

“Winners” and “Losers”: The Effects of Being Allowed or Denied Entry into Competitive Extracurricular Activities

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A number of high school extracurricular activities are competitive and selective, requiring aspiring students to apply and audition for membership. The process of trying out for two such teams, cheerleading and dance, was explored, and the reactions of girls who were successful were contrasted with those who were unsuccessful. Post-outcome assessments indicated significant differences in measures of subjective state (positive and negative emotions, arousal, investment), classroom performance (attentiveness, grades), attendance/truancy, and feelings about self and about school between girls who made the team and those who did not. Of the variables examined, only drug and alcohol use did not appear to be affected. Data collected at eight intervals demonstrated the longer-lasting negative effects of being denied entry to the team over a two-month time span.

KEYWORDS: *Extracurricular activities, adolescent activity programs.*

Introduction

Most high schools encourage students to participate in various extracurricular activities, such as athletics, vocational clubs, student government, newspapers and yearbooks, and special interest groups. There is a wealth of evidence to support the contention that participation in these extracurricular activities has a beneficial effect on academic performance and achievement, and on other areas of psychosocial functioning as well. The majority of these studies have found differences when comparing students who participate to those who do not, and these results have held even after ethnicity, income, grade level, and other background factors were statistically controlled (e.g., Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Marsh, 1992; Pedersen & Seidman, 2005). While differences in the frequency and degree of participation in extracurricular activities among gender and ethnic groups has been noted (Gerber; McNeal, 1998; Peng & Wright, 1994), the beneficial effects of such participation on academic and psychosocial variables have been consistently found.

However, with the exception of males participating in athletics, the literature has not delved into the increasing number of high school extracur-

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ricular activities that are competitive and selective—those that require students to actively and intensely compete for participation—and as a result bifurcate these auditioners into “winners” and “losers.” The present study attempted to fill this void by comparing high school girls who were successful in their bid to access a highly selective extracurricular activity to those who were not successful on academic, emotional, psychological, and delinquency variables.

Review of Related Literature

Participation in Extracurricular Activities: Relationships with Academic Achievement

A positive relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic performance has been demonstrated in a number of studies (Crittendon, 1999; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Holland & Andre, 1987; Lisella & Serwatka, 1996; Marsh, 1992; Silliker & Quirk, 1997). For example, Camp (1990) found evidence for the effects of participation in extracurricular activities on students' success in school while controlling for the effects of other variables such as academic ability, family background, and other competing time-use activities that could reasonably affect those grades. Activity participation was found to have a significant positive effect on academic achievement even more than twice as great as study habits, which are generally regarded as an influential variable in academic achievement. Cooper, et al. (1999) demonstrated that this relationship could not be explained solely by the differential selection of higher-achieving students into extracurricular activities. Eccles and her colleagues (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003) summarized their findings from extensive longitudinal research on adolescents' extracurricular activity involvement concluding that there is clear evidence for the dual role of extracurricular activity participation in serving both a promotive role facilitating academic performance, and also a protective role in deterring youth from involvement in risky activities.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities: Relationships with Psychosocial Variables

Several authors have attempted to explain the reasons underlying the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement, suggesting that the impact of extracurricular activity involvement on psychosocial variables more directly accounts for these findings (e.g., Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979; Spady, 1970). In particular, the suggestions that these relationships have been found because participation in extracurricular activities leads to enhanced self-concept (Marsh, 1991a, 1991b) or increased identification with school (Finn, 1989) have been supported by empirical research.

School connectedness. Research has shown that students who participate in extracurricular activities have more positive attitudes toward school (Davalos, Chavez, & Guardiola, 1999; Eccles et al., 2003; Jacobs & Chase, 1989)

than those who are not involved in activities. Support for the important role that a sense of school connectedness plays in healthy adolescent behaviors has been demonstrated (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Davalos et al., 1999; Jacobs & Chase, 1989; Jordan & Nettles, 1999). Harrison and Narayan (2003) found that high school participants in any type of extracurricular activity were more likely to enjoy school and get homework done, express positive attitudes about themselves, peers, teachers, and parents, and take better care of themselves by exercising and eating nutritious meals. Investigators have also illustrated the protective role that school connectedness has played in reducing a number of high-risk behaviors, such as truancy, substance abuse, and delinquency for adolescents (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). In fact, researchers have demonstrated that school bonding (connectedness) is even more powerful than family connectedness in reducing adolescents' delinquent behaviors (Resnick, Harris, & Blum, 1993).

Self-concept. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) sought to directly determine the extent to which self-concept (in the academic and social domains) might mediate the effects of extracurricular activity participation and academic achievement. In a national sample of junior and senior high school students, they found support for the thesis that academic self-concept was an important mediating variable; findings were consistent across sex, ethnicity, ability level, and school size variables. Marsh (1992a, 1991b; 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) reasoned that participation in extracurricular activities, even those not associated with academic achievement, leads to an increased commitment to school and school values, which then leads indirectly to increased academic success.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities: Relationships with Delinquency Variables

Support for the contention that unoccupied discretionary time generally leads to problem behaviors in adolescence has been documented (for reviews see Stattin, Kerr, Mahoney, Persson, & Magnusson, 2005; Osgood, Anderson, & Shaffer, 2005). Empirical research has largely supported the protective role played by some types of extracurricular activities in deterring drug and alcohol use (Buckhalt, Halpin, Noel, & Meadows, 1992; Carlini-Cotrim & Aparecida de Carvalho, 1994), and in mediating disciplinary and delinquency problems (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Tashman, Weist, Nabors, & Shafer, 1998). However, other studies have noted the relative small effect size of these relationships (Darling, 2005; Jenkins, 1996), or failed to replicate these findings (Carlini-Cotrim & Aparecida de Carvalho, 1993; Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Eccles et al., 2003; Harrison & Narayan, 2003). Differences in the populations under study, and in the methods used to assess drug and alcohol use, may account for these seemingly discrepant findings.

Adolescent Gender Differences in Extracurricular Activities

From an early age, children prefer play activities that are in line with their gender (c.f., Goldstein, 1994; Scarlett, Naudeau, Saloni-Pasternak, &

Ponte, 2005) and these male-female differences become even more entrenched during the middle and high school years (Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, & Blumenfeld, 1993; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). In fact, research has shown that during middle childhood activity preferences are even more gender typed than either children's gender role attitudes or their gender-typed personality characteristics (McHale et al., 1999). Girls have been found to spend more time outside the home in organized activities, doing academic-related activities, taking lessons, engaging in outdoor play and socializing, while boys spend more of their time outside the home participating in unorganized activities (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001; Posner & Vandell, 1999) and in team sports (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Larson & Verma, 1999; McHale et al., 2001).

Students who participate in certain specific types of extracurricular activities are more popular with peers, have higher social status, tend to be school leaders, and may be influential in directing the norms of the school's social system (Eder, 1985; Eder & Kinney, 1995; Eder & Parker, 1987; Evans & Eder, 1993; Kinney, 1993; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Participating in athletics has been consistently linked to improved social status for boys, and for girls, high status has been associated with involvement in extracurricular activities such as cheerleading (Barber et al., 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Eccles et al., 2003; Eckert, 1989; Eder & Kinney, 1995; Merten, 1996). Male athletes are encouraged to be achievement-oriented and competitive, and female cheerleaders are consistently reminded of the importance of their physical appearance and ability to manage their emotions (Eder & Parker, 1987; Leff & Hoyle, 1995; Ryckman & Hamel, 1995). Hence, involvement in "elite" extracurricular activities, especially for girls, ascribes a special social status, and becomes highly prized and sought by many in the peer group. To date, the vast majority of this research has focused on the members of these elite extracurricular activities, comparing those who are participants to those who are not, or relating ethnographic accounts of within-group social relationships. The process of gaining entry has received relatively little attention, particularly for adolescent girls.

