The Effects of Parenting on the Self-Esteem of High School Athletes

AP Research

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Abstract

An athlete’s environment has a large impact on their performance and wellbeing. Teammates, coaches, and family members all contribute to how an athlete behaves. These factors guide athletes in varying directions. The results can be positive or negative, depending on how the persons in question act towards the athlete. Level of stress and self-esteem fluctuates as a result of this behavior, causing changes in the athlete’s attitude. While it might be seen as unimportant to study the inner workings of the athlete, in actuality, strides in social psychology have led researchers to understand that self-esteem is monumental to athlete growth. This study contributed to that field by studying the perception of parental involvement from the eyes of an athlete, as well as how this impacts the stress and self-esteem levels experienced. From a mid-sized suburban high school with an upper-middle class community, 130 out of an estimated 585 athletes, from teams who participated in the study, were surveyed. Four in-depth interviews were also conducted, three of the participants being athletes, and one being a coach. The results yielded fairly conclusive results: the majority of the participants showed that their parents’ involvement reflected positively on their athletic careers and self-esteem levels. The conclusion of this study was that the majority showed positive appreciation towards their parents’ involvement.

Keywords: self-esteem, stress levels, parental involvement, high school athletes
Introduction

A prominent element of sports psychology revolves around the self-awareness of an athlete. Non-physical obstacles, or “mental barriers”, are common and can manifest even in the best of athletes. While many of these problems can be created as a result of negative internal self-talk, they can also formulate in response to external pressures. The self-esteem of an athlete depends greatly on how their athletic environment functions. Coaches, fans, family, and fellow athletes all contribute, knowingly or otherwise, to the mental state of an athlete. Often, the most influential role models throughout a child’s life are their parents. Even in an athletic sense, the approval of one’s parents can be paramount to the inner well-being of a young athlete. Negative responses to the athletic career of a child significantly contribute to the stress and lowered self-esteem experienced by the athlete. These critical influences may be conveyed through known disapproval, complete disengagement, or extreme investment to the point of hovering.

Literature Review

Pre-existing research in the field of sports psychology, specifically in stressors on high school athletes, covers several differing perspectives studied by a variety of creditable researchers. A wide array of factors adds to pressure experienced by athletes: injuries, peer and family pressure, body image issues and disorders, academic struggles, and more. These issues have been analyzed from several different angles. For instance, the sport psychology behind long-term injuries sustained by an athlete alludes to a difficulty to rehabilitation and recovery caused by self-created mental constructs. Stress has even been proven to increase the likelihood of injury in athletes (Pedro L. Almeida, Aurelio Olmedilla, Víctor J. Rubio, and Pere Palou).
Peer acceptance also takes a high priority in the determination of self-esteem level, and in several different studies, correlations have been found between sport participation and self-esteem, with peer participation being the mediator for such a relationship (Pedersen & Seidman, 2004; Daniels & Leaper, 2006; Slutzky & Simpkins, 2009; Wen-Ing Chen, Chen-Yueh Chen, Yi-Hsiu Lin, & Tien-Tze Chen, 2012). Based on these findings, an athlete’s self-perception has at least some form of connection to the attitude of their peers, the intensity of which depends on the athlete in question. In several cases, the acceptance of an athlete by their peers reflected an increase in security experienced by that athlete. Additionally, the rejection of an athlete by their peers reflected a significant decrease in security and an increase in stress levels. Peer pressure can be identified as a leading factor in the development of low self-esteem among athletes.

While the strong connection between self-esteem and the influence of external factors has been tested previously, in the form of peers and injury, there are other important factors to consider. As mentioned before, the concept that parenting can generally be measured on a spectrum includes both ends of the scale: overly invested parenting and indifferent parenting. Researcher Michael P. Counter wrote his thesis (2014) on the contrast between “helicopter parents” and “absentee parents”, listing their characteristics as well as the effects each type has on children. There were positives and negatives to both types of parenting, with analysis noting parental behavior and engagement with their children is an important component in the complexities of child to adult development.

