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Female Athletes and Their Journey

Abstract
Female athletes have gained their role in sports, and now female athletes are expressing their journey as a female athlete. Looking at female athletes and their journey of becoming a college athlete, researchers can find motivation, self-efficacy, and early specialization. Past research on the 3 factors has been done prior to this research. The relationship between self-efficacy, motivation and early specialization was examined. The data was obtained through interviews from 5 college student athletes using qualitative research. The findings showed a significantly positive relationship between self-efficacy and these athletes, however there was a considerably negative finding in athletes and early specialization in relation to self-efficacy. Furthermore, self-efficacy was expressed when asking about motivation. The athletes experienced self-efficacy at the adult age. There were no observations of early specialization and self-efficacy relating. The results of this research will further help with the self-efficacy theory corresponding to female college student athletes.

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FEMALE ATHLETES AND THEIR JOURNEY

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August 12, 2014
Abstract

Female athletes have gained their role in sports, and now female athletes are expressing their journey as a female athlete. Looking at female athletes and their journey of becoming a college athlete, researchers can find motivation, self-efficacy, and early specialization. Past research on the 3 factors has been done prior to this research. The relationship between self-efficacy, motivation and early specialization was examined. The data was obtained through interviews from 5 college student athletes using qualitative research. The findings showed a significantly positive relationship between self-efficacy and these athletes, however there was a considerably negative finding in athletes and early specialization in relation to self-efficacy. Furthermore, self-efficacy was expressed when asking about motivation. The athletes experienced self-efficacy at the adult age. There were no observations of early specialization and self-efficacy relating. The results of this research will further help with the self-efficacy theory corresponding to female college student athletes.
Introduction

Motivation, early specialization and self-efficacy have all been researched in their own framework in light of childhood athletics. There have been studies showing what each individual variable has contributed to interest in athletics. There has not been an analysis of the variables together when applied to the journey of a college athlete. Their motivation into a specific sport has not been identified. Research has shown that motivation is the most important variable to differentiate the athletes (Goncalves 2012). These concepts will be assessed in order to understand the relationship between them more clearly.

Female athletes have gained more of a role in athletics. After Title IX was passed in 1972 (Ladda 2012). Since then, women have grown independence within sports. When it comes to women and athletics, it has been assumed that they were not taken as seriously as college athletes. Researchers being well aware of this have then began asking women who participate in sports; what sports they play, what motivated them to play, and why they continue to play.

This research is beneficial to the academic community and sport managers, enabling them to develop the motivational, early specialization and self-efficacy literature needed, by addressing college athletes and their relationship with these three variables. Up to this point, this research had not been examined or studied. This topic had not been studied prior, we can take into consideration that the level of information on female athletics and their success has been researched but we don’t know how they got to that success level. There has been research done on female athletes that are “burnouts” that can relate to the Self-Efficacy theory. This research will be growing the body of knowledge by never being researched and by looking at female college athletes in a new way. The conclusion of the data will give the sport managers and the
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academic community another way to look at the process in female college athletes and understand where motivation, early-specialization and self-efficacy all come into play.

Research has been done on motivation, early specialization and self-efficacy but the researchers have not studied how these three variables collectively, affected the female college athlete. Finding out what has motivated female athletes to partake in sports and be specialized in one specific sport is what the research has not explored. The purpose of this research was to analyze the female’s athletes and their motives to become a college athlete. The research question of this study was:

How do female college student athletes go from starting to play to becoming a college athlete? The aim of this research was to study the processes in which a female college athlete has gone through to compete at a collegiate sport.
Motivation

According to Woutys (2013), he stated that “there has been significant change in the direction of amateur sports in the United States”. Many people have their own opinions on sports and the diversification of the sports. By specializing in one sport and getting as close to perfect as he or she can. Many coaches and parents are looking for the right time to get young athletes to “specialize” in a specific sport and becoming good at it. There have been many studies done on female college athletes that have shown depression, when they focused on one specific sport at such a young age and only focusing on that one sport. Some studies have shown that just because athletes have gotten a scholarship, it doesn’t mean they are happy (Woujtys 2013). The participants didn’t have a choice in what they wanted to do and they only did what the coaches and parents thought were best for them. This was the motivational factor that has kept these athletes playing in that sport.

