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The Voice of Athletes: Youth Sports Experiences & Relationships With Coaches.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of former youth sport athletes about their youth sport experience and their relationship with their coaches. Participants included 269 college students from 12 states who participated in youth sports in various sized cities and communities. Participants completed a 14-item survey (6 forced-response and 8 open-ended). Results are presented by listing the top themes that emerged in regards to positive and negative experiences during youth sports and with youth sport coaches.

Key words: coaching, relationship, experiences

Introduction

Why do children begin to play sports, continue to play through high school, and stay recreationally active in sports as adults? The answer is fun and enjoyment, aka, meaningful experience (Beni, 2017). For the 99% of children who interact with coaches in sports and who will not play in college, experiences and lessons learned should be aimed at continued enjoyment and retention (Camiré, 2014).

School administrators, coaches, and parents of children playing interscholastic, recreational, and even travel sports must find ways to keep the sport experience meaningful (Abrams, 2002). A cycle that begins with children playing sports for fun should be harbored through simple ideas that are aimed at developing the overall child as opposed to building elite athletes (Marino, 2003). As care is taken in fostering genuine relationships with children, the ultimate impact can be imparted on children who will become self-determined to continue to play sports into high school and beyond (Merkel, 2013). While journeying through the ups and downs of a career in sports, lessons will be learned and imparted into daily life, thus improving the overall person (Camiré et al., 2011).

From the perspective of a coach, the process begins with the coach-player relationship (Keegan et al., 2009). A prerequisite to becoming a successful coach who retains players is to have a genuine motivation to provide the best experience for each child (Dowdell et al., 2011). Certainly, many coaches are judged based on results and records, but just ask the vast majority of children why they play sports. Their reason is overwhelmingly because sports are fun (Castagna et al., 2018).

Practices should be geared toward fun, and imaginative coaches can achieve an atmosphere of fun while also being productive. Emphasizing concepts in practice over which children have more control such as effort, specific task completion, and maintaining a positive attitude gives every player a chance for regular success. For optimal developmental outcomes, coaches must define success in terms of providing maximum effort, improving skills, and increasing positive interpersonal interactions, as opposed to 'winning' (Vella et al., 2013). Under this type of system, players motivated to succeed have ample opportunity to do so, and those who choose this path will leave each practice with a sense of accomplishment, self-confidence, and desire to return.

A combination of transformational leadership behavior and the perceived quality of the coach–athlete relationship will provide the most reliable prediction of positive developmental experiences during sports participation (Enoksen et al., 2014; Krukowska et al., 2015). Whether or not the team is having perceived success on the field as judged by the mainstream, a coach skilled in the art of creating a positive experience will find small successes after each outcome. Positive developmental experiences can be facilitated when coaches take advantage of opportunities that are presented by both winning and losing (Camiré et al., 2011). The best way for coaches to do this may be for them to engage in behaviors that stimulate athletes intellectually, engage them in their individual strengths, and provide an appropriate role model. Additionally, establishing positive coach–athlete relationships may work synergistically with these behaviors in order to facilitate the most positive developmental outcomes (Vella et al., 2013).

As a relationship of trust is developed and nurtured, it is of the utmost importance that the coach keeps things in perspective and continues to encourage success through life lessons and experiences (Gould & Carson, 2008). Coaches need to evaluate their motivations and their goals and become youth development focused as they pursue sport involvement for children and youth (Witt & Dangi, 2018). A common problem in today's world of youth sports is the quest for college scholarships and potentially more (Coakley, 2011). Youth sport coaches have opportunities to take on the role as the voice of reason. They have the unique perspective of seeing droves of children work their way through youth sports programs. They observe, in close proximity, the shockingly low percentage of children who have the skills needed to earn a college scholarship (NCAA, na).

For many athletes, sport coaches serve as an important, and in many instances, the first father-figure, mentor, and role model (Smith, et al., 2007). Young athletes look to their coaches for instruction, motivation, praise, guidance, and affirmation, among other things (Camiré et al., 2011). For some coaches, sport serves as the medium for positive youth development (Petitpas et al., 2005), while for others, the most important outcome in sport is winning (Cummings et al., 2007) and athletes are simply a commodity (Brinson, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of former youth sport athletes about their youth sport (13 and younger) experience and with their youth sport coaches. Three specific research questions were addressed: 1) Did you ever drop out of a youth sport and if so, why? 2) What were the most positive aspects of your youth sport experience and with your youth sport coaches? and 3) What were the most negative aspects of your youth sport experience and with your youth sport coaches?

Methods

Participants

A total of 269 college students completed the study. The participants were 121 males (44.98%) and 148 females (55.02%). Ninety-five of the participants (35.32%) were, or had been, college athletes while 174 (64.68%) were not engaged in collegiate athletics. The majority of participants (n = 162, 60.22%) indicated they had not dropped out of a youth sport by age 13 compared to those who had dropped out by age 13 (n = 107, 39.78%). A majority of the participants indicated they had not been coached by at least one of their parents (n = 151, 56.13%).

Participants responded from 20 institutions representing 12 states (ND, SD, MT, KS, UT, MT, MO, TX, MN, OR, AK, ID). Participants identified the population of the city where they played sports at ages 13 and under: > 1000, n = 25, 9.26%; 1000-2499, n = 30, 11.1%; 2500-9999, n = 26, 9.63%; 10000-2,000, n = 25, 9.25%; 30000-99000, n = 55, 20.37%; 100000-490000, n = 63, 23.33%; and >500000, n = 9, 3.33%.

Measures

The questionnaire used in this study was a 14-item survey (6 forced-response and 8 open-ended) (figure 1), with an additional 28 questions from the Parental Involvement in Sport Questionnaire (PISQ). The first set of questions asked participants' to provide demographic information such as gender, if they were a college athlete, and size of the city in which they played youth sports; the second set of questions were focused on participants' youth sport experience; the third set of questions focused on participants' experiences with their youth coaches; and the fourth set of questions focused on participants' experiences with their parents during their youth sport experience. This paper addresses participants' youth sport experiences and their relationship with their coaches.

Procedures

Following approval from the University's Institutional Review Board, contact was made via phone with 20 colleagues from 12 different states explaining the study and asking their support in the distribution of the 'invitation to participate' email link to students at their respective universities. Upon their agreeing to assist, an email that provided a brief introduction to the study along with the link to participate in the online survey was sent to the research colleagues. This email was then forwarded to students at the respective universities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected via online instrumentation using Qualtrics survey software. An online survey was selected as the means to collect data in order to secure a broad range of participants and it ensured that participants could respond anonymously. Data analysis occurred throughout the collection period and continued until sufficient data had been obtained (e.g., 250 responses). Throughout the analysis during the data collection phase, incomplete attempts or attempts that had simply been opened but not answered were removed from the data set. The total number of interested subjects who opened the survey link was not tabulated.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. For this paper we report quantitative and qualitative data related to the perceived positive and negative youth sport experiences and experiences with youth sport coaches. The qualitative responses from the open-ended questions were placed into a word document and data from the various questions were

grouped together. The data were then analyzed following the steps outlined by The Pell Institute (2019). Content analysis was carried out by coding the data for certain words or content. Thematic analysis was then used to group the data into themes that helped to answer the research questions. This data analysis was carried out by three researchers, each focusing on a separate aspect of the study, before being shared with the rest of the research team. The research team then engaged in discussion of the themes. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS, Version 27.

Results and Discussion

The results are presented in three sections. The first section examines why athletes dropped out of sport. The second section examines what athletes believe are positive aspects of their youth sport experience and of their youth sport coaches. The third section examines what athletes believe are negative aspects of their youth sport experience and of their youth sport coaches.

Dropping Out of Youth Sport

Participants were asked if they had ever dropped out of a youth sport by age 13. The majority of participants in this study (n = 162, 60.22%) indicated they had not dropped out of a youth sport by age 13 compared to those who had dropped out by age 13 (n = 107, 39.78%). As detailed earlier, youth athletes drop out of sport for a number of reasons. Participants in this study who had dropped out of a youth sport were asked to select from 17 different reasons that may have influenced their decision to drop out. Participants could select up to three reasons. Table 1 shows a rank order of the reasons why participants in the study dropped out. For all participants, the most frequently cited reason for dropping out of a youth sport was a 'change of interest'. This reason was the same when reviewed by gender, collegiate athletes or not, and city size. The second most cited reason for all participants was 'didn't like the sport' and the third reason was 'relationship with coach'. By gender, these two reasons were also the second and third most cited reasons with males having 'relationship with coach' as second and females having 'didn't like the sport' as second.

Table 1
Reasons to Drop Out of Youth Sports by Rank Order and Percentage

Reason	Rank	%
Change of interests	1	25.38%
Didn't like the sport	2	13.08%
Relationship with coach	3	8.46%
Didn't feel competent or worthy	4	6.54%
No longer fun	5	6.43%
Took too much time	6	6.15%
Family finances	7	5.38%
Injury	8	5.00%
Didn't like competition	9	2.69%
Burnout	9	2.69%
Team dynamics	9	2.69%
Lack of playing time	9	2.69%
Afraid to make mistakes	13	2.31%
Felt disrespected	13	2.13%
Losing teams	15	1.15%
Lost ownership of the experience	16	0.38%
Too much parental pressure	16	0.38%
Other		

      Got a job
      Broken arm
      Parents wouldn't let me continue football
      Parents didn't have time to take me to practice
      Asthma
      Didn't want to get a physical
      Didn't have transportation

Positive Aspect or Experience During Youth Sports and with Coaches
    Participants were asked, via open-ended questions, to describe the most positive experience or aspect of their youth sport. Similarly, they were asked to describe the most positive experience with their youth sport coaches. Three themes emerged that describe the positive aspects of the youth sport experience and three themes identify the positive aspects of the coach relationship.