1 A method of parenting that involves the habit of a parent hovering over their child on a daily basis.
2 A method of parenting that revolves around a detached, “hands-off” mentality demonstrated throughout the development of a child.
Discovering different perspectives on the matter of self-esteem in athletes depends on how the question is formulated. For instance, if the question itself asks about the effects of overly invested parents on self-esteem from the athlete’s perspective, then the question can opposingly focus on the parent’s own perspective as to why they are so preoccupied with their child’s athletic career. For several parents, the pressure applied to their child’s athletic career is in the best interest of the child. If the common goal of the parent is “to afford their kids every opportunity” in order to provide them with the most successful life possible, the pressure experienced by an athlete in this form can be dismissed as an annoyance necessary for high achievement (Jennifer Alsever, 2006). There is a gap in the current research, existing as the experience and measured self-esteem of the high school athlete. Not quite at the collegiate level, high school athletes strive to perform their best in order to make it to the coveted college group. Whether parents add to this pre-existing stress was determined in this study.

Steps have been taken in the realm of parenthood to increase the likelihood of their children succeeding in life via an athletic career. Private lessons, private instructors, and club teams cater to the desires of the parent and their determination in helping their child. Athletes with more experience are typically seen as “better” athletes, meaning that if athletic success is the goal of an overly invested parent, that parent will go to great lengths in order to ensure their athlete is the “best”. In the case study of Beau Fraser, by researcher Jennifer Alsever, it was determined that Beau’s parents spent a sum total of $30,000 on “professional coaches, private trainers, athletic testing, baseball camps, tournaments, and travel with elite teams” to help him become a better baseball player. The article goes on to say that the professional coaches, private trainers, and costly baseball camps do not guarantee that Beau will transform into a professional
baseball player. Overly invested parents can be expected to go above and beyond to provide their children with what they believe will end in success, despite the chance that their provisions may not make a huge difference. Young athletes who experience extreme parental influence to mold them into a socially-deemed “successful” person may experience pressure to perform up to the standards created by their parents.

Manifestation of such pressure has been seen through the act of self-handicapping, or a phenomenon in which an athlete will take any opportunity to excuse failure and accept success. University researchers Guillaume R. Coudevylle, Kathleen A. Martin Ginis, and Jean-Pierre Famose studied the effects of self-handicapping on the performance of athletes. Their findings found a negative correlation between both claimed (known by athlete) and behavioral (unknown by athlete) self-handicapping and athletic performance. Basically, the act of insulating oneself from failure does not necessarily decrease the level of performance demonstrated by the athlete. It may only impact the interpretation of the outcomes of their performance.

**Addressing Gap**

The majority of the studies conducted in this particular sports psychology lens (children and the influence of parenting) used collegiate level athletes. The purpose of using older athletes, who may be in an unfamiliar environment (their university), would be to find whether the parental influences and installed behaviors have remained even in the absence of the stressor.

Many researchers before have studied varying external stressors and their impact on athletes. Some of these include environmental pressure, achievement-oriented pressure, and displaced pressure. Environmental pressures include that from peers, coaches, and family.
Researchers Chen and Lin (2012) concluded that a significant portion of athletic stress and resulting lowered self-esteem can be attributed to the actions of their peers. As for achievement-oriented pressure, an example could be in the form of an athlete who is being pressured to achieve a certain rank in order to be offered scholarships to college. Displaced pressure can be defined as a stressor that originally manifested in another part of the athlete’s life, such as school or friends. The stress caused by these unathletic endeavors may overlap onto the athletic portion of the daily life of the adolescent. While all of these stressors are important to the experience of the athlete, it was noticed that parental involvement was not as thoroughly studied in this social-sport psychology combination. If commonly known factors such as peer pressure can be proven accurate due to heavy research, then the same can be true of parental pressure. Knowing more about several factors that contribute to a situation is the key to understanding the situation.

