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Date

September 17, 1980

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ATTITUDES OF SEVENTH AND EIGHTH
GRADE ATHLETES AND NONATHLETES TOWARD SCHOOL

by

John Martin Overstreet

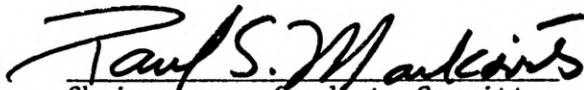
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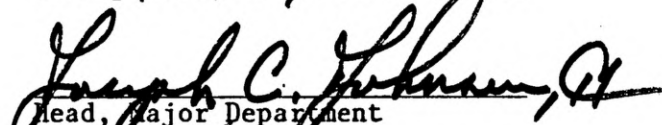
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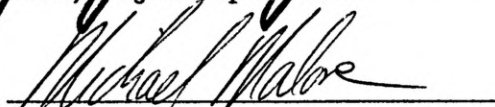
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VITA	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ABSTRACT	vii

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Importance of the Study.	2
Question to be Answered	3
General Procedures	3
Delimitations.	4
Limitations.	4
Definition of Terms.	5
Summary.	5
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	7
Value of Interscholastic Athletics	7
Contributions to Education.	7
Individual Values	9
Academic Achievement.	14
Attitudes and Measuring Attitudes.	17
Summary.	18
3. PROCEDURES	20
Population Description	20
Sampling Procedure	20
Method of Collecting Data.	20
Reliability and Validity of Student Opinion Inventory.	21
Statistical Hypothesis	24
Analysis of Data	24
Precautions Taken for Accuracy	25
Summary.	26

CHAPTER	PAGE
4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY	27
Analysis of Data	27
Summary.	36
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	38
Summary.	38
Conclusions.	39
Recommendations.	42
LITERATURE CITED	44
APPENDIX, STUDENT OPINION INVENTORY - Part A and LETTER OF PERMISSION TO COPY THE INSTRUMENT.	48

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1....Reliabilities of the Student Opinion Inventory Subscales
- Table 2....Correlation Between the Student Opinion Inventory and Semantic Differential Subscales and the Reliability of the Subscales
- Table 3....Intercorrelations of the Student Opinion Inventory Subscales
- Table 4....Variables Chosen to Discriminate Between Groups
- Table 5....Prediction Results Using Variables from Table 4
- Table 6....Item 1 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory
- Table 7....Item 3 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory
- Table 8....Item 7 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory
- Table 9....Item 9 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory
- Table 10...Item 34 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory
- Table 11...Prediction Results Using the Five Selected Variables Generated by the Discriminant Analysis Statistics

ABSTRACT

Today with the rising costs in education, school districts are re-evaluating the worth of interscholastic athletics. This seems to be especially true at the seventh and eighth grade levels because of the lack of incoming revenue to help support sports programs.

Research seems to be lacking in the area of comparing the attitudes of athletes and nonathletes toward school. Also increasing interest in girls' athletics brings about a need for more research dealing with girls' participation. Thus the problem of this study was to compare the difference between the attitudes of athletes and nonathletes toward school at the seventh and eighth grade level.

The Student Opinion Inventory questionnaire is used to measure students' attitudes toward school. The attitudes of 76 seventh and eighth grade students were measured in Big Timber, Montana, in May of 1978.

Through the process of discriminant analysis five variables are found to distinguish between athletes and nonathletes alone. The five variables are analyzed to compare the attitudes of athletes and nonathletes.

The five variables chosen deal with certain areas of attitudes toward school. Two variables deal with the attitudes toward student participation, two variables deal with the attitudes toward teachers, and one variable deals with attitude toward the school image.

This study reveals the following conclusions: (1) a larger percentage of athletes than nonathletes feel that students are involved in planning all or most student activities, (2) a much larger percentage of athletes as compared with nonathletes participate in all or most of the student activities in which they wish, (3) more athletes than nonathletes feel most or all of their teachers make sure that they understand what is taught in class, and (4) a larger percentage of athletes as compared with nonathletes are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied at the number of student activities the school offers.