Meeting Friends and Teammates
    The first theme regarding the positive aspects of participation in youth sports was meeting friends and teammates. For example, one participant said: "Friendships, every team

member working towards a common goal". Similarly, another said: "The most positive aspect was making relationships with friends I am friends with today".

Learning New Things/Skill.

The second theme that emerged from the statements regarding the positive aspects of participating in youth sports was learning new things/skills. One participant said: "Learning the basics of the sport and getting in decent shape" while another said, "Being able to learn advanced techniques and skills to excel when I grew older".

Having Fun and Being able to Participate

The third theme that emerged was having fun, something that is often mentioned as the number one reason for joining a youth sport team. This theme is supported by participant statements such as: "Getting to experience sports with my friends and my parents and just having fun". Another said, "It was a fun competitive atmosphere that didn't have stakes so I could just enjoy it".

Relationships Formed

The main theme that emerged regarding positive experiences with a youth coach was about relationships. Comments from two participants regarding relationships are: "Having a good relationship with my coach, them being involved in my life outside of just the sport" and "Forming a great relationship that lasts a lifetime".

Encouragement and Praise

Coaches who provided encouragement and praise were also mentioned in regard to a positive coach relationship. One participant stated about his coach, "Always pushed me to be my best and help me achieve things I never thought I could". A second said, "I remember having a bad game and felt pretty horrible about it. My coach sat beside me and gave me a pep talk on how we learn from losing".

Being Supportive and Trustworthy

The third theme regarding positive relationships with a coach involve the coach being supportive and trustworthy. One participate said, "A coach took me aside and personally worked with me to better my skills of a particular sport" while another said, "A coach who showed genuine interest in my life and personal development".

Negative Aspect or Experience During Youth Sports and with Coaches

Participants were asked, via open-ended questions, to describe the most negative experience or aspect of their youth sport and the most negative experience with their youth sport coaches. Three themes emerged that describe the negative aspects of the youth sport experience and three themes identify the negative aspects of the coach relationship.

Coaches

The theme that emerged as the most negative aspect of the youth sport experience had to do with coaches. For example, one participant said: "I had a bad coach who favored his son".

Another said: "When coaches showed favoritism while other players didn't understand why they weren't playing".

Competition Level
A second theme that emerged related to competition level. One participants described this by stating: "People taking things too competitively and ruining the fun of the game". Another stated: "Being moved up to play with older athletes because of physical ability but not being prepared mentally for a more advanced experience".

Other Kids/Parents/Coaches
The third main theme regarding a negative youth sport experience was other athletes, parents, and coaches. Participant statements that support this theme include: "Being told I was not good enough by other kids" and "Older athletes picking on me".

Spotlighting
The main theme that emerged related to a negative aspect of youth coaches was termed spotlighting. Two participants explained this as: "Called out in front of teammates" and "Pointing out a mistake in an embarrassing way".

Yelling/Scolding/Bad Attitude/Rude
A second theme regarding a negative experience with a coach had to do with yelling and being rude. One participant explained this as: "My coach took the team in a back room and screamed at us and eventually threw his clip board our way". Another said: "Having my first football coach cuss us out every practice". Two additional participants stated: "Middle school coaches called me dumb because I was a lineman" and "I got told I'm worthless and I should just quit".

Picking Favorites
The third theme related to picking and playing favorite athletes. One participant said: "One of my coaches favored his son over everyone so his son played quarterback and maybe shouldn't have". A second participants said: "Being benched because their daughter wanted to play my position, even though she was a terrible player".

In an attempt to learn more about coaches' behavior toward athletes, participants were also asked to identify if their coaches had displayed certain actions towards them as athletes. Table 2 shows the percentage of subjects who indicated a youth coach had done this specific action towards them. Fishers exact test was used to determine significance in difference between those who had stayed in youth sport and those who had dropped out of youth sport. For four of the seven actions, a greater percentage of participants who had dropped out of youth sport indicated they had a coach who had done the action towards them. Using crosstabs analysis, one can see that there is little significance difference between those who stayed in youth sport and those who dropped out of youth sport based on these actions. The only action with statistical significance difference was 'embarrassed you in front of other'.

Table 2

Percentage of Participants Who Stayed and Who Drop Outs Indicating a Youth Coach had Done This Action

Action	All	Participants Who Stayed	Participants Dropped Out	Fishers Exact Test
Poked fun at you	40.3%	36.0%	44.9%	0.088
Name calling, no hurtful intent	39.7%	39.6%	40.8%	0.438
Embarrassed you in front of others	33.9%	30.0%	41.0%	0.032*
Made critical comments meant to hurt	22.3%	19.4%	26.7%	0.112
Dirty look meant to hurt	39.7%	41.2%	33.9%	0.210
Threw something at you	39.5%	40.1%	35.8%	0.375
Set you up to look foolish	39.7%	39.9%	38.7%	0.531

*$p = < 0.05$

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of former youth sport athletes about their youth sport experience and more specifically, with their youth sport coaches. Three specific research questions were addressed: 1) Did you ever drop out of a youth sport and if so, why? 2) What were the most positive aspects of your youth sport experience and with your youth sport coaches? and 3) What were the most negative aspects of your youth sport experience and with your youth sport coaches?

Dropping Out of Youth Sports

The number of participants in youth sports (ages 5-17) has been dropping in recent years with the average length of playing youth sports barely three years (The Aspen Institute, 2020). There are various reasons for the decline with not all reasons identifiable as true sport dropout. For example, a lack of coaches, equipment, and facilities, and non-traditional sports options such as mountain biking and rock climbing have all contributed to the fallout (Project Play, 2019). Nationally, 70% of children playing youth sports will quit by the time they turn 13 (Witt &

Dangi, 2018; Yellowbrick, 2017). Again, the reasons explaining player dropout are many and varied: lack of enjoyment; low perceptions of physical competence; intrinsic pressures like stress, negative team dynamics due to coaches or peers, and parental pressure (loss of autonomy); and, interference with social aspects (Witt & Dangi). The findings from this study are similar to that of Project Play (2020) and Schwab et al., (2010) in that the most frequently cited reasons for quitting sports was diminishing enjoyment in the current sport, interest in other sport opportunities, and diminishing interest in the current sport.

It is frequently reported that the number one reason children play sports is 'to have fun' and the number one reason they drop out of sports is 'it is no longer fun' (Garcia Bengoechea et al., 2004). The reasons why sport is no longer fun include too much practice, not liking competition, poor coaching, too much pressure, desire to specialize, and parents (Dangi & Witt, 2018). In one study, 42% of respondents stated that their coach, when compared to parents, peers, and siblings pressured them the most (Yellowbrick, 2019). Approximately one-quarter of the participants in this study reported 'change of interest' as their number one reason for dropping out. This is contrary to previous research (Witt & Dangi; Yellowbrick, 2017) in which not having fun was found to be the leading reason why athletes drop out of youth sport. In fact, in this study only 6 1/2 percent of the participants cited 'no longer fun' as a reason for dropping out of youth sport.

One explanation for this difference may be that all of the participants in this study were college students and 35% of them identified as collegiate athletes. One could argue that college students generally come from families with a higher SES and therefore are better posed to stay in youth sports longer (Project Play, 2020) as children from higher SES are afforded opportunities that people from lower SES do not necessarily have (Holt et al., 2011). When from a higher SES family, parents are more likely to help with coaching, are better able to get their children to practices on time, and are better positioned financially to pay participation fees, clothing fees, and travel fees (Cassidy, 2014). All of these actions are likely to keep children more fully engaged and for a longer period of time.

Positive Aspect or Experience During Youth Sports and with Coaches

As stated in the introduction, sport provides many positive (i.e., social interaction, fun, competition), along with negative (i.e., burnout, favoritism, bullying), experiences for children and youth; known as meaningful experiences (Callender, 2010; Merkel, 2013). Kretchmar (2007) defined meaningful experiences as those that hold personal significance. Meaningful experiences are influenced by the value one attributes to an activity and may lead to further engagement in the activity (Beni, et al., (2017).

Results from this study suggest that meeting new friends and teammates, learning new things/skills, and participating and having fun are the meaningful experiences these participants reported as positive aspects of the youth sport experience. This supports the findings of Camiré and Trudel (2011) who reported that athletes prefer a sport environment that promotes participation and development over competition and winning.

Participants in this study reported that the most positive aspects of their youth sport coach were forming relationship, providing encouragement and praise, and being supportive and trustworthy. As mentioned earlier, coaches play a significant part in the youth sport experience. In fact, the importance of the coach in establishing the motivational climate of the sport is one of the most established aspects of youth sport experience (Cairney et al., 2018). Fry & Gano-Overway (2010) reported that athletes who perceived a caring climate on their teams were more

likely to report higher enjoyment and a more positive attitude towards their teammates and coaches. Similarly, Camiré and Trudel (2011) stated that the athletes in their study reported that effective coaches were supportive, knowledgeable, centered on athlete development, good motivators, demanding and challenging, and organized.

Negative Aspect or Experience During Youth Sports and with Coaches

The belief that youth join sport programs to have meaningful experiences has been reiterated throughout this paper. When those experiences are not met, young athletes loose interest and seek meaning elsewhere. That could be trying a new sport, leaving sport entirely, or engaging in something brand new. Participants in this study indicated that their coaches were the main reason why they dropped out of a sport, followed by the competition level, and other kids/parents/coaches. Camiré and Trudel (2011) reported that athletes believe ineffective coaches are not supportive, focused on winning (e.g. place unreasonable demands, display favoritism, do not distribute playing time equally), not organized, and not knowledgeable.