Research Question

The initial inspiration for the foundation of this study was drawn from the concept of helicopter parenting, as researched by Michael P. Counter. However, since the understanding is that there exists a parental spectrum\(^3\), studying that spectrum as a whole led to the development of a more complete perspective. In addition to differing levels of intensity from parent to parent, there are also differences among which area of growth parents focus on during the development of their child. With parenting being such a broad topic, only one of many influential aspects (i.e. academic, athletic, social, or ethical development) that affect child development could be chosen

\(^3\) One side of the spectrum is extreme hands-on parenting, and the other is extreme hands-off parenting.
to research and analyze. There is an increase in interest among athletes in discovering whether parenting influences self-esteem.

Difficulties arose quickly while developing the “helicopter parenting” project. First, it was challenging to provide a thorough, accurate definition of the term “helicopter parent.” The subjectivity of the concept did not allow for the clear formulation of an all-encompassing explanation. Additionally, the original research question focused on the effects of this type of parenting on the performance of the athlete, rather than the self-esteem. This variable seemed measurable at the onset, but it became apparent the research process required to obtain the necessary results simply was not feasible. Altering the level of parenting from helicopter parenting to a general spectrum reinvented the foundation of the question. The socially appointed term “helicopter parent” became “level of parental investment”, eliminating most preconceived ideas about the term itself, and allowing for more objectivity. Additionally, deciding to change the dependent variable from the performance of athletes to the self-esteem of athletes resulted in a seemingly more tangible level of research that could not be attained with the previous variable. The final version of said question that is to be analyzed in this study is the following: What are the effects of parenting on the self-esteem of high school athletes?

**Methods**

The research process used to obtain data in this study is descriptive analysis, focusing on both quantitative and anecdotal data in the form of surveys and interviews. A combination of both data forms is crucial to ensuring accurate results. The subjects involved in the process were high school athletes of various sports teams at a mid-sized suburban high school. It is
hypothesized, for the sake of subject selection, that those possessing a higher level of skill are more likely to feel an increased amount of pressure to succeed in their sport. Those on varsity may feel more motivated to achieve higher levels of skill in order to push themselves forward in life by means of, for example, a full-ride sport scholarship. If not for the purpose of attending college at a discount, varsity athletes might experience internal achievement motivations, in which they desire victory simply to satisfy their need for excellence. While there are more examples as to the reasoning behind why an athlete desires a high level of skill, the purpose of this study is to determine whether the external influence of parenting has a tangible effect on an athlete’s self-esteem. The standing hypothesis accompanying this project is that certain parental influences can, in fact, cause stress levels to increase and self-esteem to drop.

Surveys distributed were designed to provide a clear look into the perspective of the athlete in order to give feedback directly relating to those addressed by this study: high school athletes feeling pressures from their parents that result in their own self-esteem lowering. A series of questions were asked of the participant, the general theme being how their parents have been involved in their athletic career up until this point, as well as the athlete’s perception of such involvement. The questions were divided into three sections, or “types” of questions. The first section contained “identifying questions”, or questions in which the athlete gave information about their grade, gender and type of sport. The purpose of this section was to gain the background of the athlete being surveyed. The second section contained questions that determine how involved the parents of the athlete are in their career. This would gauge the level of influence the parent has on the daily experience of the athlete. The third and final section contained questions that evaluated the athlete’s feelings towards the level of involvement
demonstrated by the parents. This portion provided the athlete the opportunity to clearly state their opinion. The survey was split in this way in order to categorize answers in an efficient and easily attainable way.

