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Enduring Involvement in Youth Soccer: The Socialization of Parent and Child

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Youth sport provides an instructive context for study of reciprocal socialization between parents and children. This study examines the dynamics of parents' and children's enduring involvement in youth soccer. Parent and child pairs ($N = 153$) were surveyed. Measures were taken of parents' and children's satisfaction with their soccer program, enduring involvement, children's perceived skill, parental expectations for their child, parental encouragement of their child, and parents' commitment to their child's soccer program. A model was derived, then tested and revised using LISREL. Parents' program satisfaction, organizational commitment, encouragement, and enduring soccer involvement were found to have direct and indirect effects on children's perceived skill, program satisfaction, and enduring involvement in soccer ($p < .015$). No direct or indirect effect of children on their parents was found. However, the child's soccer organization was found to be a significant venue for parental socialization.

KEYWORDS: *Involvement, socialization, youth sport, family leisure, soccer*

Introduction

The choice of leisure activities is significantly affected by the social contexts of participation (Buchanan, Christensen, & Burge, 1981; Crandall, 1979; Field & O'Leary, 1973). Since leisure choices may constrain or be constrained by family members, the family is a particularly significant social context for leisure decision making (Freysinger, 1994; Holman & Epperson, 1984; Orthner & Mancini, 1990). This is especially true in the case of children's sport programs because parents typically make the initial decision to enroll their children (Howard & Madrigal, 1990), whereas their children's continued participation seems to enhance parents' social and psychological involvement with the sport (Hasbrook, 1986; Snyder & Purdy, 1982).

Studies of the ways in which parents and children develop and maintain their involvement in youth sport have both practical and theoretical significance. On a practical level, knowledge of the paths by which parents and children affect one another's interest and commitment can help to better design and market sport programs (cf. Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Filiatrault & Ritchie, 1980; Ward & Wackman, 1972). Programs can be constructed and promoted with particular reference to the factors known to favor development of enduring involvement by parents and children. If the paths of in-

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fluence between parent and child are known, program administrators can devise targeted strategies designed to impact both or either (parent or child) where needed.

In practice, program design and delivery are complicated by the unique nature of youth sport consumption (Chalip, 1978). Although parents purchase the sport experience for their children, and often provide the volunteer labor necessary to provide the experience, it is the children who participate. Parents are the purchasers and sometimes the providers, but children are the users. Parent and child thus obtain separate experiences. Parents may experience the organization as volunteer labor and as spectators at training and competition (Beamish, 1985; Gould & Martens, 1979; Watson, 1977). Children directly experience the coaching, peer interactions, and competitions (Chalip, Csikszentmihalyi, Kleiber, & Larson, 1984; Fine, 1987; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978). Thus, when assessing and valuing the sport program, parents and children do not operate from identical frames of reference (Hellstedt, 1990; Smoll, Schutz, Wood, & Cunningham, 1979). This needs to be taken into account when modelling the dynamics of parent/child relations in youth sport contexts.

There has been substantial empirical work aimed at elaborating models describing children's socialization into sport. Parents have consistently been found to play a key role (Oliver, 1980; Smith, 1979; Spreitzer & Snyder, 1976), particularly as a consequence of the encouragement they provide (Anderssen & Wold, 1992; Melnick, Dunkelman, & Mashiach, 1981). Parental encouragement seems to result in enduring involvement in physical activity (Dennison, Straus, Mellits, & Charney, 1988), particularly when the encouragement takes concrete forms, such as watching or discussing the child's activity (Routh, Walton, & Padan-Belkin, 1978; Sallis, Alcaraz, McKenzie, Hovell, Kolody, & Nader, 1992).