When asked what was the most negative experience with their youth sport coach, participants indicated spotlighting, yelling/scolding/rude, and picking favorites. These findings are similar to that of (Gearity, 2009) in which he identified five themes that constitute the essence of athletes' experience of poor coaching: 1) not teaching (not instructing, not individualized, unknowledgeable), 2) unfair (there for him-or her-self, wasn't there for me), 3) uncaring (dishonest, playing favorites, degrading), 4) inhibiting (distracting, engendering self-doubt, demotivating, and dividing the team), and 5) coping. It was further suggested that poor coaching was not associated with winning or losing.

Researchers have examined what may be considered inappropriate coaching behaviors (Alexander et al., 2011; Shields et al., 2005; Strand et al., 2017a). This study included a list of inappropriate actions, taken from the literature regarding coach bullying, and used in previous research by Strand et al. Of the actions listed, three are considered relational (embarrassed, look foolish, dirty look), three are considered verbal (critical comments, name calling, poked fun at) and one is physical (threw something). The actions can be further categorized based on degree, i.e., mild, moderate, severe. Four of the actions are considered mild bullying (critical comments, poked fun, name calling, dirty look) and three are moderate bullying (embarrassed, look foolish, three something). Unfortunately, these findings are very similar to those reported previously regarding inappropriate coaching practices (Alexander et al.; Shields et al.; Strand et al.). That being so, is it easily understandable that many athletes report the coach as the most negative aspect of the youth sport experience when so many athletes, be they those who stayed in sport or those who dropped out, report that their coach poked fun at them, called them names, embarrassed them in front of others, and made critical comments about them.

When asking coaches if they had done these actions, differences are seen from what participants report (Strand, 2018). For example, 8.8% of coaches report they have set athletes up to look foolish while close to 40% of the participants reported their coaches had done this. Further, 88% of coaches indicate this is an inappropriate action and 57% consider it bullying. It is obvious that the perceptions of this action differ greatly for coaches and athletes. Similar perceptions hold for the other six actions.

Conclusion

Obviously, coaches are an essential part of the youth sport experience and can make the experience meaningful (Vella et al., 2013). The resulting behavior from children who are treated

as people, as opposed to commodities, is excitement to play sports and stay active; contrary to the growing trends of children who play due to outside influences. Because behavior is regulated by more autonomous motives (i.e., intrinsic motivation and identified regulation), an individual will engage in an activity for its own sake and for the inherent fun and interest in that activity (Fenton et al,, 2017). Like any aspect in life, sustainability is directly related to enjoyment and autonomy (Fenton et al.). Coaches and parents achieve this by creating an atmosphere of enjoyment to which children are likely to return. The most important aspect in this cycle is the excitement of youth athletes who want to return for the next practice or game because they had so much fun. They choose to return simply because they had a positive and meaningful experience that they want to experience again (Miller & Strand, 2015).

From the lens of a parent or youth coach, the most desired outcome of participation in youth sports is a self-determined, motivated, and autonomous child (Wekesser, 2019). This is not only achieved with fun and meaningful experiences, but also by introducing a variety of sport experiences to keep things fresh. Parents and coaches should encourage children to play multiple sports before the age of 12 and give children a strong voice regarding the sports in which they participate (Edwards & Strand, 2017). They should also consult with their child about levels of play, not always encouraging the most difficult challenges. In fact, parents as well as coaches should support children who want to play pick-up games or participate in impromptu games at parks and public places (Warren & Strand, 2016). All of these experiences will add to socialization, self-determination, and sustainability (Witt & Dangi 2018).

Coaches play a strong and unique role in fostering enjoyable youth sport experiences. Strand et. al., (2017b) and Strand et. al., (2017c) provided examples of how coaches can be positive influences and impact the lives of their athletes. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to detail all of them, here are ten examples: 1) play the game the right way, 2) refrain from harm, 3) do not put an overemphasis on winning, 4) too much equals burnout in sport, 5) encourage multi-sport athletes; 6) have the right role models, 7) play by the rule of the game without violence, 8) create competitive environments while inspiring athletes to continue in sport, 9) understand your role in the development of athletes, and 10) teach athletes how to set a good example. All of these actions fall on the coach to make the sport experience meaningful.

Whether the adults in question are parents seeking scholarships for their children, re-writing their own past athletic endeavors, or if they are coaches looking to profit or gain fame through youth athletes, too many of the various outcomes hurt the child in some way (Nicholson, 2010). And if the child is not physically, mentally, or emotionally hurt directly, they are likely to miss out on a lengthy and favorable athletic experience due to dropout.

Children make the initial choice to participate in sports because the experience is perceived as fun. Fun may come in the form of success, socialization, or aspects of a particular sport that are pleasurable. Some of the recent developments in youth sports are placing value on other aspects of sport that are in conflict with the simple satisfaction of participation. Scholarships, status, and extrinsic motivations are just a few of many factors that interfere with sports as a form of true recreation, setting the stage for elimination. It will take brave leadership and courage from parents and coaches to navigate the growingly uncertain role of sports as a source of positive influence on the whole person.

One strength of this study is that it explores the athletes' voice as participants shared their perspectives about the positive and negative aspects of their youth sport experience and with their youth sport coaches. Athletes' preferences regarding youth sport and youth sport coaches provide direction going forward for other youth sport coaches and coaching education. In

essence, one could say "do this not that" in regards to enhancing the meaningfulness of the youth sport experience.

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Figure 1

1. Gender   M   F

2. Are you a collegiate athlete?   Y   N

3. What was the size of your home town when you participated in youth sports?
    a. <1,000
    b. 1,000 – 2,499
    c. 2,500 - 4,999
    d. 5,000 – 9,999
    e. 10,000 – 29,999
    f. 30,000 – 99,999
    g. 100,000 – 499,999
    h. >500,000

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all questions honestly. If a question does not apply to you or you are not comfortable answering it, just leave it blank and move on to the next item.

4. Did you ever drop out of a youth sport?   Y   N

5. If you dropped out of a youth sport, select up to three reasons why you dropped out.
    a. Relationship with coach
    b. Took too much time
    c. Didn't like competition
    d. Too much parental pressure
    e. Didn't like the sport
    f. Injury
    g. Change of interests
    h. Didn't feel competent or worthy
    i. Burnout
    j. Team dynamics
    k. No longer fun
    l. Lost ownership of the experience
    m. Lack of playing time
    n. Afraid to make mistakes
    o. Felt disrespected
    p. Losing teams
    q. Family finances
    r. Other

6. What was the most negative aspect or experience of youth sports?

7. What was the most positive aspect or experience of youth sports?

8. Did any of your youth sport coaches display the following actions towards you?

   A. Embarrassed you in front of others   Y   N
   B. Made critical comments meant to hurt   Y   N
   C. Poked fun at you   Y   N
   D. Name calling, no hurtful intent   Y   N
   E. Set you up to look foolish   Y   N
   F. Dirty look meant to hurt   Y   N
   G. Threw something at you   Y   N

9. What was your most negative experience with a coach during youth sports?

10. What was your most positive experience with a coach during youth sports?

11. Were you ever coached by one of your parents?   Y   N

12. What was the most negative experience with your parents during youth sports?

13. What was the most positive experience with your parents during youth sports?

14. What if anything, did your parents say that made you feel great, that amplified your joy during and after a game or event?

Vaping & E-cigarette Usage & Attitudes Among College Students

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Abstract

Background. Electronic cigarette use, also known as vaping, is increasing among youth as an alternative to traditional smoking or in conjunction with smoking in many countries, including the United States of America (US). According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), long-term use of electronic cigarettes or vaping can impact health, resulting in lung injury and leading to lifelong addiction. **Purpose**. The purpose of this study was to examine college students' usage, attitudes, and knowledge about vaping and its health risks by demographics. In addition, the researchers sought to explore which demographics of college students use tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or nicotine when vaping. **Methods**. A convenience sample of 584 undergraduate students from a university in southeast Louisiana (US) was recruited. Students completed a one-time survey on electronic cigarettes or vaping which included 31 items. Analyses included descriptive and other quantitative statistics. Differences in vaping use by demographics were determined by the use of chi square or t-tests analyses. **Results**. There were significant differences in usage by gender, race, and employment status. White/Caucasian and those identified as Other Race (not White or Black), and male students reported vaping more than other students. Those who were employed used e-cigarettes more than those who were unemployed. In addition, white/Caucasian students reported using nicotine while vaping more than did students of other races. Also male students more than females, and those who identified as Other Race reported using THC more than did other races. Students who used electronic cigarettes considered vaping to be safer than traditional cigarettes. **Conclusions**. Interventions focused on education and vaping cessation should be implemented to help stop the spread of this public health crisis among youth. Education can be aimed at specific demographic groups and should focus on the deleterious health effects of vaping including specific consequences of adding nicotine and THC to electronic devices.

Keywords: Addiction, nicotine, lung disease, marijuana, youth

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are approximately 1.3 billion cigarette smokers in the world (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). A form of smoking, vaping or using electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), has become a pandemic in itself. Heated tobacco products (HTP), as they are called by WHO, come in a range of different forms and are also known as electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). In a survey of eight different countries, WHO found that 54% of smokers have at least tried an ENDS (WHO, 2019b). Independent studies have indicated that these devices can release up to twenty harmful chemicals into the air and into the lungs. The urgency for banning these items has become a high priority of the WHO. Vaping is on the list of being banned in forty different countries including the US, Canada, and Spain (WHO, 2019a).

The prevalence of vaping is rapidly increasing across the United States (US). According to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS), 42.2% of students nationwide have vaped or used an e-cigarette (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018a). Flavored e-liquids such as vanilla, fruit punch, and cotton candy tend to be more attractive to young adults. CDC reported in 2017 that of those high school students admitting to using, 73% of them used a flavored tobacco product (CDC, 2017). Although US youths have made vaping the most frequently practiced leisure activity of all tobacco products since 2014, it is a dangerous practice (CDC, 2019a). Young adults face several health risks when vaping and the lack of educational information may impact their choice to vape (CDC, 2019b). Long-term use of e-cigarettes can impact health, including causing lung injury and addiction (CDC, 2019c).