The five variables selected to separate athletes and nonathletes correctly classified 77.63% of the population as athlete or nonathlete. This high percentage justifies the five variables being used to distinguish between athletes and nonathletes.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The rising costs of education have once again stirred to debate the worth of competitive interscholastic athletics. The question arises: what is the net worth of interscholastic athletics? Are expenditures justified by outcomes? Martin (1972) states that in most school districts the debate is between delineated combatants. On one side are what he calls the Anemic Knights. The "Knights" claim that interscholastic athletics are: (1) about as much fun as throwing Christians to the lions, (2) damaging to the character of participants, and (3) should not be sanctioned by schools at all.

Martin goes on to say that on the other side are the supporters of athletics. Their claim is that competitive sports are great builders of character, motherhood, national pride, and virtually the primary reason for schools to exist. Competitive athletics are ranked as a constitutional right necessary for the preservation of democracy. One must not meddle with the old school team. These supporters spend a great deal of time watching their sons and daughters run the 100-yard dash in the time it takes the average observer to light his or her cigarette.

Athletics have become more diverse and encompassing in many school situations. Girls' athletics are becoming especially popular

in most schools around the country. The opportunities for studies concerning females are becoming more practical and necessary. However, most studies dealing with the value of athletics have been conducted for boys only. For this reason, a study of both male and female athletes is thought to be of importance. This investigator feels that certain areas of study have been neglected in the research conducted on the attitudes of athletes compared to the attitudes of non-athletes. Research into attitudes could help to determine whether interscholastic athletics are worth the money invested in them.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to determine if the attitudes toward school of students involved in interscholastic athletics differ from the attitudes of students toward school not involved in any interscholastic sport at the seventh and eighth grade levels in Big Timber, Montana.

Importance of this Study

Sixty-three percent of school board members and administrators who responded to the question asked in the April, 1975 issue of the American School Board Journal: "Is increased opportunity and participation in interscholastic athletics worth all of the money we pay for them?" replied "maybe". Definitely, this is not a conclusive affirmation or rejection of athletics. This lack of affirmation seems

especially apparent in junior high school athletic programs.

Seventh and eighth grade interscholastic sports seem to be easily challenged because of the lack of incoming revenue to help support them. Most high school programs have gate receipts, season ticket money, and booster clubs to help pay for sports. Seventh and eighth grade programs usually do not have these benefits. Because of the lack of funds some school districts have even dropped the seventh and eighth grade athletic programs.

Ed Argenbright (1977), the superintendent in Big Timber, Montana, states that he tries to keep the interscholastic athletic programs running as economically as possible within budget constraints. He states that a study conducted in his school to determine if athletes and non-athletes have differing attitudes toward school would help him greatly in making decisions. This study in turn can help other administrators of small rural schools make decisions regarding programming.

Question to be Answered

This study asks one main question: What variables can best be used to distinguish between the attitudes toward school of athletes and non-athletes?

General Procedures

The data were collected to measure the attitudes of seventh and eighth grade students toward school. The Student Opinion Inventory

was used to measure the students' attitudes toward school.

The data were analysed in relation to whether the students were male or female, athlete or non-athlete, and seventh grader or eighth grader. The difference between the attitudes toward school of these various groups were compared.

Delimitations

This study includes only seventh and eighth grade students in Big Timber, Montana, in attendance during the 1977-1978 school year. The sample is drawn from a rural setting with a school population of approximately 600 students.

Limitations

The following limitations should also be recognized when interpreting the results of the study:

1. Previous research in the area of the effects of participation in interscholastic athletics on student attitude is very limited.
2. This study was limited to seventh and eighth grade students in Big Timber, Montana, in attendance during the 1977-1978 school year. Therefore, the results of this study may not hold true for the entire state. Yet it may be characteristic of schools found in rural settings.

Definition of Terms

Interscholastic Athletics. "Interscholastic athletics" shall mean competitive games or sports between schools of different communities or towns.

Attitudes of Students. This is the student's natural way of acting toward others or of thinking about things.

