controlled for gender hypothesizing that students involved in sports commit fewer deviant acts. Females will commit fewer deviant acts than males. Results support my second hypothesis, but do not support my first or third hypothesis. There is a relationship between sports and deviance; however it was in the opposite direction of what I hypothesized. It was not a negative relationship, but a positive one, involvement in sports increased deviance

My results are consistent with previous research. Agnew and Peterson (1989) found similar results when examining how leisure affects deviance. Competitive sport had no effect on deviance, but other organized and non-competitive sports negatively impacted deviance. Landers and Landers also found similar results, when looking at minor deviant activity vs. major deviant activity in high school boys. However, they

Sample

found little differences between the effects of sports and other organized activities on deviance, contrary to my findings.

This study looked at the effects of participation in athletics and other types of extracurricular activities on deviance. In the past, researchers have grouped athletic participation and other organized school activity participation together. From this, they assume that the same beliefs and values learned in sports are also learned in other school activities. However, results from my research support the idea that values and ideals encouraged and promoted in organized school activities are actually very different from athletics. By looking at these two activities separately, we are able to define the different values and beliefs that are promoted in both sports and organized school activities. From there, we can begin to promote those values that reduce deviant behavior and like wise, discourage those same values that contribute and increase deviant behavior. Looking at major acts and minor acts separately, I illustrate that minor deviance can be reduced by participation in organized school activities. It also helps to illustrate how sports contribute to problems young people face today. The prevailing attitude is that violent crimes are more prevalent in athletes as compared to non-athletes. These attitudes can potentially be blamed on the media's ability to spin stories. Because athletes are thrust into the spot light, it is easy for people to assume from those few cases, that it is a common occurrence.

The age range in this data can be both an advantage and disadvantage. We are able to get a picture of attitudes among students in both early and late adolescence; however young people are less likely to commit deviant activities such as rape, and assault. Due to time restriction, I was unable to use all of the data and could only focus

Sample

on a few activities in both major and minor acts. This can show results, that can be misinterpreted and false conclusions can be drawn. The data is very old, and the conditions of that time period, especially surrounding sports, were very different. Sports have changed a great deal from the seventies, becoming a commercialized business, where its primary focus is profit. The growth of professional leagues, as well as the opportunity to make money in sport provides a change in the attitudes of young people today. Women were less likely to be involved in sports back then because of Title 9. Title 9 was still relatively new, only being passed three years earlier in 1973. At the time this data was collected, it was still a rarity to find females participation in sports. The passing of Title 9 is the primary reason females became such an integral part of the world of sports. The number of females involved in sport has dramatically increased since 1976. People have become strong advocates of females being members of athletic teams. As a whole, the simple reality is parents, schools, and colleges promote organized activities a lot more today then they were thirty years ago. They do this through approval, rewards, scholarships, college education and etc. The advantages are many compared to the disadvantages. For example, today colleges are not just looking for the student who gets straight A's, but the student who volunteers at the homeless shelter, is class president, star athlete, and yearbook editor all the while maintaining straight A's. Perhaps, the question that can most effectively answer how to decrease deviant attitudes and behaviors is whether or not sports and organized activities provide the same rewards for staying out of trouble.

Sample

References

Agnew, Robert, and Peterson, David M. 1989 "Leisure and Delinquency." *Social Problem* 36: 332-350 .

Elliott, Delbert. 1976 "The National Youth Survey." http://www.icpsr.umich.edu:8080/ICPSR-STUDY/08375.xml

Jenkins, E. Jeanne. 1996 "The Influence of Peer Affiliation and Student Activities on Adolescent Drug Involvement." *Adolescence* 31: 297-306.

Landers and Landers. 1978 "Socialization via Interscholastic Athletics: Its Effects on Delinquency." *Youth and Society* 51: 299-303.

Langbein, Laura; Bess, Roseana. 2002 "Sports in School: Source of Amity or Antipathy." *Social Science Quarterly* 83: 434-454.

Sample