E-cigarettes can also contain added harmful substances, such as nicotine or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a liquid form of cannabis. These substances have the capacity to cause developmental brain damage which affects learning, memory, and attention (United States Health and Human Services [USHHS], 2019). Young users may view vaping as a safer and more enjoyable alternative to traditional cigarettes. In a study of college students, 29% vaped THC in their lifetime and were more likely to come from a family of higher rather than lower socioeconomic status (Jones et al., 2016). The same catastrophic health effects of cigarette smoking, such as the development of heart disease and type 2 diabetes mellitus, stroke, lung cancer, bone health deficiency, tooth loss, and decreased immune function, are a concern for those who engage in vaping (CDC, 2018a). In addition, to date, there have been 2,807 confirmed injured lung cases reported from 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands, as well as 68 verified deaths in 29 states and the District of Columbia. Georgia and Indiana had the most deaths at six each (CDC, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the usage and attitudes of college students regarding vaping and e-cigarettes products. Previous research has explored the prevalence of vaping or e-cigarette usage. Our study is of significance because of the steady increase of vaping among youth in the US currently and how it may grow in the future. We hoped to discover the demographics, usage, and health beliefs of college students who have vaped or used e-cigarettes, even once, as opposed to never-users (those who have never tried any vaping or electronic smoking products). If vaping and the use of e-cigarettes is more popular among particular demographic groupings, then certain groups might be targeted for proposed interventions. If lack of education is a precursor to vaping, then educational prevention tactics would work best.

Three main hypotheses were proposed. The first hypothesis was: There will be a significant difference between demographic groups (gender, race, grade classification, grade point average (GPA), and living conditions) in the use of e-cigarettes, with Whites and males vaping more. Another hypothesis was: There will not be a higher prevalence in the usage of nicotine or THC oils by demographic (gender, race, grade classification, GPA, and living/employment conditions). The final hypothesis proposed for this study was: Those students who vape, even once, will have more positive attitudes about the use of these devices and have deficient knowledge of the negative health effects than never users.

Methods

Survey Development and Protocol

The face-to-face survey consisted of 31 total questions, including demographic questions, items concerning vaping practices, and health-related items. These questions were taken or modified from US surveys including National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) and the YRBSS from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2018b). Two of the questions from these surveys were: "Have you ever used nicotine in an electronic vapor product?" and "Have you ever used marijuana, marijuana concentrates, marijuana waxes, THC, or hash oils in an electronic vapor product?" The other questions were taken and/or modified from the International Eurobarometer 82.4 Survey by the European Commission and the European Parliament [ECEP] in Brussels (ECEP, 2018). In addition to using established questions, face validity was determined for the other question by using multiple experts in public health.

Since multiple individuals administered the survey, a research protocol was developed. It included an introduction with a short explanation of the purpose of the survey, directions and conditions for taking the survey, and an enticement of a gift card to complete the survey. Students were allowed sufficient time to ask questions related to the survey. Each administrator was encouraged to write the instructions on the board or repeat them more than once prior to and during the administration of the survey. Students were instructed as to how to answer the questions depending on their vaping use status. For example, those who had vaped even once would be considered ever users and would answer all questions except two. Those who had never tried vaping at all would answer "no," and then follow a skip pattern and continue on to the end of the survey.

Institutional Review Board

Before the study, the research design, the survey and the protocol were approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. Informed consent was provided by each participant. Participation was voluntary and anonymous; students were informed that if they did not wish to participate, it would not affect their grades in the class. Students were also asked not to identify themselves in any manner. Students had to be at least 18 years old to participate in the survey; any students under 18 years old were disqualified from the study. Students wishing to participate in the reward system for this study were asked to fill out a completely separated piece of paper as to not identify them or link them to their survey. The three winning students were notified by their email and w-number (university identification number).

Pilot Test

A pilot test was given to 20 students in an upper level health studies course prior to the initiation of the survey. Nineteen of those students completed the survey and one declined. Verbal instructions were given to the students with the opportunity for them to ask questions regarding the survey. Once the survey was completed by all participants, participant feedback was provided to the researcher. Several students commented that the instructions were difficult to understand including which questions users versus never users were to answer or skip. Users were defined as those who had taken at least one puff of an e-cigarette at any point in their lives; never users were defined as those who never attempted to use e-cigarettes. Instructions were adjusted in the protocol to improve and increase participants' responses and accuracy. Verbal repetition or writing directions on a board in the classroom were also instituted as a result of the pilot test.

Procedures and Data Collection

Collectively, eight investigators administered surveys to 35 different classes, including the pilot study. All investigators were graduate, undergraduate students, or faculty of the university. The diverse group of investigators was studying in the health studies and kinesiology field. Students who completed the survey in a previous class were asked not to retake the survey. As a result of feedback from the pilot study, investigators verbally instructed students using the revised protocol. Students were given 15 minutes to complete the surveys. After completion, the surveys were collected and students were given a resource sheet concerning e-cigarette and vaping which included university and community resources for anyone wishing to obtain more information on quitting smoking or vaping.

Data Analyses

Survey responses were entered into Survey Monkey© and then downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet. From there, data were uploaded into SPSS 20 for analyses. Since this was a descriptive study, frequencies and chi-square analyses were conducted. For example, vaping status, and nicotine or marijuana use by categorical demographics were analyzed using chi-square tests. Chi-square analyses were also conducted to determine possible differences in vaping health beliefs by e-cigarette use or never use. The demographic variables included gender, grade classification, race, employment status, and living status. Independent t-tests were performed to determine vaping status and use of nicotine or marijuana with continuous data, such as age and grade point average (GPA).

Participants

Participants in this study included undergraduate students who were either enrolled in a Kinesiology, Health, or Orientation 101 course. There were 608 eligible participants; 584 participants completed the survey successfully for a 96% response rate. The mean age of the participants was 20, with 92% of ages ranging from 18-22 years old. The minimum age was 18 and the maximum age was 63 years of age. Females represented 63% of the participants, which matches the demographics of the university. The participants were 58% freshman with the remaining 42% almost evenly distributed among the sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate classes. The majority (59%) reported being White/Caucasian and 31% reported Black/African American as their race. The remaining 10% were composed of several other races

that included Native American, Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino. More than half of the participants were employed (60%), and lived with a roommate(s) (53%). Forty-seven percent of the participants lived with their family, or alone. The GPA mean was 3.25 with a range from 1.2 to 4.75, since some students reported their high school GPA.

Results

Vaping Usage and Demographics

More students reported having tried vaping (n=357) than never users (n=227). There was a significant difference between race and vaping usage status; White/Caucasian and Others (Hispanic/Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Native American/Indian) reported vaping significantly more than African-American students. There was also a significant difference between employment status and e-cigarette use. Employed students were more likely to vape than unemployed students. See Table 1.

Table 1
Vaping Status by Demographics

	Valid Percentage	Chi square	df	P value
Gender		2.18	1	.140
Male	64.8% (n=138)			
Female	58.9% (n=215)			
Grade		3.78	3	.285
Freshman	61.8% (n=207)			
Sophomore	67.7% (n= 65)			
Junior	57.4% (n= 54)			
Senior	53.4% (n= 31)			
Race		37.87	2	.0010
White/Caucasian	69.4% (n=240)			
Black/African American	42.5% (n=76)			
Other	69.5% (n=41)			
Employment		8.31	1	.004
Unemployed	54.0% (n= 127)			

Employed	65.9% (n=230)			
Living Status		.77	2	.682
Alone	69.2% (n=18)			
Roommate	60.5% (n= 187)			
Family	61.2% (n= 150)			

There was no significant difference between gender, grade classification or living status by vaping use. The students who reported vaping were found to be slightly younger (M=19.43) compared to never users (M=19.94), although not significantly different. There was also no significant difference found between vaping and GPA. Students who reported vaping had a slightly higher mean GPA (M=3.27) than those who did not (M=3.23).

Vaping Usage with Nicotine by Demographics

There was a significant difference between race and nicotine use while vaping. More White/Caucasians used nicotine compared to other races. There was a significant difference between age and nicotine use in e-cigarettes. Younger students (M=19.16) were more likely to use nicotine in their devices than older students (M=19.74). See Table 2.

However, there was no significant difference between nicotine use and any of the other demographics (gender, grade classification, race, employment status, and living situation). The mean GPA (M=3.29) for students who used nicotine was slightly higher than the students who never used nicotine when vaping (M=3.24). This was statistically different.

Table 2
Nicotine Vaping by Demographics

		Chi square	df	P value
Gender		.012	1	.913
Male	52.5% (n=74)			
Female	51.9% (n=110)			
Grade		2.25	1	.134
Freshman	53.4% (n=110)			
Sophomore	58.2% (n=39)			
Junior	39.6% (n=21)			

Senior	54.8% (n=17)			
Race		36.61	2	.0010
White/Caucasian	63.3% (n=152)			
Black/African American	26.0% (n=20)			
Other	37.5% (n=15)			
Employment		1.51	1	.219
Unemployed	48.1% (n=62)			
Employed	54.8% (n=125)			
Living Status		4.08	2	.130
Alone	29.4% (n=5)			
Roommate	54.8% (n=102)			
Family	51.7% (n=78)			

Vaping Usage with THC by Demographics

There was a significant difference between gender and reported marijuana use when vaping. More males than females reported using marijuana when vaping. There was also a significant difference between race and reported marijuana use when vaping. More students who identified as Other Race reported using marijuana compared to White/Caucasians and Black/African Americans. There was a significant difference found between age and reported marijuana use while vaping. The students who reported using THC while vaping were found to be slightly older (M= 19.72) than none users of THC (M= 19.18). There was also a significant difference found between reported marijuana use when vaping and GPA. Students who reported vaping marijuana had a slightly lower mean GPA (M= 3.20) than those who did not use marijuana (M= 3.32). See Table 3.