Focus of the Study and Research Questions

There is a wealth of literature that concludes that participating in extracurricular activities affords a number of academic and psychosocial benefits to adolescent participants. The focus of the majority of this research has either been on activities wherein participation lies at the discretion of the individual, or on participants who have successfully gained entry. Selective and competitive activities dictate that admission to the activity requires an auditioning process and decisions are made by external adult judges. While those who "win" and are afforded access to the activity incur many advantages and benefits, there is a dearth of information about those who "lose"—those individuals who are denied the opportunity to participate. Is it merely that they do not acquire the benefits of participation demonstrated in pre-

vious research, or are there resulting effects beyond the mere absence of these positive outcomes?

Three research questions were addressed in a large-scale study with adolescent girls that collected both quantitative and qualitative data to explore these issues: (1) "What effects does the process of applying and competing for admission into a selective extracurricular activity have on female high school students?" (2) "What are the effects of being selected or denied entry into an elite selective extracurricular activity?" and (3) "To what extent do the effects of successfully or unsuccessfully competing for an extracurricular activity extend over time?" This study also sought to provide additional detail about the beneficial effects of participation in high status, selective extracurricular activities on adolescent females that have been found in prior research. Only the quantitative findings of the large-scale study addressing these issues are presented here (see Barnett, 2006, for qualitative interview data).

This research contributes to the literature by focusing on two types of highly visible high school extracurricular activities (cheerleading and dance) which required female students to try out, and whose admission was selective and competitively based. Research has shown that for adolescent females, the main route to popularity and high status in the school is cheerleading, and that involvement in cheerleading affects a girl's personal and social identity (Eckert, 1989; Eder, 1985; Eder & Parker, 1987; Kinney, 1993; Merten, 1996). The decision to focus on these highly visible and status-laden activities for girls was made for two reasons: to examine the outcomes of the auditioning process and selection decision within two salient and competitive school-related activity contexts for girls (cheerleading and dance), and to investigate activities in which the effects of being allowed or denied access might be especially pronounced in the meanings they would have for aspiring female members.

High school girls who indicated their intent to compete for entry into their high school cheerleading or dance teams were followed throughout the process of auditioning, and when the outcome became known, students who were successful were contrasted with those who were not. Measures of mood/emotional state, feelings about themselves and about school, academic performance and classroom behavior, truancy/attendance, and drug/alcohol involvement were taken prior to try-outs, and immediately and at several points in time after decisions were announced, to look more closely at the auditioning process and its aftermath. It was hypothesized that differences in these variables would be found between girls who were successful in gaining entry to the team compared to those who were not successful. It was also hypothesized that some of these negative effects on the unsuccessful team applicants might extend over time beyond immediate reactions to the outcome.

Methods

Participants

Three mid-size high schools located in the Midwest were selected because of their similarity in school size, and in the procedures they employed

to audition and select females for their dance and cheerleading teams. The population at the three high schools was between 1300 and 1600 students; the number of cheerleading and dance team members at each school was 6 to 10 and 14 to 16 females, respectively. In one school, the number of open slots, however, reflected the number of graduating seniors, such that only 3-4 (3 dance, 4 cheerleading) spaces were available to be filled in the team. In the other two schools, previous team members were required to re-apply for the teams, so that there were 15-16 openings to be filled on the dance teams and 9-10 on the cheerleading squads.

A total of 173 girls (126 Caucasian, 39 African American, 6 Asian American, 2 Hispanic) auditioned for the cheerleading and dance teams, and of those, 57 were selected across the 3 high schools. Table 1 presents a summary of the initial number of applicants, and numbers of girls who attended practices and auditioned at each of the schools for the cheerleading and dance teams. As can be seen from this table, a few girls declined to continue to the next step at each school, however, the vast majority remained through the entire process. 116 of the applicants were not selected by the judges to be members of the team for which they auditioned. In addition, only one girl who had been a dance team member failed to again be chosen for the team.

The 57 girls (46 Caucasian, 8 African American, 3 Asian American) who were successful in their bid for the high school team for which they applied ranged in age from 15 to 17 years ($M = 15.86$; $SD = .44$) at the time of the auditions, and had exceeded the minimum grade point average of 3.5 (out of 5.0) set by all three schools ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .62$). The girls were all sophomores and juniors, and most (77%) were involved in at least one other extracurricular activity at their high school. The 116 girls who were not cho-

TABLE 1
Number of Girls Who Intended, Practiced, and Auditioned for their High School Cheerleading and Dance Teams

	Intent to Audition	Participated in:		Outcome:	
		Guided Practices	Auditions	Selected	Not Selected
High School A	42	38	37	7	30
Cheerleading	19	18	18	4	14
Dance	23	20	19	3	16
High School B	67	66	66	25	41
Cheerleading	28	27	27	9	18
Dance	39	39	39	16	23
High School C	72	70	70	25	45
Cheerleading	29	29	29	10	19
Dance	43	41	41	15	26
TOTAL	181	174	173	57	116

sen were of the same age ($M = 15.54$; $SD = .59$) and year in school, had a similar cumulative grade point average ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .79$), and most (74%) were involved in at least one other school activity.

Instrumentation

The selection of variables to be explored in the study was largely determined by the literature relating high school students' participation in extracurricular activities to a number of constructs, in an effort to investigate the replicability of earlier findings to activities of this selective type. These variables reflected the individual's state or mood, and none were presumed to reveal underlying traits. Students' mood/emotional state, feelings about themselves and about their school, drug and alcohol involvement, and absenteeism/truancy were assessed through the students' own reports of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Teachers provided a measure of each student's classroom attentiveness/concentration, and academic performance. Measurement of each of these variables followed procedures utilized in previous research among students with comparable characteristics. While it should be noted that single items typically constitute poor measures of a construct, they were utilized to assess certain of these variables based on previous research findings demonstrating relationships with more comprehensive assessments. In addition, a number of questions were initially asked of students about their background, family characteristics, and perceptions about trying out for the cheerleading or dance team.

Mood/emotional state. Measures of emotional/mood state were derived from those employed by Larson and Richards (1994) in their large-scale study of the lives of adolescents. In that research, they utilized a combination of semantic differential (scored -3 to $+3$, with 7 points labeled "very", "quite", "some", "neither", "some", "quite", "very") and Likert-type ("very much", "kind of", "a little bit", "not at all") items. These semantic differential and Likert items were combined to yield measures of four aspects of subjective state: investment, arousal, positive emotions, and negative emotions. Investment reflected the semantic differential item of "excited-bored", and the Likert items of "interested", "hardworking", "competitive", and "cooperative". Arousal encompassed the two semantic differential items of "alert-drowsy" and "strong-weak", and the Likert items of "tired", "hurried", "calm", "rowdy", "hyper", and "in control". The semantic differential items for positive emotions were "happy", "cheerful", and "friendly", and the Likert items were "proud", "great", "kindly", "accepted", and "free". The semantic differential items for negative emotions came from the bipolar adjectives in the previous group, reflecting "unhappy", "irritable", and "angry" ends of the continuum. Additional Likert items in negative emotions were "sorry", "frustrated", "nervous", "disappointed", "worried", "guilty", "awkward", "lonely", "self-conscious", "embarrassed", and "ignored". Larson and Richards (1994) reported the internal consistency and the test-retest reliability.

bility of the items to be high. Construct validity was reported in this and previous publications (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987; Larson, 1989) through correlations with related constructs, such as self-esteem (+), depression (-), and parents' ratings of internalizing symptoms (-).

Finally, a question was included at the end of this instrument when it was administered at the last session. This item asked the student to respond to the question, "Was there any time when you did not tell the truth about how you were feeling?" by checking one of three response choices: "never", "not more than once", and "not more than several times". This procedure was utilized by Larson and Richards (1994) as a check on the honesty of responses provided by their adolescent respondents.