While most of the survey questions were put forth to determine the type of athlete being surveyed, a couple of key questions provided the data analyzed in this study. For instance, one question asked “How have your parents impacted your athletic career?” The answer choices provided were “Positively”, “Negatively”, or “Not At All.” The answer to this, when paired with another question: “Do you enjoy your sport more or less because of your parents?”, provided a clear understanding of how the athlete truly felt. The perception of parental influence relates tremendously to the feelings that the athlete has about themself. If an athlete feels the parent negatively contributes to their sport endeavors, they are likely to reflect that behavior onto their own performance and feel worse about themself as a result. The same can be said for the opposite: if an athlete feels the parent supports their sport endeavors, they are likely to feel comfortable in their decisions and actions.

The interviews act as an extended, more in-depth version of the survey being taken. Questions that require descriptive answers were prevalent, and this method of anecdotal data was just as important as the survey data. Only those interested in follow-up questions had interviews, and participants had the option to end the interview at any time. Taking into account the importance of following rules of ethics, this study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board.
Overview of Results

All questions were posed in order to obtain the athlete’s perspective on the matter of parental influence. A total of 130 survey responses were collected, 52 boys and 78 girls. The hypothesis developed near the beginning of the research process was that the influence of parenting on the self-esteem of high school athletes would be, for the most part, negative. The expectation was that unhealthy stress would manifest in the teenager as a result of unwanted pestering from their parents. After researching the broad topic of stressors on high school athletes, the general conclusion was that social pressure (family, friends, and coaches in this case) has a negative impact on the psyche of the athlete. Researchers such as Counter and Alsever would support this theory due to their own individual experiments into this particular branch of sport psychology. Three interviews, in addition to a statement submitted by one of the coaches, were conducted in an attempt to understand the thoughts of the athlete, face-to-face.
Survey Results and Discussion

Figure 1: Purpose was to understand how applicable parental influences are to the average athlete’s experience.

A little over half of the respondents said “Yes” (56%, or 74 out of 130), meaning they believe that, in some form, their parents’ involvement impacts their actual playing skill. In this case, “playing skill” refers to how much experience and success the athlete has developed in their sport. Parents can generally contribute to this characteristic by paying for and driving them to private lessons and camps. They can also personally watch over their athlete’s growth in performance by coaching them, helping them train, and observing their playing during practices and games. This study has certainly raised the subjective question of whether some forms of parental support are more influential than others.
Figure 2: Purpose was to determine how the athlete felt their performance had been impacted by their parents’ involvement: positively, negatively, or not at all. Such results would provide further insight as to the nature of parental involvement the athlete is experiencing.

The majority of the respondents (62%, or 81 out of 130), marked “Positively” as their answer to the question. The other 38% is made up of those who answered “Negatively” (7%, or 9 out of 130) and those who answered “No Influence” (31%, or 40 out of 130). With the overall response being the realisation that parental influence has improve their athletic career, it can be concluded that athletes understand the extent to which their parents play a part in their successes/failures. Even so, this raises the question as to whether athletes feel their parents influence other aspects of their life in a positive way. The level of which a parent is involved in the athletic career of their child depends on the parent and their values.
**Figure 3:** Purpose was to understand whether the athlete believed their parents’ involvement in their athletic endeavors related to their enjoyment of the sport itself.

![Pie chart showing enjoyment of sport more or less due to parents' involvement](image.png)

UnEXPECTEDLY, the majority of the respondents (71%, or 93 out of 130) enjoy their sport more because of their parents’ involvement. The collective consensus, backed up by interviews, was that the support was more beneficial to the overall success and well-being. To sum it up, the good appeared to outweigh the bad. On top of that, about 71% of the respondents from those who fell under the “enjoy sport more because of parents’ involvement” bracket (67 out of 93) felt that their playing skills increased in a positive way as a result of parental influences. Only about 6% of the group (8 out of 130) experienced the extreme type of stress that was hypothesized as being prevalent: a stress to the point of enjoying their sport less.
Interview Results and Discussion