There was no significant difference between employment status and marijuana use although students who were employed reported using marijuana slightly more than unemployed students. Also, no significant difference was found between living arrangements and marijuana use when vaping; however, students who lived alone reported using marijuana more than those students living with roommates or family. Although there was no significant difference among grade classification, seniors were more likely to report THC use while vaping as compared to other grade classifications.

Table 3
THC Vaping by Demographics

		Chi square	df	P value
Gender		4.70	1	.030
Male	54.3% (n=76)			
Female	42.5% (n=91)			
Grade		4.39	3	.222
Freshman	46.1% (n= 95)			
Sophomore	42.6% (n= 29)			
Junior	47.2% (n= 25)			
Senior	64.5% (n= 20)			
Race		7.37	2	.025
White/Caucasian	42.9% (n= 103)			
Black/African American	51.3% (n= 40)			
Other	65.0% (n= 26)			
Employment		.39	1	.843
Unemployed	46.5% (n= 60)			
Employed	47.6% (n= 109)			
Living Status		5.60	2	.061
Alone	72.2% (n= 13)			
Roommate	47.8% (n= 89)			
Family	43.0% (n= 65)			

Vaping Usage and Health Beliefs

One of the sections of our study asked participants to review statements and decide if they were true or not true. For another section, participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a statement related to e-cigarettes. A majority of the students who vaped (users) and even never users believed that e-cigarettes do not make someone feel accepted among their peers. Also, both users and never users disagreed with the statement that e-cigarettes are not completely safe, but they are not as bad as the media makes them out to be. Users as compared to never users believed that "e-cigarettes are affordable" was a true statement. Also users believed that e-cigarettes are healthier than traditional cigarettes as compared to never users. Users agreed and never users disagreed, both at about 56%, with the statement that "e-cigarettes are not completely safe, but not as bad as regular (traditional) cigarettes." See Table 4.

For statements in reference to e-cigarettes being easier to get, not being harmful, and e-cigarettes being able to explode during use, there were no significant differences among users and never users. Vaping products have had restrictions on a state-by-state basis. Several states have raised the age to purchase vaping products; policy to monitor and further explore vaping products and the health effects are well under way.

Discussion

This study recruited college students to gain information on who is vaping and using e-cigarettes, what products are being added to e-cigarette liquids by which demographic groups, and what are the beliefs about vaping for ever users as compared to never users. In our study, the prevalence of ever users, using even once, was 61% (n= 357). College students in general are currently trying and using e-cigarettes and vape products at an alarming rate. The use of e-cigarettes begins in lower educational grades. The Monitoring the Future 2019 Survey reports a daily rate of 11.7% and a monthly rate of 1 in 4 (25.5%) of high school seniors who are currently vaping. It also revealed that as students progressed through middle and high school, the rate at which they are vaping is increasing from 1 in 10 to 1 in 5 students vaping, with added nicotine, on a regular basis (National Institute of Health [NIH], 2019). In addition, it was found that 42.5% of high school seniors have done (any) vaping in their lifetime (NIH, 2020). According to the CDC, e-cigarettes are now the most commonly used tobacco product by youth (CDC, 2018a). In a study by Chapman in 2014, there was a significant amount of youth who never smoked traditional cigarettes but vaped (Chapman, 2014). Vaping is a rising trend that is affecting our youth.

In this current study, data were analyzed based on three main hypotheses. The first hypothesis focused on usage differences by the demographics of users: There will be a significant difference between/among demographic groups (gender, race, grade classification, grade point average (GPA), employment status, and living conditions) who are more likely to have vaped or used e-cigarettes, with Whites vaping more. This hypothesis was partially supported. White/Caucasians and Other Races (not Black/African American) were more likely to vape. CDC also found differences in tobacco use in US youth by race/ethnicity which were significant. The Pacific Islander/Hawaiians group accounted for the highest users of tobacco, and e-cigarettes were most popular among youth (Truth, 2018). Race is a consistent demographic that can influence vaping usage.

Table 4

Health Beliefs by Vaping Status

"E-cigarettes make me feel accepted among my peers"			Chi square	Df	P value
	Users	Non Users	7.74	1	.005
True	31.7% (n=107)	20.9% (n=46)			
Not True	68.3% (n=231)	79.1% (n=174)			
"E-cigarettes are affordable"			Chi square	Df	P value
	Users	Non Users	23.93	1	.000
True	71.8% (n=242)	51.4% (n=112)			
Not True	28.2% (n=95)	48.6% (n=106)			
"E-cigarettes are healthier than traditional cigarettes"			Chi-square	Df	P-value
	Users	Non Users	27.9	1	.000
True	56% (n=188)	33% (n=72)			
Not True	44% (n=148)	67% (n=146)			
"E-cigarettes are not completely safe, but they are not as dangerous as regular cigarettes"			Chi-square	Df	P-value
	Users	Non Users	8.06	1	.005
Agree	57.1% (n=194)	44.8% (n=100)			
Disagree	42.9% (n=146)	55.2% (n=123)			

"E-cigarettes are not completely safe, but they are not as bad as the media makes them out to be"			Chi-square	Df	P-value
	Users	Non Users	28.12	1	.000
Agree	44% (n=149)	22.1% (n=49)			
Disagree	56% (n=190)	77.9% (n=173)			

       Also for the first hypothesis, employment status was one of the demographic factors that was significant. It would be easy to assume that those employed would have more money for purchase of products to vape. Our study showed that more users were employed. However, there were not any other studies that showed employment status to be a determining factor in e-cigarette usage. An issue that youth who vape will have to battle will be policies and worksite restrictions. Employers have begun placing restrictions on e-cigarette smokers as much as traditional cigarette smokers. The legal battle for the rights of smokers has been long documented in court cases and research articles. Being a user can be considered a determining factor for hiring, and for those addicted, a disability (Allen, 2014). The right to hire someone who does or does not vape is also a growing concern. Those are seek employment or who are employed and who vape are waging a new battle for their rights to be able to continue vaping at the workplace, or even to be hired. Demographics that were not significant in our study were significant in other studies. Stalling-Smith performed a longitudinal study that showed more males using e-cigarettes or vaping than females (Stalling-Smith, 2019). In a second study, gender differences in substance use were close with more females using (Montano, 2019).

       The second hypothesis in our study focused on those college students who added substances to their e-cigarettes, such as nicotine and THC, and possible demographic differences. We hypothesized that there would not be a higher prevalence in the usage of nicotine or THC oils among demographic groups (gender, race, grade classification, GPA, and living/employment conditions). We found that of those students who reported vaping, slightly more male students (52.5%) used nicotine when vaping than female students (51.9%), although not statistically significant. This second hypothesis was partially supported. Our study did find significant differences in vaping with nicotine by race. White/Caucasian students (63.3%) reported vaping nicotine more than Black/African Americans or students of other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Nicotine use while vaping was also more prominent in slightly younger college students. From 2017 to 2018, nicotine use in vaping products has doubled in a year's span (Schaeffer, 2019). During this time, 15% of college students between the ages of 19 and 22 reported vaping nicotine within the previous month. The reported use of nicotine in vaping products saw an increase of 9% from 2017, when only 6% reported nicotine vaping use during the previous month. Nicotine is highly addictive and is a key ingredient in some of the vaping devices (CDC, 2019a). Nicotine in e-cigarettes is just as harmful and addictive, if not worse, as in traditional cigarettes. Liquid nicotine puff production of nicotine levels can be at higher doses than

traditional cigarettes at times, but other times it was measured at lower nicotine levels. This makes the measurement of puff production nicotine unstable (Talih et al., 2015).

      In our study, about 47% of students who vaped reported using e-liquids containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) (n=169). Males reported vaping THC more than females although it was not statistically significant. In a longitudinal study of college students' e-cigarette use, males and marijuana users were most likely to begin using e-cigarettes (Spindle et al., 2017). In addition to gender differences, students in our study who reported using THC while vaping were slightly older and had slightly lower GPAs than those who did not report using THC, all of which were different but not significantly. In a cross sectional study, taken from the North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey, it was found that from 9th grade to 12th grade the use of cannabis in an e-cigarette vaping tripled. This aligned with our findings that the older students are more likely to use cannabis (Kowitt et al., 2019). There has been growing controversy about vaping THC cartridges because of the associated health effects. A health condition has been identified as EVALI, or e-cigarette or vaping product-use associated lung injury. According to the CDC, as of February 25, 2020, lung injuries associated with vaping have been reported from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two United States territories (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), with there being at least 68 confirmed deaths. The CDC examined these patients; they found that THC was present in 82% of all samples tested, in addition to Vitamin E acetate (CDC, 2019b).

      Many US states have passed laws regarding use of recreational marijuana which include the regulated sale of THC oils. However, people living in states where marijuana is still criminalized cannot obtain regulated THC cartridges. This causes the unregulated, black market sales of THC cartridges in which dealers try to make profit and meet demands by cutting THC cartridges with Vitamin E acetate (Duffy et al., 2020). College students can be informed of the consequences of using these ingredients, but most of the research is still in the early stages. Unreliable information/education is still being circulated among users.