General feelings about self. An additional question was included to provide a general assessment of how the individual was feeling about herself at different points in time throughout the process. Students were asked to respond to the statement, "I have been feeling pretty good about myself in the last [time period]", by indicating their level of agreement ("strongly agree", "agree", "unsure", "disagree", "strongly disagree"). The time period was changed to reflect the interval between stages of data collection.

General feelings about school. An additional variable which might be impacted throughout the process of applying for membership on the dance or cheerleading squads was the student's feelings about her school. Two single items, drawn from previous research (Eccles et al., 2003; Harrison & Narayan, 2003), were utilized to assess students' feelings about their school: "How much do you like school?" and "How did you feel about going to school today?" There were five possible Likert-type responses to the first item, ranging from "like very much" to "dislike very much". The five responses provided for the second item ranged from "wanted to go very much" to "didn't want to go at all". These two items correlated .61 to .89 across the time periods, indicating that feelings about school on some days might be more reflective of reactions to a specific event(s).

Absenteeism/truancy. A measure of absenteeism/truancy was included in the study because it was possible that the process of applying for the dance or cheerleading squads might effect school attendance, as had been shown in previous research with other types of activities (Crittendon, 1999). Following from earlier work (Eccles et al., 2003; Harrison & Narayan, 2003), students were asked to indicate if they had skipped school or cut classes within [a designated period of time], by responding "quite a lot", "several times", "a few times", "once or twice", or "not at all". As with other questions, the time period noted in the question was adjusted for the length of time since the last administration.

Drug/alcohol use. The students were also asked how often they drank alcohol or used drugs within a specified period of time (Eccles et al., 2003). The time period varied based on the interval between waves of data collection. Students were asked to indicate their response using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "a lot" to "not at all". More objective measures of

the extent of use were not provided since the time interval varied across measurements and because more detailed assessments of usage were deemed beyond the scope of the study.

Classroom attendance and performance. After signaling her intent to audition, each student was asked to provide the researcher with her class schedule. This enabled the researcher to contact each student's teachers, and ask for their cooperation and assistance by completing a few brief questions about the student's classroom attentiveness and academic performance at several times over the following two months. Each teacher was asked to respond to the question "How attentive has [student] seemed to be in your class in the last [time period]?" Five response options were provided to this question, ranging from "very attentive" to "not at all attentive". A second question asked that the teacher provide an assessment of the student's academic performance by responding to the question "How has [student] been doing in your class in his/her academic work in the last [time period]?" Teachers indicated their response to this question by marking "very good", "fairly good", "about average", "fairly poor", or "very poor". The student's name and the appropriate time period (since the last administration) were inserted on both questions where noted.

Individual characteristics. At the start of the study and following their consent to participate, students were asked to supply information about themselves (age, year in school, race, grade-point average, involvement in other extracurricular activities in and outside of school) and about their motivations for, and perceptions of, applying for the dance or cheerleading squads. These were initially identified by the researcher and in some cases by previous research, as potentially influencing levels of involvement in extracurricular activities in general, or of this specific type (competitive, selective). They were also asked to indicate how likely they thought it would be for them to be chosen for the team (using a 5-point scale ranging from "very likely" to "very unlikely"), and their perceptions of their skill level in the activity (dance or cheerleading) (using a 5-point scale ranging from "very good" to "very poor"). Finally, students were asked to what extent they felt pressured by others to try out for the team to which they were applying (using a 5-point scale ranging from "a lot of pressure from others" to "no pressure from others").

Procedures and Data Collection

In all three schools, notices were posted in hallways and in the school newspaper in early spring indicating the dates for try-outs for the dance team and cheerleading squad. The process of gaining entry onto the dance or cheerleading squads was comprised of several steps. Interested students were first required to file a permission slip and have an up-to-date physical examination submitted by the deadline date of two weeks before the start of try-outs. They were also required to submit 2 teacher recommendations, and have exceeded a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5 (on a 5.0

scale). Two weeks after the application deadline, girls were required to undergo 6-9 hours of guided practice during which they were taught two routines (cheerleading or dance) under the tutelage of an instructor and several assistants. These sessions occurred after school hours on Monday through Wednesday of the week of auditions. On the Thursday and Friday of that same week, the auditions took place after school hours. For each audition, the applicant was required to perform the routines she had been taught, and then also perform an additional routine that she had created. Each girl performed alone or with one other applicant, and 2-4 judges scored each applicant on criteria of technical merit, grace/poise, appearance, creativity, and overall impression. Applicants were asked to return to the school gym at 7 p.m. that evening to hear whether or not they were successful in their bid to become a member of the team.

All of the girls who filed the necessary materials in the school athletic office were contacted and invited to participate in the study. The girls were told the researchers were interested in learning more about individuals who try out for school activities, and that they would be asked to complete some brief forms at several different times throughout the audition process and for two months thereafter. They were informed that all of the information they provided would be kept confidential, and that they could decline to continue at any point or refuse to answer any questions that they found objectionable. If they expressed a willingness to participate, they were given a description of the study, and asked to obtain the signature of a parent or guardian to accompany their own consent. Only one girl declined to participate. At the end of the study, the girls were individually thanked for their participation and presented with a gift certificate (\$10) to a local mall. The girls were informed of this incentive at the start of the study.

Each girl who consented to participate in the study scheduled a time to meet after school within the following 1-3 days within the two weeks prior to the start of try-outs. When she arrived at the session, the girl was given a packet with the instructions and instruments to complete. The girls met in small groups to complete the forms in the presence of the researcher so that confusion or questions could be addressed. The same procedure of collecting data on all of the measures (except background information) took place during the second day of practice, and together, these two data points for each measure constituted a pre-audition assessment. In addition, girls completed the measures within a few minutes after hearing the outcome, 3 days later, 1 week later, 2 weeks later, 4 weeks later, and 8 weeks after hearing about the success of their audition. Thus, there were a total of 6 post-audition assessments. To discourage recall, the order in which the instruments were presented, as well the individual items in each, were randomized.

The teacher ratings of students' classroom performance were collected at four periods in time: when students filed their intent to try out (pre-outcome assessment), following the first Monday classes after students learned if they had been successful (3 days after outcome, or 4 days if the girl was absent), at the end of the school week (1 week after outcome), and

8 weeks after the outcome was announced. Teachers completed the forms on their own time, either in or out of school, and returned them in a sealed envelop to a mailbox in the office that had been set aside for the researcher. In all cases, at least two teachers for each student agreed to provide this information, and consistently did so, over the course of the study. Teacher cooperation ranged from as many as five to the minimum of two teachers agreeing to provide this data. Mean ratings across teachers were utilized at each data collection time period to provide an assessment of attentiveness and academic performance for each student. Teachers were also provided with a gift certificate to a local mall to thank them for their participation in the study.

Figure 1 summarizes the design of the research, noting the points at which data was collected from both the students and the teachers.

Data Analysis

Prior to data analysis, inspection of the responses of each participant to the question about their honesty was undertaken. Surprisingly, only one of the students reported that she had not been honest on more than several occasions, and her records were eliminated from all further data analyses.

The first step in the data analysis was to determine whether schools could be combined, and whether there were differences between the dance and cheerleading teams both within and across schools. To investigate differences across testing occasions between those who were successful in their bid to become a member of the dance or cheerleading team and those who were not, individuals were divided into two groups reflecting the outcome of the auditions for their respective teams. Initially, analyses on all dependent variables adopted a Group \times Time \times Activity \times School ($2 \times 8 \times 2 \times 3$) mixed model analysis of variance, with Time as a repeated measures factor. The activity (cheerleading, dance) and school effects were included to determine the extent to which any differences in the measures over time for the successful and unsuccessful groups could be attributed to the school or the type of activity. For all dependent variables across all testing occasions, the school and activity main effects were nonsignificant, and there were no statistically significant interactions with groups or time. Thus, in all ensuing analyses no further distinctions were made between schools and teams, following the demonstration that the power of the design is improved by the elimination of variables that have been shown to be statistically irrelevant (cf. Kraemer & Thiemann, 1987).