With specialization in a sport being a known fact we can see that specializing in a particular sport makes changes later on down the road for these young athletes. Gonçalves (2012) studied motivation, and felt it is the most important variable to differentiate the athletes. Like stated previously, the earlier the athlete gets involved in the specific sport, they have a tendency to become more elite in that sport. There have been many statistics done on young male athletes to show whether or not they had participated in the sport as a young child before puberty. Goncalves goes in depth about how the actual processes of identifying who the “good” athletes are and how a coach picks one out.

Moving into the motivation behind the actual specialization within the sport the main purpose of according to Russell(2013), was to examine young adults and their physical levels
and activity to see if their perceptions correlated with young athletes, if their sport experience was essentially including sport specialization. These researchers used a few different methods to figuring out if motivation behind young athletes had a pattern to what sports they played. The first study was just a demographic questionnaire. They then used the information to see how they played on the physical activity enjoyment scale.

There were two t-tests conducted as well. The conclusion of this data was that sports were more popular and enjoyable for the athletes and which sports they started when they were younger and ending up quieting. By doing this it showed that the findings were different from the young adults and then the youth sporting experiences. This goes back to the motivation of each individual athlete. It is stated that, “from a motivational perspective, sport specialization may lessen youths’ sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are important to long term motivation as indicated by Self-Determination Theory” (Deci 2000). As the article concluded, future research can study the extent of young adults perceptions, autonomy, related experienced during youth and their sport influences over a long term (Russell 2013).

Types of motivation.

When looking into the motivation on young athletes, there are a few things to understand one being, the psychological aspect of the child. Mastery, achievement, and social all are variables of motivation. Focusing on young female athletes and their motivation levels of playing a sport and sticking with it as they grow up and mature is a way to see motivation and how they implement motivation. Important figures in a child’s life is a big motivational factor for them. In this study Ames (1992) found that there are two types of motivational climates: task involving and ego involving. With these two studies it was evident that the parent’s supportive styles and their practices carried on influencing their children’s achievement behaviors. Self-esteem, sport
compétence and enjoyment were factors of task involving motivation which lead to the child’s intention to keep participating in the sport. There were many models and studies cited throughout this research that looked closely at motivation and how the levels of sport are affected by their upbringings, by Atkins.

Psychological factors also play in on a youth’s motivation to play sports. What actually drives the young child to participate in athletics? When contemplating what motivates a child to decide on a particular sport and another choosing not to, one theory is that culture plays a role on motivating a person to play a sport. Yan (2004) made it clear that children from two different cultures may choose different types of physical activities for different reasons. The research in this journal was using cross-cultural approach. When conducting studies on cultural differences, Yan found that the United States of America (USA) participants are more likely to take part in sports or physical activities for sport competition and improving skills, where Chinese children tend to favor socializing and getting fit as motives. In conclusion to this study, it was found that socio-cultural environment plays a role in what sports a youth plays and continues with.

Sports play a role in the young generation and when and where they play these sports as well. After school activities get the young athletes involved. Viira (2012) examined the differences in the perceptions of competence, autonomy, relatedness, as well as different types of motivation in physical education. The same approach was used with Russel and his research with sport specialization and motivation using over 600 participants in his study. There were many tests done which led to statistics that had a lot of information in this study. Studying students that participate in sport activities after school to the students that don’t participate, researchers have found there were similar results. Their hypothesis was supported by another study indicating that competence in psychical education is higher for those students who participated in sports outside
Motivation relies on many other factors than just someone being motivated to do something. Through many studies motivation comes with the psychographic of a person and their background/culture and what they actually participate in or specialize in.

