

Program Quality Predicts Intensity of Participation in Middle School After-School Programs

Kimberly Dadisman

Deborah Lowe Vandell

University of Wisconsin - Madison

Aspects of Program Quality

- Supportive Relationships with Staff
- Supportive Relationships with Peers
- Opportunities for Leadership
- Voice and Choice in Activities
- Interest in Program Activities

Study Question

- Are supportive experiences in after-school programs related to program attendance?

Participants

- 157 8th grade students
- 51% Male
- Mean age at Time 1 = 13.0 years
- 62% Minority
- 34% Single parent households
- 65.4% Income less than \$39,999
- 8 After-school programs

Measures

- Developmental Supports Rating Scale
 - 5 Aspects of Support
 - Supportive Relationships with Staff ($\alpha=.81$)
 - Supportive Relationships with Peers ($\alpha=.66$)
 - Opportunities for Leadership ($\alpha=.78$)
 - Voice and Choice in Activities ($\alpha=.76$)
 - Interest in Activities ($\alpha=.75$)

Intercorrelations between Subscales of the DSRS at Time 1

	SRA	SRP	Lead	Choice	Act
SRA	1.00				
SRP	.658**	1.00			
Lead	.580**	.502**	1.00		
Choice	.602**	.372**	.556**	1.00	
Act	.747**	.592**	.492**	.593**	1.00

Intercorrelations between Subscales of the DSRS at Time 2

	SRA2	SRP2	Lead2	Choice2	Act2
SRA2	1.00				
SRP2	.512**	1.00			
Lead2	.658**	.491**	1.00		
Choice2	.371**	.294**	.458**	1.00	
Act2	.664**	.606**	.561**	.478**	1.00

Sample Items from Each Subscale

- Supportive Relationships with Staff
 - The adults here pay attention to what's going on in my life
 - When I do a good job at something, the staff here let me know
- Supportive Relationships with Peers
 - I get to know other kids really well here
 - I can really trust the other kids here

- Opportunities for Leadership
 - I help set the rules here
 - I get to help plan activities or events here
- Voice and Choice in Activities
 - Staff let me decide what activities I'm going to do here
 - I feel like my ideas count here
- Interest in Activities
 - I get a chance to do lots of new things here
 - The activities here really get me interested

Measures

- Program Attendance
 - Intensity
 - Duration
- Parent Report
 - Demographic information
 - Adolescents' positive adjustment

Quality and Attendance Means

	Fall	Spring
	M (sd)	M (sd)
Supportive relations with adults	3.74 (.88)	3.76 (.78)
Supportive relations with peers	3.77 (.84)	3.75 (.76)
Opportunities for leadership	2.74 (.92)	2.68 (1.03)
Voice and choice in activities	3.41 (1.08)	3.43 (1.18)
Interest in program activities	3.47 (.94)	3.38 (.96)
Total support	3.47 (.75)	3.47 (.71)
Intensity of attendance	4.09 (.85)	3.91 (.95)
Duration of attendance	3.31 (1.47)	3.44 (1.34)

Total Support at Time 1 Predicting Intensity at Time 2

Model	Beta
$F_{(5,105)}=3.523$ $p=.006$	
Gender	-.049
Family Structure	-.159
Adjustment Time1	-.238
Intensity Time 1	.218*
Total Support Time 1	.303*
Adjusted $R^2=.077$	

Correlations Between Perceptions of Support and Attendance Controlling for Time 1 Attendance Gender, Family Structure and Prior Adjustment

	Intensity Time 2
Supportive relations with adults	.239**
Supportive relations with peers	.162
Opportunities for leadership	.161
Voice and choice	.142
Interest in activities	.258**
Total support	.241**

*p<.05 **p<.01

Conclusions

- Overall support predicts continued attendance
- Supportive staff and interesting activities associated with continued attendance

Implications

- Middle school youth “vote with their feet”
- Research is moving from a more general “satisfaction with program” perspective to assessing specific student experiences