Multivariate procedures were employed when dependent variables were significantly correlated (the four measures of mood/emotional state), and univariate tests allowed further statistical contrasts of the contribution of each of the dependent variables to any group, time, or interaction effects. Post-hoc tests were conducted by calculating simple main effects, or utilizing the Newman-Keuls procedure, where appropriate.

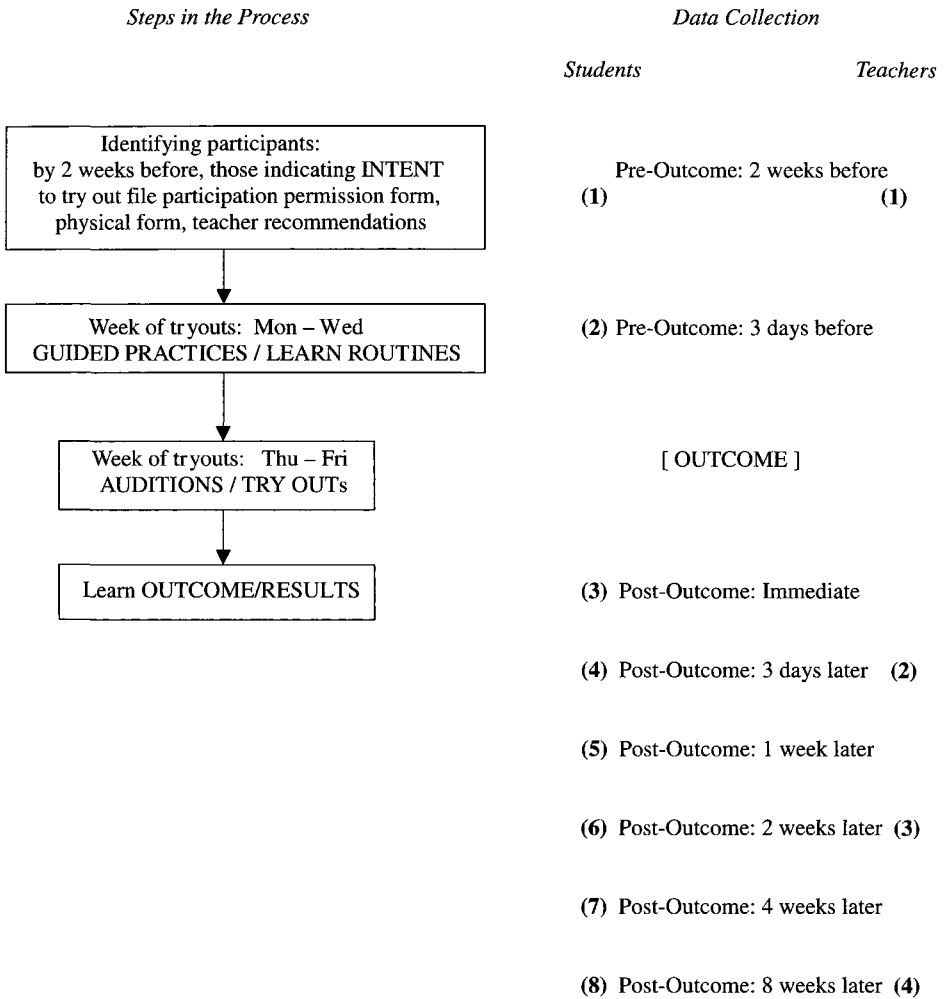


Figure 1. Depiction of research design and times of data collection.

Results

Results of the data analyses are presented separately for each of the constructs under investigation in the study. In this way, a more complete depiction and understanding of the findings relevant to each can be achieved. For each of the dependent variables in the study, cell means, standard deviations, and results of post-hoc testing where appropriate are presented in Table 2. To facilitate the reader's comprehension and interpretation, figures are also provided for all significant Group \times Time interactions

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations[#] for Groups at Each Assessment Time

	Pre-Outcome		Post-Outcome					
	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6*	7*	8*
<i>Mood/Emotional State</i>								
<i>Investment</i>								
Successful Group**	16.10 ^a (4.17)	20.61 ^a (2.44)	19.74 ^d (1.91)	16.02 ^c (3.14)	18.70 ^f (5.02)	18.58 ^g (3.77)	17.81 ^h (3.19)	15.02 (4.03)
Unsuccessful Group***	15.31 ^b (4.88)	19.88 ^{b,c} (2.39)	13.12 ^{c,d} (2.16)	7.41 ^c (3.53)	6.17 ^f (4.88)	7.53 ^g (4.95)	8.19 ^h (3.15)	9.73 (3.33)
<i>Arousal</i>								
Successful Group	16.89 ^a (3.98)	25.90 ^{a,c} (5.14)	14.78 ^d (2.12)	11.18 ^c (2.41)	12.04 ^f (2.55)	13.17 (2.16)	13.89 (2.87)	14.43 (3.04)
Unsuccessful Group	18.06 ^b (4.11)	28.41 ^{b,d} (4.98)	20.44 ^c (2.19)	18.63 ^c (3.18)	19.41 ^f (3.30)	17.89 (4.71)	17.96 (4.08)	17.04 (3.97)
<i>Positive Emotions</i>								
Successful Group	16.83 (4.91)	15.90 ^a (6.83)	27.80 ^{a,c} (1.32)	27.14 ^d (2.78)	24.98 ^e (4.91)	23.18 ^f (3.34)	22.10 ^g (5.18)	22.67 ^h (4.61)
Unsuccessful Group	18.07 (5.14)	14.81 ^b (5.87)	8.46 ^{b,c} (2.89)	9.17 ^d (2.56)	9.85 ^e (4.33)	10.88 ^f (5.91)	10.14 ^g (5.18)	8.77 ^h (5.97)
<i>Negative Emotions</i>								
Successful Group	27.33 (3.71)	21.78 ^a (4.03)	15.04 ^{a,c} (1.91)	14.96 ^d (.72)	17.30 ^e (2.88)	19.48 ^f (3.79)	16.55 ^g (5.98)	18.17 ^h (5.16)
Unsuccessful Group	23.96 (2.77)	18.44 ^b (5.94)	49.77 ^{b,c} (.96)	52.17 ^d (1.14)	44.62 ^e (3.12)	41.87 ^f (3.44)	45.08 ^g (5.61)	42.96 ^h (6.08)
<i>Feelings about Self</i>								
Successful Group	3.77 ^a (.81)	2.58 ^{a,c} (1.04)	3.71 ^{c,e} (.34)	3.32 ^f (.48)	3.17 ^g (.79)	3.41 ^h (.70)	3.30 ⁱ (.93)	3.52 ^j (.88)
Unsuccessful Group	3.51 ^b (.89)	2.04 ^{b,d} (.96)	1.17 ^{d,e} (.79)	1.39 ^f (.82)	1.55 ^g (1.04)	1.46 ^h (.97)	1.61 ⁱ (1.01)	1.54 ^j (.92)
<i>Alcohol/Drug Use</i>								
Successful Group	1.17 (.78)	1.04 (.42)	1.57 (.45)	1.91 (1.16)	2.17 (.97)	2.06 (.61)	2.03 (.93)	2.37 (1.04)
Unsuccessful Group	1.26 (.67)	1.30 (.36)	1.79 (.34)	1.56 (1.03)	1.59 (.68)	2.56 (.69)	1.71 (.52)	2.01 (.74)

TABLE 2
(Continued)

