GENDER AND SPORTS: PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON

THEIR CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF SPORTS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1972, a radical amendment to the Civil Rights Act was approved. The Educational Amendments Act of 1972, or more specifically Title IX sent a chord of concern through the members of the NCAA who have fought the ruling ever since (Murphy, 1988). Title IX, as interpreted by Salter (1996), read "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (p. 6). However, in January of 1984, proponents of Title IX suffered a set back. The Supreme Court ruled in *Grove City College v. Bell* with a much more narrow view of Title IX than originally intended (Murphy, 1988). The Supreme Court ruled that "Title IX language applied only to specific programs or departments that received federal funds, not to entire institutions" (Sage, 1990, p. 49). It was not until March 22, 1988 when the Civil Rights Restoration became law that Title IX return to the original broad interpretation the authors intended (Krupa & Neff, 1988). Yet, "ninety percent of college and universities are not in compliance with Title IX" (Salter, 1996, p. 5).

Through the years there has been an increase of women's participation in sports; however, the increase in participation does not include an increase in types of acceptable sports in which females can participate. In the United States, certain sports are deemed undesirable for women and some sports are considered unsuitable for men (Matteo, 1996). Some research has looked at the variety of roles and the impact gender and sex play in the

area of sports. These different studies examine the differences in treatment, availability, and emotional impact of sports for men and women which lead to the inequalities existing in sports. These studies analyze issues such as which sports women are more likely to participate in over men, for example sports that are feminine and do not involve heavy objects or are contact sports (Kane & Snyder, 1989); whether the sport enhances or decreases a woman's femininity because women are not likely to be seen favorably if they are participating in a sport that decreases their femininity (Pedersen & Kono, 1990); and gender differences in the burnout associated with coaching sports, where women burn out quicker than men because they feel lower personal accomplishment and more emotionally exhausted (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984).

Coaching and gender is another topic frequently addressed in studies. For example, studies which discovered female coaches are expected to follow a traditional role without the deviations that are granted to male coaches, or studies which found young athletes and athletic administrators hold stereotypical beliefs that do not benefit female coaches, or examined why there are a greater number of men coaching overall (Eitzen & Pratt, 1989; Hasbrook, Hart, Mathes, & True, 1990; Hart, Hasbrook, & Mathes, 1986; Parkhouse & Williams, 1986). In addition, across all university sports, men have more opportunities and eligibility of scholarship aid than women (Staurowsky, 1998).

The topics explored in the previously mentioned studies are examples of problems for people participating in athletics. However, there is a question which researchers have been trying to answer: if sports participation is based on gender differences, where does the definition of gender characteristics originate and who determines which sports are masculine and which sports are feminine? It is likely that these perceptions are formed

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early in life. Because of this account, it is important to explore the parents' role in their children's learning of sports.

Bandura (1977) created a model called social learning theory to explain how gender roles are formed, outlined, and maintained. Brooks-Gunn and Matthews (1979) describe social learning theory as "the way men and women behave in a particular society, that is, the modeling characteristics they convey as they proceed in their day-to-day activities and the manner in which they dispense rewards and punishments, determines the course of their children's sex role development" (p. 123). Children act according to their perceived consequence of a given behavior: everyday actions, comments, and behavior by parents to their children serve as a reinforcement of the children's learning and socialization (Brooks-Gunn & Matthews, 1979). Social learning theory can be used to understand why people believe certain sports are proper for men and certain sports are proper for women. The communication which surrounds an individual creates a picture defining that individual's character and nature. The communication men receive regarding a particular sport will help them determine whether or not to participate in that sport. Women too receive messages about sport participation that serve as deciding factors whether they should or should not take part in the sport.

Using social learning theory in this research can highlight the communication parents use with children which may encourage gender stereotypes. The purpose of this thesis is to explore parents' perceptions of sports and the communication they use with their children about sports participation, and to determine how parents influence their children's sports perceptions. In addition, this research will update a portion of Matteo's

1986 study which looked at people's perceptions of which sports are considered feminine, masculine, and neutral.

This thesis provides a clear definition of social learning theory and provides examples of the theory's application. Key ideas, such as masculinity and femininity, stereotypes, and the role of sports in people's lives, are also outlined in the following pages. Parents' communication to their children is a potential source of sports inequalities. For example by socializing their children to believe in gender stereotypes can lead to situations where females are harassed and receive unequal time at the gym (Halbert, 1997) and men are granted more scholarship opportunities (Staurowsky, 1998). This thesis aims to clarify to what extent parental communication serves as an influence of these beliefs. When searching for a solution to a problem, a source must be recognized before progress can be made. "Fundamental social relations are not altered by courts and legislation, and culturally conditioned responses to gender ideology are ubiquitous and resistant to sudden changes" (Sage, 1990, p. 53). Studying parents' communication patterns and their children's perceptions of that communication could give insight on how to bring about change to the sports arena that will give equity to both women and men.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This thesis examines the communication between parent and child, more specifically, their communication regarding sports and gender. Before magnifying details in gender and sport communication, it is necessary to review all relevant literature connected with this topic. Discussing the socialization process, understanding the current research surrounding females in sports and males in sports, and learning about the impact the current role gender plays in athletics will enhance the comprehension of the study done in this thesis.

Social Learning Theory

"Humans do not learn as passive respondents to external rewards and punishments from the environment, but rather that behavior is reciprocally determined in a dynamic interaction between the person, the environment, and previous behavior" (Bandura, 1978, p. 356). Bandura's thought is the basis for social learning theory. An individual behaves by utilizing past experience to deal with a current situation rather than creating new behavior (Rotter, 1982). "The stereotypic expectations and the differential responses they elicit are sufficiently clear and unambiguous to account for the cognitive and personality differences in children that ultimately lead to the different roles that they fulfill" (Birns, 1976, p. 251).

Bandura (1989) describes the social cognitive learning process in four subcategories of attention, retention, behavior production, and motivation. This breakdown of the learning procedure begins with attention stage. This stage of the process is the observation an individual makes and the information the individual extrapolates from the situation. The individual must then retain the information. The behavior production stage is the course of action the individual plans to take; while the motivation stage is the actual implementation of the course of action (Bandura, 1989). Communication cues are the sources an individual uses to determine which behavior is acceptable. These cues are then applied to future situations (Rotter, 1982). "Social cognitive theory assumes that values and behavior patterns arise from diverse sources of influence and are promoted by institutional backing" (Bandura, 1989, p. 47).

Social learning theory suggests people learn from their environment. The environment can include, family, media, schools, or "anything that catches their eyes or ears" (Wood, 1997, p. 55). It is the communication which children receive and which others in their environment send that teach children (Myers, 1996). Within their environment, "children may learn a wide variety of behaviors including behavioral, emotional, and perhaps cognitive responses" (Reitman & Gross, 1995, p. 90). The influences in the children's environment can lower inhibitions and teach methods of acceptable behavior (Myers, 1996). "Social learning theory is a learning approach that blends both the cognitive theory of learning and the environmental perspective of learning" (DeCenzo & Robbins, 1994).

Social learning theory is a method of socialization involving indirect learning by imagining consequences or anticipating a reward or punishment (Trenholm & Jensen,

1996). People learning from rewards and punishments will choose behaviors that produce the most beneficial results (Roach & Jensen, in press). People learn how certain behaviors are more desired, and with continued positive feedback for that behavior, they consistently choose that behavior (DeCenzo & Robbins, 1994). It is the anticipated reward or punishment which motivates a child's choice of which behavior in which to engage (Myers, 1996).

There are three effects of social learning theory identified by Corey (1996). First is the learning of new behaviors and skills, and the performance of these behaviors and skills. The learning comes from watching others perform these tasks. The second effect is a reduction in the fear of performing the behavior. When children have watched others perform or they themselves have performed without negative repercussions, their anxiety is lowered. Finally, children sense a necessity to imitate the behavior. Myers (1996) suggest the effect of social learning theory is a potential to control behaviors with rewards and punishments, and modeling behavior.

Researchers have used social learning theory to study a wide range of situations. Kalechstein and Nowicki (1993) used the theory to predict the success of telemarketers. Adolescents are often observed using this theory for the prevention of depression (Hawkins, Clarke, & Seeley, 1993), to explain smoking (Akers & Lee, 1996), and participation in gangs (Winfree, Backstrom, & Mays, 1994). Marital violence (Mihalic & Elliot, 1997) and sexual jealousy (Wiederman & Allgeier, 1993) are two other areas where social learning theory has been utilized. In addition, Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) applied social cognitive theory to explain self motivation and academic attainment.

Social learning theory is also frequently used to explain the formation of gender roles. Children receive rewards when they act in a manner which is congruent with their sex and punished for acting in a manner which is gender appropriate for the opposite sex (Harris, 1980). Brooks-Gunn and Matthews (1979) suggest children learn their roles by imitating sex-typed behaviors and the children will base their imitation on predicted or actual rewards and punishments. "The typical child can and will exhibit behavior that is either 'masculine' or 'feminine' but the adults to whom the child is exposed will reinforce only that behavior which they deem appropriate to the child's sex" (Harris, 1980, p. 225). This reinforcement from the parents or this example of social learning theory, provides an illustration of the significant impact parents have on their children and the formation of their children's gender roles. Greendorfer (1977) urges the use of social learning theory to help understand the intricacy of the sport socialization and prejudices which exists within sports. The results of her social learning theory study identified a difference between the effects parents, peers, and teacher/coaches have on the sports socialization of individuals during different life stages. Although peers were socializing agents consistently through all life stages of childhood, adolescence, and adult stage, the family does serve as a strong socializing agent during childhood.

Bandura (1986) believes the formation of gender roles can be observed primarily with the social cognitive theory. "Observational learning from live and symbolic models (e.g., films, television, and books) is the first step in acquisition of sex typed behavior" (Mischel, 1966, p. 57). Birns (1976) asserts the environment in which all children are raised propels the stereotypes associated with gender. Mischel (1966) offers the following view of social learning theory and sex roles. First one "learns to discriminate between sex

typed behavior patterns, then to generalize from the specific learning experiences to new situations, and finally to perform sex typed behavior" (p. 59). Boys receive negative judgments when they exhibit behavior that is positively reinforced and rewarded in girls (Johnsen, 1982) and the opposite is also true. "Winning games against men elicit such a negative response that girls learn early to lose rather than face rejection-whether from boys and girls their own age, or from their fathers" (Boslooper & Hayes, 1980, p. 214). Bussey and Bandura (1992) contend that children learn about gender and the different roles through social and observational experiences. For instance, peers have been found to be an influence in each part of an individual's life (Greendorfer, 1977). The environment social learning theory refers to can range from teachers, peers, and family, but also include culture and the media. These elements affect gender development. Brooks-Gunn and Matthew (1979) suggest the type of sex differentiated behaviors demonstrated by children are reflections of the larger culture. "Once children achieve gender consistency - a conception of their own gender as fixed and irreversible - they positively value and seek to adopt only those behaviors congruent with the gender concept they have acquired" (Bussey & Bandura, 1992. p. 1236). Gill (1992) posits the gender beliefs existing in sport and exercise were socialized early. Additionally, according to Malumphy (1970), it is the family that is of "prime importance in explaining sport participation"(p. 22).

Parents' Influence on Their Children

Parents are the first and strongest influence on their children and they behave diversely towards their sons and daughters beginning from the time the children are born

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throughout the child's life (Sage, 1990). Parents try to identify the best means of communicating to produce a desired outcome. (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). The parents' socialization of their children has such a tremendous influence that the degree of positive and negative in the socialization the parents' use has the potential to effect the positive and negative relationship the child will have with their own children (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993). Parents have the most substantial effect in the socialization process during childhood (McPherson, Curtis, & Loy, 1989). Bussey and Bandura (1992) state "parents explicitly and implicitly convey to their children gender appropriate behavior"(1992, p. 1238). Children learn quickly from their parents what behavior is appropriate for their gender (Mischel, 1966). Children learn the appropriate behavior for a boy or a girl based on the gender stereotypes held by their parents (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). Wood (1997) suggests that the core family is a fundamental root for children learning gender identity. "Parents; beliefs about gender influence how they interact with sons and daughters, what expectations they communicate to each, and how they themselves serve as gender models for children" (Wood, 1997, p. 117).

Specifically, parents play a major role in their children's socialization in sports (Oliver, 1980; Smith, 1979; Spreitzer & Snyder, 1976). Parents are significant sources of reinforcement for their children by serving not just as a role model but as a supporter or opposer of participation in physical activities (Anderssen & Wold, 1992). In a study examining the involvement of children in sports, specifically in soccer, it was found that the parents must approve of a sport, and be satisfied with the program offered for their children before encouraging participation by their children (Green & Chalip, 1997). It is the parent who will get their children involved initially (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Snyder

& Purdy, 1982). Anderssen and Wold (1992) assert their study identifies parents as role models and support for physical activity and sports.