**Specialization**

Specialization is “defined as intense, year-round training in a single sport with the exclusion of other sports” Jayanthi (2012). Single sport refers to a commitment with one sport for a year or however many years they decide to train for. Jayanthi (2013) are authors that examined the process of specialization in a sport. They studied expert athletes, elite vs. nonive athletes. This article focused on early vs late specialization. A survey was performed with 376 female division 1 athletes had their first sports experience in other sports. Only 17% had participated in the current sport, which were mainly individual sports. Specialization in sports comes with risks. According to this author, injury and psychological stress and dropping out of sports which was contributed to burnout was correlated to early sports specialization. With burnouts it starts with the concern of young athletes who do participate within a “professionalized context” makes the possibility of development of burnouts (Martin pg. 338).

Injury in young athletes was another study shown, it was found, that in a 10 year time period one out of five of the most competitive elite athletes reported injury as the reason for quitting that sport. Jayanthi (2013) stated that intense training in single sport to the exclusion of other sports should be delayed until adolescence to optimize success while minimizing risk for injury and psychological stress. This was important because it showed a process of how sport specialization and the way people should view how their young athletes should participate in sports.
Studying the growth and maturation in relation to the identification, selection, and development processes of youth athletes were shown in, (Goncalves 2012). He stated along with many other authors, that athletes are made and not born, this happens by specialization in young years. Surveys and experiments were done to see when young children were at their peak of best physical shape and what advantage it gave them over others in the same sport. The researchers found that the athletes that are above the average mean for their height and weight, will develop in biological maturity and be in elite development programs. When the athlete is too small for competition it increases dropout rates in the sport. This research is important because it will help better understand the reasoning why some athletes compete in elite competitions and others don’t.

Having addressed the physical development and psychological stress, a few risks in sport specialization, was supported by (Mailina 2010). Malina studied how parents being involved in what sports their children play and how it affects them. Also studied what influences the young athletes it leads into an experiment of specialization if it really works. Malina researched five sports and six to 17 year olds male and female athletes, at the college and high school level. It was found that early specialization comes with risks and burnouts. This happens to the child when the pressure from parents, coaches and young life affects the athlete and they drop out of the sport. This article is very important because the charts showed what effect specialization in a particular sport can have on young athletes if involved in early sport specialization.

Callender (2010) examines injury levels and psychological issues that come with early specialization. The study in this article used 12 athletes and interviewed them to figure out what goes on in younger athlete’s lives when it comes to sports. It was recorded that that 50% of new injuries in youth sports practices are caused from overuse and 20% of elite athletes seek
psychological assistance due to coaches and the demands placed on them at the elite level. The process throughout this study was to see what the difference is between youth and elite athletes and how their younger years affected their status as an elite player. It was stated that parents of youth athletes can be very overwhelming and demand too much of their children for a higher economic and popularity status. This information is important because it has been supported in other studies, that early specialization gets the youth involved but risks more dropout rate and physical and psychological harm. Christianson (2012) examined the early specialization and how it has become a huge phenomenon across the United States of America.

By focusing on the Theory of deliberate practice and practice makes perfect, they were able to find the psychological implication that were behind the saying, “practice makes perfect” and the theory of deliberate practice (Ericsson 1996). Conclusions that could be drawn were that parents and coaches in early sport specialization find that the theory of deliberate practice can help reduce risks. This theory is that practice and training over time will develop the athlete. The study was completed and showed a positive outcome. This is important to the early specialization factor of being healthy or a risk for the youth. According to this article there are positives to training specifically in one sport and doing a massive amount of work.

