Adolescent Involvement in Extracurricular Activities: Influences on Leadership Skills

Donna Hancock
Ph.D. Student
Department of Child and Family Development
123 Dawson Hall
University of Georgia
Athens, GA
Dlhanc2@uga.edu

Patricia Hyjer Dyk, Ph.D.
Director of the Center for Leadership Development and Associate Professor
Department of Community and Leadership Development
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY
pdyk@uky.edu

Kenneth Jones, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Community and Leadership Development
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY
Krjone3@email.uky.edu

Abstract

Study examined adolescents' participation in sports, school, and community extracurricular activities to assess the influence of different involvement roles and adult support on leadership skills. The study found that males and females who perceived their adult support more positively had more positive perceptions of their leadership skills. Findings suggest adolescents' perceptions towards their leadership skills are influenced by extracurricular activity involvement roles and the support of their parents and other adults. The findings contribute to future school and community based prevention and intervention programs, suggesting the importance of adolescent leadership involvement at all grade levels and the influence of adult support on adolescents' perception toward their leadership skills. Educators should consider facilitating youth leadership through extracurricular activities involving younger high school students. This affords the opportunity for youth to develop critical skills early and put into practice what

they learned. We strongly encourage adult involvement in extracurricular activities.

Introduction

Since leadership has been described as a set of skills and attitudes that can be learned and practiced (van Linden & Fertman, 1998), it is not surprising that adolescence is a critical time for leadership development. Through structured in-school and out-of-school clubs, sports, and community service activities these young people are exploring their strengths and learning how they can make a difference. Adolescents who participated in the greatest variety of activities reported having more leadership opportunities (Gambone & Arbreton, 1997) and greater voice in the decision making processes that affect their lives (van Linden & Fertman, 1998).

Review of the Literature

Approximately 83% of adolescents ages 12-17 participate in at least one extracurricular activity (Moore, Hatcher, Vandivere, & Brown, 2000). Adolescents often develop their skills and self competencies through participation in extracurricular activities (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Mahoney & Stattin, 2006). Positive developmental experiences that occurred in extracurricular activities predicted a more positive general self-worth and social and academic self-concept (Bloomfield & Barber, 2011). This participation has been associated with increased school engagement, self-concept, and academic achievement (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006) and less opportunities for time to be spent in unsupervised risky activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). These associations have been found to be stronger when youth are involved in a variety of activities and have opportunities to assume leadership roles (Eccles & Templeton, 2002). However, it is evident that participation in multiple types of activities (e.g., band, sports) has been associated with additional beneficial outcomes for adolescents in structured settings where adults are present and supportive (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Larson & Verma, 1999).

Adult Support

Leadership and leaders involve social processes; therefore, the interaction between adults and adolescents in extracurricular activities is important (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). The theory of social learning posits that young people are heavily influenced by their social relationships and interactions with others. In particular, parents and other adults are important in the socialization process and influence attitudes and behaviors that are learned and acquired by adolescents

(Bandura, 1977). Specifically, Van Linden and Fertman (1998) suggest that as facilitators of leadership development, adults should work with adolescents to help them understand themselves, communicate more effectively, improve interpersonal skills, manage their time and work with groups. In extracurricular activities, partnerships with supportive adults and sustained relationships with caring adults are more likely to be available to adolescents (Benson & Pittman, 2001). Social relationships adolescents establish with adults are important because they have protective effects. For instance, adult and youth partnerships enhance adolescent engagement levels in school and prevent school dropout (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Furthermore, adolescents who participate in extracurricular activities have greater opportunities to build their leadership skills through positive, active, and constant support from adults in a mentoring culture (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Adults who are intentional about helping adolescents succeed can serve as more effective role models, mentors, and motivators (Englund, Egeland, & Collins, 2008). However, in one study two out of every three adolescents reported not having positive family communication or a caring school (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Parental support, defined as parent involvement in school, has been associated with higher school engagement, higher self-esteem, greater self-concept, and self-worth in adolescents (Scales et al., 1999). Adolescents who participate in multiple extracurricular activities in school and community settings have been found to have greater access to larger social networks (Benson, 2006; Fredricks et al., 2006). One study found that youth who participated in a leadership development program within a community-based context had more positive perceptions of their relationships with adults (Jones, 2009).