In addition to exploring descriptive analysis through the use of surveys, face-to-face individual interviews were conducted in order to cement the correlations found in the quantitative data. The participating athletes were two girls, both swimmers, and one boy, a baseball player. For the purpose of differentiating each person, they shall be labeled as Athletes A, B, and C. In two out of three interviews, the athletes appeared to have a generally positive stance on their parents’ involvement. They felt the support improved their playing skills, and appreciated everything their parents did for them in their athletic career. In fact, Athlete A, a junior on the varsity swim team for three years, compared the behavior of her parents to that of other parents during their athletes’ races. She claimed that her parents were “not those kinds of parents who are running down the sidelines yelling ‘Kick!’ Some of them are crazy, and hold neon signs and stand over their swimmer yelling ‘Kick!’ They’re underwater, they can’t hear you.” The perspective of this athlete is that parents who perform those actions are too involved in the swimming of their child. After being asked whether there was any pressure generated by her parents for her success at swim, Athlete A said that even though her parents initially made her participate in competitive swim, the majority of pressure is self-generated. Her personal drive to be the best she can be appeared to be the only distressful influence in her athletic career. Athlete A’s additional feedback was that her parents attended some of her meets, but that she appreciated the moderate involvement and felt it was positive.

In another interview, Athlete B felt extreme pressure from her father to excel in swim. She is a sophomore, swimming on the junior varsity team. She has swum competitively for five years. Her father’s behaviors gives her anxiety about doing well in her races: timing her
separately, attending every meet, paying for private coaches, etc. The added effort, intended to improve her athletic performance, increased her stress instead. The act of spending extensive amounts of money on means of improving the performance of a high school athlete is mimicked in Jennifer Alsever’s case study of Beau Fraser, as mentioned previously. When questioned as to the motive behind her father’s actions, Athlete B commented, “He always wished he could swim. In high school he was a wrestler but he always thought he would be a better swimmer. So, I guess he’s going through me.” Displaced dreams of greatness, when placed upon the shoulders of an adolescent, can prove harmful to that athlete’s overall stress levels. Being unable to match those dreams appears to diminish the self-esteem of the athlete.

The final interview yielded very different results. Athlete C appeared to feel the exact opposite of Athlete B, taking a more grateful stance on the matter. He is a sophomore on the junior varsity baseball team. He has played baseball for ten years, and joined the sport of his own volition. According to what he said, Athlete C has supportive parents, and as a result feels confident and comfortable in his endeavors as a baseball player. His direct statement: “I’m happy my parents are a part of my [athletic] career because they help me out a lot, they support me in my decisions.” He went on to clarify that his parents pay for one-on-one lessons with an instructor as well as his school coach. In addition, he stated that his playing skill has significantly improved in response to his parent’s provisions. Athlete C’s experience appears to be extremely positive, and one point he emphasized was the trust installed between himself and his parents when considering other aspects of his life that his parents are involved in. He stated that he is allowed to attend social events outside of school because of that trust. When it comes to Athlete C’s baseball career, the family dynamic is encouraging and supportive.
While corresponding with many of the coaches at the high school, another source of information made himself known. This particular coach kindly shared his personal experience regarding the influence of parenting, his key statement being “As a coach, I want the parents of my athletes to be invested.” He went on to state, “If I had to pick between “overly invested” and “under invested”, I would take the “over” every time. Student athletes rarely achieve [success] without significant investment from their parents, and I do not believe self-esteem is correlated to that investment.” To a coach, parental involvement in a child’s athletic career is paramount to the success of the athlete on a general scale. This particular coach later stated that if anything, a lack of involvement on the parent’s part is more destructive to adolescents. In fact, throughout his entire coaching career, he stated that he had only witnessed two cases of extreme negative involvement, in which the parent of each child was verbally abusive to their children for not meeting their expectations. The majority of athletes he had coached had positive athletic experiences because of their parents’ involvement. Comparing this coach’s experience to the results collected in this study yields an odd similarity: parental influence tends to have, for most cases, positive repercussions. When it comes to athletic self-esteem, parental reinforcement acts as a foundation-building material for not only success, but also self-assurance.