Sage (1990) believes parents dissuade their daughters from participating in organized sports, especially once the girls reach puberty, but encourage and at times even coerce their boys in to competitive sports. Girls do not receive systematic or steady rewards while they are developing their motor skills (Greendorf. 1992). McPherson, Curtis, and Loy (1989) assert that girls need encouragement from both parents to even participate, let alone be competitive in a sport. Boys report receiving more support for sports participation and physical activity from parents than girls (Anderssen & Wold, 1992); however, support from parents is more important to girls (Spreitzer & Snyder, 1976). If a child, regardless of sex, does not receive positive reinforcement from parents, the child will most likely not participate in a sport regardless of the natural talent the child possesses for that sport (McPherson, et al., 1989). Even more than peers or the media, the family outlines the child's view of the "social world and the world of sports" (McPherson, et al., 1989, p. 40) and how the child should be involved in sports.

Gender and Sex

Gender and sex are often used in similar ways as if the words have identical definitions. However, depending on the researcher, these words, sex and gender, are words with a shared meaning, two exclusive meanings, or a blending of both extremes.

In 1966, Hamburg and Lunde explored the idea that it is biology, more specifically sex hormones, that determine the differences in behavior between the sexes. They found it difficult to separate biological influences and environmental influences but believe that sex

hormones have an obvious influence on the development of the individual; although there is no conclusive evidence to determine the extent of the influence. Shaprio (1990) agrees that hormones do have a role defining the difference between men and women. The hormone estrogen has positive influences on the female system, and influences brain and body development (Wood, 1997). Male sex hormones, such as testosterone, have also been linked to violence and jockeying for power (Study Links High Testosterone," 1991, p. 8-A).

Research has also indicated that men have a concentrated use of one lobe in the brain, while women use the other lobe (Wood, 1997). The logic and linear thought is associated with the left lobe with is used more often by men, and the right lobe, attributed to controlling imagination, is used more by women (Hartlage, 1980; Lesak, 1976; Walsh, 1978). Men's brains struggle and find it more difficult than women's brains to understand others' emotions (Begley, 1995).

It is biological differences, such as hormones and using the brain, which lead some to believe it is biology, not environment, which designates gender and appropriate behavior of males and females. For example, Allan Bloom (1987) suggest women's behavior should include staying at home with the children because, biologically, their bodies produce milk to feed the babies. Most researchers do not deny biology has a part in gender formation, but it is the degree to which biology has a role which is disputed (Wood, 1997).

Murphy (1988) defines gender as "the social meanings that are given to the biological differences" (p. 257). Gender behaviors and identities such as feminine and masculine are learned, while female and male are sexual distinctions (Lott, 1994).

According to Wood (1997), sex is determine by biology and X and Y chromosomes and gender is acquired and learned based on society's ideology. Wood (1997) states that because gender is learned through society, different cultures will produce different ideas of what it means to be feminine or masculine. Mead's (1968) assertion is congruent with Wood's agreeing that expectations for genders could be very different across cultures. Murphy (1988) echoes this notion, stating "gender in society is social not biological in origin" (p. 257). Bem (1974) determined masculinity to be a characteristic more desired by men and femininity a characteristic more desired by women. Masculinity and femininity are personality traits and men and women lie on a continuum. Those who have high levels of masculine and feminine personality traits are called androgynous. Bem (1974) suggests individuals that are androgynous are more adaptable than someone who has just feminine or masculine characteristics.

Society's expectations of femininity and masculinity permeate into everything a man or woman does and believes. According to social learning theory, children imitate behavior that is rewarded, so it is communication that educates children on what gender behavior is appropriate for their sex (Wood, 1997). This holds true even in deciding in which sports to participate. Harris (1980) determined "the difference in attitudes towards and acceptance of males and females in sports originates in the differences in the traits society ascribes to each sex" (p. 226).

Maccoby and Jacklin (1987) assert sex and gender should be used interchangeably because "socially ascribed gender overlaps biological sex nearly 100% (p. 240). Because social influences and biological influences are not independent of one another, Maccoby and Jacklin (1987) continue by stating that distinguishing one from the other would imply

that it is only biology or society that has the influence. Sargent, Zillmann, and Weaver (1998) use the word "gender" to illustrate the combination of biological and cultural components of an individual. "Gender refers to the social and psychological characteristics and behaviors associated with females and males" (Gill, 1992, p.144)

The idea that it is biology which determines if an individual is masculine or feminine is held only by a few researchers. More common is the blending of the ideas of biology and socialization in determining the gender of an individual. This thesis is written under the premise of gender being defined as a socially learned identity which is associated with the sex of the person. This statement means the researcher assumes parents and children affiliate females with femininity and males with masculinity. Gender, masculinity and femininity, is often stereotyped which leads to the continued difficulties experienced by athletes.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are a form of generalization about a group of people which fill in the blanks where there is missing information to help people organized and predict behavior and communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 1995; Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). Scollon and Scollon (1995) believe stereotyping is approaching two groups as polar opposites. The stereotypes aid in planning communication by using them as predictors (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). According to Lustig and Koester (1996), stereotypes form in a four step pattern. The first step is the identification of an "other" group. This group is different from one's own social group. After the identification, the differences between one's group and the "other" group are apparent and exaggerated. In the third step, these

differences are viewed as negative characteristics of the "other" group. Finally, the negative characteristics are applied to all members of the "other" group and members of the "other" group are not treated as individuals. These developed stereotypes are used to justify actions or relationships with the other group (Scollon & Scollon, 1995). Stereotypes are often based on "second hand information and opinions, output from the mass media, and general habits of thinking, they may even have been formed without any direct experience with individuals from the group" (Lustig & Koester, 1996, p. 307).

Inaccuracies occur with stereotypes. Stereotypes allow individuals to view other groups only on a two dimensional level (Scollon & Scollon, 1995). Lustig and Koester (1996) identify three such inaccuracies. The first problem with stereotypes is that they are applied to an entire group. The individuals are not treated as individuals. For example, women are assumed to all be delicate. A second problem with stereotypes is often they are exaggerated or even inaccurate accounts of communication and behaviors such as when men are assumed to all have poor communication skills and are only interested in sports. Lastly, even positive notions about a group are countered or explained with negative stereotypes. This last inaccuracy is evidenced when a man does something considerate it is assumed he is only wanting something in return.

Stereotyping has consequences which affect communication and interaction. Within any group there are vast differences among individuals, but if one stereotypes a member of a different group, the interpretation of that members communication becomes distorted (Lustig & Koester, 1996). People react with an emotional response and react without having all of the facts (Stewart, 1995). Errors in expectations of individuals belonging to a group are a result of stereotypes (Lustig & Koester, 1996). "Because

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stereotypes are sometimes applied indiscriminately to members of a particular culture or social group, they can also lead to errors in one's expectations about the future behaviors of others" (Lustig & Koester, 1996, p. 308). Stereotypes provide reasons for social prejudices of all varieties including sexism (Fisher & Adams, 1994). Gender stereotyping has been found in children as young as the age of three and limits the visions and goals children have for themselves (Papalia & Olds, 1989). Wood (1997) agrees stereotypes hampers outlooks people have of themselves and others.

Athletes who participate in sports not typical of their sex face labeling and stereotyping as deviants (Goffman, 1963; Gusfield, 1967). Blinde and Taub (1992) feel women who challenge the gender appropriate sports are not only stereotyped but are sanctioned and stigmatized. Because of stereotypes people hold about particular sports, men and women may not choose to participate in sports they really wish to and force themselves to play in a socially acceptable sport (Papalia & Olds, 1989). In research done by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), evidence shows parents discourage children from participating in sex inappropriate sports for fear their children will be stereotyped as homosexual. Parents are especially concerned for their male children participating in a feminine sport. It becomes vital to the parent to discourage participation in the gender inappropriate sport early before their child is stereotyped homosexual-the parents need to "nip it in the bud" (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974, p. 339).

Stereotypes are based on traditional beliefs. The next few sections will address some views on the roles of men and women in sports where stereotypes may have begun.

Men and the Masculine Role in Sports

Traditionally, men have been associated with sports. Dubbert (1979) believes men's desire to be active in sports is due to a primitive instinct in men to hunt. Gilder & Tiger (1979) state sports are the manifestations of the characteristics that are male. Sports are assumed to be escapes from women and femininity as evidenced in the exclusion of women from sports (Dubbert, 1979). Men are provided with bonds that extend off of the playing field with other men that ostracize women (Horrocks, 1995). "The early participation in sports was an essential part of separating from mother, and learning to act like a boy, and then being a man" (Leighton, 1992, p. 68). Sports separates men and women and teaches boys to be masculine-to be men. Fathers urge their sons to participate in sports so the boys learn to be successful men and acquire their appropriate gender role (Murphy, 1988). This urging by parents, an example of social learning theory, communicates to boys an expectation they will be rewarded for completing, which assures a repetition of the parents desired behavior for the boys (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). Dubbert (1979) expresses that, to a large degree, a manly constitution is formed through sports. To young males, the sports arena provides training for sports and for being a man (Horrocks, 1995). Sports serves as an avenue for men to prove they are truly men and they are successful at their endeavors (Murphy, 1988). Sports allow men to maintain a masculine domain in a evolving society (Sabo, 1994). "Sports, especially contact sports, train boys and men to assume macho characteristics like cutthroat competitiveness, domination of others, tendency toward violence, emotional stoicism, and arrogance toward women (Sabo, 1994, p. 191). Leighton (1992) posits that men who excel in sports

are noticed·by women and other significant people. "The athletic experience is so personally intense and socially pivotal for many males, whether they are jocks, fans, or anti-jocks" (Sabo, 1994, p. 191).

Male Aggression, Talk, and Sports

Evidence to support the idea of males in sports with relation to power and the separation of men and women is found in studies such as Sargent, Zillman, and Weaver (1998) believe the violent actions that exist in sports is what serves as a draw for men to sports. Nixon (1997) agrees it is the toughness that appeals to men and it is this toughness that leads to the aggressive behavior of men in and out of sports. Males are more likely to be aggressive outside of sports than women and males may have a more difficult time controlling their behavior because they learned to value hitting an opponent in sports.

This aggression men have often turns to violence against women. Out of all college men, it is the athletes who play football, lacrosse, hockey, and basketball are most likely to be accused of participating in a gang rape (Nixon, 1997). In 1991, Curry analyzed the content of male locker room talk and found sexist attitudes from the men. The talk about women often revolved around their use for men and men's pleasures. Women were talked about as if they were objects (Curry, 1991). This locker room talk indicates male athletes may be more apt to engage in aggression or even violence with women (Nixon, 1997). Curry (1991) states a similar attitude: "locker room talk about women, though serving a function for the bonding of men, also promotes harmful attitudes and creates an

environment supportive of sexual assault and rape" (p. 132). One of Curry's (1991) subjects actually describes raping a woman as part of his sexual prowess.

Curry (1991) suggests this type of talk and behavior in reference to women improves the male image and heightens the idea that he is a real man. This language also reduces the chance an athlete will be mistaken for a homosexual- an extremely unacceptable title for an athlete to have. Athletes are not even to be tolerant of homosexuality so talk in reference to homosexuals is a put down or involves the physical harm of some effeminate men. Curry (1991) quotes one of his subjects, a coach, who described how he and his fellow teammates suspected one man was homosexual so they beat him up every day until he quit.

This locker room talk and other links to male aggression is more evidence of the idea of sports being male oriented and creating bonds between men. The fact that this aggression is often used against women further defines the gap which exists in sports between male sports and expectations and female sports and expectations. The next section actually examines women's role and expectations within sports.

Women and the Feminine Role in Sports

"Women in sports are both a social reality and a social anomaly" (Harris, 1980, p. 223). Historically, women have been left out of sports. Even in 776 B.C., women were banished from watching (Marquardt, 1988), let alone participating in the Olympic Games and this banishment continued even to the modern Olympics in 1896 (Murphy, 1988). In 1900, women participate in the Olympics in only golf and tennis; in 1928, women participate in track and field in the Olympics; in 1972, women are allowed to participate in

the 1500 meter event in the Olympics; and in 1984, women were allowed to participate in twelve new events (Murphy, 1988). It was not until 1967, when a woman crashed the male only event, that a female ran in the Boston marathon (Murphy, 1988).

In 1972, Title IX was passed to give women equal opportunities in sports (Murphy, 1988). Even with the passing of Title IX and more opportunities for women to participate in sports, the number of women in coaching and administration has dropped since 1972, and leaves research with a concern of the reason behind the reduction in female coaches and what effect the decrease has on athletics (Hart, Hasbrook, & Mathes, 1986; Sage, 1990). Knopper's (1992) study examined why there are still so few women in coaching and concluded it is the perceptions of coaches, athletes, and parents about the quality of coaching a woman can provide that exist within athletics and coaching, and the entire coaching profession will need to undergo redefinition to make progress.