Parental encouragement may depend on the expectations parents have for their children, and may, in turn, affect children's sense of their own abilities. Higher adult expectations lead to increased levels of encouragement which, in turn, leads to higher performance by children (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Recent work in youth sport suggests that encouragement obtains at least a portion of its impact through its effects on perceived skill. Higher levels of encouragement engender higher levels of perceived skill (Black & Weiss, 1992). Perceived skill seems to be particularly important for the development of enduring commitment to sport because individuals with higher levels of perceived skill are more likely to locate and value intrinsic elements of the sport experience, such as learning new skills and playing with the team, rather than extrinsic outcomes like winning or pleasing others (Ryckman & Hamel, 1993; Vlachopoulos, Biddle, & Fox, 1996). Although research has focused primarily on coaches as arbiters of perceived skill, retrospective studies of sport achievement suggest that parental expectations and encouragement are comparably important (Kalinowski, 1985; Monsaas, 1985).

However, models that posit a unidirectional flow of influence from parent to child have been criticized on conceptual and methodological grounds

(Fishwick & Greendorfer, 1987; McPherson, 1986). Parents become involved in their children's sporting lives, and frequently in their children's sport organizations. They are thereby being socialized themselves. Although there is good evidence that parents are affected by their children's sport involvements (Hasbrook, 1986; Snyder & Purdy, 1982), it is not clear how much parental socialization is due to the direct impact of children on parents and how much is due to parental socialization into their children's sport organizations (cf. Bauer & Green, 1994; Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994). In order to identify the sources and directions of influence, data need to be collected on parents and children jointly, including information on parental commitment to their children's sport organization (Chalip, 1989; Haggerty & Denomme, 1991).

This study probes the dynamics of enduring involvement in soccer by examining parents and children jointly. Enduring involvement refers to "the level of perceived personal importance and/or interest evoked by a stimulus" (Antil, 1984, p. 203). There has been substantial work looking at motivation and commitment in sport (Roberts, 1992; Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons, & Keeler, 1993). Commitment and motivation have typically been defined in behavioral or hedonic terms, often with reference to attributions (McCauley & Duncan, 1990), environmental contingencies (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978), or fun (Wankel, 1993). Although these phenomena are important, their measurement may not capture ongoing emotional attachment to the activity itself (cf. Pritchard, Howard, & Havitz, 1992). A substantial volume of work in consumer behavior and leisure choice suggests that enduring involvement is better described by continuing interest and enthusiasm than by hedonic outcomes or environmental contingencies (cf. Havitz & Howard, 1995; Higie & Feick, 1988; McIntyre, 1989; Mittal & Lee, 1989). Indeed, in leisure settings, interest and hedonic outcome seem to be inseparable (Dimanche, Havitz, & Howard, 1991). Further, enduring involvement in leisure has been found to be consequent on other constructs of interest in this study. For example, Schuett (1993) found that enduring involvement in adventure recreation results, in part, from perceived skill and satisfaction. Thus, enduring involvement is used here as a measure of the relative importance that soccer has attained in parents' and children's lives.

Using the literature reviewed above, a model of reciprocal impacts between parent and child is formulated, tested, and revised to obtain a credible and statistically sound depiction of the paths by which enduring soccer involvement is fostered. Implications for theories of sport socialization and commitment, as well as for program design and implementation are then discussed.

Method

Participants and Procedures

One hundred and fifty-three parent/child pairs from youth soccer programs in a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C. were surveyed. The purpose

of the study was first explained to soccer coaches who were then asked to solicit the participation of parents and children. No coach refused. The purpose of the study was explained to parents and to children. Once they had agreed to participate, they were given survey forms to take home, instructed to complete their respective surveys independently, and asked to return them in sealed envelopes. Since young children (typically under 8 years of age) needed some assistance to complete the questionnaire, they were aided by a research assistant who was naive to the hypotheses of this study. Two hundred and forty-four survey pairs were distributed. The 153 usable pairs of surveys obtained represents a return rate of 62.7%.

Children. Of the 153 soccer players, 128 were boys and 25 were girls. They ranged in age from 5 to 13 years (M = 8.0 years; SD = 2.27). They reported between 1 and 9 years of soccer experience (M = 2.99 years; SD = 2.01).

Parents. Survey instructions specified that the parent questionnaire should be completed by "the parent most involved in your child's soccer experience." Ninety-five of the parents (62.1%) completing the survey were mothers of players—an outcome that is consistent with Howard and Madrigal's (1990) finding that mothers are usually the parent most closely involved with the child's sport. The remaining 58 parents (37.9%) were fathers of players.

