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An Evaluation of the Recreation Interest of Hopkins County Middle School Students

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AN EVALUATION OF THE RECREATION INTEREST OF HOPKINS COUNTY
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Physical Education and Recreation
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Science

By
Tricia Ann Jordan

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AN EVALUATION OF THE RECREATION INTEREST OF HOPKINS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Dean, Graduate Studies and Research Date
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The purpose of this study is to identify potential recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students, thereby assisting the Hopkins County Family YMCA in teen program development. In addition, the study investigates potential constraints these students encounter. One hundred and twenty-five students from four public middle schools participated in the recreation needs assessment. The recreation needs assessment instrument consisted of five activity categories (arts and crafts activities; dance, drama, and music activities; literary activities; nature activities; and sports and games). Category activity selections were limited to those activities the Hopkins County Family YMCA was willing and/or capable of offering considering current human, facility, and fiscal resources. Overall, the adolescent’s selected photography, basketball, and modern dance lessons as the top three recreational activities. The assessment’s findings also indicated the number one reason for nonparticipation in after school or weekend recreation activities is “I’m too busy to participate” regardless of gender.
Chapter One

Introduction

Adolescent leisure research has included studies of the potential benefits associated with recreational activity involvement (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney, 2000; Sallis, 2000), the association between gender and leisure preferences (Phillip, 1998; James, 2000; James 2001), the influence of others on leisure preferences (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Hultsman, 1993; Shaw, Caldwell, & Kleiber, 1996), boredom (Shaw et al., 1996; Caldwell, Darling, Payne, & Dowby, 1999) and constraints (McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Jackson & Rucks, 1995). Available research findings indicate that there are approximately eight million children ages 5-14 who regularly spend time without adult supervision (Miller, 1999). The need for well-planned and appealing recreational opportunities becomes evident when examining research findings that indicate students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to have used drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents than are students who spend one to four hours per week involved in extracurricular activities (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Recent research findings indicate extracurricular involvement has been linked to decreases in school drop out rates and young adult criminal arrest rates (Mahoney, 2000). In addition, adolescents have reported the development of new skills, improved talents, the development of interpersonal communication skills, opportunities to search for identity, stress relief, and opportunities to socialize or spend time with friends as benefits they derive from recreational activity
participation (Hultsman, 1996; Haggard & Williams, 1992; Fitzgerald, Joseph, Hayes, & O’Regan, 1995).

From an agency’s perspective, it is important to involve adolescents in program planning and development as research findings indicate lower rates of boredom are reported by adolescents who freely choose free-time activities. In addition, adolescents who freely choose free-time activities report higher levels of intrinsic value associated with their participation (Caldwell, et al., 1999). Equally important are research findings that link child and adolescent leisure activity preferences with leisure activity preferences of adults (Philip, 1998; Scott & Willits, 1998).

As part of a Hopkins County Family long range-planning meeting, community volunteers identified teen program development as one of four priorities to be addressed by the YMCA in the next three years. The purpose of this study is to examine potential activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students, thereby assisting the Hopkins County Family YMCA in the development of programs and activities to meet their needs.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine potential recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. These data were collected to assist the Hopkins County Family YMCA in the development of activities and programs to meet the needs of area middle school students. The author also investigated potential constraints these students encounter.
Significance of the Study

Adolescent leisure research in the 1990’s has included studies of the potential benefits associated with recreational activity involvement (Bergin, 1992; Hultsman, 1996; Page, Hammermeister, Scanlan, & Gilbert, 1998; Mahoney, 2000; Sallis, 2000), the association between gender, and leisure preferences (Mauldin & Meeks, 1990; Garton & Pratt, 1991; Kleiber, Caldwell, & Shaw, 1993; Gibson & Lynn, 1997; Phillip, 1998), the influence of others on leisure preferences (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Larson & Richardson, 1991; Larson, Richard, Moneta, Holmbeck, & Duckett, 1996; Shaw et al., 1996; Zeijl, tePole, duBois-Reymond, Ravesloot, & Meulman, 2000; James, 2001), boredom (Iso-Ahola & Weissigner, 1990; Larson & Richards, 1991; Shaw et al., 1996; Caldwell et al., 1999), and constraints (Kay & Jackson, 1991; Hultsman, 1993; Raymond, Godbey, & Crawford, 1994; McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Jackson & Rucks, 1995; James, 2000). Many of these studies focused on older adolescents specifically those in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade (Bergin, 1992; Kleiber et al., 1993; Raymore et al., 1994; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Shaw et al., 1996; Page et al., 1998). While still considered adolescents, students in the middle school grades of sixth through eighth have very different recreational interests and needs when compared to older adolescents. This difference is apparent in their definition of “hanging out.” Adolescents, ages thirteen to fourteen, define the term as finding friends to do something with. Adolescents, ages fifteen to sixteen, define the term as “chilling.” (McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995). Further evidence of adolescent difference can be found in the stigma associated with dependence on others for rides. McMeeking and Purkayastha (1995) found that younger adolescents did not view dependence on others for rides as a problem. However, by the
eighth grade this dependence begins to result in frustration stemming from a lack of personal independence.

To assist the Hopkins County Family YMCA in its planning for the next three years, the recreation needs assessment will identify potential recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. The recreation needs assessment will also examine potential constraints these students encounter. As part of the Hopkins County Family YMCA’s long range planning process, a planning meeting was held November 7, 2000. At this time, teens were specifically identified as one of four program areas to be developed by the Hopkins County Family YMCA in the next three years. As part of the long range planning process, YMCA volunteers and community leaders generated a list of potential program areas. Subcommittees were then developed for the top four programs identified areas. At this point in the process, group members were asked to identify what would be evident if the Hopkins County Family YMCA was successful in this area, any potential challenges that might be encountered, needed resources, key next steps, and payoffs. From this information, priorities for the top four program areas were developed. Establishing a Junior ‘Y’ Leader program at each middle school is one of six stated priorities for YMCA teen programming. To be successful in meeting this priority, the Hopkins County Family YMCA must work with middle school students to determine areas and activities of interest to incorporate into the program. The recreation needs assessment is intended to begin the program development process for YMCA programs designed to meet the needs of Hopkins County middle school students.

Limitations

1. The potential for a respondent to misinterpret a question.
2. The number of nonparticipants (either by individual choice or absent recreation needs assessment date).

3. Potential assessment participants forgetting to return permission forms.

**Delimitations**

1. Sample size for the survey was limited to one sixth, seventh, and eighth grade class at each of the four Hopkins County public middle schools.

2. The survey was conducted one time at each middle school.

3. Make-up survey dates were not scheduled for students who were absent the day of the survey.

4. Recreation needs assessment dates were scheduled only in December.

**Assumptions**

1. All participants will answer each question truthfully.

2. The participants will understand each question.

3. The measures taken in the pilot study were sufficient to sample recreation need assessment responses and refine the instrument.

4. The recreation needs assessment readability level is appropriate for use with the middle school years of sixth through eighth.

**Definitions of Terms**

Adolescent, for the purpose of this study, was defined as youth in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.

Recreation, for the purpose of this study, was defined as any (group or individual; passive or active) activity in which the individuals freely choose to participate merely for their own sake or personal satisfaction inherent in the participation (Edginton, Compton,
& Hanson, 1980; Sessoms & Henderson, 1994). The recreational activities included in the survey were further subdivided into five categories including dance, drama, music; literary activities; nature activities; and sports and games (Meyer & Brightbill, 1956; Edginton et al., 1980).

YMCA is the acronym for Young Men’s Christian Association (Hinding, 1998).

Intrapersonal constraints as defined in Crawford, Jackson and Godbey’s research (as cited in Raymond, Godbey & Crawford, 1994, p. 102) “involve individual psychological states and attributes which interact with leisure preferences rather than intervening between preferences and participation.” These may include stress, anxiety, or perceived skill level.