After analyzing the results further, I noticed that there was a common theme in the overall pattern of results: the majority of the interviews and survey responses reflected that parental involvement proves positive in any athletic endeavors the child has. The remaining responses were either indifferent, or they were the complete opposite of the spectrum: extremely negative. This pattern has shown up in the survey results and interviews, and it appears to hold true. It seems as though the majority of the high school athletes involved in this study were
content and grateful to their parents for their contributions and support, rather than stressed out and lacking in confidence when it came to their abilities.

Limitations

The limitations of this project include difficulties with maintaining a balanced ratio of athlete gender, type of sport, and grade. For instance, the number of female athlete responses is higher than the number of male athletes surveyed/interviewed, and the number of sophomores and juniors surveyed/interviewed is higher than that of freshmen and seniors. The type of participants involved in this study do not conform to a typical stratified sampling method. This hiccup may partially impact the reliability of the data collected, though certainly not by much. Setting aside the difficulties with the diversity amongst the parties who responded, the results yielded a fairly valid correlation: Parenting and its impact on the self-esteem of athletes. Every response brought forth by the athletes is a true contribution to this research process, regardless of the athlete’s composition.

Another limitation to consider while reading this paper is that the level of dedication of athletes on the Freshman/Sophomore and Junior Varsity teams may be at a lower level than those on the Varsity team. Mentioned previously, it can be assumed that players on higher-level teams may experience steeper stakes and greater pressure as a result. However, the truthfulness of answers is not compromised because of this consideration, it is merely something to keep in mind.

When distributing surveys and conducting interviews, only athletes who were interested in contributing their experience took part. Thus, unintentional sampling bias was brought upon
the study. At the same time, a fair percentage of responses came from each sports team, each with their own personal encounters to share. More experiences from athletes who may have only responded when required to would have been useful in the study. However, the existing data proved sufficient in answering the posed research question.

**Applications and Future Research**

This research benefits not only sport-focused psychologists and the parents of athletes, but also coaches, high school teachers, and other members of society that interact with adolescents. Understanding the specific relationship a child has with their parent is important to understanding the behavior of said child. Being aware of how certain stressors impact the self-esteem of teenagers allows for an enlightened approach in viewing teenage health, both mentally and physically. As previously mentioned, stress significantly contributes to the likelihood of an athlete sustaining an injury (Pedro L. Almeida, Aurelio Olmedilla, Víctor J. Rubio, and Pere Palou). By harnessing the knowledge of where an athlete experiences stress and lowered self-esteem, it can be ensured that stress-related injuries are eliminated from the list of potential problems an athlete faces on a daily basis.

Future research in this field would be extremely beneficial in furthering the awareness of adults when it comes to adolescents and athletics. Communication between the two ages is essential to the development of solid relationships. If a teenager is able to talk to their parents and feel that they are being heard, they will be able to transfer that communication skill to their playing field and improve their performance. At the same time, it takes work on both sides to make a relationship function properly. Parents should also make an effort to hear their children
and respond appropriately to their words. The level of involvement on the parents’ part should be flexible, according to what the athlete feels. These small details will contribute significantly to the average athlete’s stress. Also, it will monumentally improve the experience of those athletes with negatively perceived experiences associated with their parents’ involvement in their sporting career. The feeling of being heard and appreciated can lead to the perception of being “worth” something, which in turn seems to warrant a higher level of self-esteem.