      The third hypothesis dealt with differences in perceptions of health effects between students who ever vaped or never vaped. We hypothesized that those students who vaped, even once, versus those who did not vape would have more positive health beliefs about the use of these devices and have decreased knowledge regarding the negative health effects. In our study, college students who vaped as compared to never vapers believed there is less harm (not as dangerous) in using e-cigarettes than traditional tobacco products, supporting our final hypothesis. A study which surveyed college students who smoked cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and both, concluded there was a perception that there was a lowered harm and less addictiveness of e-cigarettes or dual use of smoking cigarettes and using e-cigarettes (Cooper et al., 2017). Another study conducted examined the use of cannabis vape pens which lead to decreased perceptions of health risks (Frohe et al, 2018). This also supports the findings from our study.

      Students who declared to be users believed that e-cigarettes were not as harmful as traditional cigarettes but that the media makes e-cigarettes out to be worse than they truly are. In another study on media, an online survey was used to compare the effects of viewing positive, negative, and a combination of new headlines. The results of this study were significant and found that news coverage about e-cigarettes can change and influence the beliefs of e-cigarette users regarding the harm and benefits of e-cigarettes (Tan et al., 2017). An increased presence of social marketing has enticed teens to vape for recreation. The media does have an effect on our youth and can influence their beliefs and expand or limit their knowledge regarding vaping. A

campaign designed to decrease vaping on social media should be launched to inform youth regarding the health effects of additives. The US Truth Initiation campaign is aimed at youth and explains the health effects to them. Expanding this campaign to be not only national but international would broaden knowledge and understanding to all, including those who vape (Truth, 2019).

Because teen vaping has rapidly increased over the past few years, CDC and the American Medical Association have urged individuals to avoid e-cigarettes until the duration of their ongoing investigation is completed on the health effects and deaths associated with vaping (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2019). The true effects of e-cigarettes can be learned by more education regarding e-cigarettes and vaping conducted at a younger age, possibly in the middle school and junior high settings. Peer support and education is available through university health centers on campuses nationwide for those in college. The health effects of vaping have been shown to be fatal, but are preventable. Resources to educate students about nicotine, e-liquids and THC oils specifically should be available. School-based vaping prevention and cessation programs aimed at specific demographics and additives as key topics should be designed and conducted. Students can also be provided with other on-campus recreational opportunities to promote alternative healthier behaviors. Decreasing vaping behavior is imperative since vaping has become so popular among college age students and has such deleterious health effects.

Limitations

Although this study generated interesting findings and added to the knowledge base on vaping and e-cigarette use among university students, there were some limitations. First, this study used a convenience sample in which professors and instructors volunteered their classes for participation. In addition, it relied on students' self reporting of their usage, attitudes and knowledge. Finally, it involved data collection and entry by several researchers, which could have introduced errors and possible biases. Despite these shortcomings, the current research adds to the body of knowledge about who vapes by demographics, who is using nicotine or THC when vaping, and differences in health beliefs by vaping status.

Conclusions

Our study and others support a high prevalence and rising rate of vaping among youth. The need to be cautious regarding the health effects of vaping, and especially the use of nicotine and THC additives is vastly supported. In this study, the significant findings were in line with several other studies and articles regarding vaping status, and addition of substances such as nicotine and THC into vaping liquids by demographics, and knowledge and beliefs of the health effects by vaping status. These results support the development of educational programs to equip youth with the necessary knowledge and skills for making an important decision to vape or not to vape. In fact, if youth were better educated on the effects of vaping and the ingredients in the products they consume, fewer youth might initiate the use of e-cigarettes altogether. To be able to avoid addiction and other possible negative consequences would be the desired outcome. High schools and universities should work together within communities by providing health education programs, including prevention and cessation classes. Curricula can be adjusted to intervene at a younger age, and communities can prioritize vaping prevention and cessation directed to certain demographic groups.

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Middle School Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Physical Education in their Education and Throughout their Lives

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Abstract

Physical education (PE) promotes educating a student in three areas: 1) affective, 2) cognitive, and (3) psychomotor. Due to these claims made, it is assumed that the general public would favorably support PE for all students to participate in daily or as often as possible. Unfortunately, PE is not as accepted as it should be. Because of this, support for PE is needed from as many populations as possible. One of these populations that support PE are middle school students. Thus, the purpose of this study was to better understand middle school students' perceptions of PE's importance in their education and throughout their life. It was generally found that middle school students feel PE is important for their education.

Key Words: Physical Education, middle school, students

Introduction

Physical education (PE) is unique from other content areas in that it claims to educate a student in many areas. Educating a student in physical education can be found to affect the affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains. For example, the affective domain, students develop attitudes and appreciation for participation in physical activity. This covers fair play, sportsmanship, and cooperation with classmates during games and activities. The cognitive domain has student learning focused on acquiring, comprehending and evaluation of knowledge. Such as learning values, strategies, skills and safety in certain activities. And finally, in the psychomotor domain students learn locomotor skills to be used throughout their life. Such skills as throwing, catching, striking, kicking is taught throughout the curriculum (Lumpkin, 1998). Because of what PE has to offer to students; parents, school administrators and the general public should be enthusiastic in giving priority to the importance of PE in a student's education. Yet, the support from these and other groups in society have varied.

For example, Johns and Dimmock (1999) discussed how PE is marginalized in Hong Kong. The researchers found that because academic content areas of math and science are more important in society then PE, PE was considered a "less academic subject." This study implied that physical education does not prepare students for the real world. It was concluded that both parents and school administrators have marginalized PE. For example, parents were of the opinion that PE is unimportant and not on the same level as math and science. Because of this mind set, parents felt that if their child was enrolled in a PE class it would negatively affect their child's academic grades. The school administrators were of the opinion that PE helps produce

successful athletic teams, raise the schools' reputation and that PE maintained discipline in the school. The researchers found that school administrators were more likely to allocate as much time as was needed for math, science and languages. The researchers also noted other forms of marginalizing PE by having PE classes in inappropriate sized spaces (half court on the basketball floor), class sizes with as many as 100 students in the classes, and the equipment used in the PE classes were either broken or did not have enough for everyone to have a piece of equipment. A negative result for the student's regarding the small space provided for the students, was the PE teachers attempting to take students outside for class activities. The problems with the students going outside were the high levels of pollution with extreme humidity. Along these lines Cook (2005) learned how elementary PE had been eliminated from a students' education in one elementary school in the Pacific Northwest. Because of the elimination of PE in this school, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) held fund raisers so that they had enough money to support a physical education teacher in the school. The author finds it interesting to note that even though some schools are losing PE classes, logic should dictate that PE programs should expand faster than the waistlines of today's youth.

       As stated earlier, society's support for PE has varied, not all populations have negative attitudes towards PE. Barney and Deutsch (2009) investigated elementary classroom teacher's (ECT) attitudes and perspectives towards elementary PE. The researchers surveyed elementary classroom teachers from three states. One survey statement asked the ECT if they believed PE class was important for their students. An overwhelming majority of the ECT from the three states felt that PE class was important for their students. Comments from the ECT were "it can help students with the obesity problem," and "PE can help students to learn other things like social skills, teamwork, communicating with others and problem solving." Another survey statement posed to the ECT was if the skills and knowledge students learn in PE class are going to be important for them throughout their lives. Once again, a majority of the ECT from the three states responded positively to this survey statement. Responses to this statement were, "students will learn the skills and knowledge that will encourage being physically active throughout their lives," and "they would learn sportsmanship, working with others, discipline, strategies in games, and problem solving." The results from this study highlight ECT support and importance of PE for their students, but also that PE can play an important part throughout a student's life. As discussed, there are skills learned in PE that will benefit a student in many aspects of their life. Thus, the purpose of this study was to better understand middle school students' perceptions of PE's importance in their education and throughout their life.

Methods

Participants

       The participants for this study consisted of students from a middle school in an Upper Midwest city in the United States. The students ($n= 227$) came from intact classes comprised of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. The university institutional review board (IRB) granted permission to conduct this study. Prior to the start of the study, the researcher met with the PE teachers and principal and proposed the intentions of the study. Permission to conduct the study was given by the school principal. Parental consent was obtained. The survey was administered on site.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this study, the Physical Education Interest Questionnaire (PEIQ) was developed to measure interest in PE and related factors (Van Wersch & Turner, 1992). The survey was used in a pilot study and it was found to be .70 reliable (see Figure 1). During the pilot study the author established content validity of the survey. The total number of items on the survey was 35. Within the survey, six sub-areas were created. They were: 1) interest in PE; 2) the degree to which students construe PE as a subject with masculine or feminine connotation; 3) how students construed PE compared with other school subjects; 4) satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the class curriculum; 5) effect the PE teacher has on the students; and 6) physical changes middle school students are experiencing and the effects they have on their attitudes (Barney & Deutsch, 2009). For the purpose of this study, five questions (13, 14, 15, 16, & 17) on the survey dealing with how students construed PE compared with other school subjects.

Interviews

After the survey was completed and analyzed, the researcher conducted a second part of the data collection, student interviews. For this study, 28 students were interviewed. After the surveys were analyzed 14 students who responded positively and 14 students who responded negatively to the survey were interviewed. The researcher reasoned that 28 students would give a good picture of student attitudes towards physical educations importance to other content subjects. The number of questions asked and analyzed to each student was determined by their responses from the survey. Every student was not asked the same amount of questions. The researcher analyzed all of the interview data, but for this study, the five survey statements regarding PE importance were analyzed.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program. Percentages were used to reflect the student's responses for each item being analyzed. A 3-point Likert scale was used. The following numerical values were given for every student response: 1=Agree, 2= Neutral and 3= Disagree. When analyzing the data the following variables were investigated: a) grade level: 6th, 7th and 8th, and gender: male (n=118). Other data collected from this study was interview responses from the participants. The researcher recorded and then transcribed the participants responses to the interview questions. The researcher then read and re-read the data until common themes became evident (Mueller & Skamp, 2003).