Adolescent Involvement

Involvement in extracurricular activities has been associated with a number of adolescent outcomes. For instance, adolescents involved in school and community based civic activities reported more religiosity, academic engagement, and positive perceptions of parents and peers than uninvolved youth (Ludden, 2011). More specifically, when the types of activities were considered, research found that adolescents who participated in band, orchestra, chorus, or in a school play or musical were significantly less likely than non-participants to engage in problem behaviors such as alcohol consumption or drug use (Zill et al., 1995). In another study, organized activity participation was associated with higher than expected grades, school value, self-esteem, resiliency, and prosocial peers, though the pattern of findings differed by activity context (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008).

Different types of extracurricular activities provide distinct patterns of experiences. Previous research suggests that involvement in sport activities has positive (e.g., self esteem) and negative effects (e.g., higher alcohol use) on

adolescents (Eccles & Barber, 1999). More specifically, in another study, researchers found that those who participated only in sports had more positive outcomes compared with those who had little or no involvement in organized activities, but less positive outcomes compared with those who participated in sports plus other activities (Linver, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). When gender was considered, sports involvement has been found to impact males and females differently. For example, males who were participants in sports reported higher rates of alcohol consumption (Eccles et al., 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005); although in another research study, female participants in sports had more friendships with higher achieving students (Crosnoe, 2001).

In addition to the type of activity adolescents are involved in, researchers have also considered the amount of time adolescents spend in extracurricular activities. The more time adolescents spend in structured extracurricular activities, the less time they have to become involved in unsupervised activities (Mahoney et al., 2000). In contrast, however, Marsh (1992) found that excessive extracurricular activity participation may decrease the time adolescents spend in their academic studies. The over-scheduling hypothesis (Mahoney, Harris, & Eccles, 2006) posits that youth who participate in too many extracurricular activities could experience poor adjustment and stress, spend less time with family, and experience an early movement into adult roles (Rosenfeld & Wise, 2000). Although over-scheduling has been found to have negative effects on youth outcomes, other researchers have found that the benefits of extracurricular activity involvement increased as the level of participation increased (Mahoney et al., 2006). However, Luthar and colleagues (2006) found youth were more likely to experience negative effects of high participation when they perceived their parents were critical of their engagement or if their parents had no expectations of their performance.

Current Study

There is a lack of research considering the differences among adolescents who participate at different roles since past research has not specifically focused on adolescent's leadership role in extracurricular activities. To add to existing literature, we will examine how support from individuals in these contexts influence adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills. In this study, we give particular attention to parental school support, adult support at school when examining the participation role (non-participant, participant, or leader) of adolescents in sport, school, and community extracurricular activities. The central focus of this investigation was to determine how adolescents' involvement roles in extracurricular activities influenced their self-perception of their leadership skills. The objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the influences of parental school support and adult support for school on the development of adolescent's leadership skills.

- Examine gender differences in adolescent leadership skill development.

- Examine the effects of male and female adolescents' involvement role (non participant verses participant; participant verses leader/captain) in various (sports, community, and school) extracurricular activities on adolescent's perceptions of their leadership skills.

Based upon the objectives of the research study and past literature, several hypotheses have been developed. We hypothesized that adult support would positively influence how adolescent's viewed their leadership skills. Secondly, we hypothesized that the gender differences would be associated with differences in how youth viewed their leadership skills in various types of extracurricular activities while serving in different roles.

Although researchers have examined how the role of participation in different types of extracurricular activities influences adolescent development (Fredricks, et al., 2006; Eccles & Barber, 1999), this study was conducted to contribute to existing literature by exploring influences of adult support and extracurricular activity participation on adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills. Findings from this study would inform the practice of leadership education by identifying the effects of different types of adult support on adolescent leadership skills development. Additionally, the effects of adolescent's involvement in extracurricular activities need to be examined so that leadership educators can be better equipped to more effectively implement leadership skill development programs for youth. This would aim to better serve those youth who are actively involved in structured out of school time, as well as those who are less engaged.