	Pre-Outcome		Post-Outcome					
	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6*	7*	8*
<i>Feelings About School</i>								
Like School								
Successful Group	3.79 (.62)	4.31 (.40)	4.58 ^b (.38)	4.74 ^c (.67)	4.67 ^d (.54)	4.71 ^e (.61)	4.15 ^f (.49)	4.26 ^g (.51)
Unsuccessful Group	4.11 (.51)	4.04 ^a (.32)	1.76 ^{a,b} (.79)	1.48 ^c (.71)	1.55 ^d (.63)	1.63 ^e (.55)	1.97 ^f (.42)	1.94 ^g (.45)
Want to Attend								
Successful Group	3.35 (1.13)	4.47 ^a (.19)	2.06 ^{a,c} (.38)	4.21 ^{c,d} (.41)	3.97 ^e (.48)	3.74 ^f (.62)	3.56 ^g (.56)	3.21 (.70)
Unsuccessful Group	3.12 (.97)	4.71 ^b (.22)	2.43 ^b (1.07)	1.18 ^d (.82)	1.52 ^e (.65)	1.97 ^f (.59)	1.61 ^g (.61)	2.09 (.77)
<i>Absenteeism/Truancy</i>								
Successful Group	1.34 (1.01)	1.93 (.15)	1.04 (.38)	1.67 ^b (.46)	1.11 ^c (.89)	1.39 (.77)	1.76 (.82)	1.68 (.89)
Unsuccessful Group	1.22 (1.14)	1.69 (.12)	1.06 ^a (.97)	3.19 ^{a,b} (.58)	2.73 ^c (.72)	1.87 (.67)	1.60 (.79)	1.63 (.82)
<i>Classroom</i>								
Attentiveness								
Successful Group	3.87 ^a (.68)			2.39 ^{a,c} (1.03)		3.23 ^c (.91)		3.18 (.92)
Unsuccessful Group	4.23 ^b (.57)			1.57 ^{b,d} (.89)		2.36 ^d (.76)		2.67 (.80)
Academic Performance								
Successful Group	4.11 ^a (.43)			2.19 ^{a,c} (.58)		2.37 ^c (.54)		2.81 (.77)
Unsuccessful Group	4.39 ^b (.48)			2.55 ^b (.31)		3.56 (.47)		3.38 (.51)

[#]Standard deviations are in parenthesis.

* 1 = 2 weeks before outcome, 2 = second day of practice, 3 = immediately after outcome, 4 = three days after outcome, 5 = one week after outcome, 6 = two weeks after outcome, 7 = four weeks after outcome, 8 = eight weeks after outcome

^{abcde fghij} means with the same superscripts are significantly different (all $p < .01$ or better). (For example, pre-outcome 2 is significantly different than post-outcome 3 for the unsuccessful group in Feelings About School.)

in Figure 2. In all significant findings reported below and in the Table, the maximum Type I error probability was set at .025.

Mood/Emotional State

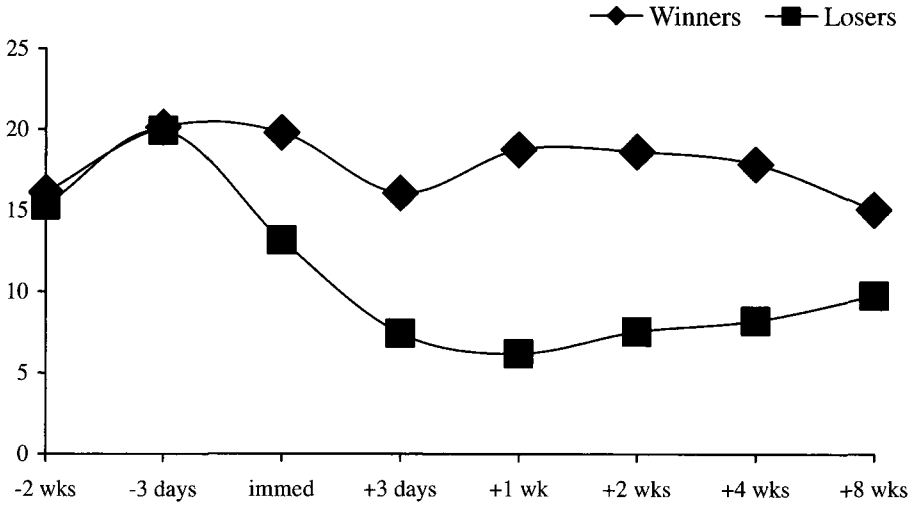
The MANOVA on the four aspects of the individual's mood/emotional state indicated a significant multivariate F-ratio for the Group main effect [$F(4,168) = 7.94$] and Group \times Time interaction [$F(7,157) = 12.87$]. The univariate significance tests revealed that the interaction was statistically significant for all four mood/emotion measures [investment: ($F(7,165) = 15.19$), arousal: ($F(7,165) = 14.02$), positive emotions: ($F(7,165) = 23.94$), negative emotions: ($F(7,165) = 21.96$)], and the Group main effect [investment: $F(1,171) = 8.43$; positive emotions: $F(1,171) = 7.12$; negative emotions: $F(1,171) = 7.36$] was significant for all but the arousal aspect of mood/emotional state.

For *investment*, inspection of the cell means revealed that the success group was significantly higher than the nonsuccess group, and the interaction further revealed that these group differences were primarily shown at specific post-outcome times (Figure 2A). Post-hoc tests indicated that both groups showed a significant increase in investment from the time they had signed up to audition to when they were learning the required routines. Following announcement of the outcome and at all points in time until two months later, the success group was significantly more invested than the unsuccessful group, a result of the significant decline in investment for the unsuccessful girls. No initial pretest differences were found between the two groups, and at two months following the outcome, the group differences began to subside.

Univariate analyses indicated that only the Group \times Time interaction was statistically significant for the *arousal* aspect of mood/emotional state [$F(7,165) = 4.11$]. The post-hoc tests showed that for all of the girls, arousal increased significantly from the time they signaled their intention to try-out to the guided practice sessions. Arousal scores then declined significantly once the outcome had been announced for the girls in both groups (Figure 2B). A significant difference in arousal was then detected between the successful and unsuccessful groups within the first week following announcement of the outcome. These group differences eventually waned, such that by the second week and thereafter, they were not statistically reliable.

Post-hoc tests following the significant univariate group main effect [$F(1,171) = 8.91$] and interaction [$F(7,165) = 11.02$] for *positive emotions* showed that while there were no differences between the two teams before learning the outcome, significant and consistent differences emerged following the announcement. As might be expected, dramatic group differences were observed immediately following the announcement of who was successful and who was not, and these differences persisted at all times of data collection, even two months later (Figure 2C). The positive emotions of the successful girls showed a slight decline between one and two weeks following

