

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

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Interest in Topic

- 21st Century Parenting
- Concept of “helicopter parents”
 - Evolved to differing **levels** of parental involvement
- Personal experience as an athlete

Question and Hypothesis

Question: What are the effects of parenting on the self-esteem of high school athletes?

Hypothesis: The majority of athletes analyzed feel negatively pressured by their parents to succeed in their sport. This leads to undesired drops in self-esteem.

Literature Review

- **Psychology in the world of sport injury: What it is all about (2014)** ¹
 - Research has highlighted stress as one of the most important variables in the injury process
 - It has been shown to promote vulnerability to athletic injury
- **Sport Participation and Self-Esteem As Mediated By Perceived Peer Acceptance (2012)** ²
 - The attitude of an athlete's peers impacts the athlete's self-perception and resulting levels of self-esteem

¹ Pedro L. Almeida, Aurelio Olmedilla, Víctor J. Rubio, and Pere Palou (2014); Vol. 23(2),p. 395-400

² Wen-Ing Chen, Chen-Yueh Chen, Yi-Hsiu Lin, & Tien-Tze Chen (2012)

Literature Review Cont.

- **Parental Involvement in Children's High School Sports (2014)** ³
 - "Helicopter Parents" vs. "Absentee Parents"
 - Parenting is a spectrum
- **A New Competitive Sport - Grooming the Child Athlete (2006)** ⁴
 - Case Study of high school baseball player Beau Fraser
 - Parents spent \$30,000 on professional coaches, private trainers, athletic testing, baseball camps, tournaments, and travel with elite teams

³ Michael P. Counter (2014) Master's Thesis submitted to St. Norbert College

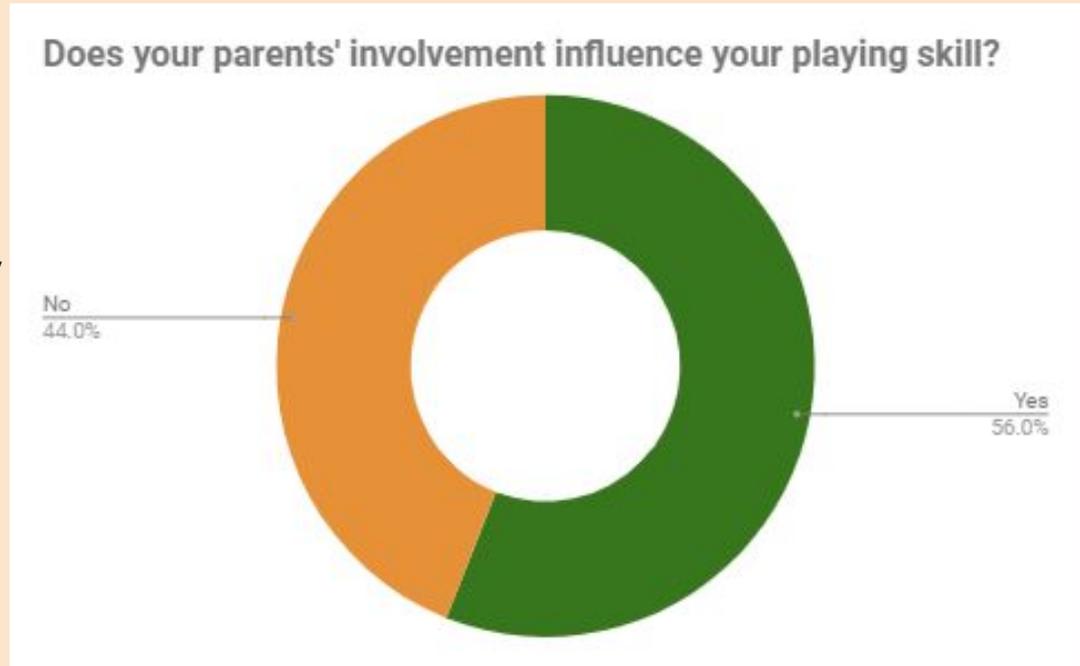
⁴ Jennifer Alsever (2006) The New York Times

Methods

- **Surveys**
 - 130 High School Athletes
 - 3 Types of Questions
 - Identifying Questions
 - Level of Parental Involvement
 - Athlete's Perspective
- **In-Depth Interviews**
 - Athlete A
 - Athlete B
 - Athlete C
 - TOHS Coach