Values. "A value is defined as an activity or condition that is cherished. A pattern of values is the distribution of a sample of activities and conditions with respect to the degree to which they are cherished by a person." (Battle, 1956, p. 20)

Athlete. This is an individual who participates in one or more interscholastic sport.

Non-Athlete. This is an individual who does not participate in interscholastic sports.

Summary

Today with the rising costs in education many school systems are reevaluating the worth of interscholastic athletics. This seems to be especially true at the seventh and eighth grade levels. One area of research which seems to have been overlooked is the comparison of attitudes of athletes and non-athletes toward school. Also, increasing interest in girls' athletics brings about a need for more research dealing with girls' participation in interscholastic athletics. Thus

the problem of this study is to compare the differences between the attitudes of athletes with the attitudes of non-athletes toward school at the seventh and eighth grade levels. This study involves both girl and boy athletes and girl and boy non-athletes in the seventh and eighth grades during the 1977-1978 school year.

It is hoped that this work will help the administrators of the Big Timber School District understand students' attitudes toward school in relation to scholastic athletics. The study should aid in decision making concerning students' attitudes toward school.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many investigations have been made since the early 1900's concerning characteristics such as personality, intelligence, and academic achievement of scholastic athletes and non-athletes. These studies have encompassed all educational levels in the spectrum of athletic competition. There is inconclusive evidence, however, concerning the differences between those students who participated and those who did not participate in school athletic programs. In this chapter, a review of the literature pertinent to these differences is presented.

VALUE OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Contributions to Education

The tight budgets in today's school systems seem to be bringing about a debate as to whether values gained from interscholastic athletics are worth the expenditures. Dannehl and Razor (1974) state that there are two main reasons interscholastic athletics are challenged when funding is limited: (1) its value in terms of educational contributions and economic expenditures is questioned by school boards, and (2) interscholastic athletics is the focal point for bringing attention to a financial crisis of a sometimes apathetic public. Dannehl and Razor go on to say that most communities favor interscholastic

athletics and the idea of possible elimination generates the financial support necessary.

Even though athletics seem to be supported by the public, controversy arises as to whether interscholastic athletics contributes or takes away from educational goals. Pietrofesa and Rosa (1968) say that interscholastic athletic programs have moved away from educational goals and certain problems have arisen. These problems include teachers giving up class time for pep assemblies, overemphasis of varsity sports which hurts intramural and physical education programs, and the health of athletes being ignored in close game situations for the sake of winning.

Research findings vary as to whether athletics have educational value. Rehberg (1969) states that contrary to the belief that athletics is detrimental to educational pursuits, the evidence reviewed appears to support the belief that interscholastic athletics, is conducive not only to higher scholastic performance, but to higher educational expectations as well.

Research also suggests that interscholastic sports keep some students in school who might otherwise drop out if it were not for participation in sports. Dannehl and Razor (1971) say that many boys finish school only because they want to participate in athletics. If this is true, then athletics are surely valuable. The study brings out some negative aspects, however. For example, some students take

easy courses instead of courses which interest them and, coaches put pressure on teachers to keep these students eligible.

A positive value of sports seems to be the ability to help youngsters from minority groups. Kennedy (1969) says that one of the most desirable outcomes of the public school's interscholastic sports program has been the role it has played in the individual development of younger people from minority groups. Scott (1969) says, however, that for every white youth lifted out of a coal mining town and every black youth taken from the ghetto by an athletic scholarship, there are hundreds of lower class youths who have wasted their lives futilely preparing to be sports stars instead of developing intellectually. Obviously, the value of scholastic athletics to education is not firmly understood.

Individual Values

Studies have been completed to determine whether individual values are gained from participation in interscholastic sports. Schendel (1965) states that ninth grade athletes generally possess desirable personal social and psychological characteristics to a greater extent than non-participants. Schendel found that the ninth grade athletes possess the following characteristics as compared with non-athletes: (1) more of the qualities of leadership, (2) more sociable, (3) greater sense of personal worth, (4) make fewer complaints, (5) greater intellectual efficiency. Schendel also conducted

the same research at the twelfth grade and collegiate levels. The results of these studies are still positive regarding characteristics of athletes compared with non-athletes, but the greatest differences were at the ninth grade level.