Women athletes meet more oppression than most other women in the American society (Hart, 1971). Sage (1990) points out that women who choose to "participate in competitive sports face social isolation and censure" (p. 45). Women who play sports, especially traditional masculine sports, are challenged by men. For instance, women bullfighters are looked at as "amusing novelties" (MacClancy, 1996, p. 77) and women playing cricket, rugby, or boxing are viewed with "surprise, humour, or revulsion amoungst men" (Horrocks, 1995, p. 151). Leighton (1992) shares a personal story of his daughter who would not participate in Little League even though she possessed strong skills because she did not want to be like the boys and different than the other girls. "The dissonance between the behavioral characteristics necessary for success in athletics and those that are considered appropriate for women can produce a real identity crisis in the

young female who is struggling to establish her own identity and enjoys participating in sports" (Harris, 1980, p. 227).

Feminine Sports Versus Masculine Sports

Within the sports arena, a participant's level of masculinity or femininity plays a much greater role in others' perception of that individual than the participant's actual biological sex (Bandura, 1986). Men who choose to participate in a feminine sport are frequently classified as substandard or inadequate (Matteo, 1986), and women who choose to participate in any sport can be discredited as feminine and believed to be more masculine (Kane & Snyder, 1989). The definition of a masculine sport or feminine sport comes from the expectations of women's and men's stereotypical roles. Kane and Snyder (1989) found the deciding factor of whether a sport is feminine or not is determined by what the woman is doing with her body. For example, a woman participating in gymnastics is using her body in an elegant artistic manner, and not "as an instrument of power" (Kane & Snyder, 1989, p. 81). Men are believed to choose sports that exhibit their toughness and courage, because these characteristics are masculine (Nixon, 1996). Some sports, such as figure skating and dance, allow women to retain most if not all of their femininity (Pedersen & Kono, 1990). These sports are distinguished as feminine because they include "the use of less heavy objects, the need for accuracy rather than undue strength, little or no body contact, and shorter, more aesthetically pleasing patterns of body flight" (Colley, Roberts, & Chipps, 1987, p. 110). Sports such as tennis or gymnastics are not contact sports nor do they involve heavy objects used to assert strength; instead these sports accentuate body form, shape, and movement (Colley, Nash,

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O'Donnell, & Restorick, 1987). Kane and Snyder (1989) believe "some sports glorify and exaggerate the dimension of physicality/power far more than others. We all know, for example, that football is a much more powerful or 'physical' sport than figure skating. More importantly, when we think of these two types of sports, we also know that football is a 'male' sport and figure skating a 'female' sport" (p. 79). Twin (1988) reports it is "the cultural image rather than physical limitations that has made women's participation in sport limited and unequal" (p. 270).

Matteo (1986) surveyed college students to determine which sports men and women considered masculine and feminine in addition to which sports men and women had actually attempted to play. The study used a questionnaire which listed sixty-eight sports and asked the subjects to select where the sport fell on a continuum of masculinity and femininity with very masculine on one end and very feminine on the other end. Results indicate there are sports that are considered ardently masculine, such as football, with a mean score that is equal to the most extreme masculine option on the Likert scale, and there are sport considered definitely feminine, such as gymnastics. Sports such as golf and tennis fell in the middle of the scale in the neutral area. Out of the sixty-eight sports listed on Matteo's (1986) survey, thirty were considered masculine and twelve were considered feminine.

With only twelve sports being considered as feminine, it is not surprising that women have not received the same opportunities as men in sports, and have not had equal support, facilities, and compensation as men, consequently, sports for women has been an experience of exclusion and inadequacy (Sage, 1990). Murphy (1988) believes women choose not to participate in sports to avoid living with the stigma that comes with being

unfeminine. While at the same time, men are threatened by the thought of women participating in sports (Sabo, 1994).

"The critical concern is not that females and males are defined differently in relationship to sport, but that males are perceived as better than females within an athletic context" (Kane & Snyder, 1989, p. 77). Kane and Snyder (1989) assert males are seen as "better" because sports honor all that is masculine such as power and strength. These authors take this adulation as an indication of male dominance and the inferiority of females. Many potential reasons have been given to explain why there is a sex and gender division in sports, and why some athletics are categorized as feminine and others as masculine. Matteo (1986) suggests that perhaps females are only exposed to feminine sports during physical education classes. On the masculine side of things, Harry (1995) posits males are encouraged to use sports and all they stand for as a demonstration of their masculinity and "that sports develop into a symbolic act in which traditional views of gender roles are confirmed and enhanced" (p. 112). Another reason for the division is the role conflict women experience in athletics which causes society not to accept female sports (Snyder, 1983). Kane and Snyder (1989) attribute the unbalance in athletics to basic male dominance and suppression of women:

> Sport reproduces the ideology of male supremacy because
> it acts as a constant and glorified reminder that males are
> biologically, and thus inherently superior to females . . . because
> sport ultimately is about physical activity, sport offers a perfect
> arena for reproducing concrete everyday examples of male
> physicality, muscularity, and thus superiority . . . the social reality
> of the modern sports woman is that she is here (and apparently
> to stay) in unprecedented numbers so it becomes imperative
> to stereotype and trivialize her involvement. (1989, p. 79)

Sports provide "proof" of the natural superiority of men over women (Sabo, 1995).

Dubbert (1979) claims the football field as the "only place where masculine supremacy in incontestable" (p. 179), and Murphy (1988) suggests some men believe "male only team sports are the last bastion of male supremacy" (p. 274). Messner (1987) asserts that sports, for athletes and fans, are manifestations of male power and superiority. "It is likely that the rise of football as 'America's number one game' is largely the result of the comforting clarity it provides between the polarities of traditional male power, strength, and violence and the contemporary fears of social feminization" (Messner, 1987, p. 196).

The social expectations of appropriate gender behaviors influence both men and women in their participation and accomplishment in sports (Murphy, 1988). Social learning theory posits that parents, as well as media and peers, communicate to their children through rewards and punishments what is socially acceptable for their sex (Palalia & Olds, 1989). Men and women are effected by the extent into which they believe in the stereotypes of feminine and masculine (Murphy, 1988). It is the actual image of feminine or masculine, in other words, gender, not the actual sex of the athlete, that causes the attention (Murphy, 1988). The idea that sports have an image attached to them has an impact on self confidence levels in men and women.

Confidence in Gendered Sports

Bandura (1993) states the more self-efficacy an individual has, the higher the goals the individual will set and there is a stronger commitment to these goals. In contrast, those with low self-efficacy can easily fall "victim to stress and depression" (p. 144). It is

self confidence beliefs "which contribute significantly to the level and quality of human functioning" (Bandura, 1993, p. 145).

In 1977, Lenney's research sparked an area of study looking at self confidence of the sexes in sex typed activities. Lenney (1977) found women to be less confident of their abilities in situations that rely on social evaluation and participation in a gender inappropriate activity. The study indicates females do not always score lower in achievement activities, but females are very susceptible to social influences. These results are similar to the conclusions drawn by Horner (1972) years earlier who suggest that success has negative consequences for women because success requires competitive, achievement behaviors that conflict with the traditional feminine image. Corbin, Landers, Feltz, and Senior (1983) suggest that women's low success predictions may be attributed to modesty which is a feminine characteristic and often encouraged in women.

Corbin and Nix (1979) followed up Lenney's (1977) results with similar conclusions. Girls predictions for themselves were lower than the boys predictions for themselves in a male sex-typed competition. Corbin and Nix (1979) found success for boys was because of their skill while girls' success was attributed to luck. Interestingly, there is no difference in confidence levels with activities determined to be gender neutral (Sanguinetti, Lee, & Nelson, 1985). Lirgg (1991) found a positive correlation between how masculine an activity is perceived and the distance between men's and women's confidence in their success with the activity. This assertion means the more a sport is considered masculine, the greater the difference between a man's confidence, which increases, and a woman's confidence, which decreases.

As an example, Clifton and Gill (1994) studied men and women participating in cheerleading. A questionnaire in the study revealed the majority of cheerleading is feminine activities. The results of the study indicate women had confidence in their cheerleading abilities and more so than men except in the areas of tumbling and stunts which are recognized as masculine activities. Results also show males have a greater confidence in their overall athletic ability than females.

In 1996, Lirgg, George, Chase, and Ferguson once again found females to have less confidence in their abilities in a male activity. Hill (1992) found males and females to have similar levels of confidence for activities that were sex-typed feminine. However, Lirgg et. al(1996) found males to be less confident in their success in a female sex-typed activity than females yet males still had confidence in their skills. Males draw the analogy if an activity is feminine then the activity is easy and if the activity is easy then of course their physical skills will grant them success (Lirgg, et. al, 1996). "The threat of playing a 'good opponent' seems to create a vulnerability in females which is not present in males" (Corbin, 1981, p. 269). Women predicted they would do well in a feminine activity but had less confidence in a male sex typed activity (Lirgg, et. al, 1996). Yet, women were successful in masculine activities if they were told prior to the activity they had the ability to be successful. Young girls as well did not lack confidence in their abilities prior to the activity if the girls did not believe the activity had been labeled with a gender tag (Corbin, Stewart, & Blair, 1981). Lirgg, et. al, (1996) fear women may never attempt to participate in masculine activities because they lack confidence in their ability to succeed.

The media receives a large portion of the criticism for perpetuating the gender stereotypes involved with sports. The following section reviews issues raised involving the media, sports, and stereotypes.

Gender Stereotypes and the Media

Although social learning theory identifies parents as the main source of reinforcement during childhood, the media is influential in society which in turn has impact on individuals. Kane and Snyder (1989) assert media uses the conventional expectations of women, such as attractiveness, to highlight female athletics. The use of these traditional elements decreases the image of women as competitive athletes. The researchers believe that although women's sport receive more coverage than in the past, the coverage being given is that of the old stereotypes (Kane & Snyder, 1989) and emphasizes the women as sex objects (Sage, 1990). The *New York Times* ran an article with the description "in the locker room, the air is heavy with the smell of Halston perfume and there is talk of who will do the laundry and who last used the travel iron" to illustrate the happenings of the Women's Basketball League in 1980. It is portrayals such as these using stereotypes that lessen the credibility of women as successful and talented athletes. With the reemergence of a professional league for female basketball players, the media is there with its own interpretations. The media is surprised at the success of the Women's National Basketball Association (Wulf, 1997). Sports Illustrated featured quotes from fans of the WNBA that implied the fans were shocked and amazed that the women were good and talented (Lopez, 1997).). "Our data suggests that network commentary still tends to undermine this message by reproducing images and descriptions that subtly devalue, trivialize, and

marginalize women's basketball by conveying ambiguous messages relative to women's bodies, physical attributes, and limitations of skill" (Blinde et al., 1991, p. 111). Sports commentary can use male standards that are subtle, such as the term man to man coverage or non-parallel language (men versus girls and ladies), that often the inconsistencies are unchallenged or worse unnoticed (Blinde et al., 1991).

The media is held accountable for the belief that there are few women athletes due to the lack of national and local coverage for women attributes to lack of knowledge of their existence (Matteo, 1986). Under fifteen percent of newspaper sports coverage deals with women in sports (Sage, 1990). Kane (1988) cites *Sports Illustrated* as an influential magazine that sends a distinct message of what is "acceptable or valued within women's athletics" (p. 133). Kane (1988) continues with the analysis of *Sports Illustrated* covering women's athletics that were gender appropriate instead of covering other sports that may be considered gender inappropriate. For the 1996 Olympics, NBC, who had sole coverage of the events, made an extra effort to attract female viewers (Mayberry, Proctor, & Srb, 1996). NBC tried to appeal to women but "believed that, to make women watch sports, you had to tell them stories that had nothing to do with sports" (Mayberry et al., 1996, p. 6). The Olympic coverage was heavily peppered with personal stories, biographies, and elements of a good love story all in an effort to appease the woman viewer (Mayberry, et al., 1996). NBC did not credit woman with the ability to just enjoy the sport for the sake of the sport. In a study of university coverage of sports, Wann Schrader, Allison, and McGeorge (1998) found men's athletics received more newspaper coverage than women's athletics. These inequalities were discovered by comparing the articles in the paper, the enrollment in the universities, and the number of sports available

to the men and the women. The unequal coverage was more prominent in the larger universities. Wann, et. al (1998) posit one explanation for the distortion in coverage between men and women as editors determining their readers want to read more about men's athletics than women's athletics.

Even within the ranks of sports coverage, women struggle to find a role. Sage (1990) found that men in sports reporting felt "women do not understand sport, so they certainly could not know how to report it" (p. 134). Female sports reporters are viewed as less qualified than their male counterparts (Ordman & Zillmann, 1994). "The obvious conclusion here is that gender is an asset for a man seeking acceptance as an expert sports reporter but a liability for a woman- regardless of whether the sport involves men or women" (Ordman & Zillmann, 1994, p. 74).

Pedersen and Kono (1990) have found gender biases to be held by both men and women. This fact affects not just how society perceives women in sports, but also affects how women athletes perceive themselves. Sage (1990) believes "the subordination of women continues, and each new break through in media sport requires concerted struggle against the persistent, male dominated sexual division of labor" (p. 135). Sage continues with this thought "more females playing sports does not signify that a revolution has been won for women, not so long as the organization of sport promotes and sustains the dominance of men in social relations" (p. 54).