Coakley in 2013 wrote an article taken out of American Swimming Coaches Association [ASCA] Newsletter. He examined past research based on what the economy was like and how parents are involved in sporting events with their children. He found that early specialization has changed tremendously over the past two generations. From what the parents do, and act to how they actually afford the sports their children play, to how they fit sporting events into the very busy life of the American working class. He also found that sport specialization has emerged to two larger societies; the privatization and commercialization of youth sports, and the
development of unique ideas about parenting, especially the definition of what constitutes a good parent (Coakley 2013). This article is very informative on how early specialization has changed over time. We can learn a lot from where sport specialization has gone and what the risks and positive effects that comes from his article.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a theory that can be portrayed differently in certain contexts. For this research self-efficacy will focus on the young athletes and how they have the ability to reach their goals. During the adolescent years a child grows stronger psychologically and physically. They soon then become independent and grow apart from their parents and end up spending more time with their peers. When focusing on young teens with their peers and starting to participate in various activities researchers have found that peers have more influence on them. Kiran (2012) stated that self-efficacy and peer pressure had a relationship in children in their adolescent years. Self-efficacy is a person’s belief to do something successfully. Kiran said in reference to Eccles (1998), when adolescent children work to achieve things and their maturity expands they gather information from themselves as well as their family and friends.

The purpose of this research from Kiran (2012) was to see what the relationship is with self-efficacy and peer pressure and how it effects young athletes. The result of this relationship is that, self-efficacy can be related to peer pressure by psychological structure Kiran (2012). This research supports earlier stated concepts, when dealing with psychological structure. This ties back into motivation and specialization. Knowing what self-efficacy is and how it effects athletes it shows how motivation comes into play with this theory and how athletes are effected by it.

Building on the previous research, with knowing what self-efficacy is researchers can now see where self-efficacy within the world of sport falls into this theory. This next study was
done on athletes and if they will take on more challenging goals. Self-efficacy also influences motivation. Barker (2013) stated in his review that hypnosis can enhance self-efficacy. Hypnosis in this situation relates to motivation, beliefs and attitudes, which all correlate to motivation and what makes up motivation. One can conclude from this study that the author’s conclusion and data shows the correlation between self-efficacy and hypnosis when referring to motivation, beliefs, and attitudes of athletes. By using this, researchers were able to find what triggered sport performance with hypnosis in relation to self-efficacy.

Corresponding to the previous article self-efficacy is a theory that can be interpreted in many ways. Focusing on athletes and their success as a youth athlete, psychological information is needed to see how the brain works for such a young athlete. Sport psychology and how it affects children and adolescent athletes is another related research piece. Coming across a theme of self-efficacy, it is being pushed upon a young athlete from the coach and peers. This data supported by Harris (2013) he stated, that an adolescent’s ability to accurately discriminate self-efficacy and the way others view or expect success on a certain task. In other words having young athletes understand self-efficacy and know the way others view them brings out a greater risk for the adolescents. This study focused on objective, subjective and observational assessment on young athletes. The research was the foundation of all research within the lines of the psychological reasoning of self-efficacy with the youth.

Tying in self-efficacy to sports and reading past articles and research that has been done, it is evident that people can influence the “self-efficacy” of young athletes. Coaches, peers and parents affect the way the adolescent athletes make their goals and how they have motivated themselves. Another way for researchers to find out how or why youth athletes have goals and want to go to the next level is through self-efficacy. A study that was done by Munroe-Chandler
(2008) was imagery and how it affects adolescent athletes, this study was done on young soccer athletes. Athletes completed three questionnaires; one measuring the frequency of imagery use, one assessing generalized self-confidence, and one assessing self-efficacy in soccer. The benefit of this research was to see what outside factors caused a more positive “self-efficacy” on young athletes. Like the past articles, coaches and parents affect the lives of young athletes and whether they set goals and can accomplish them.

Conceptual Framework

Early specialization falls into the term specialization and “specializing” in one sport. When moderating and intervening the variables with motivation a factor could be what life is like at home for the young athletes. This wouldn’t be a question during the measurable research but would be broader. Early specialization would be intervening with money, location/geography, access, and exposure. Motivation in this context is what is driving these athletes to play, who are their motivators. Early specialization focuses on strictly young athletes sticking to one specific sport, and trying to excel in that sport. The self-efficacy theory will be used throughout this research to show how these young athletes have the will power to make and reach goals in a particular sport and stick with it.