Viable future research could additionally revolve around the parents’ perception of their children's athletic performance as a result of their involvement. The perspective of a parent may differ greatly from the athlete’s, as parents commonly seem to want the best for their children. Perhaps, exploring this perspective could lead to strengthened communication for both parties. The possibilities for applications of this research are endless: therapy, psych evaluations, leadership exercises, etc. All of the above could produce more accurate results if the relationship between parent and child was emphasized. However, something to consider is that everyone is different, so applications of this knowledge may not completely alleviate stress caused by either side, depending on the person. Parenting is certainly a spectrum when it comes to level of involvement, and thus, Counter’s claim that “helicopter” and “absentee” parents exist on opposite ends of said spectrum must be taken into account. It may be interesting to see which “type” of parent is more willing to take on the task of promoting open communication with their child. Future research might discover a correlation between the levels of communication, parental influence, and perceived stress.
Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine what influence parental involvement had on the self-esteem of high school athletes. The end result was that while half of the high school athletes who participated believe their parents have an effect on their playing skill, the majority believe that the involvement of their parents has reflected positively in their athletic career. Whether it was demonstrated through paid lessons, or simply their support at every sporting event, the actions of a parent are consequential to the adolescent’s development of self-confidence. Future research within this lens of sport psychology could reveal the perspective of the parents on this topic, and further lead humanity toward the complete understanding of the relationship between parent and child.
References


Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions

1st Section - 6 questions
2nd Section - 12 questions
3rd Section - 12 questions

Required Questions = *

1st Section: Identifying Questions
-What grade are you in? *
  a. Freshman/9th
  b. Sophomore/10th
  c. Junior/11th
  d. Senior/12th
-What is your gender? *
  a. Female
  b. Male
  c. Other: __
-Do you play a sport? *
  a. Yes
  b. No
-What specific sport do you play/participate in? If you play more than one of these sports, check all that apply. *
  a. Basketball
  b. Volleyball
  c. Football
  d. Wrestling
  e. Tennis
  f. Swim
  g. Baseball
  h. Soccer
  i. Softball
  j. Golf
  k. Water polo
  l. Track and field
  m. Cross country
  n. Lacrosse
- How long have you been playing that sport?
  a. 1-2 years
  b. 3-4 years
  c. 5-7 years
  d. 8-10 years
  e. Longer than 10 years

- In addition to playing at your high school, do you play on an independent sports team (club, travel ball, etc.)?
  a. Yes
  b. No

2nd Section: Level of Parental Involvement
- Why did you choose your sport(s)/Who suggested you play it/them? Select all that apply. *
  a. Personal interest
  b. My friend
  c. My parent(s)
  d. Other: __

- In general, what is the connection of you and your parents to the sport(s) you currently play? Select all that apply. *
  a. My parent(s) played the sport(s) when they were younger
  b. My parent(s) suggested that I play the sport(s)
  c. My parent(s) signed me up to play the sport(s) when I was young
  d. My parent is my coach
  e. My parent(s) wasn't involved in my decision to play the sport(s)
  f. I did not select "My parent(s)"
  g. Other: __

- Do you currently have a private instructor/private lessons with your coach? *
  a. Yes
  b. No

- Did you take private lessons in your sport as a child? *
  a. Yes
  b. No

- Do your parents/parent help you train for your sport? *
  a. Yes
  b. No
  c. Sometimes

- If you selected "Yes" for the previous question, briefly describe how your parents/parent help you train for your sport.
Response: __
-Do you have any injuries, either short-term or long-term? *
  a. Yes
  b. No
-Do your parents/parent encourage you to play while you are injured?
  a. Yes
  b. No
-Do your parents/parent attend your practices?
  a. Yes
  b. No
  c. Sometimes
-If you selected "No" on the previous question, please answer the following question. Is there a reason your parents don't usually attend your practices?
  a. My practices occur during school hours
  b. My parents have work
  c. My parents are busy
  d. I've requested that they do not attend
  e. My parents don't approve of me playing my sport, and therefore do not attend
  f. I selected "Yes"
  g. Other: __
-Do your parents/parent attend your meets/matches/games? *
  a. Yes, all of them
  b. Yes, some of them
  c. No, none of them
  d. No, I've requested that they do not attend
  e. My parents don't approve of me playing my sport, and therefore do not attend
-On a scale of 1 to 5, how involved would you say your parents are in your athletic career? *
  a. 1
  b. 2
  c. 3
  d. 4
  e. 5