Method

At the request of a Superintendent interested in further developing the leadership capacity of the broad spectrum of high school students in his district, baseline data were collected from youth in each of his three public high schools. Students who participated in the survey resided in a suburban area located in northern Kentucky. Adolescents surveyed ranged from the ages of 13 through 19 in grades 9 through 12. Since every student was enrolled in an English class, two classes per grade at the general and advanced level were randomly selected. Every effort was made to provide each student the same opportunity for selection while stratifying by grade. The sample included 217, 212, and 218 youth from each high school within the district. This yielded a sample population of 720 in 26 classes,

of which 697 had parental consent. There was a response rate of 93% since 647 youth assented to participate in this study. Due to stratified sampling strategy, respondents represented a fairly equal distribution across all grade levels: 149 freshman, 158 sophomores, 181 juniors, and 159 seniors. In the sample, 358 were female and 289 were males. The sample was predominantly white (92%), which was representative of the overall student body population. Only about 1.2 % of the students classified themselves as African-American, 1.4% were Asian, and 5.4 % reported having another racial identity.

Procedure

Although one survey was used to assess students' perceptions, the items used were adapted from multiple research instruments, which included the Youth-Adult Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale survey (Jones & Perkins, 2005), Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors survey (1996) and the 4-H Essential Elements (Kress, 2004). The seventy-four question survey (Hancock, 2008) was pilot-tested on 60 high-school students in another school district before being administered at the test site. After the pilot test, reliabilities for survey constructs were examined in order to assure that measurements were valid and reliable. Reliabilities from the pilot test include the following: parental support for school (males α=.644; females α=.732), adult support within schools (males α=.810; females α=.811), and adolescent's perception of leadership skills (males α=.878; females α=.897).

The school superintendent and school board approved the study before researchers entered into the high schools. Administration of the survey was conducted over a four-day time period during a 25-minute period in the selected high-school English classes. Adolescents signed an assent form before taking the survey. No identifying information was obtained from the students who completed the survey. For the current study, the following constructs will be considered: parental support for school, school-based adult support, leadership skills, and extracurricular activity engagement.

Measures

Questions for the adult support constructs were adapted from the Youth-Adult Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale survey developed by Jones and Perkins (2005). Items measuring adolescents' perceptions of adult support were divided into two categories which included *parental support for school* (males α=.657; females α=.741) and *school-based adult support* (males α=.820; females α=.822). The three-item parental support for school subscale included: "My parents always encourage me to do well in school," "My parents are interested in my involvement in school activities" and "My parents participate in activities at my

school." The four-item subscale for school adult support included "There are many caring adults involved in school activities," "There are many positive adult role models in my school," "The adults in my school are good examples of positive leaders" and "Adults in my school have the ability to motivate youth to become leaders." In the analysis, parental support for school and school-based adult support were measured on an interval scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

To measure *adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills*, we asked adolescents to rank themselves using 13 self-assessment statements; items were adapted from Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors survey (Scales et al., 1999) and 4-H essential elements (Kress, 2004). The mean score for this construct was 3.86 for females and 3.72 for males. Adolescents' responses could vary from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These items included "I can organize a group activity," "I can identify community resources," "I can get others in my school to volunteer," and "I can work as a team member." Reliability and internal consistency of the index was measured using Cronbach's Alpha (males α=.889; females α=.915).

Several demographic indicators were used in the study for the purpose of statistical control and to conduct the analyses based on gender and grade level. These variables include family structure, grade level, and gender. For the purpose of this study, family structure was examined by collapsing categories into a dichotomous variable that included adolescents living with two parents or living in other living situations (i.e., single parent, grandparents). A binary classification was used for grade level to compare 9th and 10th grade levels (lower) to 11th and 12th grade levels (upper). A comparison of upper and lower grade levels was examined because within the high schools, there was an emphasis to encourage older adolescents to serve in a leadership capacity; however, only six students from each school in the 11th and 12th grades participated in the school advisory team and were trained under a core leadership curriculum. After the training session of the core leadership team, the 11th and 12th grade adolescents held school-wide workshops to teach students in upper and lower grade levels leadership principles, so no control groups were examined in this study.

Fourteen items were included in the survey to examine adolescents' participation in sport, school, and community extracurricular activities. *Sport extracurricular activities* included team sports, individual sports, and other sports. *School extracurricular activities* included band, art, vocational, student government academic team, and other activities. The *community extracurricular activity* category included activities such as environmental clubs, 4-H, boy/girl scouts, and religious groups. The activity-type classification was modeled after past research studies (Eccles et al., 1999).