Parents ranged in age from 25 to 49 years (M = 38.6 years; SD = 5.1). All had completed high school, and all but 52 had a college degree. Most parents (94.1%) identified themselves as "white." Parents reported a mean household income of $63,000 ($SD$ = $18,000). The majority (71.9%) had no experience as soccer players, while 16.3% had played up to the level of local recreational leagues. Only 11.8% had played soccer beyond the level of local recreational competition (i.e., at high school level, regional level, or beyond). Parents reported between 1 and 15 years of experience in their child's current soccer program (M = 3.03 years; SD = 2.56).

Measures

On the basis of the literature reviewed above, eight variables were identified as essential for description of the parent/child system in youth sport. Enduring involvement and program satisfaction were measured for parents and children (yielding a total of four measures). Perceived soccer skill was measured for children. Parental expectations, parental encouragement, and parents' organizational commitment were measured for parents. Table 1 summarizes the constructs, the items measuring those constructs, and the abbreviations used here for those constructs.

Enduring involvement. Two items were derived from Bloch, Sherrell and Ridgeway's (1986) Enduring Involvement Index. The original index consists of five items designed to measure respondents' continuing preoccupation with and enthusiasm for a product class. The index assumes that enduring involvement is indicated by an ongoing interest in the product class, and by

TABLE 1
Summary of Measures and Their Components

PARENT/CHILD MEASURES	
PSAT:	**Parent's Satisfaction**
	My child's coach is knowledgeable about soccer.
	I would describe my child's coach as "good with children."
	I like the way the program is structured.
CSAT:	**Child's Satisfaction**
	Soccer practice is exciting and fun.
	I really like to play soccer with my team.
PEI:	**Parent's Enduring Involvement**
	How frequently do you find yourself thinking about soccer?
	How interested are you in the subject of soccer?
CEI:	**Child's Enduring Involvement**
	How often do you think about soccer?
	How interested are you in the subject of soccer?
CHILD MEASURES	
PS:	**Perceived Skill**
	How good at soccer are you?
	How good at soccer would your parents say you are?
	How good at soccer would your coach say you are?
PARENT MEASURES	
PEXT:	**Parental Expectations**
	What level do you believe your child has the potential to reach?
	What level would you like your child to attain as an athlete if you had your choice?
ENC:	**Encouragement**
	How often do you watch your child play or practice soccer?
	How often do you and your child discuss soccer?
OC:	**Organizational Commitment**
	I really care about the fate of this program.
	I am willling to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this program be successful.

frequently thinking about the product class. Bloch et al. report predictive validity coefficients ranging from .67-.70 for the scale.

The scale was adapted for this study by asking parents two questions. They responded to the question, "How interested are you in the subject of soccer?" by rating their interest on a 10- point scale ranging from "not interested at all" to "extremely interested." They responded to the question, "How frequently do you find yourself thinking about soccer?" by rating their frequency on a 10-point scale ranging from "never, not at all" to "very fre-

quently." Pretesting with the original instrument showed that these two questions were most meaningful to respondents. The original scale includes three questions about the importance of soccer to respondents' lives and careers. These questions were not meaningful to respondents when referring to youth soccer, and were therefore not included here.

Children were asked to respond to the question, "How interested are you in the subject of soccer?" by rating their interest on a 10-point scale ranging from "not interested at all" to "very interested." Pretesting showed that the word "extremely" (used in the parents' scale) needed to be replaced by "very" for children.

Children were asked to respond to the question, "How often do you think about soccer?" by rating their frequency on a 10- point scale ranging from "never, not at all" to "very often." Pretesting showed that this wording of the question and response (which is simpler than that for parents) was required to make the item and its scale meaningful to children.