There are many types of motivations and what makes up motivation. Mastery is the command or understanding, achievement, and social all are variables of motivation. Early specialization will fall into the term specialization and “specializing” into one sport. The last variable would be self-efficacy and that theory can be portrayed differently in certain contexts. For this research self-efficacy will be focused in on the young athletes and how they have the
ability to reach their goals. When moderating and intervening the variables with motivation a factor could be what life is like at home for the young athletes. This wouldn’t be a question during the measurable research it would be more broad. Early specialization would be intervening with money, location/geography, access, and exposure.

All three of the main concepts in this research intertwine with one another. Motivation and specialization work off each other. Being motivated will give an individual a better chance to specialize in a certain sport. Therefor being motivated at a young age represents someone being able to specialize in one sport and not worrying about any other sport. They can focus and excel in one sport. Tying motivation together with self-efficacy works in a way of being goal oriented. Most motivated people set goals and achieve them, where the self-efficacy theory is having the ability to see goals and to reach their goals. Specialization and self-efficacy theory correlate with being goal oriented as well. Being specialized in one sport makes the goals easier for one to obtain and not be so demanding for multiple sports.

Theoretical framework

Self-efficacy is a theory that can be portrayed differently in certain contexts. For this research self-efficacy will be focused in on the young athletes and how they have the ability to reach their goals. During the adolescent years a child grows stronger psychologically and physically. They soon then become independent and grow apart from their parents and end up spending more time with their peers. When focusing on young teens with their peers and starting to participate in various activities researchers have found that peers influence each other. Kiran (2012) stated that self-efficacy and peer pressure had a relationship in children in their adolescent years. Self-efficacy is a person’s belief to do something successfully. Kiran said in reference to Eccles (1998), when adolescent children work to achieve things and their maturity expands they
gather information from themselves as well as their family and friends. The purpose of this research from Kiran(2012) was to see what the relationship is with self-efficacy and peer pressure and how it affects these young children. The result of this relationship is that, self-efficacy is related to peer pressure by psychological structure (Kiran 2012). This research supports earlier stated concepts as well when dealing with psychological structure. This ties back into motivation and specialization as well by now knowing what self-efficacy is and how it effects athletes it shows how motivation comes into play with this theory and how athletes are affected by this.
Summary

Motivation, specialization, and self-efficacy are the three concepts that were focused on in the literature reviews. This research all intertwines with one another. The research on motivation presented the different types of motivation and the way the three motivations are broken down to; mastery, achievement, and social. Specialization is “defined as intense, year-round training in a single sport with the exclusion of other sports” (Jayanthi 2012) pg.252. Early specialization was shown through the conclusions of data from research that was done on athletes that specialized in one specific sport. Self-efficacy theory was acknowledged as being able to achieve goals. Researchers have found self-efficacy in the youth community.

Methods

The purpose of this research was to analyze the female’s athletes and their motives to become a college athlete. The research question of this study was:

How do female college student athletes go from starting to play to becoming a college athlete?

The aim of this research was to study the journey and process in which motivational factors lead to the females playing and continuing a certain sport. This study will be done using the cross sectional design.

Desired sample

The population that was sampled for this research was female college athletes at the D3 and D2 level. These female participants were in ages between 20 years old and 22 years old. The location of these athletes range all the way from New York down to North Carolina and they are seniors at the collegiate level. I had five female college athletes interviewed and all are in different ranges of the sport they participate in. There were a variety of sports in this data collection, which came from the interviewees and they said what sport they play at the collegiate
level. The sampling procedure was key informant, the participants were chosen based on specific knowledge, and will knew they had the information to help this research. The goal of this was to be able to express an understanding of the groups Self-Efficacy and their journey.