Adolescents' roles in extracurricular activities were examined by classifying adolescents as non participants, participants, or a leader/captain for each of the listed activities. Adolescents' involvement role in extracurricular activities was examined in two separate phases. First, these high school students were classified as *non-participants* if they did not participate in any extracurricular activities, as *participants* if they participated or served as a leader/captain in extracurricular activities. In the second analysis adolescents who participated in at least one extracurricular activity in each context (sports, school-related and community-based) were classified as *participants* and those who served as a leader/captain in at least one activity in each context were classified as a *leader/captain.*

Regression analyses were performed to determine how parental support for school, school adult support, family structure, grade level, and the role (non-participant verses participant; participant verses a leader/captain) and type (sport, school and community) of activities influenced adolescents' perception of their leadership skills. A series of models for males and females were examined using regression analysis.

Results

Correlations for all study variables are presented along with mean scores for males and females in Table 1. Adolescents' role in extracurricular activities was examined in two different ways. First, regression equations (Table 2 & 3) were run to compare adolescents who were *non-participants* (those who did not participate in any extracurricular activities) to those who served as *participants (*those who participated or served as a leader/captain in extracurricular activities). Secondly, regression analyses (Table 4 & 5) were also utilized to compare those males and females who were only participants within extracurricular activities to those who served as a leader or captain in one or more extracurricular activities. Independent variables included parental support, school adult support, family structure, grade level, type of activity (sport, school and community), and role in activity (non-participant verses participant; participant verses leader/captain).

Table 1
Correlation Matrix for Study Variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	Mean Female	SD	Mean Males	SD
1. Parental Support	-	.34†	.16†	-.02	.28†	.14*	.39†	.46†	3.7	.88	3.68	.78
2. School Adult Support	.45†	-	.09	.00	.08	.18†	.13†	.34†	3.7	.71	3.56	.76
3. Family Structure	.14*	.17†	-	.07	.05	.02	.04	.07	.75	.43	.69	.46
4. Grade Level	-.18†	.10*	-.04	-	.22†	.12	-.01	.13†	2.5	1.09	2.56	1.10
5. School Extracurricular Activities	.17†	.09	-.11	.17†	-	.45†	.41†	.42†	2.2	.26	2.13	.17
6. Community	.09	.17*	.04	-.03	.26†	-	.14†	.22†	.08	.27	.03	.18
7. Sport Extracurricular Activities	.26†	.12*	.02	-.10	.11	.14†	-	.31†	2.4	.46	2.35	.40
8. Leadership Stills	.40†	.41†	-.03	.15†	.26†	.18†	.24†	-	51.61	8.51	50.51	7.87

NOTE: Correlation coefficients for Females above diagonal; Correlation coefficients for Males below diagonal

This series of analyses examined sport, school, and community extracurricular activities. Tables 2 and 3 below describe the regression equation that shows the significant predictors of adolescents' perceptions towards their leadership skills for males and females who were involved in sport, school, and community extracurricular activities. The equation also included a comparative analysis between participants and non participants in these extracurricular activities.

As indicated in Tables 2 and 3, parental support for school and school adult support were significantly associated with male and female adolescents' perceptions toward their leadership skills in sport, school, and community activities. Analysis of grade level indicated that males and females in upper grade levels had more positive perceptions of their leadership skills than did younger adolescents. Participation in school and community extracurricular activities significantly predicted the outcomes of adolescents' perception towards their leadership skills for both males and females. However, female participants in sports significantly viewed their leadership skills more positively than did non participants.

Next, the models from the previous regressions were replicated focusing on similar comparisons as in Tables 2 and 3, but also investigating the influence of participant and leader/captain involvement roles. Significant predictors of adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills that are based upon different types of extracurricular activities are reported in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 2
Standardized Regression Coefficients for Adolescents' Perceptions of Leadership Skills by Type of Extracurricular Activity Comparing Participants and Non Participants for Males

	Model 1 Sport		Model 2 School		Model 3 Community	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
Independent Variables						
Parental Support	.305***	(.636)	.305***	(.591)	.300***	(.593)
School Adult Support	.271***	(.617)	.272***	(.592)	.271***	(.592)
Family Structure	-.102	(.920)	-.085	(.054)	-.124	(.873)
Grade Level	.131**	(.867)	.108**	(.889)	.112**	(.820)
Participant	.055	(.552)	.154***	(.829)	.175**	(.672)
Constant	29.61**	2.408	29.29**	2.299	29.84**	2.303
Adjusted R^2	.255		.274		.281	
N	289					

Note: * p< .05; **p<.01; *** p< .001

Table 3
Standardized Regression Coefficients for Adolescents' Perceptions of Leadership Skills by Type of Extracurricular Activity Comparing Participants and Non Participants for Females