Interpersonal constraints as defined in Crawford et al. research (as cited in Raymond et al., 1994, p. 102) are “the result of interpersonal interactions or the relationship between individuals’ characteristics...better understood as constraints which occur when possible co-participants are perceived to be constrained from participation.” These may include the inability to find a workout partner or friend to participate with in the activity.

Structural constraints as defined in Crawford et al. research (as cited in Raymond et al., 1994, p. 102) are “intervening factors between leisure preferences and participation.” These may include time, cost, or financial resources.
Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Adolescent leisure research has included studies of the potential benefits associated with recreational activity involvement (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney, 2000; Sallis, 2000), the association between gender and leisure preferences (Phillip, 1998; James, 2000; James 2001), the influence of others on leisure preferences (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Hultsman, 1993; Shaw et al., 1996), boredom (Shaw et al., 1996; Caldwell et al., 1999) and constraints (McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Jackson & Rucks, 1995). The purpose of this study is to identify potential recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. These data were collected to assist the Hopkins County Family YMCA in the development of activities and programs to meet the needs of area middle school students. The author also investigated potential constraints, encountered by the students. The literature review for this project will focus on the potential benefits of recreation activity participation, the influence of others on leisure preferences, gender differences in recreation activity preference, boredom, and constraints.

Benefits

Researchers have observed many potential benefits associated with participation in recreational activities and programs. Wankel and Berger (1990) applied Csikszentmihalyi’s 1982 model of sport values to evaluate the benefits associated with sports involvement. Their findings indicated that benefits derived from sports participation could include personal enjoyment, personal growth, social harmony, and social change.
Wankel and Berger (1990) further concluded that activity choice, leadership, organization, and environmental conditions were critical to facilitating a positive outcome. When considering personal enjoyment or psychological benefits the activity should provide challenges commensurate to one’s skill level (Wankel & Berger, 1990). Situations in which the skill matched or was less than the challenge were less likely to be seen as leisure (Kleiber et al., 1993). In addition, a positive and supportive environment facilitated personal enjoyment (Wankel & Berger, 1990). Personal growth benefits, i.e., health related benefits, could be derived provided the chosen activity was of appropriate frequency, intensity, and duration (Wankel & Berger, 1990). When considering potential benefits associated with social outcomes Wankel and Berger (1990) noted sports participation has the potential to promote social harmony or rivalry between groups.

**Academic Benefits**

In addition to potential benefits associated with personal enjoyment, some researchers examined positive relationships between leisure activities and school achievement in an effort to expand the body of knowledge related to the learning benefits associated with leisure activity participation. Specifically, Bergin (1992) investigated the reciprocal relationship between high school students’ school activities, on the one hand, and their leisure activities and motivations on the other hand. Bergin’s (1992) proposed assertion is “that leisure activities and motivation for learning may influence school achievement, and school activities may generate interests that result in leisure activity interests or the development of skills used during leisure.” The results indicated that the number of leisure activities and hours spent participating in leisure activities correlated positively, but weakly, with grade point average (GPA). Specifically, a large amount of
time committed to sports alone was not related to a higher GPA, nor was time in non-sports activities. However, the research findings indicated two academic leisure activities, school-based music lessons and current event activities, showed a significant relationship with GPA. In addition, the researcher’s finding of a negative relationship between time spent at a part-time job and GPA suggested that leisure activity content was an important factor of school achievement (Bergin, 1992).

Recent research related to potential academic benefits associated with leisure participation includes studies that examine the association between extracurricular activity involvement and academic achievement. Eccles and Barber (1999) examined the potential benefits and risks associated with participation in five types of activities including team sports, school involvement, performing arts, academic clubs, and pro-social activities. The results indicated those adolescents who participated in pro-social activities consistently experience increased academic achievement and lower rates of involvement in risky behaviors. Of particular interest, participation in a team sport was associated with increases in both positive and negative behaviors. Students who participated in team sports experienced increases in both academic achievement and drinking. Students who participated in clubs or organizations also experienced increases in academic achievement and the likelihood to drink alcohol. Extracurricular activity involvement has also been linked to decreases in school dropout rates. Mahoney (2000) examined individual patterns of antisocial behavior as part of a longitudinal study of 659 youth. These youth were interviewed annually in childhood, high school, and in their early adult years. The research findings suggested individuals who participated in one or
more extracurricular activities prior to eleventh grade had lower rates of school dropout. These same individuals also experienced reduced rates of criminal arrest as young adults.

**Health Benefits**

In terms of health related benefits associated with leisure activity participation, Escobedo, Marcus, Holtzman, and Giovino (1993) found sports participation to be associated with lower rates of adolescent smoking. Similar research results have indicated that female athletes were nearly three times less likely to report cigarette use than nonathletes (Skolnick, 1993). Other research evidence indicated students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to have used drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents than are those students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). More recently, Page et al. (1998) found school sports may serve as a protective factor for not engaging in cigarette smoking or illegal drug use. Specifically, students who reported participating in one or two team sports as well as students who reported participation in three or more team sports were less likely to have engaged in cigarette smoking and illegal drug use than those not on a sports teams. However, the same study provided evidence that sports participation may be a risk factor for steroid use and smokeless tobacco use among male students. In addition to the potential reduction in risky behavior, sports or recreational activity participation has been linked to emotional well-being. Steptoe and Butler (1996) concluded that emotional well-being is positively associated with the extent of participation in sports and vigorous recreational activity among adolescents. Specifically greater participation in vigorous sports and recreational
activities was associated with lower risks of emotional distress, independent of gender, social class, illness during the previous year, and use of hospital services.

Benefits Identified by Adolescents

Adolescents themselves have identified several benefits associated with recreational activity participation. In a study of 394 sixth through ninth grade students, Hultsman (1996) identified four general categories of benefits associated with recreation participation. These categories included opportunities to search for identity, opportunities to relate with others, filling time, and opportunities to improve talents. Specifically, recreational activities provided adolescents opportunities to increase self-confidence, focus on self-improvement, and feel better about their ability to think and act appropriately. In addition, research findings indicated that through leisure activities we are able to construct situations that provide us with information about who we are, as well as provide others with information that will allow them to understand us more accurately (Haggard & Williams, 1992). Recreational activities further provided opportunities for adolescents to spend time with friends (Hultsman, 1996). Researchers also concluded that adolescents preferred activities that were passive and social in nature (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). At the same time, recreational activities were seen as a relief from boredom or as time spent in stress relief activities (Hultsman, 1996). Finally, adolescents identified recreational activities as opportunities to improve skill level or develop new skills (Hultsman, 1996).

The Influence of Others

Young adolescents begin to divide their time between family, peers, and time spent alone (Larson & Richards, 1991; Larson et al., 1996; Zeijl et al., 2000) as they
mature. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) provided further documentation that adolescents spend a significant amount of time with their families, their best friends or with groups of boys and girls. Other research evidence indicates there is a significant decline in the amount of time spent with the family as adolescents mature. The “best friend” becomes critical for many adolescents as the parents’ role of confidante diminishes and peers become the new support system (Siegel & Shaughnessy, 1995). Larson and Richards (1991) found older adolescents report half as much time spent with their families as younger adolescents. Likewise, there is a steady drop in family time, from 35% of waking hours in fifth grade students to 14% of waking hours in twelfth grade students (Larson et al., 1996). This decrease in the amount of time spent with family was replaced with time spent alone, particularly among boys. While adolescent girls replaced family time with time spent with friends and alone (Larson & Richards, 1991). Smith’s study found that adolescent girls spend significantly more time alone than boys did and boys spend more time in physical activity (as cited in James, 2001). Zeijl et al. (2000) found that ten-to-twelve year olds from higher social classes were ‘family kids’. These youth spent a substantial part of their leisure time with parents and siblings. The ‘family kids’ also reported experiencing the most parental interference in their leisure activities. Whereas males fourteen to fifteen years of age from higher social classes focused more on peer group relationships, fourteen to fifteen year-old females preferred to spend time in dyadic friendships.