**Data Collection**

The participants contact information was collected from college websites in the athletic page. Once there was contact with the participant, there was a scheduled interview. Before conducting the interview there was a consent form sent out and signed to agree to the interview (see appendix B). The process was done through a semi-structured interview style and the interview ranged from 45 minutes to an hour. The interviews were conducted via Skype. By using Skype it helped see the face reaction of the participant, and they were able to interact by seeing me. The interview contained 10 questions please see appendix A for the interview guide. By asking the same exact questions to each female athlete, it was to try to find a theme between them. After taking notes and recording the interviews I was able to then put all of my data together. With my data I was looking for experiences, themes, and relationships.

Interviewees were asked will you please tell me about your journey to becoming a college student-athlete, who or what motivated you as a child (1-18yrs) in relation to play a sport, what role(if any) did your coaches play in motivation with you as an athlete.

**Analysis.** I did qualitative.

**Results Draft**

Generally speaking, my data involved information from female athletes between the ages of 20 and 21. With four of the five interviewers growing up in New York and two of the five living in another state, this data has represented five female athletes close in age. This sample was taken when all the athletes were on summer vacation and not participating in season at the
college level. The data used for this research represents the population of female athletes. Female student college athletes start off playing sports in grade school and go onto college sports. These female athletes had the same background history of participating in athletics and being involved in sports growing up. They all had influential people in their childhood motivating them, and then at the college level showing a sign of self-motivation.

Codes:

*Motivation, parents, coaches, family*

I used the motivation as a code because it is very broad and this research has been related to motivation. *Motivation* was a word that was used throughout the interview and was spoken in different ways but in the end meaning one thing. *Parents* were another code that could possibly overlap with motivation, in every interview parents were brought up and had a positive roll in the female athlete’s life. *Coaches* were the main focus from the athletes; they talked very strongly of them all except for one. *Family* could also be a code that overlapped with parents and motivation. *Life time experiences in relation to sport* would be known as the athletes experience throughout their childhood and moving into the college level.

This research was deductive approach (discovering codes as reading)

Themes-

Originally, the coding provided me with a few common themes. Throughout initial coding it was clear to me that some of the codes did relate to one another. The themes, throughout this research were defined differently by each individual athlete but came together with the same meaning of an overall theme. Initially the codes immerge after reading through the data, and then realizing
they overlapped one another was the next step in shifting through the data. Taking Motivation and separating that word into categories of where the motivation is coming from or what is motivation to the athlete or in essence helped discover the individual codes so they didn’t overlap anymore. With the refined list of codes just from motivation, the themes that emerged from that were the initial themes were organized as listed below:

*Self-efficacy, influencers, growing up as an athlete.*

The following quotations are examples that support my theme of *Self-Efficacy;*

“Yes like no one in my family played sports so I pretty much was my own motivator. My family supports me but um yeah I would be my own motivator” (CB 2014)

“Yes like no one in my family played sports so I pretty much was my own motivator. My family supports me but um yeah I would be my own motivator” (CB 2014)

“Picking myself up changing my attitude it gets me to become happy with myself and umm it is it just is something to pick yourself up to be the best you can possibly be” (CF 2014)

“Strong urge and that you have and just it’s there to make you work harder and be a better player or be a better person” (KA 2014)

“first comes goals and then from there you need to have motivation to obtain those goals”

“first comes goals and then from there you need to have motivation to obtain those goals”

“having the urge to like succeed or do something you want to do and like maybe it’s something you didn’t think you could do and you have to work to leads it you have to find something within you to get you to be able to succeed” (KV 2014)

The following quotes are from female athletes that show the theme of *influencers;*

“she pushed us but she didn’t push to hard. She knew when to back off and she we would do like six am practices and stuff like that to be prepared for our games she wrote us inspirational quotes
that she handed out before each game to give us something to think about to discuss before as a team and I started doing it with my team mates” (KA 2014)