The review of literature has evidence the many facets of studies and extensive research done with the topics of social learning theory, gender, and sports. The next chapter answers the call of Lirgg, George, Chase, and Ferguson (1996), researchers cited previously for their work in self confidence and sex-typed activities, who state "it is

imperative that educators break down perceived barriers and underscore that the gender appropriateness of tasks are socially constructed, not biologically based, and that skills of all types are acquirable through practice" (p. 433).

CHAPTER III

RATIONALE

Rodriquez (1987) defines equity as "fair and equal treatment of all members" (p. 20) which takes into account needs of individuals. With the addition of the national women's basketball league, it appears as though perhaps the inequity in sports is not as much of a problem today as it was in the 1970s (Wulf, 1997). The initiation of the WNBA and the American Basketball league are quite the tribute for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the passage of Title IX and the equity Title IX tries to achieve. At some WNBA games, fans acknowledged this accomplishment with signs bearing the message "THANK YOU TITLE IX" (Lopez, 1997). The beginning of this professional league does open a new door for women in sports, and women will be getting more exposure in a historically masculine sport, yet this is only a step and only a step in one sport. Ice skating, a traditionally feminine sport, has received quite a bit of media attention with the conflict between Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding. The sport receive additional attention when Nancy Kerrigan went to the Olympics expecting to win a gold, and an unknown named Oksana Biul took the honor. However, the coverage of the sport is of the women and not of their male counterparts in the same sport. In contrast, Halbert (1997) looked at the issues facing female boxers and outlined the difficulty these women have in such a male-dominated sport. Conclusions of the study indicate women boxers do not adhere to the feminine role and compromise the traditionally masculine arena of sport (Halbert, 1997). Women boxers receive sanctions for their inappropriate behavior (Halbert, 1997).

Although there are always the few exceptions, sports still carry a label that denotes whether they are masculine or feminine. Reasons such as lack of opportunities for women, the maintenance of male domination over females, and loss of femininity for women have all been suggested as rationale for the status of gender inequity in sports. "Simply furnishing opportunities for equal participation is not enough to produce meaningful social changes" (Sage, 1990, p. 53). It is important to locate the source of the beliefs.

Previous studies have successfully used social cognitive theory as an explanation for behavior and a preventative measure to decrease inappropriate behavior. If social learning theory can explain a portion of how children develop views on gender and sports participation, perhaps there is a way of countering the current stereotypical trend which exists in sports participation. Because parents play such a large role in the socialization of their children, identifying parents' communication as a possible source of gender role attribution to sports will give future researchers a starting place to work against the labeling of masculine and feminine sports and encourage people of both genders to participate in any sport they choose. The results may provide a site to break the cycle of children being encourage to participate in only sex-appropriate sports. Once this cycle is broken perhaps the equality which would exist in sports would permeate to other areas of society such as the workplace, and the classroom.

In a gender and sports study done by Koivula (1995), one of the subjects stated, "I can not logically explain even to myself why women should not participate in some sports. It's just that I simply can't imagine a woman doing those things" (p. 555) Not being able to imagine a woman able to do "those things" is a cause for concern. As many researchers

have shown, women are still not seen as equal in the majority of society's realms including sports. How is it that through the years of women's suffrage and equal rights movements, this inequality is so prevalent? By applying the social learning theory to parents' communication with their children, a researcher may be able to identify a source of the bias.

If parents socialize their children to believe there are appropriate sports for males and inappropriate sports for males, and appropriate sports for females and inappropriate sports for females, this study may reveal it. The study will attempt to identify if children and parents share beliefs about gender and sports. The study will identify if the subjects believe females should or should not participate in certain sports, and males should or should not participate in certain sports. The children's perception of their parents thought process of encouraging the child's participation in sports and which sports they are, will be utilized to again see if the children are learning gender ideals from their parents. In order to discern how parents' communication contributes to their children's perception of sport, the following research questions were explored:

RQ1: How do male and female parents communicate to their male and female

children about feminine, masculine, and neutral sports?

RQ2: How do children perceive their parents' feelings about sports?

RQ3: What in the parents' communication about sports to their children is in

reference to masculinity or femininity of the sport?

Because this study is looking at masculinity and femininity of sports and communication used by parents, current information is needed on the perception whether a particular sport is masculine, feminine, or neutral held by parents and children. Matteo's

1986 provided data on this topic, however the study is over twelve years old. In addition, the study used college students and asked them to rank a provided list of sports on a masculine/feminine continuum. Considering these limitations, the following question will be considered:

RQ4: What do parents and children perceive as masculine, feminine, and

neutral sports?

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

This research was conducted with 128 subjects, 64 parents, mother or father, and 64 children between the ages of 10 and 13. There were four possible pairings-female parent-female child-28 pairs, female parent-male child-16 pairs, male parent-female child-13 pairs, and male parent-male child-7. The subjects were volunteers from the community found at a variety of schools, churches, and neighborhood associations. Only one parent per child was needed for completion of the study.

Procedures

Separate, but similar surveys were given to parents and children. The parents completed an informed consent form for their child before beginning the study (see Appendix A). All surveys remained anonymous and confidential.

The parent's survey first asked for demographic information such as the parent's sex and the sex of their child completing the survey. The parent responded to three sections. Each section asked the parent to identify three sports that are either feminine, masculine, or neutral. The parent then chose a sport he or she imagined the child would ask to play and wrote out exactly how he or she would respond to the child's request (see Appendix B).

The child's survey first asked for demographic information such as the child's sex and the sex of the parent completing the survey, in addition to the child's age. As with the

parent survey, the child responded to three sections. Each section asked the child to identify three sports that are either feminine, masculine, or neutral. The child's survey asked the child to pick one of the three sports he or she named and to write exactly what he or she believes the parent would say in response to the child's request (See Appendix C). Dr. Kathryn Button, Assistant Professor for Curriculum and Instruction-Education at Texas Tech University, reviewed the survey and found it to be clear and understandable for children ages 10 to 13.

The sections on the surveys were rotated so not every survey started with the same questions. Surveys could have started with either the masculine, feminine, or neutral sports first. The surveys were color coded to designate whether the subject was a parent or child.

Data Treatment

To produce the most rich descriptive data, the qualitative method of content analysis was selected to examine the data from this research. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest it is qualitative methods that can highlight reasons for a particular phenomena. The researchers continue explaining that qualitative methods also allow other researchers to view results with a different angle which in turn will produce even better discussion (Strauss & Corbin, 1990.) Weber (1985) posits content analysis can reveal cultural standards of societies, and illustrate trends in communication. Qualitative methods will allow the researcher to study language and word choices. The majority of the previously conducted sports research has utilized quantitative methods instead of qualitative methods.

By using content analysis, the current research will go beyond looking at numbers to reveal the details of parents' communication with their children.

The data was separated into parent communication and child communication. Under each category, the data was further broken down into sub-categories based on the sex of the subject and the subject's partner completing the survey. For example, a father who filled out the survey with his son had his responses placed under the heading of parent communication-male parent-male child. Finally, the data collected with the questions what sports are masculine, feminine, or neutral and what would the parent say in response to the request were divided into the categories of feminine, masculine, or neutral sport (see Appendix D). The written responses to the survey questions were coded for themes. Themes emerged and characterized themselves from other data on a conceptual level (Krippendorf, 1980). The unit of analysis for these themes was a topical phrase as defined by Jensen and Lamoureaux (1997). A topical phrase is "a comment that can stand alone" (Jensen & Lamoureaux, 1997, p. 43). For example, a response given by a parent stated "Have fun, but be careful." This statement contains two topical phrases-have fun and be careful. Each phrase was identified as part of a mutually exclusive category. Four or more topical phrases constituted a theme. Comparing the themes of each parent-child set, as well as parents and children in general, provides insight into parents' influence on their children's ideas about sports.

Two independent coders were trained on a sample of the surveys to ensure reliability before the coding continues. The coders overlapped on twenty percent of the coding throughout all of the data treatment. The coder reliability was .96 according to

Holsti's (1969) formula. Also, the sports which parents and children indicated as masculine, feminine, or neutral were counted and percentages were calculated.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study by first exploring parent responses to the children's request to participate in a particular sport. Then the children's perceptions of their parents' responses to their request will be examined. Thirdly, the use of sex and gender in communication by parents and children is investigated. Finally, a tally of which sports parents and children considered masculine, feminine, and neutral is outlined.

Parent Themes

The first research question examined how parents communicate to their children regarding sports. The content analysis of the answers given by parents revealed 353 responses, which were categorized into 19 themes (see Table 1). These themes were mutually exclusive and had their own definition of what qualified a response to be assigned to the category (see Appendix E).

The parents were asked to write exactly how they would respond to their child requesting to participate in particular sport and the Positive Response theme, the largest theme category, accounts for 17% of the total responses. Positive Responses are simple affirmative answers with no explanation for the positive response. For example, "yes" is a Positive Response. "OK," "yeah," and "fine" are other examples of the positive response theme. These responses are different from the Enthusiastic Positive Response which involve an explanation for the affirmative response or phrases indicating approval other than derivatives only of "yes." Examples of Enthusiastic Positive Response include "that's

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great," "go for it," and "let's play." Enthusiastic Positive Response account for 13% of the total parent responses.

Concern for Safety (13% of the total responses) is comprised of topical phrases involving warnings for children about safety, describing possible injuries, dangers of the sport, or reminders about proper equipment for the sport. Comments such as "be careful," "you could get bruised, scratched, cut or even suffer a broken bone," and "wear shinguards" are examples from this category.

Supportive statements include comments of support for both the person and the decision to participate in the sport. The Supportive theme (8%) contains phrases which comment on the child's success in the sport (e.g., "you'll do a great job," and "you can be good"), and also includes motivating comments about the child's overall involvement in the sport (e.g., "you'll enjoy it," and "I'll support you"). Still another theme, Acknowledgment of Child's Current Abilities (7%) differs by pointing out a particular strength the child possesses (e.g., "you have the upper body strength to do well," and "you'd be good at the flips") and by highlighting any experience the child has in the sport (e.g., "you already do a great job at this sport"). Positive comments made about the sport itself fall into the Positive Quality of Sport (8%) (e.g., "tennis is a great sport," and "it is the all around best sport").

The Health theme and the Benefit theme are similar in the fact they both involve the betterment of the child, however, there are distinct differences. Remarks about different advantages the child receives fall into the Benefit theme (3%) (e.g., "the greatest benefit will be that you get all the credit," and "you will pick up some good defensive

skills"). Those comments which focus on the fitness value fall into the Health theme (4%) (e.g., "you'll get in good shape," and "it's a very good form of exercise").

Comments such as "I would ask her if she were sure that's what she wanted to do," and "are you sure you want to play baseball?" are evidence of the Question Child's Choice theme (4%) wherein the parent asks why the child selected that sport or if the child is certain of the choice made.

Friends and Family, and Coach themes contain a reference to the subject indicated by the title of the theme. The Friends and Family theme (2%) contains statements such as "then you can play with the whole family." Finally, "do what the coach tells you" is an example from the Coach theme (1%).

The Negative Response theme (3%) contains replies which consist of the simple disapproving statements, "no," and "don't do it." The Extremely Negative Response theme is comprised a clear denial of the request (e.g., "too much work for rewards," and "absolutely not").

The Advice theme (8%) contains a variety of statements which are recommendations from the parent to the child (e.g., "be sure to give it 100%," and "don't be afraid of the ball hitting you"). In addition, parents with misgivings about the child's capacity to participate in a sport make comments such as, "you'll have to be a fast thinker," which fall into the Concern for Current Abilities theme (2%). Opinions about the looks of the child (e.g., "you'll make a beautiful ballerina") are part of the Appearance theme (1%).

Concern for Academics theme (1%) involves any account about grades or academics (e.g., "as long as it doesn't interfere with school and homework," and "if

grades are negatively impacted, the sport will be discontinued"). Concern for Logistics theme (1%) encompasses a variety of worries parents assert about the child's participation it the sport. Concerns can include cost, availability, and convenience of the sport (e.g., "I don't like having to take you to all the games and practices," and "do you need a special costume?").

Sex and Gender References Within Parent Themes. In a breakdown of the parental themes, there was little difference between male and female parents in the usage of the themes; however, there were differences in the usage of some themes according to whether the theme was used with a male or female child and in which sport the child was requesting to play.

In the Extremely Negative theme, all but two of the comments were from parents to female children choosing to participate in masculine sports. A male parent stated to his female child requesting to participate in boxing, "no way." Eleven out of the fourteen Health theme remarks were made by parents to their female children. Only one comment from the Concern for Academics theme was made to a female child, and the rest were made to male children.