A. Investment



B. Arousal

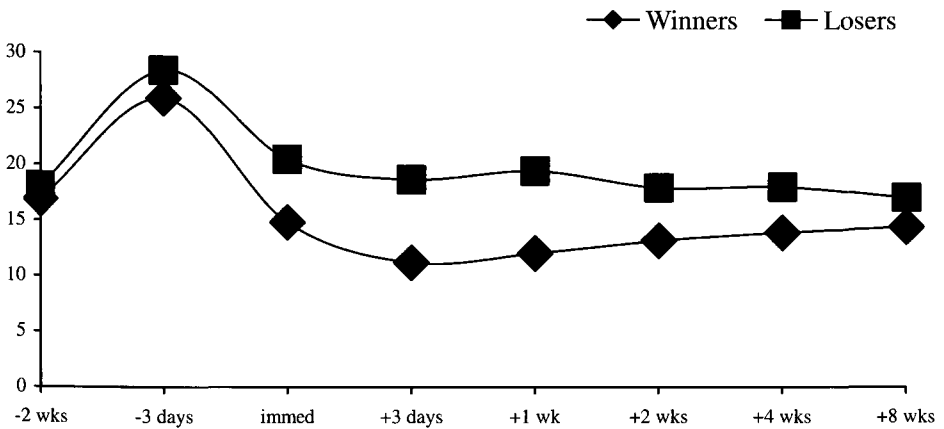
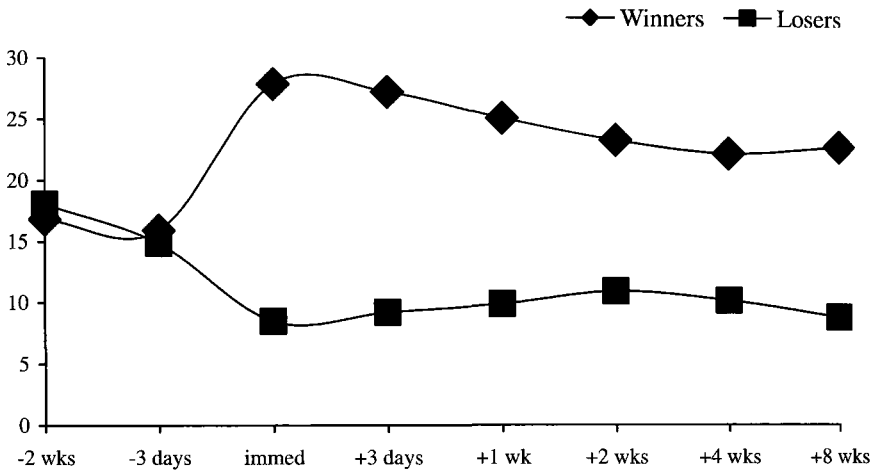


Figure 2. Cell means for group \times time interactions for dependent measures.

C. Positive Emotions



D. Negative Emotions

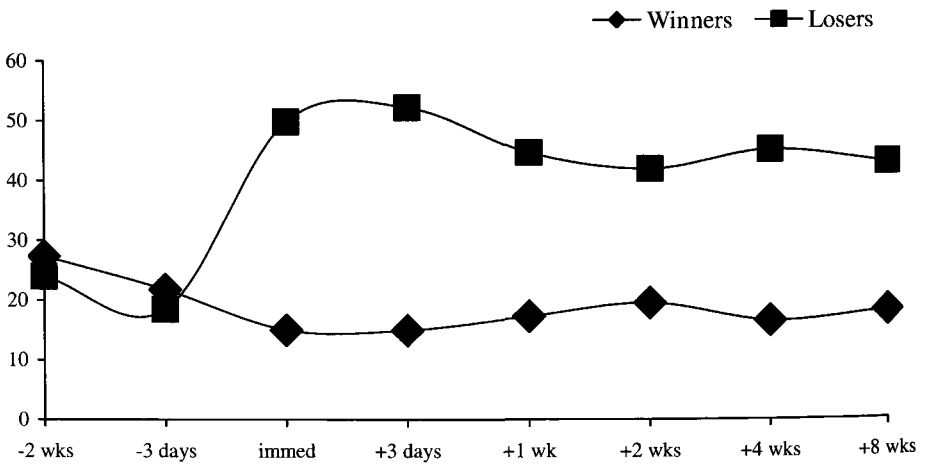
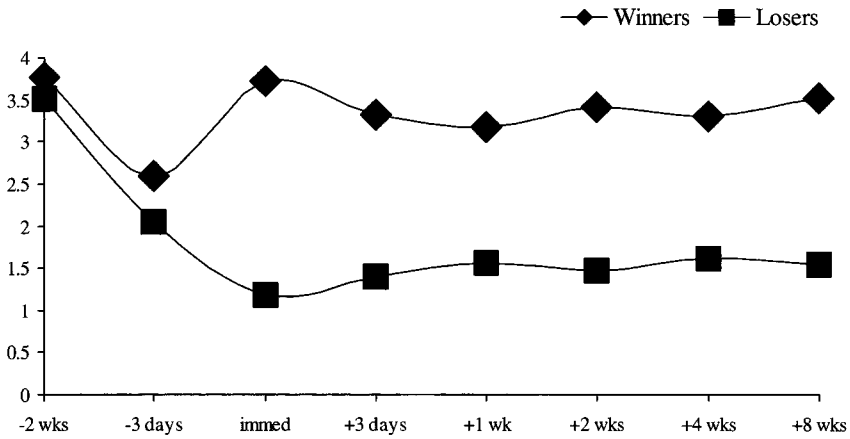


Figure 2. (Continued)

E. Feelings About Self



F. Liking School

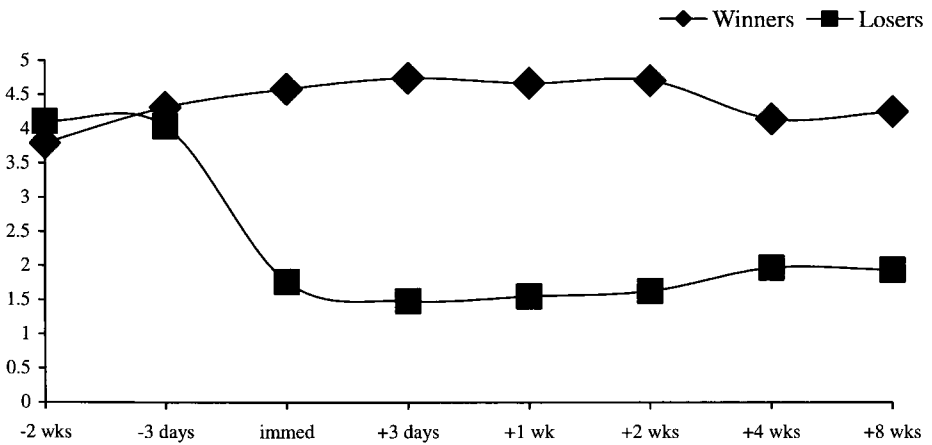
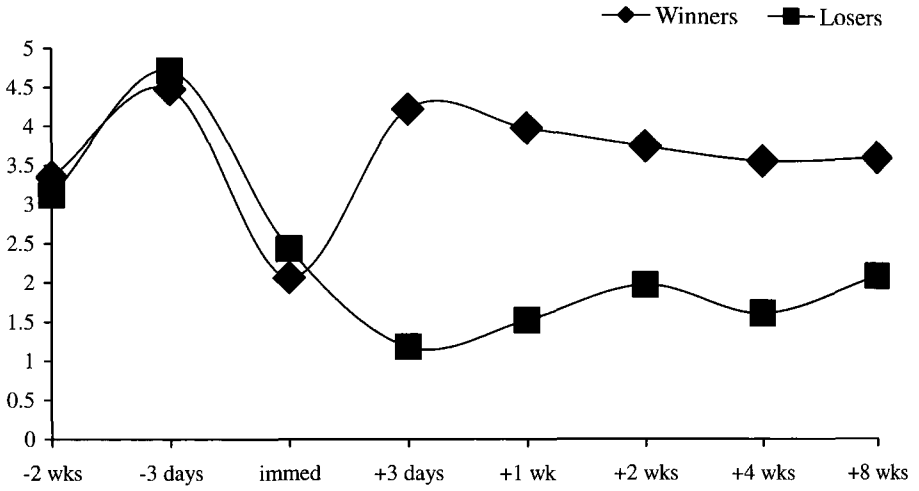


Figure 2. (Continued)