“he had something nice to say to pick you up and he always made light of the situation. He always had a good outlook on it and wouldn’t focus on the negative he’d put them aside and fix it and move forward kind of thing.”(BF 2014)

“my dad I think he had a lot of influence on how much I practiced and how hard I practiced and I mean he was always at my games and so I think from a young age it was my dad and then um from there on I kind of just I just fell in love with it myself so I was a self-motivator after that”(CB 2014)

The following quotes support the theme of the growing up as an athlete:

“my parents were very supportive no matter what the cost was they wanted me to be able to whatever I wanted to do so umm a lot of the teams and stuff around where I grew up weren’t expensive due to the location they weren’t expensive”(BF 2014)

“I played soccer as a little kid and growing up and I also played basketball but I grew up in a small town so most of my friends and pretty much everyone I went to school with played peewee when we were younger so I just continued to play that and I was athletic and excel I just continued to play until I got older” (KA 2014)

“growing up I always was really passionate about sports like even now I can’t picture myself not playing them so I’ve always used it as an outlook for school cause I put a lot of pressure on myself with school” (KV 2014)
With each theme having quotes from at least three of the five participants, it has been demonstrated that each theme has been presented with an answer.

**Conclusion**

After interviewing five female college athletes it came down to each athlete having their own motivation themselves to keep them in a sport throughout their college career. With many factors tying into the reasoning of why the athletes went from childhood play to collegiate play, this research was based off of self-motivation (self-efficacy), influencers, and childhood.

Relating back to the research question, and knowing that motivation, self-efficacy and early specialization all ties into this research it has been known that research has been done but the researchers have not studied how these three variables collectively, affected the female college athlete. The goal of finding out what has motivated female athletes to participate in sports and be specialized in one specific sport is what the research has not explored. Whereas motivation was talked about throughout the whole interview, not just in relation to specialization but in the journey of the young athletes life. Studying the growth and maturation in relation to the identification, selection, and development processes of youth athletes were shown in, (Goncalves 2012). He stated along with many other authors, that athletes are made and not born, this happens by specialization in young years. Whether motivation came from the coaches, parents, peers or themselves motivation was accomplished throughout the adolescent’s years and into the college level. Jenn Till (2014) said, “you need to have motivation to obtain those goals”. The quote shows motivation being part of a female athlete’s life in how to get to the next level and be successful; you have to have motivation to obtain goals.

In relation to self-efficacy, it is a person’s belief to do something successfully. Kiran said in reference to Eccles (1998), “when adolescent children work to achieve things and their maturity
expands they gather information from themselves as well as their family and friends”. Self-efficacy was shown in each individual female athlete that was interviewed. The theoretical framework piece was demonstrated throughout the interviews and after collecting the data, the self-efficacy theory was well-known. This information was collected by asking the participants to explain motivation and what it meant to them. Through this, answers were given in relation to self-efficacy. Such as “so I pretty much was my own motivator, my family supports me but um yeah I would be my own motivator” Sue Jack (2014). Being able to motivate yourself and by having goals shows self-efficacy through these athletes. Which essentially then ties into the research question of how do female student athletes go from starting to play to college playing. “Yeah like no one in my family played sports so I pretty much was my own motivator”, Sandy Smith (2014).

Limitations
Limitations from this research would be three key terms. One being, taking more time, by taking more time, in any research data may evolve more. With time and going back to reread the data and results, it could lead to more information. The second and third limitation would be changing one or two of the questions in the interview and then changing the follow up questions to dig deeper into an answer. By digging deeper into a question and having a follow up question that gets the interviewer talking more will also lead to more data which will lead to more results and could further the study.