In the Questioning Choice theme, all of the comments from parents were to children choosing to participate in a sex-inappropriate sport. For example, a male parent asked his female child "are you sure you want to play baseball?" and when a male child requested to play field hockey, his male parent questioned "why?" Only three out of the eighteen comments from the Supportive theme were made to male and female children choosing a sex-inappropriate sport, for example a male parent replied "if this is what you have your heart set on, I'll support you," to his male child who requested to participate in

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gymnastics. The majority of the comments such as, "have a good time," were used by parents for children choosing a sex-appropriate sport. Most Supportive comments were similar to the example of a female parent stating "enjoy it," to her male child requesting to play basketball or "I think you have made a wise choice" was stated to a female requesting to play volleyball from a female parent. In contrast, in the Positive Quality of Sport, all comments except one were made about children requesting to participate in sex-appropriate sports. In the Negative Response theme, 67% of the "no" responses were to children requesting to play a sport which is considered sex-inappropriate. Five comments from the Enthusiastic Positive Response theme were to children requesting to participate in sex-inappropriate sport and, of these, four out of the five comments were made to female children. Examples of typical Enthusiastic Positive Responses to children requesting to participate in a sex-appropriate sport are one female parent responded "what can I do to get you there?" to her female child's request to play softball and one male parent stated to his female child wanting to participate in gymnastics, "that's great!"

Child Themes

The second research question investigated the children's responses to their perceptions of their parents' communication about sports. The content analysis of the children's responses unveiled 241 responses which were categorized in 19 themes (see Table 2). Some of these themes are identical to the parent themes, but others are exclusive to the children's remarks. With the exception of six themes, the children's themes match and utilize the same criteria as the parent themes of the same name (see Appendix F).

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The Positive Response theme, which had the same criteria as the parent Positive Response theme of a simple positive reply, accounted for 30% of the replies. The Enthusiastic Positive Response theme, again with the same criteria as the parents theme of the same name, comprised 7% of the total responses. A theme with 6% of the responses is the Ambivalent Response theme, which is unique to the children's responses. Children indicated they believed their parent would have a noncommittal attitude towards their participation in sports, for example "I guess," "they wouldn't care," and "if you really want to."

There are five other themes which are exclusively children's themes. First, Concern for Money (2%), is similar to the adult theme, Concern for Logistics, except the children's theme deals exclusively with cost and money, for example, "how much does it cost?" The Physical Characteristics theme (2%) is similar to the parent's theme of Appearance. However, Physical Characteristics theme encompasses more than just looks, the theme additionally includes physical attributes, "you might be too tall" and "you are too small in size."

Next, the Concern for Convenience theme (2%) addresses statements made about the parents being troubled by the child's participation in sports (e.g., "would we need to play on weekends?" "do you need special shoes?"). The Concern for Commitment category (2%) included children's concerns that their parent may have about the follow through with agreeing to participate in sports (e.g., "if you will not quit in the middle of the season;" "hope you can keep it up."). Finally, the Suggest Alternative theme (2%) is the last of the child themes not covered in the parent themes, containing messages such as "is there a softball team you can join instead?" and "maybe you should take jazz instead."

<u>Sex or Gender References Within Child Themes.</u> The perceptions children have of their parents' feelings about sports were occasionally different for male and female children. Only one time did the children feel there was difference between male and female parents in response to a child's request to participate in a sport.

In the Enthusiastic Positive theme, the comment "go for it" was made to a female child requesting to play hockey and was the only comment of this sort made to a child who requested to participate in a sex-inappropriate sport. Of the Extremely Negative Response theme comments, 83% were made to both male and female children requesting to participate in sex-inappropriate sports. Only one of the Supportive theme remarks was made to a child asking to participate in a sex-inappropriate sport.

Only one comment from the Safety theme was made to a male. The Safety theme was comprised of half females requesting to play feminine and neutral sports and the other half females requesting to play masculine sports. Ninety-two percent of the Positive Response theme comments were to children requesting to participate in sex-appropriate sports. The remaining six comments were made to female children, four of whom were requesting to play baseball.

Only one of the Physical Characteristics theme comments was made to a male child. He requested to play football and perceived his male parent would state "you are too small in size." All of the comments in the Concern for Logistics theme came from male parents to female children.

Masculinity and Femininity in Parent Communication

Research Question three asks "what in the parent's communication to their children about sports is in reference to the masculinity or femininity of the sport?" The data revealed no parent communication specifically contained the words masculinity or femininity; however, remarks about the child's sex or attributes associated with masculinity and femininity were found. For example, themes identified as Sex as a Factor in Decision were identified in both parent and child responses. Parents replied with statements such as "remember differences in male/female physiology." and "you'll be perhaps the only girl on the team." One parent wrote "I think you can find a sport more appropriate." Although there is no mention of sex or gender. because the comment was made about a girl playing football, one can infer the parent was using the word appropriate in reference to a sex-appropriate sport.

Children also noted comments that are part of the Sex as a Factor in Decision theme. For example, "It's OK if you go slower than the boys," was written by a female child in response to her request to play soccer and "you are such a man," was written by a male child in response to his request to play rugby. One boy reported his parents "would call me a sissy" for participating in softball, which he perceived as a female appropriate sport.

A closer look at other themes reveals negative responses when children request to participate in sex-inappropriate sports. For example, a male child perceived his female parent would "not say anything because she would be in shock" if he requested to participate in ballet, a sport he felt is feminine. A female child believed her female parent would state "you're crazy" if she wished to play what she felt was a masculine sport,

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football. A female child suggested "absolutely not" as the answer she would receive from her female parent if the child asked to play hockey. One male child felt his male parent "would think I'm a little weird" for wanting to figure skate, a sport the child believes is feminine. Another female child requesting to play football felt the reply she would be given from her female parent would be "are you nuts?" Although the comments do not specifically use the words female, male, feminine, or masculine, they can still be construed as pertaining to the sex of the child because the comments are in reference to children requesting to participate in sex-inappropriate sports.

Perceptions of Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral Sports

The fourth research question dealt with what parents and children perceive as masculine, feminine, and neutral sports. When asked to generate their own ideas of what are the best examples of masculine, feminine, and neutral sports, similarities emerged between parent and child responses. Overall, both parents and children ranked gymnastics, volleyball, and softball highest as feminine sports, football, baseball, hockey, and wrestling highest as masculine sports, and basketball and soccer highest as neutral sports (see Table 3).

To break down the results further, parents rated gymnastics and volleyball highest as feminine sports, football and wrestling highest as masculine sports, and basketball and soccer highest as neutral sports (see Table 4). Children assessed softball, gymnastics, and volleyball to be feminine sports, football and baseball to be masculine, and basketball and soccer to be neutral (see Table 5).

When comparing perceptions of males and females, the highest-ranked sports by males in each categories placed gymnastics, volleyball, and softball in the feminine sports category, football and baseball in the masculine sports category, and basketball and soccer in the neutral category (see Table 6). Male parents labeled gymnastics as feminine, football as masculine, and soccer and basketball as neutral (see Table 7). Male children categorized softball and volleyball as feminine sports, football as a masculine sport, and basketball and soccer as neutral sports (see Table 8).

For the highest ranking of sports in each category, females also selected gymnastics and volleyball as feminine sports, football, baseball, hockey, and wrestling as masculine sports, and basketball and soccer as neutral sports (see Table 9). Female parents classified gymnastics, volleyball, softball, and basketball as feminine sports, football and wrestling as masculine sports, and basketball and soccer as neutral sports (see Table 10). Female children ranked gymnastics and volleyball as feminine sports, football as a masculine sport, and basketball and soccer as neutral sports (see Table 11).

Each parent-child combination's, such as female parent-male child or male parent - female child, responses were compared to find out if there were identical sports both parent and child considered either masculine, feminine, or neutral. In order to match, a parent and a child had to list the same sport in either the masculine, feminine, or neutral category. For example, a female parent named soccer, golf, and tennis as neutral sports. The female child completing the survey with the female parent named soccer, swimming, and tennis as neutral sports. In this example the female parent-female child pairing matched twice - one time for naming soccer and one time for naming tennis. This parent-child pairing received two points. In comparing the masculine, feminine, and neutral

ratings of sports within each parent-child pairing, no pairing matched more than 17% of the time, which was a female parent-female child on masculine sports. Overall, female parents-female children pairings matched 15% of the time, female parents-male children pairings 13% of the time, male parents-female children pairings 11% of the time, and male parents-male children pairings 7% of the time (see Table 12).

Table 1
Parent Themes

Theme/Example	Actual Number of Responses (374 Total)	Percent of Total
Positive Response "Yes;" "OK."	61	17
Enthusiastic Positive Response "We'd love for you to play;" "Let's go sign-up."	47	13
Concern for Safety "Be careful;" "Don't get hurt."	47	13
Supportive "I think you've made a wise choice." "You'll do a good job."	30	8
Advice "Remember to be aggressive on the court;" "You must pay attention."	30	8
Positive Quality of the Sport "Soccer is a fun sport;" "I think swimming is lots of fun."	29	8
Acknowledgment of Current Abilities "You are quick;" "You are very graceful."	25	7
Health "It's great exercise;" "A good way to stay healthy."	14	4
Question Child's Choice "Let's go watch a match to be sure that's what you want to do."	14	4

Table 1 Continued

Theme/Example	Actual Number of Responses (374 Total)	Percent of Total
Benefits "You will learn the virtues of teamwork."	13	3
Negative Response "No;" "Don't do it."	12	3
Extremely Negative Response "Too much work for too little rewards;" "No way!"	9	2
Friends and Family "Do you have friends who want to be in gymnastics too?"	9	2
Sex as a Factor in Decision "You'll also be more popular with the girls."	8	2
Concern for Current Abilities "Do you know the rules of the game?"	7	2
Appearance "You are such a pretty girl;" "We don't want you too muscular."	5	1
Coach "Let me talk to the coach;" "Who is the coach?"	5	1
Concern for Academics "Grades must continue to be on the honor roll."	5	1

Table 1 Continued

Theme/Example	Actual Number of Responses (374 Total)	Percent of Total
Concern for Logistics	5	1
"Does our school have wrestling?"		
"It cost a lot."		

Table 2
Child Themes

Theme/Example	Actual Number of Responses (241 Total)	Percent of Total
Positive Response "Sure;" "Yes".	74	30
Enthusiastic Positive Response "Go for it;" "Here's the check."	17	7

Advice
    "Don't be a ball hog;" "Listen
    to your coach."
	16	6

Ambivalent Response
    "I don't care;" "If you really
    want to."
	15	6

Concern for Safety "Be careful;" "Don't get hurt."	15	6

Supportive
    "Have a good time;" "I'll come
    to your games."
	15	6

Positive Quality of the Sport "Great sport;" "Tennis is cool."	14	6

Extremely Negative Response
    "Are you nuts?;" "Not even
    a choice."
	12	5

Acknowledge Child's Current Abilities
    "You're a good dancer;" "You
    are already a natural athlete."
	9	4

Negative Response "No."	8	3

Table 2 Continued

Theme/Example	Actual Number of Responses (241 Total)	Percent of Total
Question Child's Choice "Are you sure?" "How much do you want to play this sport?"	7	3
Concern for Academics "Keep up your straight A's;" "If grades stay up."	6	2
Concern for Money "I don't have any money;" "How much does it cost?"	6	2
Physical Characteristics "You are too small;" "You are pretty."	6	2
Benefits "It would help your posture."	4	2
Concern for Convenience "I don't want to take you to games."	4	2
Concern for Commitment "If you start, you can't quit."	4	2
Sex as a Factor in Decision "It's just for men;" "You're a girl- you'll get hurt."	4	2
Suggest Alternative "Maybe you should take jazz instead."	4	2

Table 3

Total Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Gymnastics	61	17
Volleyball	51	15
Softball	38	11
Tennis	29	8
Basketball	28	8
Figure Skating	26	7
Dance	20	6
Swimming	16	5
Soccer	15	4
Ballet	13	4
Field Hockey	11	3
Synchronized Swimming	9	3
Cheerleading	6	2
Track	5	1
Aerobics	3	1
Golf	3	1
Walking	2	*
Jacks	2	*
Baseball	2	*
Jump Rope	2	*
Hockey	1	*
Roller Skating	1	*
Skiing	1	*
Twirling	1	*
Hopscotch	1	*
Equestrian	1	*
Bowling	1	*
Total	350	

* = less than 1%

Table 3 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Masculine Sports		
Football	118	31
Baseball	60	16
Hockey	47	13
Wrestling	46	12
Basketball	27	7
Rugby	16	5
Boxing	15	4
Soccer	14	4
Weight Lifting	11	3
Skateboarding	3	1
Sumo Wrestling	2	*
Polo	2	*
Skiing	2	*
Golf	2	*
Karate	1	*
Water Skiing	1	*
Water Polo	1	*
Running	1	*
Throwing the Heavy Ball	1	*
Hunting	1	*
Kickball	1	*
Luge	1	*
Car Racing	1	*
Bowling	1	*
Total	375	

* = less than 1%

Table 3 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral Sports		
Basketball	85	22
Soccer	66	17
Tennis	33	9
Swimming	32	8
Track	26	7
Volleyball	23	6
Skiing	15	4
Softball	14	4
Golf	12	3
Baseball	12	3
Gymnastics	10	3
Figure Skating	7	2
Football	5	1
Running	4	1
Hockey	3	1
Roller Skating	2	*
Kickball	2	*
Snowboarding	2	*
Hiking	2	*
Biking	2	*
Fooseball	1	*
Dodgeball	1	*
Tumbling	1	*
Rugby	1	*
Racing	1	*
Weight Lifting	1	*
Boating	1	*
Rock Climbing	1	*
Tae Kwando	1	*
Cricket	1	*
Table Tennis	1	*
Chess	1	*
Racquetball	1	*
Archery	1	*
Cross Country	1	*
Speed Skating	1	*