Parental Influence

Even though adolescence marks the beginning of separation from parents there is evidence that parents play a role in an adolescent’s leisure preferences. Research
describing the influence of others on adolescent recreational activity preferences
specifically identifies the influence parents and peers exert on an adolescent’s activity
choices. Howard and Madrigal (1990) investigated the influence of children and parents
on the purchase of recreation services. The results indicated mothers exercised
considerable influence at each stage of the decision making process. Specifically,
mothers dominated the search and final decision stages of the purchase of recreation
services. It was further noted that mothers actively screen program opportunities before
allowing the children to become involved in the final decision stage. As concluded by
the researchers, the child was found to make decisions independently only to a very
modest degree. Furthermore, the child’s role was one of consultant. The mother
consulted with the child during the final decision phase to determine the child’s
willingness to participate. The mother’s considerable influence in the child’s recreation
service purchase was attributed to her role as the primary caregiver, responsible for
scheduling adjustments and transportation to accommodate the child’s recreation activity
participation.

In related research, Hultsman (1993) examined early adolescents perceptions of
the influence that parents, significant other adults, and peers exerted on the adolescents
decisions not to join a recreational activity of interest or to cease participation in
organized activities. As part of this study, 940 fifth through eighth grade students were
asked to rank the five most important reasons for not joining an activity. The youth were
also asked to rank the five most important reasons for dropping out of an activity. The
findings indicated that parents were the strongest human influence in decisions not to join
an activity in which an adolescent was interested. In particular, approximately 76% of
the students reported parental influences for not joining an activity of interest. Of specific interest, adolescent boys listed this reason more than adolescent girls; while Hispanic students were more likely to cite parental influences to not join as a reason more than Caucasians, African-Americans, Native Americans, or students of mixed backgrounds.

The Influence of Peers and Leaders

The influence of peers and activity leaders in an adolescent’s decision to not join an activity appeared to be minimal across grade, gender, race, or socioeconomic background. When deciding to drop out of activities the influence of leaders was the strongest reason with 40% of students reporting leaders influenced their decision to quit. Parents exert less influence on an adolescent’s decision to quit an activity, with approximately 19% of the students reporting parents influenced their decision.

Shaw et al. (1996) examined the experience of boredom, time stress, and lack of choices in the daily lives of tenth grade students. The researcher’s interview data indicated that adolescent’s lack of choice in free-time activities was often due to pressure from friends or from conforming with the wishes of friends. Males reported pressure from friends related to the kinds of sports activities they chose to play. Furthermore, males reported participating in activities that they really did not want to. Females reported pressure to participate in activities such as going to parties, shopping, and going down town. In addition, females reported going along with certain activities to avoid hurting a friend’s feelings. This lack of choice contradicts research results indicating adolescents regard situations as leisure-like when they are doing activities because they “wanted to” (Kleiber et al., 1993).
Gender Differences in Recreation Activity Preference

Gender has been associated with differences in recreational activity preference among youth. Mauldin and Meeks (1990) examined time allocation difference of youth ages 6-17 in six different areas (household work, leisure activities, school, paid work, personal care, and sleep) utilizing time diaries. The results indicate males spend more time in leisure activities and less time in household work and personal care than females. Specifically, males allocated 6 hours to leisure activities on weekdays and 9.75 hours to leisure activities on weekends. Females on the other hand allocated 5.25 hours on weekdays and 8.25 hours on weekends to leisure activities. When examining specific recreational activity participation, the results indicated that youth spend most of their time in passive leisure. Watching television was a significant component of their passive leisure time regardless of gender during the week. Males spent more time watching television on the weekends than did females. The second highest use of leisure time was playing games. Males allocated on average about 20 minutes more to game playing during the week than did females. On the weekends, this difference amounted to about 11 minutes. Additional gender differences in recreational time allocation were reported in the areas of active sports participation, socializing, outdoor activities participation, and shopping. Males reported more time in active sports and games while females spent more time shopping. Likewise males ages 13 to 15 spent more time in hobbies than younger males, older males, and females 6-15. Females spent more time socializing. Mauldin and Meeks (1990) concluded the differences found in time allocation appeared to be in accordance with traditional male-female roles established at an early age. James (2001) concluded girls appear to make their recreational choices based on a complex
Gender Differences

interplay of factors. These factors include balancing situational body image, physical factors, and control factors.

Consistent with the idea that male-female roles would dictate participation, Garton and Pratt (1991) hypothesized that the sex of respondents, in their study of 1316 students ages 13-17, would be an important predictor of levels of participation and interest in different activities. Specifically, the researchers predicted males would be more interested in and participate in more sports activities. Their research findings indicated gender was a major predictor of the activities adolescent school students chose and engaged in. Gender was found to be a particularly strong predictor of participation in sports activities and vocational pursuits. When examining the most frequently mentioned sports activities, squash, basketball, and tennis appeared on the top ten lists of both sexes, however their relative ranking was considerably different. Male respondents ranked squash first followed by basketball, while female respondents ranked basketball seventh and squash tenth.

Colley, Eglinton, and Elliott (1992) added to the body of knowledge relating to gender and sports participation in their study of 60 children using the Play and Games Inventory and interviews. Their findings further describe sports participation consistent with traditional male-female roles. Males participating in their study reported playing a greater range of sports outside of school than did females. In addition, the males played masculine and neutral sports but none played feminine sports. Females reported playing more neutral sports than masculine and feminine sports, which they reported playing in approximately equal numbers. Holland and Andre (1994) found participation
Gender Differences

in gender-appropriate sports was positively related to increased popularity among peers. More specifically, females who participate in more feminine or gender-appropriate sports were clearly preferred by males for dates (86%) and by females for a friend (74%). For females, participation in gender-appropriate sports was related to a higher level of self-confidence and rewarded with both higher peer status and perceptions about themselves (Holland & Andre, 1994). Suitor and Reavis (1995) concluded there was an increase in girls' acquisition of prestige through sports and a decrease in girls' acquisition of prestige through cheerleading. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) found that girls participated in more keep fit activities such as aerobics, yoga and playing badminton, while boys participated more in sports and outdoor activities, i.e., climbing, camping and fishing. In addition, the boys enjoyed soccer, watching TV, and videos. The girls enjoyed going to parties, discos, pop concerts, and sitting around talking. The boys reported no interest in dance classes, knitting, sewing, visiting museums, and visiting art galleries. The girls reported no interest in gardening and video games. Colley, Griffiths, Hugh, Landers, and Jaggli (1996) found female childhood activity preferences included make believe games, skipping, dolls, and party games. Male childhood preferences included tag, football, soccer, war games, cycling, British bulldog, TV, Lego, and playing with cars. Adolescent leisure activity preferences for females included swimming, going to the movies, netball, shopping, going to discos and parties, and watching TV. Male adolescents preferred computers, football, rugby, cricket, and cycling. Shaw et al. (1996) determined that adolescents ranked social activities with friends (i.e., hanging out, talking on the phone, and parties) as their most common nonobligatory activity. The adolescents
Gender Differences

ranked TV viewing second and sports/physical activities ranked third. Colley et al. (1996) concluded gender differences in preferred adolescent leisure activities reflect adult leisure roles. However, interaction with siblings had a moderating effect upon the extent to which sex-type preferences were named (Colley et al., 1996). Specifically, females who reported higher levels of interaction with male siblings during childhood named more male stereotyped childhood activities. In adolescence greater interaction with female siblings resulted in more female stereotyped activities being named by males. Gibbons and Lynn (1997) determined female sports participation was associated with individual sports such as gymnastics and swimming. Males participated in more sport activities overall as well as activities that required group participation. Male participation in group-activities is consistent with earlier findings that United States males are heavy team sport participants (Beatty, Jeon, Albaum, & Murphy, 1994). The “Generation Next is Now: Kids, Sports, Media, and Technology study (as cited in With the increasing participation of girls in sports nation-wide, 2001) found that overall enjoyment of sports is highest among older boys as 85% say they either “love” sports or “like them a lot.” While girls of all ages are also participating in sports, 75% of younger girls and 74% of older girls say they “love” or “like” sports. The study also described gender different motives to participate in athletic events. Adolescent males reported being motivated by the competition while adolescent girls were more interested in challenging themselves and being with friends (as cited in With the increasing participation of girls in sports nation-wide, 2001).
Race and Gender Differences

Philipp (1998) investigated the influence of race and gender on adolescent peer group approval of leisure activities. As part of this study, 11th and 12th grade public high school students completed a questionnaire asking the students to rate peer approval of 20 leisure activities. The results indicated, of the 20 leisure activities included in the questionnaire, 10 activities were rated significantly higher between the different racial groups with regard to peer approval. African-American students indicated stronger peer approval for playing basketball, going to the mall, singing in choir, and dancing. Caucasian students indicated stronger peer approval for playing soccer, horseback riding, water skiing, camping, fishing, and golfing. When racial as well as gender differences were examined, African-American males and females were more likely to agree on what is “disapproved,” while Caucasian males and females were more likely to agree on what is “approved.”