Parents' program satisfaction. Three program evaluation items were derived from the post-season assessment survey system designed by Chalip (1989) to appraise parents' satisfaction with youth sport programs. Prior to implementation, they were reviewed for face validity by three youth sport researchers. The statements were: "My child's coach is knowledgeable about soccer." "I would describe my child's coach as 'good with children'." "I like the way the program is structured." Parents rated each on a six-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

Children's program satisfaction. The literature suggests that children's satisfaction with their programs depends on their satisfaction with the team (Weiss & Duncan, 1992) and on the sense of fun and excitement they obtain during practice (Wankel & Kreisel, 1985). Two items were constructed to reflect those components. The statements were: "I really like playing soccer with my team." "Soccer practice is exciting and fun." Children rated both on a 10-point scale ranging from "no, not at all" to "yes, very much."

Perceived skill. Perceived soccer ability was measured using three items developed from McElroy and Kirkendall's (1980) single measure. Whereas McElroy and Kirkendall asked children only to estimate their parents' perceptions of their skill, the literature suggests the value of including player estimates of their own and their coaches' perceptions (Feltz & Brown, 1984; Horn, 1985; McCormack & Chalip, 1988). Children were asked to respond to three questions: "How good at soccer are you?" "How good at soccer would your parents say you are?" "How good at soccer would your coach say you are?" They rated each on a five- point Likert scale ranging from "poor" to "very good."

Parental expectations. Parents' expectations for their children's sport attainment were measured using two items from Orlick's (1974) Family Sports Environment questionnaire. Orlick reported that the overall instrument, which consists of 5 subscales, successfully differentiates families of children involved in sport and those not involved in sport, an indication of predictive validity. Instructions for the two items specified that the items referred to

sport in general (rather than to soccer specifically), which is consistent with Orlick's original usage. The first item asked, "What level would you like your child to attain as an athlete if you had your choice?" The second question asked, "What level do you believe your child has the potential to reach?" For each question, parents chose one of five levels: "participate just for fun," "average recreational player," "high school varsity athlete," "college athlete," or "national class or professional athlete."

Parental encouragement. Frequency of encouraging behaviors was measured using two additional items from the Family Sports Environment questionnaire (Orlick, 1974). Parents rated the first question, "How often do you and your child discuss soccer?" on a six-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "very often." They rated the second question, "How often do you watch your child play or practice soccer?" on a six-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "almost always."

Organizational commitment. Two items from Mowday, Steers and Porter's (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were used in this study. Mowday et al. report test-retest reliabilities for the OCQ ranging from .62 to .72 over 2 and 3 months. They report convergent validity coefficients ranging from .63 to .74. They also report significant prediction of turnover, tenure, absenteeism, and performance. The original nine item short form measures commitment in terms of satisfaction, caring, and willingness to expend effort for the organization. Since satisfaction is measured separately in this study, only those items reflecting caring and willingness to expend effort were included. The resulting pool of items was given independently to two youth sport researchers who were asked to identify those most applicable to the youth soccer setting. They agreed on two items, which were then incorporated into this study. The two items are: "I really care about the fate of this program." "I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this program be successful." Parents rated each on a six-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Analysis

The data were analyzed using linear structural relations modeling (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989). This method permits the researcher to specify the measurement of constructs, and to hypothesize the relations that occur among those constructs. The adequacy of the measurement model and the tenability of the hypothesized causal relations among constructs are tested simultaneously. A poor fit of the measurement and causal models indicates that the relations initially hypothesized do not occur. A good fit supports the validity of the model, but does not rule out plausible alternatives that were never tested.

In practice, a measurement model for the variables and a causal model for the underlying constructs are proposed and then fit to the observed covariance matrix by the LISREL program. The program models the covar-

iances among variables. The program provides three measures of overall fit: a chi-square test, a goodness of fit index, and the root mean square residual. The chi-square test is a test of residual variance; if the model fits well, the chi-square will be insignificant—an indication that the residual variance is not significantly different from zero. The goodness of fit index (GFI) ranges between zero and one, with higher values indicating better fit. The GFI does not have an associated probability value for significance testing. The root mean square residual (RMSR) is a measure of residual variance.

The program provides statistics to help the user improve the model. The *t*-values for each path indicate the significance of individual paths. Modification indices help the user determine which missing paths would improve the model's fit were they to be included.

The program can also calculate standardized path coefficients, which are comparable to standardized Beta weights in multiple regression. These coefficients provide an indication of the relative magnitude of effects within the model.