<p align="center">Results</p>

Quantitative Data

For this study, survey questions 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 were examined. For statement 13 participants were asked if they do not go to school to do PE, but to learn more important

subjects. For this statement, over 55% of the 7th graders (56%) and 8th graders (56%) disagreed with this statement. Interestingly, for this statement 20% or less of the students in all grades agreed with this statement. Statement 14 stated, "PE at school is not important because you can do sports in your spare time." Here again, a large majority of students (6th graders: 77%, 7th graders: 75% and 8th graders: 70%) disagreed with this statement. For statement 15, it states, "PE is not important because you cannot get a job by doing it." For this statement a large majority of the students disagreed. When looking at grade and gender, 90% of the 6th grade male students disagreed with this statement. For statement 16, students were asked if they preferred PE were as important as other school subjects. The response to this survey question were evenly dispersed between the three survey choices. Another survey question asked the students if they would rather do PE than other school subjects (Question 17). Here again, a large majority of students agreed with this statement (86% of 6th grade males).

Qualitative Data

Other data collected was from student interviews. One of the interview questions was, "If you feel other subjects in school are more important than PE, would you still take PE?" Jane said, "I'd still take PE, because I can run around and talk instead of sitting in class and doing math or other things. I really look forward to coming to PE every day." John stated, "Yes, I would still take PE, because I am an active person and I like to run around. I think it is important to be active. I need it." And Roberta said, "Yes, I would take PE, but if I had to take math or other classes to graduate, I wouldn't take PE." Another interview question for the students were, "Do you feel PE can help you find/or get a job later in life? For this interview question many of the students took a moment to think through this question. The following are a couple of the student responses. Frank stated,

"I don't think taking PE classes will help me get a job later, but there are things we do in class that will help me when I get a job. I think getting along with other people will help when I get a job. When we play flag football in PE, we have to listen to the quarterback in the huddle. I will have to listen and follow what my boss tells me to do."

Susan said,

"I want to be an elementary [school] teacher. So, I won't be teaching PE exactly. Still I can probably teach my students about how to play games, how to be a good sport, even when someone doesn't win. So what I do in PE class, might help me with my students I will teach."

Lewis said, "I want to be a lawyer, so PE won't help me out at all when I am a lawyer."

One other interview question student's were asked was would you rather do PE then other school subjects. Sandy said, "Duh! Who wouldn't want to do PE, then do math?" Brett said,

"There are some things we do in class that aren't my favorite things to do. But still, most of what we do in class is so much fun. Also, it is fun playing with my friends in class. It makes the class so much better."

And finally, the students were asked if PE was an important class for them to take in school. Cindy stated, "Yes, I feel PE can help me now and it can help me when I am older." Jon said, "Yes, it is important because it keeps my body in shape and I learn things like why it is important to be active my whole life." And Scott said, "I really think PE is good because it helps me in my other classes. It wakes me up and I feel I am more alert during class."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand middle school students' perceptions of PE's importance in their education and throughout their life. Generally, the findings suggest that middle school students feel that PE is an important aspect of their education and that what they learn and participate in PE class will benefit them throughout their life. One of the first points of discussion deals with PE's importance compared to other content subjects from a student's perspective. The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) have come out with a number of position statements dealing with a number of different topics in K-12 PE. One in particular is titled, Physical Education is Essential for all Students: No Substitutions, Waivers or Exemptions for Physical Education. Part of the rationale states:

> "Physical education is an academic subject and, as such, demands the same rigor as other subjects. Physical education provides students with a sequential K-12 standard-based program designed to develop movement skills as well as knowledge to create and implement personal plans for physical activity and fitness. It also provides the contributing supports of social-emotional learning and nutrition, leading to meaningful participation in daily physical activity."

The statement continues by saying, "instructional programs in physical education are essential for building their skills, advancing their knowledge, and contributing to their dispositions towards physical activity at all stages of their lives (SHAPE, 2018). From this study a majority of the male and female participants disagreed that they do not go to school to do PE, but to learn more important subjects. From the qualitative data the students felt that PE was an important part of their day and important to their education. One student stated, "I like PE and it sure helps me as I go to other classes. I don't know why some people don't think PE is important."

Another point of discussion was would the students rather do PE then other school subjects. Hopple (2018) studied 4th, 5th, and 6th grade student's feelings towards PE. The researcher learned that these students like PE because it is fun. Yet, during this study the researcher learned of specific reasons why PE is fun. For example, students found PE fun because they can be physically active and move, they loved their interactions with their PE teachers and classmates, that being physically active helped relieve stress, the feelings they felt while they were being physically active and learning new skills. These results from this study obviously highlight that students find PE fun, because they find PE fun, attitudes are positive that will only help as they take other PE classes throughout their education. From this study a majority of the students would rather do PE then other subjects. This implies that they find PE fun and enjoyable. As one of the students' expressed, "Duh! Who wouldn't want to do PE."

And finally, students were asked if PE was an important class to take in school. The literature has attested that PE is positively related to increased academic performance (Castelli, Hillman, Buck, & Erwin, 2007), that PE can serve as a stress reliever for students (Barney, Pleban, & Lewis, 2019) and that PE develops physically literate students (SHAPE, 2014). From this study, student responses affirm PE being an important subject for them to participate in. Interview statements from this study were, "PE can help me now and it can help me when I am older." Another student stated, "I really think PE is good because it helps me in my other classes. It wakes me up and I feel I am more alert during class."

Implications of this Study

The results of this study reinforce the importance of PE classes for middle school students. This coming from the middle school students themselves. These results can be added to the voice of parents (Barney & Pleban, 2011) and elementary classroom teachers (Barney & Deutsch, 2012) that feel PE is valuable and important in so many ways to help students while in school and after they graduate from the school system. The results from this study only strengthens PE's claim of being an important part of a student's education.

Limitations

The researcher noted limitations to this study. For this study the participants came from one middle school. Because the participants came from one school it may allow a representative sampling of middle school students from other schools. Also, the participants for this study were from the same geographic region of the United States, thus limiting the generalizing of the findings.

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Figure 1
Middle School Students Opinions of Physical Education's Importance

13. I do not go to school to do PE, but to learn more important subjects.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
6th Grade	20%	35%	45%
Male	19%	24%	57%
Female	23%	40%	67%
7th Grade	12%	32%	56%
Male	11%	22%	67%
Female	12%	40%	48%
8th Grade	10%	34%	56%
Male	13%	44%	43%
Female	10%	34%	56%

14. PE at school is not important because you can do sports in your spare time.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
6th Grade	5%	18%	77%
Male	5%	14%	81%
Female	6%	20%	74%
7th Grade	7%	18%	75%
Male	7%	20%	73%
Female	7%	16%	77%
8th Grade	6%	24%	70%
Male	6%	23%	71%
Female	6%	25%	69%

Table 1 Cont.
Middle School Students Opinions of Physical Education's Importance

15. PE is not important because you cannot get a job by doing it.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
6th Grade	4%	14%	82%
Male	0%	10%	90%
Female	6%	17%	77%
7th Grade	2%	10%	88%
Male	2%	11%	87%
Female	2%	9%	89%
8th Grade	2%	18%	80%
Male	0%	12%	88%
Female	2%	18%	80%

16. I would prefer it if PE were as important as other school subjects.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
6th Grade	30%	38%	32%
Male	43%	19%	38%
Female	23%	49%	28%
7th Grade	26%	33%	41%
Male	29%	27%	44%
Female	40%	25%	35%
8th Grade	35%	28%	37%
Male	40%	25%	35%
Female	19%	38%	43%

Table 1 Cont.
Middle School Students Opinions of Physical Education's Importance

17. I would rather do PE than other school subjects.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
6th Grade	64%	25%	11%
Male	86%	10%	4%
Female	51%	34%	15%
7th Grade	57%	23%	19%
Male	38%	31%	31%
Female	58%	23%	19%
8th Grade	68%	18%	14%
Male	44%	31%	25%
Female	68%	18%	14%

A Department Chair – Navigating Tenure and Promotion

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Abstract

Achieving the ranks of tenure and promotion (T&P) are necessary within the academic academy. Unfortunately, there is not a one size fit all and the selection process is often laden with hidden agendas, especially for minorities. Discrimination in promotion often exists in the form of racism, ageism and an implicit notation that one can only get there without "time served", even when credentials exceeds requirements and others who have already achieved similar rank. To overcome some of the T&P obstacles, it is paramount for individuals to understand expectations for promotion. Usually publication is the deciding factor regardless of the type of institution. Faculty should secure an accountability scholarship network since it is not readily built into routine functions within the university as it is for teaching. Faculty needs vary depending on rank, understanding and addressing these different needs may be key to faculty motivation and productivity.
Key Words: Tenure and promotion, discrimination, diversity, salaries

Confounding Factors in Tenure and Promotion

Achieving the academic rank of full professor is one the highest ranks a college faculty member can earn.   University trends are changing, and positions previously held by full professors are not being renewed and adjunct faculty are being hired to cover positions previously held by tenured faculty. There are many factors impacting one's ability to navigate to tenure and promotion (T&P) processes. Factors may include discrimination and marginalization of targeted groups, including gender biases, ageism, and racism. Other issues may include a lack of consideration for individual needs at different ranks in the T&P process. Understanding that faculty members seeking initial T&P have needs that are vastly different from seasoned faculty having earned the rank of professor. Also, there are situations, especially following initial rank where T&P guidelines are laden with ambiguity which allows for a person's credentials to be evaluated with flexibility and subjectivity.

Most universities have guidelines regarding record keeping including, what information should be kept, how often it should be tracked, guidelines regarding storage and accessibility.