Boredom

Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990, p. 4-5) describe leisure boredom as “the subjective perception that available leisure experiences are not sufficient to instrumentally satisfy needs for optimal arousal” further stating, “perceptions of leisure boredom are associated with negative affect, and can be manifested as beliefs that available leisure experiences are not sufficiently frequent, involving, exciting, varied or novel.” Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990, p. 5) concluded “leisure boredom was a mismatch between desired arousal-producing characteristics of leisure, and perceptual or actual availability of such leisure experiences.” Mikulas and Vodanovich (1993) define boredom as a state of relatively low arousal and dissatisfaction that may be attributed to
an insufficiently stimulating situation. The researchers further explain that boredom often results from being in a situation where complexity is lower than individual skill, resulting in below optimal arousal.

**Boredom Experienced**

When defining an adolescents’ experience of boredom, Larson and Richards (1991) determined students’ defined boredom in terms of the situation creating the ‘state’ versus a definition centering on the ‘state’ i.e. boredom resulting from not having anything to do or not knowing what to do. The researchers further found that boredom correlated with tiredness, drowsiness, frustration, and anger. In addition, boredom was positively associated with wishing to be doing something else and negatively associated with such factors as choice over current activity and interest (Larson & Richards, 1991). When boredom experienced during school hours versus that experienced during non-school hours was examined, boredom in school was attributed to the current activity. Boredom during non-school hours was related with having nothing to do or no one around. Furthermore, boredom during non-school hours was slightly higher in seventh and eighth grade. Results also indicated boredom during non-school hours varied each season with the highest rates of boredom reported in the winter (28%) and lower rates in the spring (20%). Shaw et al. (1996) observed similar findings reporting 31.9% of tenth grade students reported boredom during school while 30% reported boredom during non-school hours. Shaw et al. (1996) also found students who reported being bored in school were likely to report boredom out of school. For tenth grade students’, evenings during the week were mentioned as the most boring. Non-school boredom was associated with having nothing to do, no friends around, no where to go or lack of transportation to visit
friends. Shaw et al. (1996) found males tend to report more boredom than female students during school and non-school hours.

In a recent study of the causes of adolescent boredom, Caldwell et al. (1999) found adolescents who freely choose to participate in activities reported lower levels of boredom during the activity. These same adolescents reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation when compared to adolescents who participated in required activities or participated because there was nothing else to do. In addition, adolescents with lower levels of perceived parental monitoring were more likely to be bored. Finally, the researchers found gender did not predict individual difference in boredom (Caldwell et al., 1999).

**Adult Constraints**

Important aspects of previous leisure constraint research related to this study center on barriers to leisure participation. Kay and Jackson (1991) found financial and time constraints were frequently reported by adults; however, these constraints do not necessarily affect participation. The researchers further suggested participation itself could expose an individual to potential constraints; therefore, it could be expected that high levels of constraints may be reported by participants. Shaw, Bonen and McCabe (1991) provide further documentation that time is a frequently mentioned adult constraint to leisure participation. Their results further support the suggestion that more constraints do not lead to decreased participation. Shaw et al. (1991) propose the mitigation of constraints does not automatically increase participation. In additional adult leisure constraint research, Jackson (1994) examined the simultaneous effect of activity-specific and age-based variations in constraints on leisure. In this study, the constraints examined
included isolation, cost, skill level, facilities, and time commitment. When analyzed individually, the importance of cost declined with age, lack of skill increased in importance with age, the importance of time commitments was highest in the middle age and lower in the younger and older age groups. Facilities showed no significant age-based variation as a leisure constraint. Multivariate analysis however showed that relationships between age and constraints were generally independent of activity preferences. In addition, the relationships between activity and constraints were independent of the subject’s age. These findings support the conclusion that apparent activity-based variations in constraints were not attributed to age differences in leisure or recreational activity preferences (Jackson, 1994).

Adolescent Constraints

Raymond et al. (1994) examined adolescents’ perceptions of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints on leisure. The researchers also sought to determine if the perceived constraints related to gender or level of self-esteem. The findings indicated relationships could be established between self-esteem and perceptions of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints. Gender difference also existed in an adolescent’s perception of intrapersonal and total constraints on leisure. Specifically, individuals with low self-esteem perceived more intrapersonal constraints than individuals with medium or high self-esteem. Individuals with low self-esteem also perceived more interpersonal constraints than individuals with high self-esteem. Subjects with high self-esteem perceived slightly fewer structural constraints. Females were more likely to report perceptions of interpersonal constraints than males. Females also perceived more total constraints than males (Raymond et al., 1994).
Garton and Pratt (1991) found adolescents frequently report lack of facilities for a particular activity, lack of time, no opportunity for girls and inconvenience as reasons for nonparticipation. Hultsman (1993) found similar reasons stated by adolescents when investigating internal homogeneity in relation to perceptions of constrained leisure. In this study, adolescents stated lack of transportation, cost, inability to attend the activity meetings, parental influence, and skill perceptions as reasons for not starting an activity. McKeeking and Purkayastha (1995) also found when an activity was not within walking distance financial constraints, particularly cost of transportation, were reported by city youth desiring to participate in structured leisure activities. Further, reliance on others to provide transportation was vital for adolescents living in the urban-rural fringe if they were to have access to leisure activities. Adolescents’ dependence on mothers for transportation has also been experienced as a constraint as more mothers work outside the home (McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995). When adolescents desired to participate in unstructured leisure activities, i.e., hanging out, loitering restrictions became a constraint (McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995). Hultsman (1996) found six main concepts related to deterrents to recreation participation when investigating the perceived benefits and deterrents to participation. These concepts included effects of other participants, concerns relating to leadership, the impact of rules or regulations, time conflicts, issues of safety i.e. injury or potential fighting, and issues related to the activity itself, i.e., must be the best to participate. When examining adolescent girls and outdoor recreation participation three theoretical categories of constraints were evident including relational, structural, and personal influences. The most significant indication of constraints emerged in the relational and structural categories. These constraints included gender
roles, lack of opportunities, different opportunities for males and females, and peer influence. Personal constraints included self-concept, physical or safety concerns and individual affinity for the outdoor environment (Culp, 1998).

**Constraint Negotiation**

Jackson and Rucks (1995) examined components of leisure constraint negotiation by categorizing constraints encountered as well as negotiation strategies utilized by adolescents. Their research findings confirm the proposition that some people will negotiate through constraints successfully in order to begin or continue leisure participation (Jackson & Rucks, 1995). Specifically, the researchers found adolescents reported constraints that could be classified into commitment and time, lack of skill, problems with interpersonal relations, health and fitness, geographical accessibility, cost, and facility categories. All of these constraints are similar to those reported in previous research studies (Graton & Pratt, 1991; Hultsman, 1993; Hultsman, 1996). The researchers also found individuals used cognitive or behavioral strategies to negotiate leisure constraints. The researchers further subdivided the behavioral strategies into time management, skill acquisition, changing interpersonal relations, improving finances, physical therapy, and changing leisure aspirations. The researchers concluded that the majority of people used behavioral modifications to negotiate leisure constraints. In addition, the researcher suggested that the strategies utilized were consistent with the type of constraint encountered, i.e., individuals encountering time constraints modified their time use most often changing aspects of non-leisure time versus changing aspects of their leisure time (Jackson & Rucks, 1995). James (2000) provided further documentation of constraint negotiation when examining adolescent girls’ use of public swimming pools.
In this study, research findings suggested when girls experienced a strong desire to swim they would employ a range of techniques to negotiate participation constraints.