3rd Section: Evaluation of Experience/Self-Esteem
-On a scale of 1 to 5, how happy are you with your experience as an athlete so far? *
  a. 1 (Not happy)
  b. 2
  c. 3
d. 4  
e. 5 (Very happy)

What is the main element that has made your experience enjoyable so far? (if you had to pick one) *

a. The team environment  
b. My teammates  
c. My parents' involvement  
d. My coach/coaches  
e. The sport itself  
f. Other: __

What is the main element that has made your experience un-enjoyable so far? (if you had to pick one) *

a. The team environment  
b. My teammates  
c. My parents' involvement  
d. My coach/coaches  
e. The sport itself  
f. Other: __

How do you feel about your parents' involvement in your athletic career? *

a. They're not involved enough  
b. They're not too involved, but not too removed  
c. They're too involved

How would you describe your parents' involvement from the given adjectives?

a. Indifferent  
b. Adequate  
c. Stressful

Do you feel that your parents' involvement influences your playing skill? *

a. Yes  
b. No

How do you feel your playing skill has been influenced by your parents' involvement? *

a. In a positive way  
b. In a negative way  
c. It has not been influenced

Do you enjoy your sport less or more because of your parents' involvement? *

a. Less  
b. More

How do your parents generally respond when you lose a game/race/match? *

a. They are sympathetic/encouraging  
b. They are indifferent
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**EFFECTS OF PARENTING ON SELF-ESTEEM IN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES**

- They are angry/upset/disappointed
- They think I could have done better

-if you selected "They are indifferent", "They are angry/upset", or "They think I could have done better" on the previous question, please answer the following question. Do you get upset with yourself/disappointed in yourself when your parents respond this way?  

  a. Yes  
  b. No  
  c. Sometimes  
  d. I did not select "They are indifferent", "They are angry/upset", or "They think I could have done better"

- How do your parents generally respond when you win a game/race/match?  

  a. They are proud  
  b. They are indifferent  
  c. They think I could have done better

-if you selected "They are indifferent" or "They think I could have done better" on the previous question, please answer the following question. Do you get upset with yourself/disappointed in yourself when your parents respond this way?  

  a. Yes  
  b. No  
  c. Sometimes  
  d. I did not select "They are indifferent" or "They think I could have done better"

---

**Appendix B: Survey Results**  

- A random sample of the collected data is portrayed below (44 responses out of 130)

*First selection of survey questions from the sample*
# Effects of Parenting on Self-Esteem in High School Athletes

## Second Selection of Survey Questions from the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents provide you with emotional support?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents provide you with physical support?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents provide you with academic support?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Third Selection of Survey Questions from the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents set high expectations for you?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents help you with homework?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents discuss your goals with you?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Fourth Selection of Survey Questions from the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents encourage you to be physically active?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents discuss the importance of nutrition?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents model healthy behaviors?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What is your name, grade, and sport?

2. What is your overall feeling about your parents’ involvement in your athletic career?

3. Why do you think they are so involved in your sport?
   a. Do they want you to get scholarships?
   b. Are they living their dream through you?
   c. Did you ask them to support you?

4. How do your parents react to your performance during your games/matches/meets? Are they overly upset when you lose? Are they ecstatic when you win?
   a. Do they criticize your performance at all after a game/match/meet?

5. How does that make you feel?

6. If you don’t like their reactions, have you ever shared your feelings with your parents?
a. If so, how do they respond?

b. If not, what’s keeping you from talking to them?

7. Do you feel that your parents’ pressure/involvement has helped your athletic career? If your parents pressure you by saying things like “You need to be the best”, does this have a positive impact while you’re performing?

8. How do you feel your parents’ involvement has affected you in other aspects of your life?
   a. School, Social life, Relationships/Friendships, etc.

9. How has it affected how you feel about yourself?