Results

An initial model was hypothesized based on relationships suggested by the literature reviewed above. Figure 1 shows the initial model. Paths shown in bold were retained in the final model. Paths found to be insignificant ($p > .15$) were eventually deleted from the model; they are shown in lighter print. Variables depicted on the left represent constructs for parents; those on the right portray constructs for children.

Examination of Figure 1 shows that parents' satisfaction with their child's soccer program (PSAT) was expected to affect their commitment to the organization (OC) and their enduring involvement with soccer (PEI). Greater satisfaction was expected to yield greater organization commitment and greater enduring involvement. Since parents are purchasing the experience for their children, it was expected that parental satisfaction would depend, at least in part, on their children's satisfaction (CSAT).

Since the soccer organization is a venue for parental socialization into soccer, commitment to the organization should also engender higher levels of value for those things the organization esteems—soccer and athletic ability. Thus, the initial model specified a path from organizational commitment to parents' enduring involvement (PEI) and to parental expectations (PEXT). In turn, higher parental expectations were expected to further enduring involvement and to induce higher levels of encouragement (ENC).

Children's perceived skill (PS) and their enduring involvement with soccer (CEI) were expected to be enhanced by parental encouragement. Higher levels of perceived skill were expected to foster children's enduring soccer involvement and to promote their satisfaction with the soccer program. Greater satisfaction with the soccer program was expected to boost children's levels of enduring involvement.

Finally, it was anticipated that reciprocal socialization into soccer would be reflected in a reciprocal impact between parents' and children's enduring

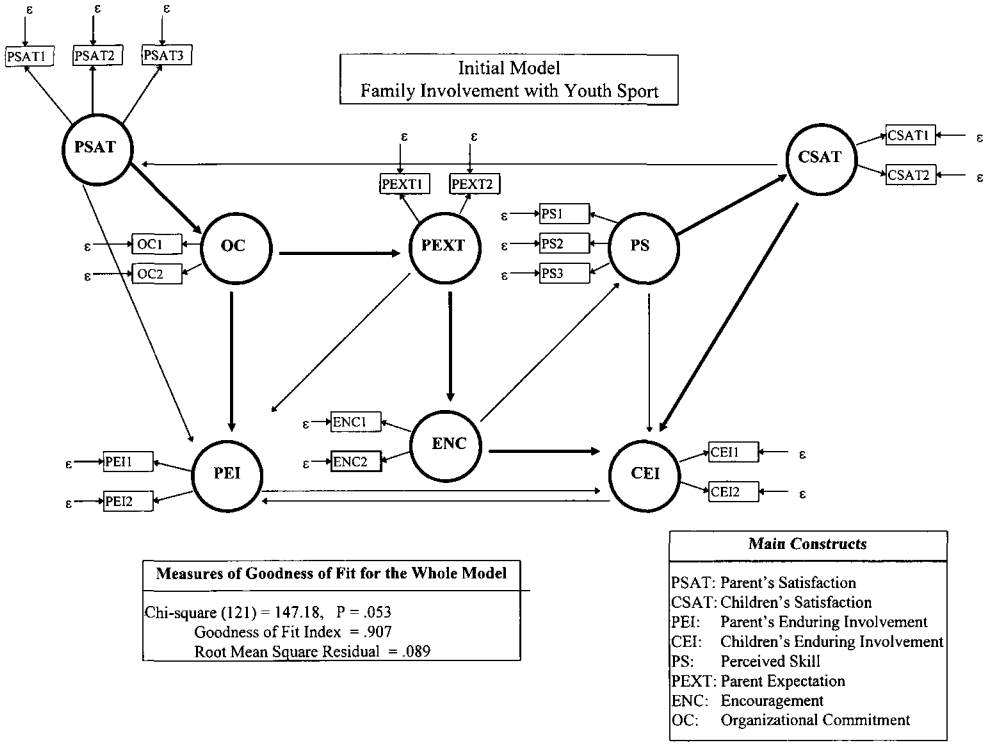

Figure 1. Initial model: Family involvement with youth soccer.

soccer involvement. In other words, higher levels of child interest in and preoccupation with soccer would engender higher levels of parental interest in and preoccupation with soccer, and vice versa. Thus, the initial model specified reciprocal paths between parents' and children's enduring involvement.