Summary

Researchers have described many potential benefits associated with leisure activity participation (Hultsman, 1996; Steptoe & Bulter, 1996, Page et al., 1998; Mahoney, 2000). Adolescents themselves have identified opportunities to search for identity, to relate with others, improve skill, gain confidence, and fill-time as potential benefits they derive from their leisure participation (Hultsman, 1996). Researchers have also suggested the decision to participate in leisure activities is influenced by an adolescent’s friends, family members, and activity leaders (Hultsman, 1993; Shaw et al., 1996). Early research findings indicate an adolescent’s activity preference was influenced by traditional male-female roles (Mauldin & Meeks, 1990; Graton & Pratt, 1991; Colley et al., 1992; Holland & Andre, 1994). More recent research findings suggest, while males once participated in more sports overall (Gibbons & Lynn, 1997) females are increasing their participation in sports (Suitor & Reavis, 1995; as cited in with the increasing participation of girls in sports nation-wide, 2001). In general, adolescents prefer an activity be social (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Shaw et al., 1996). In addition, adolescents who freely choose their leisure activities report lower levels of boredom and higher levels of intrinsic value (Caldwell et al., 1999).
Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

Adolescent leisure research has included studies of the potential benefits associated with recreational activity involvement (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney, 2000; Sallis, 2000), the association between gender and leisure preferences (Phillip, 1998; James, 2000; James 2001), the influence of others on leisure preferences (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Hultsman, 1993; Shaw et al., 1996), boredom (Shaw et al., 1996; Caldwell et al., 1999) and constraints (McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Culp, 1998). The purpose of this study is to identify potential recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. These data were collected to assist the Hopkins County Family YMCA in the development of activities and programs to meet the needs of area middle school students. The author also investigated potential constraints encountered by the students.

Description of Subjects

The sample of subjects selected for the recreation needs assessment were from a total population of 560 sixth grade students, 546 seventh grade students, and 558 eighth grade students attending four Hopkins County public middle schools in Madisonville, Kentucky. The total middle school student population was 1664. The student population was 90% Caucasian, 9% African-American, less than 1% Hispanic, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Island, and other. The student population was 52% male and 48% female students (Hopkins County Schools, 2001-2002).

One homeroom class, from each grade, was randomly selected by the school principal at James Madison Middle School, South Hopkins Middle School and
West Hopkins Accelerated School to participate in the recreation needs assessment. At Browning Springs Middles School, the principal chose an exploratory class from each grade to participate in recreation needs assessment. These students were already randomly assigned to an exploratory class prior to the start of the 2001-2002-school year. The researcher then coordinated the recreation needs assessment dates with one teacher who was in contact with a sixth, seventh, and eighth grade class in a single afternoon.

Permission to conduct the recreation needs assessment using Hopkins County middle school students was granted after contacting Assistant Superintendent Linda Zellich and individual school principals to discuss the recreation need assessment’s intent. With the permission of the school system personnel and prior to the recreation needs assessment date, parental consent and child’s assent forms (see Appendix A) were distributed to the randomly selected students.

**Instrument Utilized**

The recreation needs assessment (see Appendix B) completed by the students was designed by the researcher to evaluate recreation activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. The researcher developed question content with the assistance of Hopkins County Family YMCA professional staff members. The instrument’s format and question content was further refined with assistance from Robert Cobb, Director of Institutional Research, and Tuesdi Helbig, Research Analyst, at Western Kentucky University. A final revision of question content was completed by the researcher following a pilot study conducted at Christ the King School.

Christ the King middle school teacher Hannah Myers tested the recreation needs assessment instrument by examining its readability. As part of this examination, two
well-known readability indexes, the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Index and the Fry
Readability Index, were utilized. These indexes examined readability using different
formulas that consider the number of syllables in each word and the complexity of each
sentence (Weaver, 1994; Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1990). The Flesch-Kincaid
Reading Index calculated the assessment instrument to have an average of a 6.5 reading
level. The Fry Readability Index calculated the assessment instrument to have an average
of a 6.3 reading level. Using the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which estimates a
reading grade level range, the instrument’s ZPD is a 5.2-8.1 reading level. Therefore, the
instrument’s calculated reading levels of 6.3 and 6.5 are within the appropriate ZPD
levels for use with the middle school grades of sixth through eighth (Tierney et al., 1990;
Weaver, 1994).

The first section of the recreation needs assessment requested demographic
information from each respondent. Respondents were asked to indicate their current
grade level, their gender, and the school they attended. In the second section of the
recreation needs assessment, respondents were asked to identify their top two activity
choices in five different categories of recreational activities. The recreational activity
categories included arts and crafts; drama, dance, and music; literary activities; nature
activities; and sports and games. Activity choices within each category were limited to
those program areas the Hopkins County Family YMCA was willing and/or capable of
providing based on current YMCA fiscal and human resources. The final section of the
recreational needs assessment requested recreational activity participation data.
Respondents where asked to indicate if they participated in recreational activities after
school. Respondents who indicated they did not were then asked to list the top two
reasons they did not participate. Respondents were then asked to indicate if they participated in recreational activities during the weekends. Respondents who indicated they did not were asked to list the top two reasons they did not participate. Question responses for questions 10 and 12 were developed by the researcher with assistance from YMCA staff members and cross-referenced with Hultsman (1993) adolescent’s reasons for not joining or ceasing participation in recreational activities.

**Procedures**

Prior to the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year, the researcher contacted Hopkins County School Assistant Superintendent Linda Zellich to discuss the intent of the recreation needs assessment and gain permission to conduct the needs assessment at the four middle school (Browning Springs Middle School, James Madison Middle School, South Hopkins Middle School, and West Hopkins Accelerated School) in the Hopkins County School District. The researcher also contacted Christ the King School Principal Larry Bishop to gain permission to conduct the recreation needs assessment pilot study using a sixth, seventh, and eighth grade class at Christ the King School. After completion of the pilot study, in October of 2001, the researcher contacted each individual Hopkins County Middle School principal to schedule dates to distribute the consent forms and schedule needs assessment dates. The classes selected to participate in the survey (one class in each grade from each public middle school) were randomly selected by each school’s principal. Two weeks prior to the scheduled assessment date, each student received a parental consent and child’s assent form (Appendix A) to be reviewed and signed by the participant and his/her parent/guardian. Recreation needs assessment dates were scheduled in December. No make-up dates were scheduled for
students who were absent the day of the assessment. The researcher entered the classroom and was introduced to the students by the teacher. The students were then told by the researcher that “this was an assessment of their recreational activity interests, the information gathered would be used by Hopkins County Family YMCA staff to assist with program planning and development, all answers would be kept strictly anonymous and confidential, participation in the recreational needs assessment was voluntary, and they would not be individually identified by their responses.” Recreation needs assessments and pencils were then distributed to all students in the classroom. Students were asked to respect the privacy of all students and to remain quiet until everyone had completed the assessment. The researcher then collected the completed recreation needs assessments, thanked the teacher and students, and left the classroom.

**Design and Analysis**

The recreation needs assessment was descriptive research examining the recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. The instrument utilized to collect the data was a questionnaire. The results were intended to assist Hopkins County Family YMCA staff in the development and implementation of new teen recreational programs and activities. To analyze the recreation needs assessment findings, the responses to each item were tallied. The results were then reported identifying the frequency of each response reported as a percentage. The frequency of each response was then cross-tabulated by gender. Western Kentucky University Institution Research provided the researcher with the results reports.
Pilot Study

Two pilot studies were conducted examining the recreation needs assessment instrument for question content and format. The first pilot study consisted of colleagues reviewing the instrument. This group included staff members from the Hopkins County Family YMCA, staff members from other YMCA’s, a middle schoolteacher, and members of the thesis committee.