G. Wanting to Attend School



H. Absenteeism / Truancy

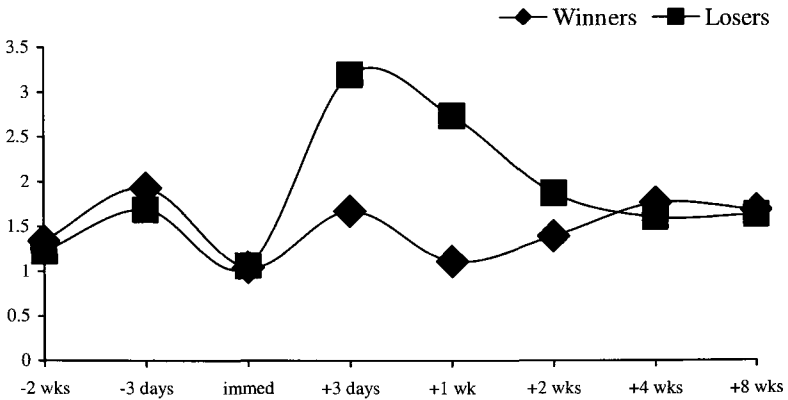


Figure 2. (Continued)

I. Academic Performance

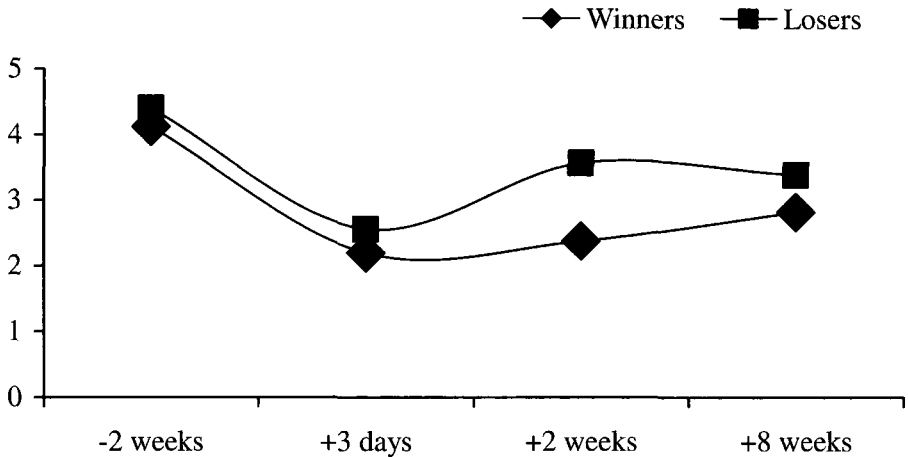


Figure 2. (Continued)

the outcome, but at all points in time their level of positive emotions was dramatically higher than those of their unsuccessful counterparts.

The findings for negative emotions mirrored those found for positive emotions, yielding a significant Group main effect [$F(1,171) = 3.94$] and Group \times Time interaction [$F(7,165) = 16.89$]. Cell means indicated that *negative emotions* were generally low when individuals first made application, and they declined during the supervised practice sessions as try-outs neared for all of the girls. The same dramatic effects of the announcement of who had made the teams were seen in immediate negative emotional reactions. A decline in negative emotionality was immediately observed for those who were successful although it was non-significant, but a dramatic and statistically significant increase was observed for those who were unsuccessful (Figure 2D). Differences between the successful and unsuccessful groups in negative emotion persisted at all data collection intervals across the two months of testing, following announcement of the outcome. While the level of negative emotions never returned to what it was during baseline observations for the unsuccessful girls, for the successful girls fewer negative emotions were shown compared to baseline immediately, and remained at low levels through the ensuing two months.

Feelings about Self

A significant Group main effect [$F(1,171) = 7.39$] and Group \times Time interaction [$F(7,165) = 11.80$] resulted from the 3×2 ANOVA on the item

assessing how participants were feeling about themselves. Cell means indicated that all of the applicants consistently reported feeling good about themselves when they first filed their permission slips and signaled their intent to participate in the process. Post-hoc tests showed that there was a significant decline when practices took place, and this was consistently the case for all girls regardless of the outcome (Figure 2E). The effects of hearing the decision were dramatic and instantaneous: the girls who had been selected showed a significant increase in how they were feeling about themselves while those who were not successful showed a steep decline. Throughout all ensuing time periods the differences between the two groups was highly statistically significant. The successful girls' feelings about themselves remained above their initial pre-outcome measures, while those of the unsuccessful girls remained significantly below their initial pre-outcome scores.

Feelings about School

A two-way (Group \times Time) repeated measures MANOVA was computed on each of the two items assessing feelings about school. The correlation between the two items, although significant ($r = .49$), was nevertheless moderate, suggesting that there was sufficient unexplained variance such that these items were not duplicitous of each other, and hence, separate analyses were undertaken. The statistical findings for the item about liking school showed a significant Group main effect [$F(1,171) = 10.14$] and Group \times Time interaction [$F(7,165) = 25.88$]. Post-hoc tests revealed that both groups were initially equivalent on the two pre-outcome measures, but were significantly different on all six post-outcome testing times (Figure 2F). Girls in the unsuccessful group consistently reported not liking school, and at levels significantly below what they had reported on both pre-outcome assessments. Throughout the two-month term of the study, members of the unsuccessful group never came back to baseline, and were always lower in their feelings about school than the successful girls.

The Group main effect [$F(1,171) = 6.99$], Time main effect [$F(7,165) = 4.78$], and their interaction [$F(7,165) = 12.26$] were all statistically significant in the analyses of the item indicating how the girls felt about attending school on the particular day when it was asked. Post-hoc tests indicated that the all of the applicants wanted to attend school for the guided practice sessions, and did not want to attend on the second day of try-outs or to hear the outcome. Once the outcome was announced, the successful girls showed a significant increase in wanting to attend the following school day, and remained at this level for the two-month duration of the study (Figure 2G). In contrast, the girls in the unsuccessful group immediately reported not wanting to attend school, and while their feelings about attending did increase slightly (but not significantly) as time elapsed, they were consistently below the successful group on all occasions up to two months. The finding that there was no statistical difference between the groups at the two-month point of data collection, might suggest that had there been additional longer-

term measurements, the unsuccessful girls might have continued to increase in their desire to attend school.

Absenteeism/Truancy

A significant Group \times Time interaction [$F(7,165) = 10.44$] was obtained in the ANOVA on the absenteeism/truancy item. At the start of the study when the girls first filed their forms to allow them to participate in the selection process, a minimal level of absences/truancy was reported, and no group differences were shown. A slight increase in missed classes was observed from the first to second pre-outcome measure, perhaps reflecting the girls' desire to maintain an energy level and focus that might make them competitive for practices and try-outs. A significant increase in truancy/absenteeism was found for the unsuccessful girls on the next school day after the outcome was announced (Figure 2H). In addition, on the first and third school days after hearing the outcome of the try-outs, significantly more girls in the unsuccessful group were absent than in the successful group. However, by the next post-outcome time (2 weeks), no group differences were found in truancy or absenteeism, and remained this way for the duration.

Drug/Alcohol Use

No significant group or time main effects or interaction were found in the ANOVA on the measure assessing drug or alcohol use (all $p > .05$). Cell means indicated that such usage was reported to be minimal among the girls, and did not change significantly throughout the course of the study. There was an increase observed in alcohol and drug use among the unsuccessful girls in the second week after learning the outcome, but this change was not statistically significant.

Classroom Performance

Classroom performance was assessed in two ways: by looking at the attentiveness of each girl to classroom activities, and by a general item related to grades received on exams and assignments. Teacher ratings on these two items were positively correlated but nonsignificant ($r = .21$, $p > .05$), suggesting that ANOVA be performed on each of them separately.

The results of the ANOVA on the measure where teachers were asked to rate the girls' attentiveness in class produced a significant Time main effect [$F(7,165) = 5.87$]. Post-hoc procedures revealed that classroom attentiveness for all girls decreased from the pre-outcome to first post-outcome measure. After this initial one-week period, the girls increased their attentiveness in the classroom as measured at the one-month interval, and then remained at that level for the second month. These trends were similarly observed for both the successful and unsuccessful group members.