The model fit the data moderately well; χ^2 (121) = 147.18, p = .053; GFI = .907. However, examination of the t-values for individual paths suggested that it was overspecified. More paths were fit than were required. Paths with t-values below 1.00 ($p > .15$) were eliminated in sequential fits. Since refitting a LISREL model after removing a path can alter the magnitude and standard error of remaining paths, only one path was removed at a time, and paths that had been eliminated were retested after others had been dropped. Every effort was made to test fully the tenability of each initial path.

Seven paths were eliminated from the initial model. The paths that were not retained were: children's satisfaction to parental satisfaction, parental satisfaction to parental enduring involvement, parental expectations to parental enduring involvement, parental encouragement to children's perceived skill, children's perceived skill to their enduring involvement, and the

reciprocal paths between children's enduring involvement and their parents' enduring involvement.

Examination of the modification indices suggested that two paths not specified in the initial model would significantly improve the model's fit: from parents' enduring involvement to their encouragement of their children's soccer, and from parental expectations to their children's perceived skill. Neither path was deemed inconsistent with theoretical expectations. Thus, each was added in sequential runs. The resulting model, including standardized path coefficients, is shown in Figure 2. The model shows good fit to the data; $\chi^2(126) = 142.52$, $p = .149$; GFI = .910. All paths are significant; $t > 2.3$, $p < .015$ throughout.

Inspection of Figure 2 shows that the model is much simpler than that initially hypothesized. Each construct (except children's enduring involvement) affects one other construct directly. Five constructs (parental satisfaction, organizational commitment, parental enduring involvement, parental expectations, and children's perceived skill) have indirect effects on at least one other variable. There are no paths from any children's construct to a parents' construct. Parents' satisfaction with their children's soccer program

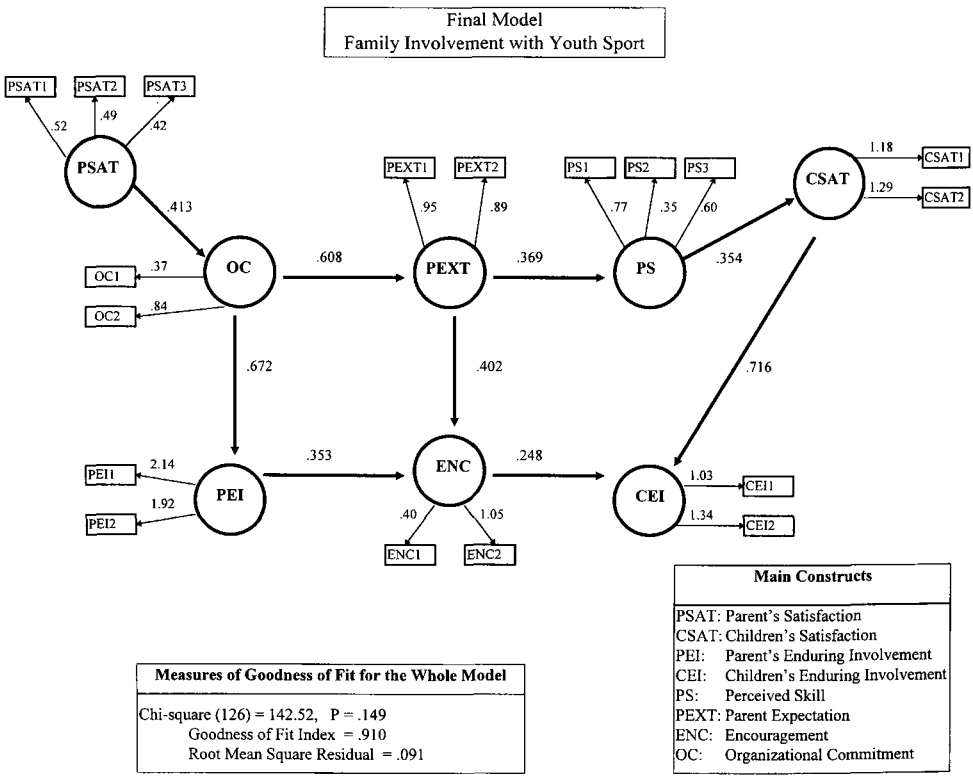

Figure 2. Final model: Family involvement with youth soccer.