The second pilot study was conducted at Christ the King School in Madisonville, Kentucky. As part of this process, 21 middle school students participated in the pilot study. The pilot study’s population was approximately 71% female and 28% male. The pilot study’s grade level distribution was 29% sixth grade, 57% seventh grade, and 14% eighth grade students.

Pilot study participants selected pottery and photography as the top two arts and crafts activities. The males selected drawing and pottery as their first and second choice. The females selected pottery and photography as their top two arts and crafts activities they would like to do.

Pilot study participants selected dramatic classes and jazz dance lessons as the top two dance, drama, and music activities. Females selected dramatic classes and jazz dance lessons as the top two activities. Males selected guitar lessons as their first choice. Jazz and modern dance lessons tied as their second choice. Pilot study participants selected Spanish lessons and reading as the top two literary activities. Male and female pilot study participants selected the same top two literary activities (Spanish lessons and reading).
Pilot study participants selected archery and white water rafting as the top two nature activities. Males selected rock climbing and archery as their first nature activity choice. Repelling was their second nature activity choice. Females selected archery as the first nature activity choice. White water rafting and camping tied as their second nature activity choice.

Pilot study participants selected soccer and swimming as the top two sports and games activities. Males selected soccer as the first sports and games activity choice. Track was the second sports and games activity choice. Females selected soccer and swimming as the first sports and games activity choice. Board games, cross-country, and track tied as the female’s second sports and games activity choice.

Pilot study’s participants indicated they participate in recreational activities after school at a rate of approximately 62%. Pilot study’s participants indicated they did not participate in recreational activities after school at a rate of approximately 38%. Of those participants not participating in recreational activities after school the number one reason for nonparticipation is “I’m too busy to participate.” Pilot study’s participants indicated they participate in recreational activities during the weekend at a rate of approximately 57%. Pilot study’s participants indicated they did not participate in recreational activities during the weekend at a rate of approximately 43%. Of those participants not participating in weekend recreational activities, the number one reason for nonparticipation is “I’m too busy to participate.” Both males and female respondents indicated the same reasons for nonparticipation in recreational activities during the weekend.
Overall, the first activity the pilot study participants choose was Spanish lessons. Drama classes and archery are tied as the second activity. The adolescents participating in the pilot study did not encounter problems with the recreation needs assessment’s question content or format. In addition, the results of the pilot study produced the desired responses. The recreation needs assessment was therefore used as it was originally designed.
Chapter Four

Analysis of Data

Adolescent leisure research has included studies of the potential benefits associated with recreational activity involvement (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney, 2000; Sallis, 2000), the association between gender and leisure preferences (Phillip, 1998; James, 2000; James 2001), the influence of others on leisure preferences (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Hultsman, 1993; Shaw et al., 1996), boredom (Shaw et al., 1996; Caldwell et al., 1999) and constraints (McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Culp, 1998). The purpose of this study is to identify potential recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. These data were collected to assist the Hopkins County Family YMCA in the development of activities and programs to meet the needs of area middle school students. The author also investigated potential constraints encountered by the students.

Two hundred and seventy-nine middle school students (77 students from James Madison Middle School, 73 students from Browning Springs Middle School, 71 students from South Hopkins Middle School, and 58 students from West Hopkins Accelerated School) were selected to participate in the recreation needs assessment. Permission slips were collected from 126 (44 from James Madison Middle School, 25 from Browning Springs Middle School, 32 from South Hopkins Middle School, and 25 from West Hopkins Accelerated School) of the 279 middle school students. One hundred and twenty five students completed recreation needs assessments. The recreation needs assessment’s grade level distribution is shown in Table 1.
Table 1

Participant Grade Level Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125

The recreation needs assessment’s population was 48% male and 52% female.

There was one unusable response to the question “I attend...” The recreation needs assessment’s school distribution is shown in Table 2.
Table 1

Participant School Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Browning Springs Middle School</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison Middle School</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hopkins Middle School</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Hopkins Accelerated School</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 124

Overall, adolescents participating in the recreation needs assessment selected photography, drawing, and painting as the top three arts and crafts activities they would like to do. Adolescent males, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected drawing, painting, and photography as the top three arts and crafts activities they would like to do. Adolescent females, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected photography, painting, and drawing as the top three arts and crafts activities they would like to do. The frequency for each possible arts and crafts activity response is shown in Table 3.
Table 3

Arts and Crafts Activity Response Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket Making</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Making</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Making</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlepoint</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125

Overall, adolescents participating in the recreation needs assessment selected modern dance lessons, guitar lessons, and dramatic class as the top three dance, drama, and music activities they would like to do. The adolescent males, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected guitar lessons, modern dance lessons, and drama class as the top three activities they would like to do. Adolescent females, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected modern dance lessons, drama class, and
swing dance lessons as the top three dance, drama, and music activities they would like to do. The frequency for each possible dance, drama, and music activity response is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Dance, Drama, and Music Activity Response Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Dance Lessons</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar Lessons</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Class</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz Dance Lessons</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing Dance Lessons</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballet Class</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125

Overall, adolescents participating in the recreation needs assessment selected Spanish lessons, creative writing, and reading as the top three literary activities they would like to do. Adolescent males, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected story-telling and Spanish lessons as the top two literary activities they would like to do. Creative writing and reading tied as the adolescent male’s third selection. Adolescent females, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected Spanish
lessons, creative writing, and reading as the top three literary activities they would like to do. The frequency for each possible literary activity response is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary Activity Response Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125

Overall, adolescents participating in the recreation needs assessment selected camping and fishing as the top two nature activities they would like to do. There is differentiation of .8% between the adolescent’s third, fourth, and fifth selections of rock climbing, snow skiing, and white water rafting. Adolescent males, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected fishing, camping, and archery as the top three nature activities they would like to do. Adolescent females, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected camping, white water rafting, and rock climbing as
the top three nature activities they would like to do. The frequency for each possible
nature activity response is shown in Table 16.

Table 6

**Nature Activity Response Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Climbing</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Skiing</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Water Rafting</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoe Trips</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ropes Challenge Course</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repelling</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpacking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125
Overall, adolescents participating in the recreation needs assessment selected basketball, swimming, and flag football as the top three sports and games activities they would like to do. Adolescent males, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected basketball, flag football, and baseball as the top three sports and games activities they would like to do. Adolescent females, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected basketball, swimming, and softball as the top three sports and games activities they would like to do. The frequency for each possible sports and games activity response is shown in Table 7.

Adolescents, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated they participated in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 57%. Males indicated they participated in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 48%. Females indicated they participated in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 52%. The adolescents indicated they did not participate in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 43%. Males indicated they did not participate in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 48%. Females, indicated they did not participate in recreational activities after school, at a rate of approximately 52%. The number one reason for nonparticipation in after school recreational activities is “I’m too busy to participate.” Adolescent males and females, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated lack of time was their number one reason for nonparticipation in after school recreational activities. The frequency for each possible response to the question “What are the top two reasons why you do not participate in recreational activities after school” is shown in Table 8.
Table 7

Sports and Games Activity Response Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag Football</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-line Skating</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength Training</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Games</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Class</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ping Pong</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racquetball</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125
There were two unusable responses to the question “Do you participate in recreation activities during the weekend. Adolescents, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated they participate in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 50%. Males indicated they participate in weekend recreational activities at a rate of 45%. Females indicated they participate in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 55%. Adolescents, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated they did not participate in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 50%. Males did not participate in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 51%. Females did not participate in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 49%. The number one reason for nonparticipation in weekend recreational activities is “I’m too busy to participate.” Adolescent males and females indicated time was their number one reason for nonparticipation in weekend recreational activities. The frequency for each possible response to the question “What are the top two reasons why you do not participate in recreational activities during the weekend” is shown in Table 9.