Good record keeping impacts institutional accountability and credibility. However, many universities have poor data management regarding T&P data, including age, gender, rank, attempts, denials, discipline, demographic make-up of committees, and nationality. However, data tracking is essential when studying T&P because this information allows for trend data analysis and decision making.

Hao (2003) states that "discrimination against women and minorities is as pervasive in education as it is in other areas of employment…". This discrimination is more prominent in fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), where minorities and women are often steered away from because of the concept that *the hard* sciences are too difficult or beyond the intellectual grasp of minorities (Wheeler & Freeman, 2019). Guarino and Borden, 2017 found that women engaged in and were called upon to participate in service more than males. Women are more likely to complete *office housework*, cleaning, making coffee, decorating and other domestic chores. Similarly, Griffin et al. (2011) reported that Black women often felt over-extended because of their need to give back and help others by serving on a dispropionate number of committees when compared with their majority colleagues. Frazier (2011) reports that Blacks are often filling the gap by mentoring and advising underrepresented populations, serving as the university's symbol of diversity in all things as an expectation and sometimes assignment. Diversity fatigue, referred by Lam (2018) is when underrepresented faculty are called upon to do more work in the form of the *diversity*, including advising mentoring, training, diversity workshops, often more than their fair share of labor with little return on investment in the form of promotion and tenure. In most situations these extra efforts contribute to the overall quality of the institution and allow universities to address how they are meeting diversity expectations. However, related to T&P, these extra responsibilities take away from time faculty have for research and contributes minimally or does not contribute at all.

Rio and Madariga (2016), offers guidelines for overcoming gender biases including recognizing they exist including speaking time for women versus men, specifically men getting more speaking time. Women being perceived as difficult or not collegial when they assert themselves. Having an underrepresentation of women and minorities in positions that count. Authors stress the importance of women being purposefully assertive and addressing actions that appear undermining, striking a balance between saying yes and no, and building an environment for social interactions. Other recommendations are to be inclusive by recommending women and other minorities for decision making positions. Hao (2003) stresses the importance of not only recognizing but practicing self-awareness of male and white privilege as a necessity for having empathy and building compassion. The importance of recognizing self-behaviors and what can be done individually and institutionally including recognizing trouble exists and acknowledging it and speaking out and not trivializing or blaming the victims or the oppressed is discussed. Join in a call for action which may be internalized or more overt. This includes building a sense of community in which one's satisfaction is joined directly with the connection of others and not at their expense.

There continues to be a divide between male and female salaries at similar rank. During the 2014-2015 academic year, men who were full professors at public universities had an average salary of $120,055, while women in the same role earned an average salary of $104,832. During this same timeframe, male full professors at private universities earned an average salary of $154,144 whereas females with similar rank earned an average salary of $133,228.

Accordingly, between 2019 – 2020 the average salary of women was 81.4 percent of what men make (American Association of University Professors, 2014, 2019).

Ageism or discriminating towards an individual because of their age is another consideration in the T&P process. This may be too young or too old. The average age of academic faculty is around 55 (Chau, 2015). According to USA Academic Career Structure, the average age of tenure is 39 and the average age of full professors is 55. Sometimes, younger faculty may not be told out right that they have not served their time at a particular rank or worked in the academy for a specified period of time, although time is sometimes viewed a deciding factor over productivity when considering T&P. Typical stereotypes are that individuals are not considered for rank or specific benefits because of age.

Chambers & Freeman (2020) interviewed seven young (age range 33-44) minority full professors who earned the rank of full professor before the age of 45 to determine if they experienced discrimination because of age and race. Findings did not result in age discrimination however, themes evolved regarding age, questioning how individuals were able to publish as much as they did within a short time span, treatment as junior faculty because they *looked young*, and being asked, "why would you want to go up so fast". Others reported that T&P guidelines were clear, and they were mentored to adhere to established criteria. Although age discrimination was not found, no one was denied promotion. However, questions regarding the rigor of the T&P guidelines arose, and possible considerations for a hostile work environment. Institutions of higher education do not want to encounter legal actions regarding these factors. Chou (2015) states that there is a "young professor phenomenon" in which universities are functioning utilizing a business model and awarding and promoting younger professionals based on their potential for productivity or meeting the mark, rather than their age. Productivity is often greater, for faculty who have recently finished their degree, including being energetic, enthusiastic, highly motivated.

Understanding T&P Guidelines –
What I do vs what I am evaluated on vs Tenure and Promotion Criteria

In the academy, it seems that research trumps service and teaching regardless of the size of the university, status of the institution, assignment of responsibility, and or type of institution, research, or teaching. According to skill number four, "Mastering Academic Time Management" presented by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD). A major pitfall in navigating the academy is when a faculty member *fails to understand the game*. Which is, publications add value, gives autonomy, and offers credibility. Although, there is little to no built-in accountability.

Often there is a mismatch regarding the assignment of responsibility and tenure and promotion guidelines. For example, faculty member's annual assignment consists of a large percentage of time teaching and service and single digit allowances for scholarship however, there is little correlation between workload and the P&T criteria (Schimanski, L. A., & Alperin, J. p. 2018, Diamond & Adam, 1998). Gordon, 2008 found that faculty gave preference to either teaching or research based on the type of institution (teaching or research). For institutions that were mixed, faculty indicated that productivity in research was viewed more favorable than teaching and at research institutions, teaching and service carried little to no weight in the T&P process.

Having Clear T&P Guidelines

There are usually clear T&P guidelines when moving from one rank to the other, especially requirements for earning tenue (Finnegan & Hyle, 2009, Singe et al., 2019). However, within those guidelines, expertise associated with different ranks are not clear and/or evaluated and sometimes purposefully vague. When individuals at different ranks were asked what was learned regarding how to navigate the academy, responses varied based on rank. Initial responses indicated learning little regarding self-regulation and actualization. Whereas with the rank of associate professor there was more objectivity, recognition of social roles having different responsibilities, confidence in self and work based on acceptance from other faculty and students. They reported more control over their confidence and ability to establish different ways of sharing their expertise. Patterns existed by rank, junior faculty reported needing a sounding board to help with self-pacing, and mentoring guidance through professional activities, and assistance with publishing, whereas mid-level needed time, and encouragement, senior needs stimulation.

Wheeler (1990) found that faculty vitality may be recognized in stages and goals and needs vary at different stages of career passages. Progressing through the ranks from assistant professor to full professor is labor intensive, and emotionally exhaustive. Rank is typically based on the number of articles produced, teaching evaluations, service but not the quality of progression or mastery. Similarly, Jaschik (2012) found Associate Professors have less job satisfaction than assistant and full professors. Recognizing after tenure many supports, release time are gone, teaching more, and obtaining support for presentations are met with a brick wall after tenure. The security and protection once held is no longer available. Faculty after tenure get stuck especially women and minorities, they get bogged down with service. This mid-level group is often the backbone of the university. Service take away from needed time to produce scholarship, resulting in a state of exhaustion, disappointment, and stagnation which has been termed the "midcareer malaise" (Beauboeuf et al, 2017).

Typically, Black faculty who are successful in the tenure and promotion process at Primarily White Institutions (PWIs) learn to navigate within the system by finding community, like mindedness and not always because the institution is supportive (Christian 2012, Matthew, 2016). Soares (2015) found evidence that in some situations, community in the form of shared authorship could be a problem during the T&P process, when only first author is recognized.

Moving through the ranks does not include different levels of understanding. Schimanski and Alperin (2018) discussed that T&P does not clearly equate to improved knowledge, critical inquiry, instead often scholarship is based on sheer numbers. Criteria does not always address peer reviewed. The academy is not keeping up with and addressing T&P as it relates to current trends such as proprietary journals, open access, on-line publishing, information technology communication trends, and the lack of prestigious journal to publish in within a short period of time (Howard, 2013).

Gruzd, et al. (2011) interviewed faculty at all ranks asking if and how social media was used in the T&P process. Results were that only a small percentage indicated that social media was part of the T&P process. However, this will likely change in the way universities approach T&P policies as well as publishing scholarly work. These factors may become more critical in the age of COVID-19 and the delay time it takes to publish in peer reviewed journals, make take years. When junior tenure earning athletic trainers were interviewed, common themes evolved

indicating a clear understanding of teaching research and service as part of the evaluation for tenure and promotion. However, common themes evolved indicating the expectations not being quantifiable and sometimes confusing and vague, including different expectations at different levels in the review process (Singe et al., 2019).

Wells et al. (2019) had four pre-tenured faculty (3 females 1 male) engage in autoethnographic research using pictures to assess how photographs represented self-care practice and a sense of resiliency during the pre- tenure process, personally and professionally. Four themes evolved as follows: Community – being with and experiencing with faculty going through or who have gone through similar experiences, having support, humor, and a higher power, also, keeping things to self because of competition in the academy. Theme 2 – Balance-including personal and professional life, staying true to personal values. Questioning how "writing 10 articles" help provide people (students) with tools to be successful. Theme 3 Coping Strategies – positive or mal adaptive, and Theme 4 Process - looking at what is required and reality including transparency, subjectiveness, "how the process feels" related to traumas, tension, including being remined of self and job separation. The process is laden with mixed messages (Barat & Harvey, 2015). Teaching is important but it is known that research is what matters.

Although the importance of community and connection has been clearly identified as a necessity in the tenure and promotion process, Tillman (2001) found that Black faculty at White institutions often suffered from social isolation, including little to no social, emotional, and personal support, even when they were successful in the T&P process. It is further discussed that mentoring programs are inadequate when Black are paired with Whites and there is no connection, and often times a direct counter to what mentoring should be, when the White counterpart actually adds to isolation and separation. Contributing to the ongoing turnover of Black faculty at PWIs. Sadly, this much needed understanding is often not discussed at department level meetings, nor closed mentorship activities. There is much more dialogue required, and this topic has not been extensively published among those in the academy.

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