Table 3 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral		
Dancing	1	*
Total:	381	

* = less than 1%

Table 4

Total Parent Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Gymnastics	34	20
Volleyball	23	13
Figure Skating	17	10
Tennis	15	9
Softball	14	8
Basketball	13	7
Dance	10	6
Synchronized Swimming	8	5
Field Hockey	7	4
Soccer	7	4
Cheerleading	5	3
Swimming	4	2
Ballet	4	2
Track	2	1
Aerobics	2	1
Golf	2	1
Equestrian	1	1
Bowling	1	1
Twirling	1	1
Walking	1	1
Jacks	1	1
Hopscotch	1	1
Baseball	1	1
Total	174	

Table 4 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Masculine		
Football	63	33
Wrestling	33	17
Baseball	28	14
Hockey	26	13
Boxing	10	5
Rugby	10	5
Weight Lifting	8	4
Basketball	7	4
Soccer	6	3
Skiing	1	1
Car Racing	1	1
Polo	1	1
Total	194	

Table 4 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral		
Basketball	42	22
Soccer	36	19
Swimming	20	10
Track	17	9
Tennis	17	9
Volleyball	9	5
Softball	8	4
Skiing	6	3
Baseball	6	3
Golf	5	3
Figure Skating	5	3
Gymnastics	4	2
Bowling	3	2
Running	3	2
Biking	2	1
Kickball	1	1
Boating	1	1
Rock Climbing	1	1
Hiking	1	1
Football	1	1
Speed Skating	1	1
Roller Skating	1	1
Racquetball	1	1
Archery	1	1
Cross Country	1	1
Total	193	

Table 5

Total Child Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Gymnastics	29	17
Softball	29	17
Volleyball	28	16
Basketball	15	9
Tennis	14	8
Swimming	12	7
Dance	10	6
Figure Skating	9	5
Ballet	9	5
Soccer	8	5
Field Hockey	4	2
Track	3	2
Total	170	
Masculine		
Football	55	37
Baseball	32	22
Hockey	21	14
Wrestling	20	14
Soccer	8	5
Rugby	6	4
Boxing	5	3
Total	147	

Table 5 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral		
Basketball	43	26
Soccer	30	18
Tennis	16	10
Volleyball	14	8
Swimming	12	7
Track	9	5
Skiing	9	5
Golf	7	4
Gymnastics	6	4
Softball	6	4
Baseball	6	4
Football	4	2
Hockey	3	2
Figure Skating	2	1
Total	167	

Table 6

Total Male Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Gymnastics	23	22
Volleyball	18	17
Softball	16	16
Figure Skating	11	11
Tennis	9	9
Field Hockey	6	6
Dance	5	5
Soccer	3	3
Synchronized Swimming	3	3
Aerobics	2	2
Cheerleading	1	1
Walking	1	1
Jacks	1	1
Hockey	1	1
Golf	1	1
Equestrian	1	1
Bowling	1	1
Total	103	

Table 6 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Masculine		
Football	40	33
Baseball	22	18
Wrestling	13	11
Hockey	13	11
Basketball	11	9
Rugby	8	7
Boxing	4	3
Skateboarding	3	3
Weight Lifting	3	3
Water Skiing	1	1
Water Polo	1	1
Polo	1	1
Total	120	

Table 6 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral Sports		
Basketball	27	21
Soccer	23	18
Tennis	13	10
Volleyball	10	8
Swimming	10	8
Track	6	5
Skiing	5	4
Baseball	5	4
Golf	5	4
Softball	4	3
Bowling	2	2
Running	2	2
Figure Skating	2	2
Football	2	2
Tae Kwando	1	1
Hiking	1	1
Running	1	1
Cricket	1	1
Table Tennis	1	1
Snowboarding	1	1
Chess	1	1
Roller Skating	1	1
Racquetball	1	1
Archery	1	1
Cross Country	1	1
Total	127	

Table 7

Total Male Parent Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Gymnastics	16	30
Figure Skating	9	17
Volleyball	7	13
Softball	5	9
Tennis	4	8
Field Hockey	3	6
Dance	3	6
Synchronized Swimming	2	4
Equestrian	1	2
Bowling	1	2
Soccer	1	2
Aerobics	1	2
Total	53	
Masculine		
Football	20	33
Wrestling	10	16
Baseball	9	15
Hockey	7	11
Boxing	4	7
Rugby	4	7
Weight Lifting	3	5
Basketball	3	5
Polo	1	2
Total	61	

Table 7 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral		
Soccer	12	20
Basketball	11	18
Swimming	6	10
Volleyball	5	8
Tennis	4	7
Track	3	5
Skiing	3	5
Softball	3	5
Bowling	2	3
Golf	2	3
Baseball	2	3
Figure Skating	2	3
Roller Skating	1	2
Racquetball	1	2
Archery	1	2
Cross Country	1	2
Running	1	2
Total	60	

Table 8

Total Male Child Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Softball	11	19
Volleyball	11	19
Gymnastics	7	12
Tennis	5	8
Basketball	4	7
Field Hockey	3	5
Ballet	3	5
Soccer	2	3
Figure Skating	2	3
Jump Rope	2	3
Dance	2	3
Cheerleading	1	2
Synchronized Swimming	1	2
Walking	1	2
Jacks	1	2
Aerobics	1	2
Hockey	1	2
Golf	1	2
Total	59	

Table 8 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Masculine		
Football	20	32
Baseball	13	21
Basketball	8	13
Hockey	6	10
Rugby	4	7
Wrestling	3	5
Skateboarding	3	5
Soccer	3	5
Water Skiing	1	2
Water Polo	1	2
Total	62	
Neutral		
Basketball	16	24
Soccer	11	17
Tennis	9	14
Volleyball	5	8
Swimming	4	6
Track	3	5
Golf	3	5
Baseball	3	5
Skiing	2	3
Football	2	3
Softball	1	2
Tae Kwando	1	2
Hiking	1	2
Running	1	2
Cricket	1	2
Table Tennis	1	2
Snowboarding	1	2
Chess	1	2
Total	66	

Table 9

Total Female Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine Sports		
Gymnastics	40	17
Volleyball	33	14
Basketball	24	10
Softball	22	9
Tennis	20	9
Swimming	16	7
Figure Skating	15	6
Dance	15	6
Soccer	12	5
Ballet	10	4
Cheerleading	5	2
Track	5	2
Field Hockey	5	2
Baseball	2	1
Golf	2	1
Roller Skating	1	*
Skiing	1	*
Twirling	1	*
Walking	1	*
Jacks	1	*
Hopscotch	1	*
Aerobics	1	*
Total	233	

* = less than 1%

Table 9 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Masculine		
Football	78	31
Baseball	38	15
Hockey	34	13
Wrestling	33	13
Basketball	16	6
Boxing	11	4
Soccer	11	4
Weight Lifting	8	3
Rugby	8	3
Sumo Wrestling	2	1
Golf	2	1
Karate	2	1
Running	2	1
Skiing	2	1
Throw the Heavy Ball	1	*
Polo	1	*
Hunting	1	*
Luge	1	*
Bowling	1	*
Car Racing	1	*
Total	253	

* = less than 1%

Table 9 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral Sports		
Basketball	58	23
Soccer	43	18
Swimming	22	9
Track	20	9
Tennis	20	9
Volleyball	13	5
Gymnastics	10	4
Softball	10	4
Skiing	10	4
Baseball	7	3
Golf	7	3
Figure Skating	5	2
Kickball	3	1
Bowling	3	1
Football	3	1
Biking	2	1
Running	2	1
Roller Skating	1	*
Fooseball	1	*
Dodgeball	1	*
Tumbling	1	*
Rugby	1	*
Snowboarding	1	*
Racing	1	*
Weight Lift	1	*
Dancing	1	*
Boating	1	*
Rock Climbing	1	*
Hiking	1	*
Football	1	*
Bowling	1	*
Speed Skating	1	*
Total	253	

* = less than 1%

Table 10

Total Female Parent Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Gymnastics	18	14
Volleyball	16	13
Softball	14	11
Basketball	13	10
Tennis	11	8
Figure Skating	8	6
Dance	7	6
Soccer	6	5
Synchronized Swimming	6	5
Cheerleading	5	4
Swimming	4	3
Field Hockey	4	3
Ballet	4	3
Track	2	2
Golf	2	2
Twirling	1	1
Walking	1	1
Jacks	1	1
Hopscotch	1	1
Aerobics	1	1
Baseball	1	1
Total	126	

Table 10 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Masculine		
Football	43	32
Wrestling	23	17
Hockey	19	14
Baseball	19	14
Boxing	6	5
Rugby	6	5
Soccer	6	5
Weight Lifting	5	4
Basketball	4	3
Car Racing	1	1
Skiing	1	1
Total	133	

Table 10 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral		
Basketball	31	23
Soccer	24	18
Swimming	14	11
Track	14	11
Tennis	13	10
Softball	5	3
Gymnastics	4	3
Volleyball	4	3
Baseball	4	3
Skiing	3	2
Golf	3	2
Figure Skating	3	2
Running	2	2
Biking	2	2
Kickball	1	1
Boating	1	1
Rock Climbing	1	1
Hiking	1	1
Football	1	1
Bowling	1	1
Speed Skating	1	1
Total	133	

Table 11

Total Female Child Responses to Which Sports are Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Feminine		
Gymnastics	22	19
Volleyball	17	15
Swimming	12	11
Basketball	11	10
Tennis	9	8
Softball	8	7
Dance	8	7
Figure Skating	7	6
Ballet	6	5
Soccer	6	5
Track	3	3
Field Hockey	1	1
Baseball	1	1
Roller Skating	1	1
Skiing	1	1
Total	113	

Table 11 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Masculine		
Football	35	29
Baseball	19	16
Hockey	15	13
Basketball	12	10
Wrestling	10	8
Boxing	5	4
Soccer	5	4
Weight Lifting	3	3
Sumo Wrestling	2	2
Golf	2	2
Karate	1	1
Running	1	1
Throwing the Heavy Ball	1	1
Polo	1	1
Skiing	1	1
Hunting	1	1
Kickball	1	1
Luge	1	1
Bowling	1	1
Total	119	

Table 11 Continued

Category of Sport/ Name of Sport	Actual Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Neutral		
Basketball	27	22
Soccer	19	16
Volleyball	9	7
Swimming	8	7
Tennis	7	6
Skiing	7	6
Track	6	5
Gymnastics	6	5
Softball	5	4
Golf	4	3
Baseball	3	3
Hockey	3	3
Figure Skating	2	2
Bowling	2	2
Football	2	2
Kickball	2	2
Fooseball	1	1
Dodgeball	1	1
Tumbling	1	1
Rugby	1	1
Snowboarding	1	1
Racing	1	1
Weight Lifting	1	1
Dancing	1	1
Total	121	

Table 12

Parent/Child Feminine/Masculine/Neutral Sport Matches

Relationship	Actual Number of Matches	Percent of Total	Total Matches Possible
Female Parent-Female Child			
Feminine Sport	35	15	239
Masculine Sport	44	17	252
Neutral Sport	35	14	254
Total	114	15	745
Female Parent-Male Child			
Feminine Sport	25	14	185
Masculine Sport	28	14	195
Neutral Sport	21	11	199
Total	74	13	579
Male Parent-Female Child			
Feminine Sport	18	11	166
Masculine Sport	20	11	180
Neutral Sport	19	10	181
Total	57	11	527
Male Parent-Male Child			
Feminine Sport	8	7	112
Masculine Sport	10	8	123
Neutral Sport	9	7	126
Total	27	7	361

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The results of this research have interesting inferences for the area of communication and sports. These findings also raise more questions about this topic and promises even more exciting discoveries in the future. This chapter details the results with greater analysis and suggests possible explanations for the outcomes. Theoretical implications for social learning theory and some limitations which may have affected the study are outlined. Finally, potential areas for future research are explored.

Parent Themes

Research Question One asks how a parent communicates to his or her child regarding sports. The parent communication was found to contain topical phrases that were categorized into themes. An examination of the theme areas, as well as the percentage of responses in each theme, is truly useful only when one looks beyond the numbers and takes into account other variables such as sex of parent and child, and the sports about which the comments are made. The question of how parents communicate with their children regarding sex-appropriate sports and how parents communicate with their children regarding sex-inappropriate sports can be better understood by closely examining their responses. To answer the first question about sex-appropriate sports, parents generally respond in a positive manner. Both male and female parents gave their children supportive and positive answers. There were very few exceptions. It is safe to say parents are positive about their children playing sex-appropriate sports.