	Model 1 Sport β	(SE)	Model 2 School β	(SE)	Model 3 Community β	(SE)
Independent Variables						
Parental Support	.359 ***	(.532)	.308 ***	(.503)	.380 ***	(.494)
School Adult Support	.210 ***	(.608)	.217 ***	(.583)	.198 ***	(.595)
Family Structure	-.007	(.928)	-.019	(.890)	-.028	(.909)
Grade Level	.130 **	(.817)	.070	(.782)	.106 **	(.795)
Participant	.125 *	(.455)	.270***	(.306)	.137***	(.584)
Constant	27.160	2.423	28.065	2.316	27.474	2.369
Adjusted R^2	.28		.32		.29	
N	358					

Note: * p< .05; **p<.01; *** p< .001

Table 4
Standardized Regression Coefficients for Adolescents' Perceptions of Leadership Skills by Type of Extracurricular Activity Comparing Leaders and Participants for Males

	Model 1 Sport β	(SE)	Model 2 School β	(SE)	Model 3 Community β	(SE)
Independent Variables						
Parental Support	.308 ***	(.613)	.315***	(.590)	.326 ***	(.589)
School Adult Support	.268 ***	(.608)	.270 ***	(.595)	.279 ***	(.596)
Family Structure	-.103	(.915)	-.090	(.891)	-.116	(.879)
Grade Level	.130 **	(.860)	.121*	(.827)	.101 **	(.827)
Leader	.104 *	(.870)	.131*	(.408)	.147***	(.584)
Constant	29.64	2.394	27.566	2.375	29.186	2.315
Adjusted R^2	.25		.29		.27	
N	147					

Note: * p< .05; **p<.01; *** p< .001

Table 5

Standardized Regression Coefficients for Adolescents' Perceptions of Leadership Skills by Type of Extracurricular Activity Comparing Leaders and Participants for Females

	Model 1 Sport β	(SE)	Model 2 School β	(SE)	Model 3 Community β	(SE)
Independent Variables						
Parental Support	.375 ***	(.532)	.353 ***	(.506)	.398 ***	(.488)
School Adult Support	.219 ***	(.608)	.206 ***	(.598)	.198 ***	(.597)
Family Structure	-.011	(.928)	-.021	(.916)	-.022	(.912)
Grade Level	.098	(.817)	.117*	(.791)	.108 **	(.798)
Leader	.108 *	(.455)	.169***	(.373)	.117**	(.584)
Constant	27.22	2.434	27.566	2.376	27.373	2.375
Adjusted R^2	.28		.29		.29	
N	187					

Note: * p< .05; **p<.01; *** p< .001

In the regression equations in Tables 4 and 5, we found that parental support and school adult support was a significant predictor of adolescents' perception of their leadership skills for males and females. Grade level of adolescents was a significant predictor of adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills for those in upper-grade levels except for males who were leaders in sports. Regression analyses of extracurricular sport activities indicated that those who were serving as a leader/captain in more than one sport activity significantly reported having more positive perceptions of their leadership skills. Interestingly, when participants were compared to leaders, males and females who reported themselves as leaders had more positive perceptions towards their leadership skills than participants regardless of what type of activity they were involved in.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to extend the literature by examining the influence of school based adult support, parental school support, and involvement roles on adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills. Findings from this study extend prior research by examining the differences in adolescents' perceptions toward their leadership skills based upon their involvement level in sport, school, and community extracurricular activities. Consistent with the social learning theory, our findings suggest that adults in the home and school environment can significantly influence how adolescents' view their leadership skills. Similar to past research, our study findings indicated that parental support was a significant predictor of adolescents' perception toward their leadership skills in sport, school,

and community extracurricular activities for those who were participants or served as a leader/captain in these activities.

Recent studies have shown that adolescents who participate in extracurricular activities have greater opportunities to build their leadership skills through positive, active, and constant support from adults in a mentoring culture (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Further, researchers suggest that mentoring should be formalized, using best practices, while supporting informal mentoring through education and training (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). Our research findings indicate that extracurricular activity involvement roles influence adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills. These findings suggest that youth may benefit from more involved leadership roles, such as an official position.