fosters parents' organizational commitment; higher organizational commitment yields higher parental expectations for their children and higher parental enduring involvement in soccer; higher parental enduring involvement prompts more encouragement of the child; higher parental expectations inspire more encouragement and bolster children's level of perceived skill; parental encouragement nurtures children's enduring involvement; higher perceived skill promotes children's satisfaction; children's satisfaction furthers children's enduring involvement.

Discussion

Although the final model is generally consistent with expectations, there are some surprises. The lack of any path from child to parent is inconsistent with expectations for reciprocal socialization (viz. Fishwick & Greendorfer, 1987; Hasbrook, 1986; Snyder & Purdy, 1982), though it is consistent with the notion that power and influence within the family flows fundamentally from parent to child (e.g., Jacoby, 1975; Miller, 1981). The failure to find any effect of children's satisfaction on parents' satisfaction is particularly disconcerting.

Several explanations are plausible. It might simply be that children affect their parents' program satisfaction and enduring involvement in ways not measured here (cf. MacKay & Crompton, 1988; Dimanche, Havitz, & Howard, 1991). Parents' satisfaction was not assessed using items similar to those measuring children's satisfaction because parents' and children's youth sport experiences are known to differ (cf. Chalip, 1978; Hellstedt, 1990; Smoll, Schutz, Wood, & Cunningham, 1979). The measures were designed to reflect the differing criteria each has been shown to use when assessing the quality of the youth sport experience (viz., Chalip, 1989; Wankel & Kreisel, 1985; Weiss & Duncan, 1992). The failure to find any relations between parents' satisfaction and children's satisfaction may be a consequence of the differing criteria measured for each. Future work might find a direct relationship if parallel satisfaction measures were given to parents and children (e.g., Stuntzner-Gibson, Koren, & DeChillo, 1995).

Similarly, different measures of enduring involvement might yield closer relations between parents and children. This study focused on psychological involvement in terms of thinking about soccer and interest in soccer because these have been shown to be pivotal in other contexts (cf. Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgeway, 1986). However, enduring involvement has been defined and measured in varying ways (cf. Mittal, 1995). Other work in leisure settings has successfully incorporated multidimensional conceptions of enduring involvement (cf. Dimanche, Havitz, & Howard, 1991; Havitz & Howard, 1995; McIntyre, 1989). It is possible that the strength of relations among parents' and children's satisfaction and enduring involvement depends on the dimension of involvement measured.

Nevertheless, parental socialization into youth sport may not be due to the direct influence of the child per se, but, rather, to the child's sport organization. The data here do suggest that the organization plays a focal

role in socializing parents into soccer. Thus, the child's impact may be substantially indirect. By remaining involved in a sport, children keep their parents involved in the sport organization which, in turn, serves as a venue for parental socialization.

In any case, the lack of any path from children's satisfaction to their parent's satisfaction requires further study. The elements of the child's experience to which parents pay closest attention need to be enumerated, and the criteria by which parents gauge the value programs have for their children need to be explored. The possibility remains, however, that parents are not typically well attuned to their children's experiences. In her classic analysis of parent/child relations, Miller (1981) contends that parents rarely perceive their children's subjective experiences accurately. Building her thesis from clinical data and psychoanalytic theory, she argues that parents commonly project their own needs and wants onto the child, consequently denying the veracity of the child's account of experience when that account is inconsistent with the parental projection. Miller maintains that children soon learn to accommodate parents by describing experiences in ways children deem compatible with parental needs. The paths identified in this study are consistent with predictions that would be derived from Miller's model. Although psychoanalytic perspectives have not informed most youth sport research, the consistency of Miller's thesis with findings here suggests the potential value of work that begins from a psychoanalytic perspective.