Turning to children requesting to play sex-inappropriate sports, communication contains more negative messages. Responses to children wanting to play sex-inappropriate sports fell heavily into the Extremely Negative and Negative themes. Some parents questioned the sport the child chose when it was not appropriate to the child's sex. The parents' negative responses could be found in a variety of categories. For example, the largest number of parent responses fell in the Positive Response theme and the Enthusiastic Positive Response theme. A closer look at these themes reveals that only five of these responses were made to children requesting to participate in sex-inappropriate sports (e.g., a male child requesting to participate in gymnastics). Similarly, the majority of the Extremely Negative and Question Choice comments were made to children requesting to play sex-inappropriate sports, while Supportive and Affirmation theme comments were mostly made to children requesting sex-appropriate sports. Overall, parents are not supportive of children participating in sex-inappropriate sports.

Notably, the Enthusiastic Positive comments made to children participating in sex-inappropriate sports were made to only female children. Perhaps it is more acceptable for females to participate in perceived masculine sports than for males to participate in feminine sports. Because feminine sports do not utilize power (Kane & Snyder, 1989) and sports allow men to exhibit their manliness and strength (Dubbert, 1979), generally men do not desire to participate in feminine sports. Matteo (1986) suggests males participating in feminine sports are often labeled as deficient. The findings in this study support these notions of labeling and stereotyping.

Another interesting result is the fact that all the majority of the Health comments such as "you'll stay in shape" and "it's good exercise" were made to female children. A

possible reason could be the emphasis on looks and appearance which females often feel. Wood (1997) discusses five themes which occur in the contemporary views of femininity, with the first theme being "appearance still counts." Females are expected to be beautiful, thin, and presented themselves well because females are judged by their looks (Wood, 1997). Pressure to maintain the right look may start with subtle comments such as these.

The Concern for Academics theme only contained one comment to a female child, while the rest were made to male children. It is interesting that a focus for the male children would need to be academics. Perhaps all of the attention given to the local university's problems with academics in the sports department has had an influence on parents' responses. It may be that parents would like their children to avoid the stereotype of the "dumb jock".

Child Themes

The study further questions how children perceive their parents' feelings about sports. The children's results mirrored the parents' results but the children's answers had more of a harshness to them. When the children requested to play sex-appropriate sports, the children perceived that they would receive positive answers from their parents. These answers fell into Enthusiastic Positive, Positive, and Supportive themes. It is the responses to requests to play sex-inappropriate sports that produce the most fascinating results.

Similar to the parents' responses, the children's requests to participate in sex-inappropriate sports were met with negative responses or questioning the child's choice of that particular sport. The difference in the parent negative response and the child negative

response was the level of severity. In general, children indicated a more extreme reaction from the parents. A typical parent Extremely Negative response to a sex-inappropriate sport is "no way;" however, a child's written response of what their parent would say typically contains the harshness of statements such as "you're crazy," "if you come crying to me that you got hurt, I'm not going to do anything about it" or "they would say that I am a sissy."

Comparing Parent and Child Themes

The difference in themes when comparing the parents' and the children's, creates an interesting image of the ideas parents have and children's perception of their parents' ideas with responses about participation in sports. Parents had the themes Health, Friends and Family, Concern for Current Abilities, Appearance, Coach, and Concern for Logistics, and the children did not. Children had the themes Ambivalent Response, Concern for Money, Physical Characteristics, Concern for Convenience, Concern for Commitment, and Suggest Alternative, while the parents did not. The parents' theme of Appearance is similar to the children's theme of Physical Characteristics and the children's themes of Concern for Convenience and Concern for Money are both similar to the parents' theme of Concern for Logistics, which contain issues with both cost and convenience. It is the themes that do not match or do not have similar comments that are intriguing.

Parents responded with comments about friends, family, and coaches. These statements, such as "are your friends playing softball" and "your granddad and grandma used to play jacks," with the exception of one statement about a coach, were not specified by the children. Parents also had remarks about staying in shape or concerns about fitness

that the children did not have. Children state parents are concerned with commitment to the sport give examples of comments such as "if you think you can make it the whole season," and none of the parents' themes or topical phrases mentioned any concern about the child's commitment to a sport. This raises the question: are parents not concerned with their children's commitment to a sport they wish to play? Or is the concern not a real priority? The Ambivalent Response theme is also exclusively a children's theme. Children indicated they believed their parents' would respond "I don't care," and "whatever you want." Curiously, the parents' topical themes do not contain any noncommittal statements that could be considered ambivalent.

The difference in the parents' responses and children's perceptions of their parents' responses can be attributed to different factors. First, it could be that children are not socialized about sports by their parents to the extent presented in the literature review. Because of the number of results that were similar, this reasoning does not seem likely. A more plausible explanation could be parents trying to make themselves look good for the results. Parents may not have been willing to give answers they felt would reflect poorly on them. This effect is similar to McLaughlin, Cody, and O'Hair's (1983) underlying theme in failed events of saving face which is a phenomena where people try to control the image other's have of them. Parents may have assumed they knew what the researcher was looking for and tapered their answers to fit a more acceptable model to avoid giving a "wrong" answer.

Another difference to be accounted for is that children did not have as many topical phrases in their responses as the parents. Many of the parents' responses were several sentences long and occasionally each sentence contained more than one topical

phrase. The children's responses however, were usually one sentence with one topical phrase, maybe two. For example, one female parent stated in response to her male child's request to participate in softball (a perceived feminine sport) "Stanley, why would you rather play softball instead of baseball? You have been playing baseball all of your life. Only girls are offered college scholarships for softball." In contrast, a female child believed her female parent would simply state "absolutely not" to her request to play the perceived masculine sport of hockey. The difference in responses here may be attributed to the face-saving technique previously mentioned. Parents may give the most complete explanation possible so the researcher is very clear on the rationale behind the answer. The difference may also come from the children recalling only what is truly important to them as children, which would be the answer and the emphasis behind the answer. Possibly the children were not as thorough with their answers as the adults because children tend to be cognitively simple and still have a smaller number of personal constructs through which to convey their answers (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996).

Masculinity and Femininity in Communication

The sex of the child definitely plays a role in parents communication to their children about their participation in sports. Children requesting to participate in sex-inappropriate sports received the most negative feedback from parents. Sports are still seen as divided into male and female sports, or masculine and feminine sports. Take for example the picture drawn by a male child who was responding to what he perceived his female parent would say if he requested to participate in softball, a sport he considers feminine (see Figure 1).

Softball - they would say that I
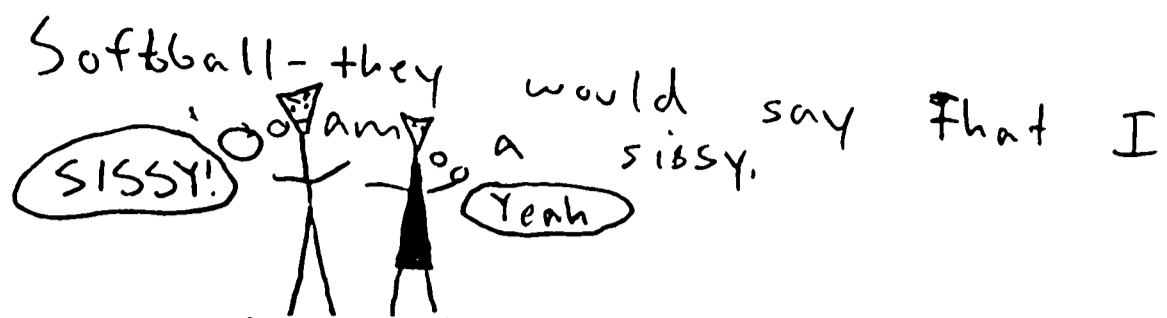'oo oo Anyoo a sissy,
SISSY!
Yeah

Figure 1   Male Child Response to Feminine Sport

This drawing is evidence of how children believe their parents feel some sports are

inappropriate for boys. This same male child states his female parent would state "you're

such a man" if he requested to play rugby. A female child utilized the entire three inch

space given to write "NO. Not even a choice" for a response to what her parents would

say to her if she requested to play football, a perceived masculine sport. For this same

child's written responses to the feminine and neutral sports, she used a little more than a

quarter of an inch space in which to write her answers. Again, an example of children

perceiving their parents would believe some sports are inappropriate for certain sexes,

which in this example is girls.

Although rarely did the parent or the child actually use the words masculine,

feminine, male, or female, in their written response, their importance to the decision of

participation still exists. Again, no parent or child distinctly stated "no, you can not play

because you are a girl and that is a boy's sport" or "yes, you can play because you are a

boy and it is a boy's sport," yet these types of messages are implied in nearly every

response given by both parent and child. Both parent and child themes hold evidence that

parents do or are perceived to send these messages. For example, a female parent stated

"I think you can find a sport more appropriate" to her female child requesting to

participate in football, and a male child requesting to play baseball perceived his female

parent's response would be "why wouldn't you want to play?" By using encouraging

comments and positive statements only in conjunction with requests to participate in sex-appropriate sports, parents are clearly sending a message that the parent believes only those sports are appropriate for the child. They are further heightening this message with negative comments or questioning choices made by the child when the child requests to participate in sex-inappropriate sports. Children's responses of what their parents would say gives us insight into the types of messages children actually receive from their parents.

Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral Sports

The data collected in this study supports and updates Matteo's (1986) scale for masculine, feminine, and neutral sports. Matteo's (1986) study and the current study actually examined two different variables. Matteo (1986) measured the degree to which subjects viewed a named sport as masculine, feminine, or neutral. The current study investigated which sports subjects perceived as masculine, feminine, or neutral by having subjects generate their top three choices for each of those categories. Matteo's (1986) data had boxing as the most masculine sport, cheerleading as the most feminine sport, and bowling as the most neutral sport. The current research indicates football as the most frequently thought of sport as masculine, gymnastics as the most frequently thought of sport as feminine, and basketball as the most frequently thought of sport as neutral. The current lists contained all of the sports Matteo (1986) deemed at the extreme ends of the continuum. On the surface this may indicate that times may not have changed, but a closer examination reveals this statement is not really accurate.

In comparison to Matteo's (1986) ranking of twelve feminine sports, the current study had twenty-seven sports listed as feminine. However, unlike Matteo's (1986)

findings, the current study's list of feminine sports contains fifteen sports which are also inventoried on the other sports lists. This fact means there are twelve sports currently considered exclusively feminine such as these top ranked sports on the exclusively feminine list field hockey, synchronized swimming, cheerleading, and aerobics. Matteo's (1986) use of the Likert scale would be very beneficial in interpreting the results of the current study. The sports which are one more than one list would more than likely not be on the extreme feminine end of the scale. The overlapping of sports on the different inventories creates a gray area which is discussed later in this chapter.

The current masculine list contains twenty-four sports as compared to Matteo's (1986) list of thirty sports. The current masculine list does consist of sports which are also listed elsewhere. For instance, the masculine list shares sixteen sports with other lists. Sports currently thought of as solely masculine are sports including wrestling, boxing, sumo wrestling, and polo, which are the top four sports ranked on the exclusively masculine list.

Matteo (1986) listed twenty-six sports as neutral. The current neutral list ranks thirty-eight sports but fifteen are exclusive to this category such as, hiking, chess, racquetball, and table tennis. Interestingly, the sports appearing exclusively on the neutral list all had a percentage of less than one, meaning each of these sports were only listed once with the exception of three which were listed twice.

Basketball, soccer, golf, hockey, baseball, and skiing are the six sports which appeared on all three lists; basketball and soccer are also the two sports which ranked highest on the neutral list. The larger number of neutral sports and several sports appearing on two or three lists provides a gray area of the appropriateness of sports for a

particular sex. Overall, when all responses are totaled, some flexibility of the masculinity or femininity of a sport exists. It would be hoped that this gray area or sport androgyny allows for more individuals of either sex to participate in more sports. Yet when these results are juxtaposed with the results of the content analysis of parent and child themes, a quandary is discovered. If the apparent androgyny in sports exists, why is there such opposition to sex-inappropriate sports? The answer presumably lies within the individuals. A male individual may perceive a sport such as softball as both neutral and feminine, but because it can be considered feminine finds himself discarding the sport as an option. When participants were responding to a sport which the total responses indicate as neutral, but the individual had listed it elsewhere, it is conceivable that the subject still perceives the sport as either masculine or feminine, and not neutral. So the subject, either parent or child, may believe the sport is sex-inappropriate, even if total numbers suggest it is actually a neutral sport.

The communication regarding whether sports are masculine, feminine, or neutral, and whether sports are appropriate or inappropriate for certain sexes has an influence on the socialization of children. The results of the study do support Bandura and the idea of social learning theory.

Theoretical Implications

Bandura (1978) states people learn from the rewards and punishments of past behavior to modify current behavior. Rotter (1982) attributes cues from communication as sources of feedback on behavior. Thus the communication an individual receives regarding a behavior will ordain future behavior. Individuals look for favorable

communication and repeat behavior which elicits that communication. As demonstrated in the literature review, parents have a tremendous influence on children and utilize communication they perceive will create their preferred result (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). Because of the influence of parental communication, there is a high need to create a supportive environment for the performing of physical activities (Anderssen & Wold, 1992), and the findings indicate parents are <u>not</u> providing equally supportive environments for sex-appropriate and sex-inappropriate sports.