Leadership educators should consider the effects of adolescents' embeddedness within their family, school, and community on perceptions toward their leadership skills when developing leadership opportunities for youth. For instance, leadership development efforts in extracurricular activities should encourage youth-adult partnerships across multiple contexts to facilitate leadership skill development among adolescents. Leadership educators should also incorporate youth-driven activities within student organizations and community projects, offering students an active role in developing their own leadership capacity.

This study examined adolescents' perception of their leadership skills based on gender differences since previous findings from research that examine sport involvement of males and females were mixed. Gender differences in social competencies and positive values are common among youth (Leffert et al., 1998). Interestingly, the current research findings suggest that females in sport activities had significantly more positive perceptions of their leadership skills than males. Further, our research findings suggest that participation in sport extracurricular activities is more likely to influence the perception of leadership skills among female adolescents who serve in leadership roles than males. Further research is needed to examine gender differences in the influence of particular extracurricular activities on adolescent leadership skills. Adults working with youth in sports should especially focus on providing males with leadership development opportunities. This could be achieved by creating more leadership roles on athletic teams in addition to team captain.

Although the current study extends past research, there were several limitations in the current study. Adolescents' participation roles in extracurricular activity were reported for the current school year only and were not assessed over time. Although adolescents were told to report their involvement in extracurricular activities for the current school year, some students may have overestimated or underestimated their participation levels. Future studies should use aggregate

indices to measure and analyze activity involvement and roles instead of focusing on individual activity. Further, this study did not examine the frequency of activity involvement, the length of time spent in the participation role, the tasks adolescents completed in their participation role, and adolescents' motivations for participating or not participating in extracurricular activities. Future research should consider collecting data to capture these dimensions of extracurricular activity involvement. In this cross sectional study, self-reported data was collected from adolescents on how they perceive their leadership skills. Future research should collect longitudinal and multi-informant data from adults and parents instead of relying on adolescents' reports to determine levels of school support among adults. Collecting data from parents and teachers would provide researchers with an enhanced idea of adult levels of support. Future studies should also collect data from other school districts with more diverse student populations. The same findings may vary if the sample included ethnically diverse adolescents from urban areas.

Implications

Based upon findings from this study, adolescents should be encouraged to become involved in extracurricular activities and explore their individual potential as leaders. This study revealed that youth perceptions of their leadership skills are influenced by parents and other adults; therefore, leadership educators need to find ways, such as youth-adult partnerships, to involve parents and other adults in extracurricular activities. Our findings indicate that youth at higher grade levels reported higher perceived leadership skills than lower grade levels; therefore, recommendations include more involvement in youth/adult mentoring opportunities for younger students that focus on building leadership skills. Moreover, it is important that leadership educators can facilitate leadership skill development by providing youth with opportunities to practice their leadership skills in a safe environment with supportive adults. Giving adolescents a voice in decision making processes is one way that leadership educators can facilitate the development of adolescent leadership skills. Adults who interact with adolescents should continue to support and encourage them to become engaged in school and community contexts and remain active throughout their adolescent years and in to adulthood. Based upon these conclusions, further research is warranted to examine the continuing influence of adult support on adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills.

References

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory.* New York: General Learning Press.

Benson, P. (2006). *All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise scaring and responsible children and adolescents*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Benson, P., & Pittman, K. (Eds.) (2001). *Trends in youth development: Visions, realities and challenges*. Medford, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Bloomfield, C. J., & Barber, B. L. (2011). Developmental experiences during extracurricular activities and Australian adolescents' self-concept: Particularly important for youth from disadvantaged schools. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40,* 582-594.

Crosnoe, R. (2001). The social world of male and female athletes in high school. *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth, 8*, 87-108.

Eccles, J., & Barber, B. (1999). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research, 14,* 10-43.

Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. (Eds.) (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. National Research Council. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Eccles, J., & Templeton, J. (2002). Extracurricular and other after-school activities for Youth. *Review of Education, 26,* 113-180.

Englund, M., Egeland, B., & Collins, A. (2008). Exceptions to high school dropout predictions in a low-income sample: Do adults make a difference? *Journal of Social Issues, 64,* 77-93.

Fredricks, J., & Eccles, J., (2006). Extracurricular involvement and adolescent adjustment: Impact of duration, number of activities, and breadth of participation. *Applied Developmental Science, 10,* 136-146.

Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. (2008). Participation in extracurricular activities in the middle school years: Are there developmental benefits for African American and European American youth? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 37,* 1029-1043.