Clearly, when programs are evaluated, parents' program satisfaction and children's program satisfaction need to be assessed separately. The relative independence of children's and parents' satisfaction found here suggests that one cannot be inferred reliably from the other. Nor does one uniquely determine the other. Yet both are important, as evidenced by the flow of effects from each.

As in other work (e.g., Feltz & Brown, 1984; Ulrich, 1987), the effect of children's perceived skill on their program satisfaction was significant but small. The fact that the effect of parental expectations on perceived skill is not mediated by encouragement is, however, surprising. The path from parental expectations onto perceived skill is small but positive, which suggests that the effect may be mediated by something not measured in this study. Encouragement was measured here in terms of watching and discussing. Watching and discussing may be less important to perceived skill than what parents communicate during discussions and what they say and do while watching. Even so, watching and discussing do seem to convey to children a sense that soccer is important. Encouragement as measured here did have an impact on children's enduring involvement.

However, children's enduring involvement in soccer is most strongly affected by their satisfaction with the program. Enduring involvement results when children enjoy their team and find practice to be exciting and fun. This suggests the value of training youth sport coaches to be proficient instructors and team leaders. Proficient coaching requires more than expert skill instruction or optimization of a team's record; it requires a focus on children's immediate affective response to the sport experience. Current

work demonstrates that youth sport coaches can be trained to make practices more rewarding to participants (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992), but more work is needed to elaborate methods for enhancing team dynamics (cf. George & Feltz, 1995). Indeed, it would be worthwhile to do more to make youth sport less like work and more like play (cf. Coakley, 1979).

Despite the substantial work that has already been done on enhancing the quality of children's sport experience, there has been little work on enhancing the quality of parents' experience. The complex role that parents play in socializing their children into sport stands out in this study. Clearly parental satisfaction is a necessary foundation for parental commitment to the sport organization. Their commitment to the organization provides the basis for their socialization into the sport. Their socialization into the sport facilitates their children's socialization. A great deal is known about adult socialization into work settings (e.g., Chao et al., 1994; Fisher, 1986), and specific strategies for socializing new employees have been formulated (van Maanen, 1978). More work is needed on parental socialization into children's sport organizations. Research in varied settings suggests three components that seem likely to be significant in youth sport: information dissemination (Morrison, 1993), assignment to significant roles (Bauer & Green, 1994), and facilitation of social networking (McPherson, Popielarz, & Drobnic, 1992).

For research on parental socialization into children's sport to proceed, the role of parents may need to be recast. The popular stereotype describes pushy parents (Horn, 1977) and the consequent advantages of children's sport without adult supervision (Devereaux, 1976). If the stereotype were to be taken seriously, one would conclude that parental involvement in youth sport should be minimized or eliminated. However, developmental studies of successful athletes demonstrate that parents can be positive influences (Kalinowski, 1985; Monsaas, 1985). Other work shows that the impact of adults in youth sport depends on the ways in which they execute their roles (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992; McCormack & Chalip, 1988). This study sustains the worth of valuing parents and the utility of training them to be constructive influences. Although the literature hints strongly at what parental training might entail, substantial new work is needed to formulate and evaluate the necessary methods and curriculum.

Parental training might include instruction to become less intrusive as children mature. This study's finding that parents are pivotal is limited to preadolescents. Voyle (1989) studied a leisure center in which adolescents were given administrative control while adults assumed supporting roles. She reports levels of adolescent satisfaction and commitment substantially higher than when adults are in control. She argues that adults may need to reduce their degree of authority as children mature into adolescence. She demonstrates that adults can be trained in the skills necessary for providing unobtrusive background support.

More work is needed to understand how family members come to value sport, and how their experiences of sport affect family dynamics. Although this study illumines the dynamics of parent and child enduring involvement

in a sport, it does not illustrate the ways in which involvement waxes and wanes as a consequence of changing experience (cf. Havitz & Howard, 1995). Enduring involvement clearly depends on the ways that children and parents feel about their sport programs. What remains to be determined is how variations in program design and implementation affect each family member's felt experience of sport, and how those experiences affect the family's leisure choices over time.

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