The children's mirroring of the parents' perceptions of sports is an example of social learning theory. In this study, children who selected sex-inappropriate sports in which to participate received negative communication from their parent about playing that sport. The similarities which exist in the parent and child themes regarding sex-appropriate and sex-inappropriate sports is evidence of social learning theory. For instance a female child requesting to play a feminine sport believed her male parent's response would be "sure," and the actual response from the male parent to the female child was "yes." These two topical phrases are from the Positive theme. The child's prediction matched the parent's response. Children's perceptions of their parents' response were also accurate where sex-inappropriate sports were requested, such as the female child requesting to participate in a masculine sport believed her male parent would tell her to be careful in addition to suggesting an alternative and her male parent actually responded with "be careful. Do you know the rules of the game?" This particular parent-child combination, although exactly matched with only one topical phrase, the child understood there would be an additional comment which would not be positive.

Kane and Snyder (1989) posit females are encouraged to play feminine or sex-appropriate sports. If a female child receives an extremely negative response to a request to participate in a perceived masculine sport and a enthusiastic positive response to a request to play in a perceived feminine sport, it stands to reason females are socialized, therefore encouraged to play feminine or sex-appropriate sports. For example a female child requesting to participate in feminine sport perceived her female parent would give her a positive response of "sure," but when the female child requested to participate in a masculine sport, the female child perceived her parent would respond with "if you get hurt don't come crying to me." The actual response the female parent gave to her female child in response to participating in the feminine sport was "absolutely," while the parent's response to the masculine sport was "let me talk to the coach. I want to be sure there are safeguards. Let's go watch a match to be sure that 's what you want to do. Let's discuss the issue of contact." The enthusiastic response from the parent for the sex-appropriate sport and the negative response for the sex-inappropriate sport are part of social learning theory and are examples of Kane and Snyder's (1989) belief females are socialized into believing they are limited in their abilities.

The linking of sports and stereotypes is also identified in the results. The idea that a child would not choose to participate in a sport because of the stigma attached is evident in the child who felt his parents would think he was a sissy for play a feminine sport. The fact that there is encouragement for sex-appropriate sports and negative feedback for participation in sex-inappropriate sports provides support for Blinde and Taub (1992) who posit those who challenge the socially acceptable mold are labeled. This current research

is parallel to the ideas of Goffman (1963) and Gusfield (1967) who also found stereotypes playing a role in the decision to participate in a particular sport.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study which should be taken into account when reviewing the results. This research was conducted in a mid-sized West Texas city with limited access to children's athletics. The subjects' responses may not be applicable to a larger population or residents of a different location. However, there is a large public university in the city with a wide range of both men and women's sports.

The number of subjects may also be a concern. One hundred twenty-eight subjects were used and the breakdown of the subjects into the four possible parent-child combinations were not even. Very few men volunteered to participate, and consequently the male parent-male child pairings were few. The pairs ranged from female parent-female child at 28 to male parent-male child at 7. A more even distribution of pairs would have been more desirable.

Another limitation is that parents and children were never questioned about their past experience or affiliation with any sport or sports. Therefore, previous involvement by either parent or child may have had an impact on the responses given and produce different results surrounding the sport in which either had experience.

A possible limitation may be the small number of responses in some of the themes. Because there are themes with only account for one or two percent of the total number of responses, some may question the need for these separate themes. However, in order to maintain the most descriptive categories, the researcher chose to identify those themes.

Finally, to illustrate the possible impact of the media on the participants' responses, the Winter Olympic Games aired only two week previous to the data collection. Sports such as sumo wrestling, and luge appeared in the data collection, which might not have been selected as masculine sports if the games had not coincided with the study. Additionally, the occurrence of hockey rated as a female sport may also not have appeared on the survey had there not been heightened coverage of the sport because it was the first female hockey competition in the Olympic games, and the U.S. women's hockey team was in contention for the gold medal.

Future Research

This study provides a foundation for further research in the area of communication, gender, and sports. This research was conducted to explore the extent to which parental communication serves as an influence on children's beliefs about sports and to indicate whether future research was needed to find a solution. The results verify there is a difference in communication between a perceived sex-appropriate and sex-inappropriate sport. This socialization from parents to children to believe in the sex-appropriateness of sports leads to the continuation of inequalities within the arena of sports. Solutions for the inequalities will need to start by addressing the parents' communication to their children. Future research and studies should aim at finding a method of countering these socializations of sport stereotypes or educating parents and children about the potential of all children participating in any sport.

A study identifying if sports and gender is an area of concern for the general public would be of interest. The public may not see sex-appropriate sports and sex-inappropriate

sports as problems. However, if the public is fully educated on sport inequality and the impact it has yet does not feel this topic is a real concern, research may want to take another direction where there is deemed a social concern.

It may be beneficial to replicate this study in order to use more subject and in particular more male subjects. The themes provide flags of potential communication problems and a replication would strength the themes or address the limitation that some categories are too small.

Replicating this study using friends or peers may also produce interesting results. Instead of asking what the parent would say in response to a request to participate in a sport, ask the child subject what his or her close friend might say if he or she played a masculine, feminine, or neutral sport. A comparison of the two studies may also yield evidence of social learning theory and a better understanding of the influence parents and peers have in children's decisions.

Because the degree of a sport's masculinity and femininity were not examined in this study, a complete reproduction of Matteo's (1986) study would also provide complimentary and additional results. A measure of the level of perceived femininity or masculinity of each sport may provide stronger support for the conclusions. A full replication of Matteo's (1986) study would also provide additional insight by including areas not addressed in this study, such as overall experience with sports and commitment to sports based on the appropriateness of the sport.

Regardless of the direction future research takes, the expectancy is new studies will take the lessons of these results and make bigger strides at leveling the playing field for men and women, and boys and girls.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided an extensive literature review of a variety of subjects dealing with social learning theory, communication, gender, and sports. The literature review identified a gap were no research had been done specifically on the socialization of children into sports based on the sex of the child and the sex-appropriateness of sports by parents.

The results of the study point to a relationship between parents' attitudes about sports and children's' accurate perceptions of their parents attitudes. The analysis provides more evidence of social learning theory. This study also answers the call of Lirgg, George, Chase, and Ferguson (1996) who challenge educators to break down barriers which exist for males and females in sports. These authors posit that when equality in sports is finally obtained people "may be encouraged to attempt a variety of physical skills, which in turn may positively influence their beliefs about what they are truly capable of accomplishing" (p. 433). The ramifications of equality in sports reaches outside of the sports arena to an individuals life and self concept. Special treatment for either sex is not wanted, but equal treatment is a necessity. This research concludes that starting at a basic level, the family, or more specifically the communication between parent and child is a logical place to start to achieve that equality. The study is "action science" or better defined as a project for social change. Parents have shaped their children to believe there are appropriate sports so it is possible parents can reshaped their children to understand their potential can be limitless.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I hereby give my consent for myself and for my child to participate in this survey entitled:
Sports Survey

I understand the person responsible for this project is:
Mary Kate Leonard   phone: **742-0411**

She or her authorized representative has explained the procedures for this study. She or her authorized representative has explained there are no risks involved with filling out this survey. Participation is strictly voluntary and anonymous.

It has further been explained to me that the total duration of my participation and my child's participation will be no more than the time required to complete the survey; that only Mary Kate Leonard and her authorized representative will have access to the data collected for this study; and that all data associated with this study will remain strictly confidential.

Dr. Karla Jensen has agreed to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the procedures at **742-3913**. I have been informed that I may contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects by writing them in care of the Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409, or by calling 742-3884.

I understand that I or my child may discontinue this study at any time I choose without penalty.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____
Date: _____

Signature of Project Director or her Authorized Representative:

_____
Date: _____

Signature of Witness to Oral Presentation: _____
Date: _____

Appendix B

PARENT SPORTS SURVEY

Please circle the appropriate answer:

I am a: female   male   My child filling out the survey with me is: female male

List three feminine sports: _____   _____
_____

If your child had to pick one of these sports to play, which one would your child pick?
_____

Please write exactly what you would say in response to your child requesting to participate in the sport you just picked.

List three sports that are neither feminine nor masculine:
_____   _____   _____

If your child had to pick one of these sports to play, which one would your child pick?
_____

Please write exactly what you would say in response to your child requesting to participate in the sport you just picked.

List three masculine sports:_____   _____
_____

If your child had to pick one of these sports to play, which one would your child pick?
_____

Please write exactly what you would say in response to your child requesting to participate in the sport you just picked.

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Appendix C

CHILD SPORTs SURVEY

Please circle the right answer:

I am a: female   male   My parent filling out the survey with me is: female male

Please fill in your age: I am _____ years old.

List three feminine sports: _____   _____
_____

If you had to pick one of these sports to play, which one would you pick?
_____

Please write exactly what you think your parent would say back to you when you asked them if you could play the sport you just picked.

List three sports that are neither feminine nor masculine:
_____   _____   _____

If you had to pick one of these sports to play, which one would you pick?
_____

Please write exactly what you think your parent would say back to you when you asked them if you could play the sport you just picked.

List three masculine sports:_____   _____
_____

If you had to pick one of these sports to play, which one would you pick?
_____

Please write exactly what you think your parent would say back to you when you asked them if you could play the sport you just picked.

Appendix D

DATA TREATMENT CATEGORIES

Parent Communication	Child Communication
Male Parent-Male Child	Male Parent-Male Child
Masculine Sport	Masculine Sport
Feminine Sport	Feminine Sport
Neutral Sport	Neutral Sport
Male Parent-Female Child	Male Parent-Female Child
Masculine Sport	Masculine Sport
Feminine Sport	Feminine Sport
Neutral Sport	Neutral Sport
Female Parent-Female Child	Female Parent-Female Child
Masculine Sport	Masculine Sport
Feminine Sport	Feminine Sport
Neutral Sport	Neutral Sport
Female Parent-Male Child	Female Parent-Male Child
Masculine Sport	Masculine Sport
Feminine Sport	Feminine Sport
Neutral Sport	Neutral Sport

Appendix E

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS FOR PARENT THEMES

Acknowledgment of Current Abilities	Remarks about any strength the child possesses, or remarks about any experience the child has in the sport
Advice	Any statement of guidance
Appearance	Any statement in reference to the child's looks
Benefits	Comments about the advantages of participating in the sport
Coach	Any comment in reference to a coach
Concern for Academics	Remarks about potential problems with grades, studying, or participation in school
Concern for Current Abilities	Statement about the child's ability to perform the necessary skills for the sport
Concern for Logistics	Any comment about any of the logistics surrounding the child's participation in the sport such as cost, availability, and location
Concern for Safety	A comments involving any aspect of safety including general warnings, dangers of the sport itself, possible injuries, or use of equipment.
Enthusiastic Positive Response	An affirmative response in conjunction with a explanation of the affirmative or phrases indicating approval
Extremely Negative Response	Comments containing negative responses with more than the word "no" or similar simple negative responses
Friends and Family	Any remark containing a reference to friends or family
Health	Comments regarding the fitness value of a sport or participating in a sport
Negative Response	A one or two word negative response

Positive Quality of the Sport	Positive comments related specifically about the sport
Positive Response	A one or two word affirmative answer
Question Child's Choice	Any remark about why a child pick a sport or skeptical remarks about whether or not the child is certain about the choice.
Sex as a Factor in Decision	Comments related to the child's sex in the response
Supportive	Statements indicating support for the person, the decision to participate, or hopes for the enjoyment of the sport

Appendix F

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS FOR CHILD THEMES

Acknowledge Child's Current Abilities   *

Advice   *

Ambivalent Response   Any comment indicating a indifferent attitude about the child's participation in the sport

Benefits   *

Concern for Academics   *

Concern for Commitment   Comments which question whether the child can last for the whole season of the sport or comments involving agreement from the parents if the child is willing to commit for the entire season of the sport.

Concern for Convenience   Statements in which there is an indication that the participation in the sport will be a bother of some sort for the parents

Concern for Money   Comment regarding cost or affordability of the sport

Concern for Safety   *

Enthusiastic Positive Response   *

Extremely Negative Response   *

Negative Response   *

Physical Characteristics   Any comment about the child's physical appearance, stature, or attributes

Positive Quality of the Sport   *

Positive Response   *

Question Child's Choice   *

Sex as a Factor in Decision   *

Suggest Alternative   Comments where an alternate of a sport is indicated

Supportive   *

* = uses the same definition as the parent themes (See Appendix E)

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In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Texas Tech University or Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, I agree that the Library and my major department shall make it freely available for research purposes. Permission to copy this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Director of the Library or my major professor. It is understood that any copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my further written permission and that any user may be liable for copyright infringement.

Agree (Permission is granted.)

_Mary C. Leonard_____   _4/6/98_____
    Student's Signature   Date

Disagree (Permission is not granted.)

_____   _____
    Student's Signature   Date