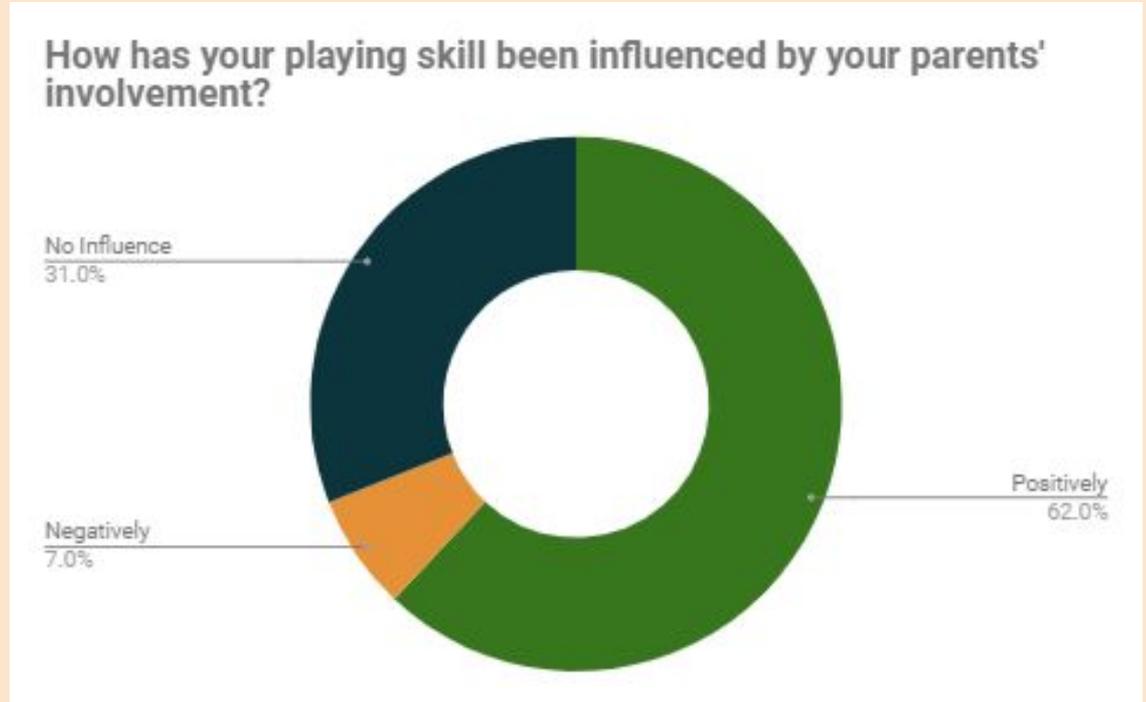
Survey Results

- 56% (74 out of 130) said “Yes”
- Parents **generally** contribute to playing skill by providing the means of improvement
 - Paying money
 - Watching over athlete’s training personally