Overall, adolescents participating in the recreation needs assessment selected photography, basketball, and modern dance lessons as the top three recreational activities they would like to do. Adolescent males, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected guitar lessons, drawing, and basketball as the top three recreational activities. Adolescent females, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected photography, modern dance lessons, and basketball as the top three recreational activities. A list of the top 16 recreational activities selected by the middle school students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, is shown in Table 10.
Table 8

**After School Recreation Activity Non-participation Response Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m too busy to participate</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have a ride</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like the activities offered</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the activity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong time of day</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know how to sign-up</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have enough skill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one I know participates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents won’t let me</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nothing to do</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like the coach/instructor/leader</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends don’t think I should</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of the activity</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not offered for my sex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not offered for my age</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activity is too competitive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125
Table 9

Weekend Recreation Activity Non-participation Response Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m too busy to participate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong time of day</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have a ride</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like the activities offered</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know how to sign-up</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one I know participates</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the activity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents won’t let me</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nothing to do</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have enough skill</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like the coach/instructor/leader</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends don’t think I should</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not offered for my sex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not offered for my age</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of the activity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activity is too competitive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125
Table 10

Overall Top 16 Recreation Activities Selected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Dance Lessons</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar Lessons</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Lessons</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Telling</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Short Stories</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Class</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Climbing</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 125
Chapter 5

Findings

Adolescent leisure research has included studies of the potential benefits associated with recreational activity involvement (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney, 2000; Sallis, 2000), the association between gender and leisure preferences (Phillip, 1998; James, 2000; James 2001), the influence of others on leisure preferences (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Hultsman, 1993; Shaw et al., 1996), boredom (Shaw et al., 1996; Caldwell et al., 1999) and constraints (McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Jackson & Rucks, 1995). The purpose of this study is to identify potential recreational activity interests of Hopkins County middle school students. These data were collected to assist the Hopkins County Family YMCA in the development of activities and programs to meet the needs of area middle school students. The author also investigated potential constraints encountered by the students.

Conclusions

The researcher expected more sports and games activities to be included in the recreation needs assessment’s overall top 10 recreation activities selected by the middle school students. However, an examination of the overall top 10 activities, selected by the middle school students participating in the recreation needs assessment indicates a stronger interest in participation in arts and crafts activities, dance, drama, and music activities, and literary activities. The only sports and games activity in the overall top 10 recreation activities selected by the middle school students was basketball selected by 50.4% of the students. A similar result is found when evaluating the top 10 recreational
Males selected fishing and females selected camping as the top nature activities. The top three sports and games activities were basketball, swimming, and flag football. Both males and females selected basketball as their top sports and games activity.

Adolescents, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated they participated in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 57%. They did not participate at a rate of approximately 43%. The number one reason for nonparticipation was “I’m too busy to participate.” Adolescents indicated they participated in weekend recreational activities at a rate if approximately 50%. The number one reason for nonparticipation was “I’m too busy to participate.”

Conclusions

The researcher expected more sports and games activities to be included in the recreation needs assessment’s overall top 10 recreation activities selected by the middle school students. However, an examination of the overall top 10 activities, selected by the middle school students participating in the recreation needs assessment indicates a stronger interest in participation in arts and crafts activities, dance, drama, and music activities, and literary activities. The only sports and games activity in the overall top 10 recreation activities selected by the middle school students was basketball selected by approximately 50% of the students. A similar result is found when evaluating the top 10 recreational activities selected by the middle school students evaluating gender differences. Adolescent males, participating in the recreation needs assessment, selected guitar lessons, drawing, basketball, painting, photography, modern dance lessons, fishing, story telling, Spanish lessons, and creative writing and reading tied as their tenth selection. Adolescent females, participating in the recreation needs assessment selected
photography, modern dance lessons, basketball, camping, Spanish lessons, painting, writing short stories, creative writing, reading and drawing as their top 10 overall recreation activities.

The sports and games activity results, of the middle school students participating in the recreation needs assessment, were consistent with research findings suggesting there may be gender-appropriate sports. Specifically, of those participants indicating a desire to play flag-football, approximately 72% were male and 28% were female. Similar results were found in the activities of baseball, approximately 99% of those indicating an interest to participate were male and 1% were female. When examining those participants who selected softball 100% were female. Finally, participants who selected strength training were approximately 85% male and 15% female. These findings are consistent with research findings by Colley et al., (1992) indicating males participated in masculine and neutral sports but participated in no feminine sports while females participated in more neutral-sports but no feminine sports.

The results of the recreation needs assessment indicated females desire to participate in more individual sports (swimming, approximately 68% female and 32% male; cross-country, approximately 91% female and 9% male; and track, approximately 80% females and 20% male,) than do males. This finding is consistent with earlier research by Gibbons and Lynn (1997) suggesting female sports participation was associated with individual sports such as gymnastics or swimming. However, the sports of basketball and soccer provided a different result suggesting these team sports are appealing to the participants of the recreation needs assessment. Recreation needs assessment results indicated that assessment participants desired to play basketball
(approximately 51% were female and 49% were male) and soccer (85% were female and 15% were male). Of all the nature activities, included in question seven of the recreation needs assessment, camping (approximately 38%) was the only activity to score in the overall top 10 recreation activities selected by the middle school students.

An examination of the reasons indicated for nonparticipation in after school recreation activities, by the middle school students participating in the recreation needs assessment, reveals the top two reasons ("I’m too busy to participate" and "Don’t have a ride") are structural constraints as defined by Crawford et al. research (as cited in Raymond et al., 1994, p.102). The top two reasons ("I’m too busy to participate" and "Wrong time of day") for nonparticipation in weekend recreation activities are also structural constraints as defined by Crawford et al. research (as cited in Raymond et al., 1994, p. 102). Overall, the middle school students participating in the recreation needs assessment indicated “time” as a significant constraint to both after school and weekend recreation activity participation independent of gender. “I’m too busy to participate” (the students first selection) and “wrong time of day” (the students fifth selection) are two of the top five reasons for nonparticipation in after school recreation activities for both males and females. “I’m too busy to participate” (the students first selection) and “wrong time of day” (the students second selection) are two of the top five reasons for nonparticipation in weekend recreation activities for both males and females.

The researcher’s finding of “time” as a constraint to recreation activity participation is consistent with earlier adult (Kay & Jackson, 1991; Shaw et al., 1991; Jackson, 1994) and adolescent (Garton & Pratt, 1991; Jackson & Rucks, 1995) constraint research indicating “time” is a potential recreation participation constraint.
As the Hopkins County Family YMCA has a policy to be open to all regardless of ability to pay, cost as it relates to program fee affordability was not included as a potential constraint even though earlier researchers (Kay & Jackson, 1991; Jackson, 1994; Hultsman, 1993; McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Jackson & Rucks, 1995) have determined cost has been reported by adults and adolescents as a potential constraint.

The middle school students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, listed “Don’t have enough skill” as their seventh reason for nonparticipation in after school recreation activities and their tenth reason for nonparticipation in weekend recreation activities. These finding are consistent with earlier research findings (Jackson, 1994; Hultsman, 1993; Hultsman, 1996) indicating lack of skills or the perceived lack of skill as a potential constraint reported by adolescents.

The middle school students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated peers (“No one I know participates,” approximately 4%; and “My friends don’t think I should,” approximately 2%) have minimal affect on their choice not to participate in after school recreation activities. When choosing not to participate in weekend recreation activities, peers (“No one I know participates,” approximately 7%) also have a minimal affect on the middle school students participating in the recreation needs assessment. The influence of parents and activity leaders had a minimal influence on the middle school student’s reason for nonparticipation in after school and weekend recreation activities. The reason “Parents won’t let me” was reported by approximately 4% of the students indicating they did not participate in after school recreation activities and approximately 3% of the students indicating they did not participate in weekend recreation activities. The reason “Don’t like the coach, instructor, leader” was reported
by approximately 2% of the middle school students indicating they did not participate in after school recreation activities and approximately 1% of those students indicating they did not participate in weekend recreation activities. These findings are consistent with earlier research findings indicating parents (Howard & Madrigal, 1991; Hultsman, 1993), peers (Hultsman, 1993; Shaw et al., 1996), and leaders (Hultsman, 1993; Hultsman, 1996) have an influence on an adolescent’s participation in recreational activities.