The variance analysis on the academic performance measure yielded a significant interaction [$F(7,165) = 5.67$], but no significant main effects.

Post-hoc analyses indicated that the significant interaction occurred because the academic performance of both groups decreased from the first to second pre-outcome assessment, and then showed different patterns as a function of group membership (Figure 2I). Grades in the week following announcement of team membership initially declined significantly for all girls, then increased for the unsuccessful girls throughout the next month and stabilized from there through the second month. For the successful girls, a slight increase in grades continued over the next two months, although this trend was not statistically significant.

Discussion

Initially, the girls who entered the auditioning process seeking to become a member of the school cheerleading or dance team were comparable in their levels of investment and arousal, positive performance and attention shown in their classes, the degrees to which they felt various emotions about the process, and about feeling positive about themselves and their school. These data do not provide any indication of how the aspiring team members compare to the general population of high school girls, only to changes that occurred within themselves across the duration of the study. However, the lack of any differences between the schools further supports the generalizability of the findings to Midwestern high schools of comparable size with similar types of selective extracurricular activities for girls.

An Expanded Look at the Effects of Extracurricular Activities

There is a wealth of literature that has investigated the relationships between participation in extracurricular activities and a number of academic and psychosocial variables. In general, the research has found that this type of involvement serves a “promotive” role (Eccles et al., 2003), which has been said to be superior to school environments in promoting important aspects of positive youth development (Larson, 2000), in fostering better academic performance (cf., Cooper et al., 1999; Crittendon, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Jordan & Nettles, 1999), more positive attitudes toward and enjoyment of school (Davalos et al., 1999; Eccles et al., 2003; Jacobs & Chase, 1989), a sense of belonging and identity (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Finn, 1989; Marsh, 1992), and increased self-concept and self-esteem (e.g., Marsh, 1992). The present findings lend additional support to these beneficial effects that have been documented, extend the literature (Eckert, 1989; Eder, 1985; Eder & Parker, 1987; Merten, 1996) by quantitatively documenting the effects of these types of competitive extracurricular activities on adolescent females, and illuminate in detail the changes that occur throughout the processes of applying, auditioning, and participating in such selective activities.

The findings in this study also, and quite significantly, demonstrate the opposite—that for a number of female high school students, the process of trying to gain entry into competitive and selective elite extracurricular activ-

ities has negative consequences. For girls who are not successful in their bid to become members of these types of school-sponsored teams, their feelings about themselves and about school, and their classroom performance were negatively impacted. And for many of them, the negative consequences remained for at least two months. It appeared that the only aspect of their lives under study that was not affected was the use of drugs and alcohol. This finding is consistent with previous research examining the effects of girls' participation in cheerleading and dance (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Eccles et al., 2003), and extends these findings to demonstrate that the effects of not being chosen to join these activities does not manifest itself through these enhanced delinquent activities.

The process of auditioning. Changes in the girls were observed when they were in the midst of the guided practice sessions preceding the auditions. For all of the girls, both investment and arousal increased, indicating that they became more involved in the sessions in terms of effort and competitive spirit. Perhaps as they practiced along side each other, they became more aware of their own skills and energies in relation to their rivals, which could have served as an energizing effect for some of the girls, or as an enervating experience for others. The girls' feelings about themselves declined significantly during this process, reflecting the pervasive nervousness and self-doubt that was experienced as an outgrowth of entering the try-out process, and carried over into the classroom where teachers reported the girls to be less attentive.

Learning the outcome: "Winners" and "losers". The girls' feelings about themselves were strongly influenced by hearing whether or not they were successful in making the team. An immediate increase in how good the applicants felt about themselves was observed for the successful team members, as was an immediate decrease for the girls who were not successful, and these persisted throughout the two-month duration of the study. At all points in time following the outcome being revealed, substantial differences in self-feelings were observed as a function of whether the girls were successful or not.

The emotional state of the girls was immediately impacted by the announcement of the outcome. For the girls who were successful, positive emotions increased and negative emotions decreased immediately. For the girls who were not successful in making the team, their positive emotions decreased immediately, and remained significantly below those of the successful team members for the next two months. They were also consistently more negative than the successful girls, immediately upon hearing the outcome and throughout the following two-month period. Both their levels of positive and negative emotions never returned to initial levels by the end of the two-month duration of the study.

The extent to which students perceive a connection with their school—variously labeled “belongingness”, “school connection”, “school identity”—has been found to mediate the relationship between extracurricular activity participation and self- and school-related feelings and achievement (Finn,

1989; Marsh, 1992). In the present study, the girls who learned they had successfully made the team also reported an increase in wanting to go to school, perhaps to be congratulated by their friends and to bask in the status that typically accompanies membership on teams of this type (Brown & Lohr, 1987; Eder & Parker, 1987). This was a temporary "high", but one that was consistently felt by more successful girls than unsuccessful ones. For the unsuccessful girls, their feelings about themselves and connections they felt to their school decreased dramatically and stayed at lower levels for a number of weeks. They declined in their liking of their school, and remained at a lower level of school affinity than the successful girls throughout the study and even at two months later. They were also more likely to skip classes or school within the first week after the announcement was made, perhaps because they felt embarrassed or distressed by the outcome and did not want to face their peers. Thus, this sense of school identity/connectedness/belonging was significantly impacted—positively for the girls who successfully made the team and negatively for the girls who were not successful.

It can be speculated that, for a number of girls, their experience in trying out for the team and subsequently not gaining entry could have produced a form of psychological withdrawal from their school, which might carry over into other school-related extracurricular events, activities, and perhaps social relationships with others. While beyond the scope of the present data, these possible carryover effects should be explored, as they might represent additional deleterious outcomes from the process of pursuing admission to a selective and competitive activity.

Conclusions

An increasing number of high school extracurricular activities are accessible only to those who successfully compete for a small number of openings. These types of activities are commonplace in most high schools, yet there is little research about the process of "auditioning" for these team spots, nor about what happens to those who are not successful in their bid to become a team member. The findings confirmed and extended existing literature documenting the beneficial effects of participating in selective extracurricular activities (cheerleading and dance) on adolescent females' academic, psycho-emotional outcomes, and on perceptions of school connectedness. In addition, the study found that for girls who were not successful in their quest to gain entry to these extracurricular activities, a number of deleterious effects resulted, many of which persisted well beyond the initial decision. While it is clear at the outset that there are "winners" and "losers" in such competitive auditions, it is doubtful that many of those "losers" could have anticipated the negative effects that they might experience. As a result of being denied entry to these activities, the girls suffered less positive and more negative moods and emotions, depressed feelings about themselves, and more negative attitudes toward their school immediately and over a two-month period, as well as poorer attendance and classroom performance for

at least a week. Contrary to much of the literature which has heralded the benefits of extracurricular activity participation, there are an increasing number of adolescent extracurricular activities which may actually be harmful to those who aspire to become members (and are unsuccessful). This research study provides support for examining in more detail the extent to which competitive and selective extracurricular activities are offered in high schools, and for the ways in which female students experience the processes involved in gaining admission or being excluded.

The issue of access and exclusion should be examined at both micro and macro levels to further understanding of the negative impact of exclusion from gendered activities for females, as well as for males. Future research should explore the application of these findings to high status activities for male high school students, as well as to other types of lower profile extracurricular activities. In addition, research that has found differing degrees of status and popularity attributed to middle school students through their extracurricular activity participation would suggest that younger individuals might well experience some dire negative effects from trying out for competitive activities at a more vulnerable age. As significant identity-related issues during middle and late childhood are being confronted, and with the increasing influence of the peer group, the potential influences of selective admission to extracurricular activities need to be empirically explored. In addition, the advisability of individual attention, in particular, to those who are not successful in their bid to become a member of an activity club or team, should be considered, as well as revisions to the processes determining inclusion and exclusion in play and leisure activities.

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