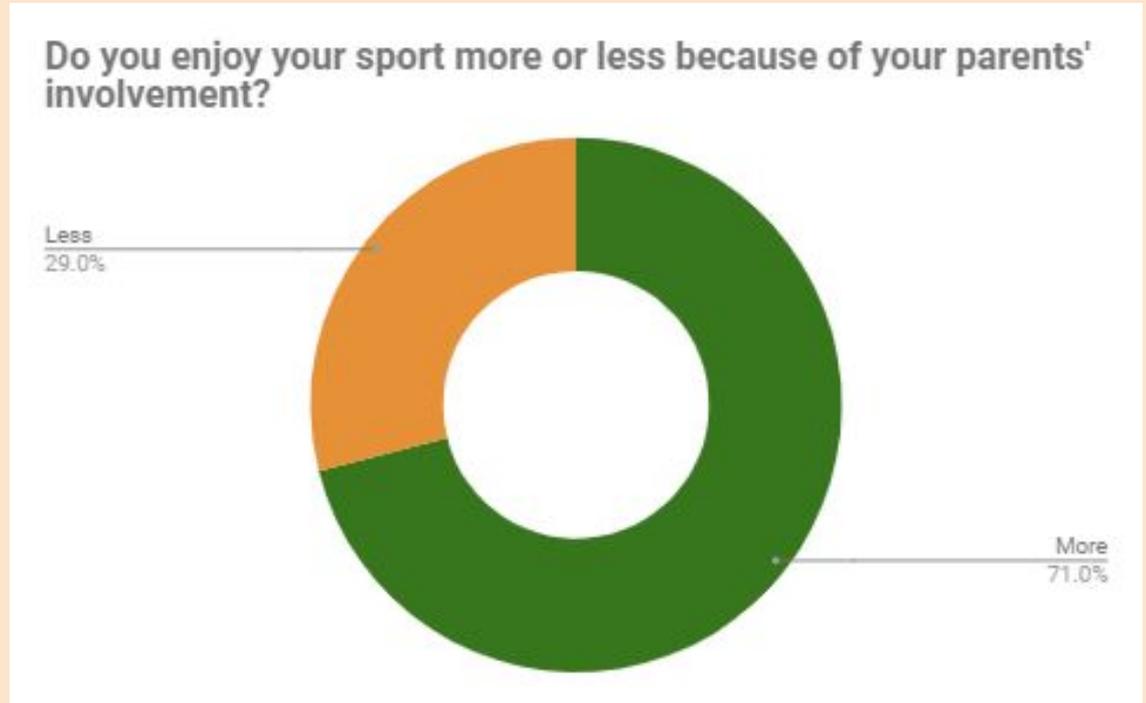
Survey Results

- 62% (82 out of 130) said “Positively”
- 7% (9 out of 130) said “Negatively”
- 31% (41 out of 130) said “No Influence”
- Demonstrates the majority of athletes acknowledge impact of parents’ involvement



Survey Results

- 72% (93 out of 130) enjoy their sport more because of their parents' involvement
- The good outweighs the bad



Interview Results

Athlete A: 11th grade, swimmer

Athlete B: 10th grade, swimmer

Athlete C: 10th grade, baseball player

TOHS Coach

Athlete A

- 11th grade, female, swimmer
- Positive approach to parental involvement
- Compared her parents to those of other athletes
 - Hers were “not those kinds of parents who [run] down the sidelines yelling ‘Kick!’”
- Majority of distressful pressure is self-generated
- Parents attend some of the meets
- Feels parents are moderately involved

Athlete B

- 10th grade, female, swimmer
- Negative experience with parental involvement
- Specific behavior of father distresses her: timing her races separately, attending every meet, hiring private coaches
- Her father “always wished he could swim”
 - Her father was a wrestler in high school, but always thought he would be a better swimmer
- High level of stress resulting in lowered levels of self-esteem

Athlete C

- 10th grade, male, baseball player
- Positive approach to parental involvement
- Deep appreciation towards parents contributions
- Emphasized trust between himself and his parents
 - “I’m happy my parents are part of my athletic career because they support me in my decisions.”
- Parents pay for one-on-one lessons
 - He stated his playing has improved significantly as a result
- Supportive parents have led him to feel confident and stable

TOHS Coach

- Positive stance on parental involvement, saying that “students rarely achieve without significant investment from their parents”
- Prefers extremely invested parents over detached parents.
- Only experienced 2 cases of extreme parenting resulting in verbal harm to athlete

Discussion

- Only about 6% of respondents experienced extreme stress (Hypothesis was incorrect)
 - 8 out of 130 athletes experienced extreme stress and lowered levels of self-esteem
- Common Theme Throughout All Results:
 - The majority showed healthy levels of self-esteem and stability
- Athletes Seem to Understand The Extent of their Parents' Involvement
 - The majority were appreciative and acknowledged their parents' contributions

Limitations

- Ratio of participants is not equal
- Level of intensity may be lower in Frosh/Soph and Junior Varsity
- Sample may be biased
- Every athlete is different, and all experiences are interpreted differently

Applications

- Understanding each relationship between parent and athlete may...
 - Reduce stress-related injuries
 - Improve quality of treatment
 - Provide a more thorough background for persons of authority
 - Lead to further research on how parents impact their children's lives

Conclusion

- Majority of TOHS athletes in this study feel the involvement of their parents has contributed positively to their careers and self-esteem.

Future Research

- Parents' perspective on this topic
- Involve both parties in communication experiments

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the TOHS athletes who participated in my study!