The middle school students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated transportation was a constraint to their participation in after school and weekend recreation activity participation. “Don’t have a ride” was the second reason selected by those indicating they did not participate in after school recreation activities and the third reason selected by those indicating they did not participate in weekend recreation activities. In earlier research, adolescents identified transportation, either from a failure to find a ride or cost of transportation, as a potential constraint to recreation participation (Hultsman, 1993; McKeeking & Purkayastha, 1995).

Overall, approximately 57% of the assessment’s middle school students indicated they participated in after school recreation activities. In contrast, approximately 50 of the assessment’s middle school students specified they participated in weekend recreation activities. The middle school students participating in the recreation needs assessment indicated similar after school and weekend recreation participation rates. Males participated in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 48%. Females participated in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 53%. Males participated in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 45%. Females participated in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 55%.
Recommendations

The Hopkins County Family YMCA, with the exception of activities that are included in child care and summer camp programs, is weak in the program areas of arts and crafts, dance, drama, music, and nature activities. Participants in the recreation needs assessment indicated a high interest in the arts and crafts activities of photography (approximately 51%), drawing (approximately 47%), and painting (approximately 46%). As a result, the researcher recommends the Hopkins County Family YMCA work with area artists, photographers, and faculty at Madisonville Community College or Hopkins County Schools to develop these program opportunities. Students participating in the recreation needs assessment also indicated high interest in the dance, drama, and music activities of modern dance lessons (approximately 50%). Therefore, the researcher recommends the Hopkins County Family YMCA work with the current dance instructors to include modern dance lessons in the current youth dance program. The Hopkins County Family YMCA provides few literary activities outside those opportunities available in existing child care and preschool programs. Middle school students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated an interest in Spanish lessons (approximately 43%). The researcher suggests the Hopkins County Family YMCA incorporate Spanish lessons into current childcare and teen development programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

• Conduct the recreation needs assessment again at each school expanding the number of student’s participating.

• Duplicate the recreation needs assessment on a regular basis (every two-three years) to evaluate new interests on a regular cycle.
• Duplicate the recreation needs assessment at other YMCA’s to determine if middle school students in different service areas have similar interests.

• Follow the original assessments students through high school to determine if they pursued the recreational interests indicated in the assessment.

• Develop an instrument to evaluate the reasons for the middle school student’s low interest in nature activities.

• Develop an instrument to evaluate the reasons associated with the overall low scores in the activity areas of sports and games, and the higher scores in the activity areas of arts and crafts; dance, drama, and music; and literary activities.

Summary

Middle school students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, expressed a stronger interest to participate in more arts, craft, dance, drama, music, and literary activities. The top five activities included photography, basketball, modern dance lessons, drawing, and painting. The students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated that time was a constraint to their recreational activity participation. “I’m too busy to participate” was the number one reason for nonparticipation in weekend and after school recreational activities. Middle school students, participating in the recreation needs assessment, indicated they participated in after school recreational activities at a rate of approximately 57%. The students participated in weekend recreational activities at a rate of approximately 50%.
References


With the increasing participation of girl’s in sports nation-wide, YMCAs should examine the demand in their communities. (2001). *YMCA Membership and Program Notes, 3,* 14.

APPENDIX A

Recreation Needs Assessment Consent Forms
Parental Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your child’s class has been selected to participate in a recreation activity needs assessment being conducted through Western Kentucky University and the Hopkins County Family YMCA. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to allow your child to participate in this project.

The data collected will be utilized to assist the YMCA in future teen program planning and development. Your child’s participation will help the YMCA better understand the interests of middle school students and therefore provide additional recreational opportunities for Hopkins County adolescents. Through their participation in the assessment, they will be helping the YMCA build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

The assessment is estimated to take 10 minutes. As part of the assessment, your child will be asked to identify those activities they would like to participate in if given the opportunity. They will also be asked to identify those reasons they do not participate in recreational activities.

Participation in the assessment is voluntary. All assessment participants will remain anonymous. At anytime your child is free to withdraw consent or refuse to answer any assessment item without prejudice to the student. All data will be kept confidential and accessible only to the principle investigator and their assistants on the project. Should the results of the assessment be published only average scores to each item will be reported.

I have read the above information with my child and understand the purpose of the needs assessment. Questions or concerns I have can be directed to Tricia Jordan, YMCA Youth Sports Director, at 821-9622.

I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks. My child understands I’m giving them my permission for them to participate. Any questions we have about the project have been answered to our satisfaction.

I give permission for ______________________ to participate in the recreational activity needs assessment being conducted through Western Kentucky University and the Hopkins County Family YMCA.

__________________________________________
Signature

__________________________________________
Date

__________________________________________
Witness

__________________________________________
Date

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD, Dr. Phillip Myers, Human Protections Administrator, TELEPHONE: (270) 745-4652.
Child's Assent Form

I, ____________________________, understand that my parents have given permission for me to participate in study concerning middle school recreational needs, under the direction of the Hopkins County Family YMCA Program Director, Tricia Jordan.

My participation in this project is voluntary, and I have been told that I may stop my participation in this study at any time. If I choose not to participate, it will not affect my grade in any way.

Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Western Kentucky University Human Subjects Review Board, Dr. Phillip Myers, Human Protections Administrator, Telephone: (270) 745-4652
APPENDIX B

Recreation Needs Assessment
Recreation Needs Assessment

Section 1: Please select one answer for each of the following questions.

1. What grade are you in?
   - 0 6th
   - 0 7th
   - 0 8th

2. I am a...
   - 0 Boy
   - 0 Girl

3. I attend...
   - 0 Christ the King School
   - 0 BSMS
   - 0 JMMS
   - 0 WHAS

Section 2: Listed below are 5 different categories of recreational activities. For each category, select the top 2 activities you would be interested in doing.

4. Arts & Crafts (Mark top 2):
   - 0 Basket Making
   - 0 Calligraphy
   - 0 Drawing
   - 0 Needlepoint
   - 0 Paper Making
   - 0 Painting
   - 0 Photography
   - 0 Print Making
   - 0 Pottery

5. Dance/Drama/Music (Mark top 2):
   - 0 Ballet Class
   - 0 Dramatic Class
   - 0 Guitar Lessons
   - 0 Jazz Dance Lessons
   - 0 Modern Dance Class
   - 0 Swing Dance Class

6. Literary Activities (Mark top 2):
   - 0 Creative Writing
   - 0 Reading
   - 0 Story Telling
   - 0 Spanish Lessons
   - 0 Writing Short Stories

7. Nature Activities (Mark top 2):
   - 0 Archery
   - 0 Backpacking
   - 0 Camping
   - 0 Canoe Trip
   - 0 Fishing
   - 0 Gardening
   - 0 Kayaking
   - 0 Kayaking
   - 0 Repelling
   - 0 Rock Climbing
   - 0 Ropes Challenge Course
   - 0 Snow Skiing
   - 0 White Water Rafting
8. Sports & Games (Mark top 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Class</td>
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<td>Flag-Football</td>
<td>0 Softball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>In-Line Skating</td>
<td>0 Strength Training</td>
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<td>Basketball</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Ping Pong</td>
<td>0 Swimming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board Games</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Racquetball</td>
<td>0 Tennis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0 Track</td>
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<td>Cycling</td>
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Section 3:

9. Do you participate in recreation activities after school?

0 Yes (Skip to question 11) 0 No

10. If you answered NO to question 9, what are the top 2 reasons why you do not participate?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know how to sign up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t have enough skill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t like the activities offered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t like the coach/instructor/leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t have a ride</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m too busy to participate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the activity</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends don’t think I should</td>
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</tbody>
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11. Do you participate in recreation activities during the weekend?

0 Yes (Skip question 12) 0 No

12. Do you answered No to question 11, what are the top 2 reasons why you do not participate?

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<thead>
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<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Location of the activity</td>
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<tr>
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