Gambone, M. A., & Arbreton, A. J. A. (1997). *Safe havens: The contributions of youth organizations to healthy adolescent development*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Hancock, D. L. (2008). *Adolescent engagement in school and community extracurricular activities: Influences on developmental assets* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

Inzer, L. D., & Crawford, C. B. (2005). A Review of Formal and Informal Mentoring: Processes, Problems, and Design. *Journal of Leadership Education, 4,* 31-50.

Jones, K. R. (2004). An assessment of perceptions and experiences in community-based youth-adult relationships. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

Jones, K. R. (2009). Influences of youth leadership within a community-based context. *Journal of Leadership Education, 7,* 246-264.

Jones, K., & Perkins, D. (2005). Determining the quality of youth-adult relationships within community-based youth programs. *Journal of Extension, 43,* 5.

Kress, C. (2004). *Essential elements of 4-H youth development*. Available online: http://www.national4-H headquarters.gov/library/elements.ppt

Larson, R. W., & Verma, S. (1999). How children and adolescents spend time across the world: Work, play, and developmental opportunities. *Psychological Bulletin, 125,* 701-736.

Leffert, N., Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Sharma, A. R., Drake. D. R., & Blyth, D. A. (1998). Developmental assets: Measurement and prediction of risk behaviors among adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science, 2,* 209-230.

Linver, M. R., Roth, J. L., & Brooks, G. J. (1999). Patterns of adolescents' participation in organized activities: Are sports best when combined with other activities? *Developmental Psychology, 45,* 354-367.

Ludden, A. B. (2011). Engagement in school and community civic activities among rural adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40,* 1254-1270.

Luthar, S. S., & Shoum, K. A., (2006). Extracurricular involvement among affluent youth: A scapegoat for "ubiquitous achievement pressures?" *Developmental Psychology, 42,* 583-597.

Mahoney, J. L, Harris, A. L., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Organized activity participation, positive youth development, and the over-scheduling hypothesis. *Social Policy Report: Giving Child and Youth Development Knowledge Away, 20,* 3-32.

Mahoney, J. L., & Stattin, H. (2000). Leisure time activities and adolescent anti-social behavior: The role of structure and social context. *Journal of Adolescence, 23*, 133-127.

Marsh, H. (1992). Extracurricular activities: Beneficial extension of the traditional curriculum or subversion of academic goals? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 84*, 553-562.

Moore, K. A., Hatcher, J. L., Vandivere, S., & Brown, B. V. (2000). *Children's behavior and well-being: Findings from the national survey of America's families.* Washington DC: Child Trends.

Rosenfeld, A., & Wise, N. (2000). *The over-scheduled child: Avoiding the hyper-parenting trap.* New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

Scales, P., & Leffert, N. (1999). Developmental Assets: A Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development. Minneapolis: Search Institute.

Search Institute (1996). *Profiles of student life: Attitudes and behaviors*. Available online at: http://www.search-institute.org/surveys/ab.html

Van Linden, J. A., & Fertman, C. I. (1998). Youth leadership: A guide to understanding leadership development in adolescents. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Zill, N., Nord, C. W., & Loomis, L. S. (1995). Adolescents time use, risky behavior, and outcomes: An analysis of national data. A report by Westat, Inc. for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Author Biographies

Donna Hancock is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Child and Family Development at the University of Georgia. Her research interests include examining the predictors and consequences of parenting behaviors and adolescent/emerging adult outcomes. In addition, she also examines the intergenerational transmission of problem behaviors among adolescents and emerging adults. Currently, Donna is a Research Assistant at the University of Georgia.

Dr. Patricia Dyk is an Associate Professor in the Department of Community and Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky. She is also the Director of the Center for Leadership Development. Her research work focuses on the social and economic well-being of families and children in the community and policy contexts, with particular interest in low-income rural families.

Dr. Kenneth Jones is an associate professor in the Department of Community and Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky. His research interests include assessing youth-adult relationships within community contexts, understanding the role of youth-adult partnerships in nurturing youth leadership, positive youth development, and theoretical approaches to community development initiatives. Kenneth has worked in various areas from program development at the community level to research and evaluation of youth civic engagement, youth-adult relationships and other issues affecting community-based programs. Dr. Jones is also the Director of the Program and Staff Development unit for the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. In this role his duties include providing statewide direction for program development and evaluation and training of county-based and state-level Cooperative Extension staff and faculty.