Delimitations for this research are focusing on just female athletes, not having a specific division level I II or III, and then the last delimitation for this research would be having interviews via Skype. Focusing on female athletes only, put this research in a different perspective. If this study was on men, researchers would find a difference in motivation and
reasoning’s why they participate in sports. If this study had an limitation of division I athletes, the study would be changed to more of the specialized athletes than just motivation factors. Interviews done via Skype put the athletes more on the spot and could have made them feel more uncomfortable because they didn’t know if the interview session was just being recorded without other people in the room. If the interviews were held in person, the interviewee would know who was around and they may have spoken more about sensitive topics if they felt more comfortable. Moving forward, for recommendations for future research could be finding a deeper meaning as to why these athletes chose the sport they did at the collegiate level.

By focusing on a specific question they could be a better chance of finding out if they were forced/peer pressured. Researchers could also change the number of participants to 20 or even 30 to get a bigger range of data. If there are more participants and an easier way to get an answer other than have an hour long interview, it may be more efficient to the study to find out why this self-efficacy theory relates to female athletes. Researchers could focus just specifically on the self-efficacy theory with female athletes, and go down a different path as to why the self-efficacy theory tied into their athletic career and where it has gotten them as an athlete.

Summary

This research was conducted to find the answer to “How do female college student athletes go from starting to play to college play”. The answer was found through a few different factors that supported and answered the research question. The female athletes had the resources to participate in sports, they had support, motivation and encouragement from a few important people and they believed in themselves and believed that they could be college players. Having the belief and the goals that each individual athlete had goes to show that the self-efficacy theory could be used throughout the athlete’s life and it was shown in their personal interviews.
References


Edward M. Wojtys, MD Sports Specialization vs Diversification


Appendix A

Interview Guide

1. What was your favorite sport to play as a child under age 18, and why?

2. What role did the location of where you grew up play in your decision to play certain sport?

3. What role/if any did money play a factor in the sports you participated in as a child (1-18yrs)?

4. Will you please tell me about your journey to becoming a college student-athlete?

5. Who or what motivated you as a child (1-18yrs) in relation to play a sport?

6. What role (if any) did your coaches play in motivation with you as an athlete?

7. Can you tell me why you chose to participate in sports instead of maybe other activities that were offered at your school or outside of school?

8. When did you know you wanted to play sports in college?

9. Who helped you get to college athletics?

10. Can you tell me why you stuck with a sport in college?
Appendix B

Project Title: Female Athletes and Their Journey

Researcher: Emily M. Youngs E-mail: emy01433@sjfc.edu
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Purpose and Description: The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of why female athletes decide to participate in one particular sport and continue the sport at the college level. Being a participant in this research, you are being asked to do an interview and answer questions that articulate why you stuck with one sport. An example of a question that would be used during the interview would be; did finances have a role in the sports you participated in as a child? The interview could take roughly from 30 minutes to an hour.

The information that you provide could assist in helping further understand why women sports are so distance from men and what goes on in the life and childhood of a young athlete that reaches college level with athletics. This interview will benefit future parents of athletes as well as making sport managers aware of the lifestyle and effect that specializing in one sport can make on a young athlete. A risk that could be associated with participating in this interview is that you may feel uncomfortable by giving your personal feelings and answering questions that talk about your childhood. Some of your statements may be presented in the final results, but attempts to protect your identity will be made. For example, your name will not be included in this research.

There is no incentive being offered for participating in this interview.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. If at any time throughout this interview you feel the wish to stop and withdraw you may choose to do so. Your choice will be respected and it will not
result in anything towards you. I appreciate your honest opinion in withdrawing if you do not feel comfortable. Your identity will not be connected to you, and your name won’t be used in this research. After reading this having the chance to ask questions in regards to this interview, please allow for the start of the interview. By signing below you will give me consent to participate in this research. If you do happen to have any concerns about participating or treatment throughout this research I ask that you please contact my research advisor, Dr. Katharine Burakowski, St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Ave, Rochester, NY, 14618.

Participant Name (print) Date

____________________________________________________________

Participant Signature

____________________________________________________________

Researcher Signature Date

____________________________________________________________