

Exploring Activity Combinations with Time Diary Data

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Previous research on the contribution of participation in out-of-school time activities to adolescent development typically limits the investigation to either a specific type of activity, such as sports or neighborhood clubs, or to more global measures, such as the number of activities. This line of inquiry overlooks the reality of youths' lives by failing to consider the developmental consequences of participation in a variety of activities. This study investigates the correlates of participation in combinations of three different types of activities.

Data Source

Second wave of the *Child Development Supplement* to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (CDS-II)

- Collected interview and time diary data from a nationally representative subsample of active PSID families with children between 5 and 18 years old in 2002

Analytic Sample (weighted)

- 1,466 adolescents in 5th through 12th grade
- 51% female, 49% male
- 63% White, 17% Black, 13% Latino, and 7% of other ethnic origin
- 35% lived in a single-parent family

Measures

- Time Use, drawn from one weekend and one weekday time diary.
 - Activities. Number of minutes, over 2 days, youth reported engaging in 3 types of activities: skill building (computer use, homework, reading for pleasure, and organized activities), physically active (sports, leisure and exercise, organized sports, and sports lessons), and down-time (relaxing, playing, listening to music, and watching TV).
 - Activity Splits and Patterns. 8 activity combinations formed by splitting youth into high and low participation groups based on the minutes reported in each type of activity over the 2 days. High physical activity was more than 45 minutes. High skill building was more than 120 minutes. And high down time was more than 360 minutes over the 2 days. The 8 activity combinations are as follows: 1) high physical activity, low skill-building and down time; 2) high skill building, low physical activity and down time; 3) high down time, low physical activity and skill building; 4) high physical activity and skill building, low down time; 5) high physical activity and down time, low skill building; 6) high skill building and down time, low physical activity; 7) low on all 3; and 8) high on all 3.
- Correlates
 - Achievement. Standardized broad reading score and applied problem subscale from the Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test-Revised.
 - Beliefs. Student's report of their math, reading and global self-concept, prosocial attitudes, and connection to school.
 - Behavior. Primary caregiver reports from the Positive Behavior Scale and the Behavior Problem Index.

Results

Regression models, controlling for background characteristics, show differences between youth who participated in all 3 types of activities (ones we are calling "well rounded") and youth who did not.

- Youth who participated mostly in **down-time activities** showed lower global self-concept, less connection to school, more internalizing problems, and lower math test scores than the well-rounded students. Students who combined down-time activities with physically active activities were no different from youth who combined all three. But youth who reported down-time with skill-building activities, but little time in physically-active activities showed lower global self-concept and higher reading test scores than youth who participated in all three.
- Youth who participated mostly in **physically active activities** showed higher prosocial behavior than the well-rounded students. Students who participated in both physically-active and skill-building activities showed higher reading self-concept, higher test scores, and more positive behaviors than the well-rounded youth.
- Youth who participated mostly in **skill-building activities** showed higher reading self-concept, and higher math and reading test scores than the well-rounded students.
- Youth who did not spend much time in any of the three activities showed higher problem behavior scores than the well-rounded students.

Conclusions

Overall, skill building and physically active activities tend to be associated with more positive outcomes. However, for youth who spend a lot of time in down-time activities (i.e., watching a lot of TV), also participating in skill-building activities is associated with better outcomes.