The value of building character is another example of a positive value that is supposed to be aided through athletic participation. Tutko and Ogilvie (1971) state, "We found no empirical support for the tradition that sport builds character. Indeed, there is evidence that athletic competition limits growth in some areas" (page 61). Tutko and Ogilvie found that individuals who were mentally fit, resilient, and physically strong possessed positive traits of setting high but realistic goals, were highly organized and respectful of authority, and had a large capacity for trust and self-control prior to participation in scholastic athletics. The building of character attributed to sports might just be the enhancement of positive traits possessed by some athletes from the start.

In order to examine character and personality, Blanchard (1946) assessed boys and girls on twenty-four traits for two consecutive years in grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. He found that desirable traits were affected by participation in athletic activities and that the greatest gain in these traits was made during the sophomore year in high school.

McGraw and Tolbert (1953) studied the relationship between sociometric status of 438 junior high school boys and their general athletic ability, which was determined by totaling the number of seasons of sport participation. The following observations concerning the sociometric status of these students are that: (1) a high relationship existed between sociometric status and athletic ability, (2) measures of athletic ability, as used in this study, are predominant factors in determining the "best-liked" students, and (3) a slight positive relationship exists between sociometric status and mental maturity. These authors suggested that high scores on the sociometric test might be a result of social contacts made through athletic endeavors.

The Symonds Adjustment Questionnaire, Form A, and a homemade rating sheet for the personality traits of cooperation, self-control, leadership, reliability, agreeability, and sociability were used by Carter and Shannon (1940) to compare athletes and non-athletes in ten small high schools in southern Indiana. Coaches, principals, and teachers were asked to rate (scale of 1 to 10) the personality traits of the students. For the Symonds Adjustment Questionnaire, the "social" items of adjustment favored the athletes while the "academic" items favored the non-athletes. Five of the six differences in personality traits were significant and favored the athletes; the ratings of the principals produced the least amount of difference in this comparison.

The value of competition in athletics is another area in which research has been conducted. Knicker (1974) says that if the overriding value orientation in American life is towards achievement and success, and if the success in competition is rewarded, then it follows that the value of experiencing competition in athletics is also prized. A standard cliché is that life is competitive hence athletics prepare one for playing the game of life. A number of critics agree that under certain conditions competition is healthy. The sheer joy of finding out how far one can extend his or her body or the thrill of running a race at your personal best time is hard to describe. Knicker goes on to say that unhealthy competition is often the result of a win at all costs attitude.

Competition is overemphasized in both school and games according to Campbell (1974). Frustrated fathers are determined that their sons will be winners. Little league coaches give Knute Rockne style half time speeches. Campbell compares a street baseball game to little league. The differences he says are between kids enjoying themselves, the game, laughing, joking, bending the rules, and, tense children shouldering the responsibility of dozens of adults, making good for mom and dad, for the team, and the coach. Personal competition, not competition dictated by some outside influence, can be beneficial if properly controlled and under the correct conditions.

The proper administration and the right kind of coach seem to be two ingredients researchers contend are needed to receive the most good from athletics. Alley (1974) states, "In the hands of a coach dedicated to fostering the full development of the youngster with whom he works, school athletics provide abundant opportunities for youngsters to practice and thus to learn the skills of successful social behavior" (page 103). Alley goes on to say that players must react to their own capabilities and the behavior of those around them. The result is a change in the player, mental as well as physical. What youngsters learn through athletics depends in great measure on how artfully and skillfully the coach utilizes athletics for the development of each youngster, physically, mentally, and psychologically. Alley found the following:

Athletics can be a two-edged sword; capable of cutting in opposite directions. The direction depends on who swings it, not on the sword itself. Athletics can be a potent force in developing constructive behavioral and attitudinal patterns or equally potent as a destructive factor. (page 103)

Hamilton (1977) researched attitudes of high school athletes and non-athletes toward school. He found the following: (1) there is no significant difference in attitudes toward school of athletes and non-athletes except in the subcategories of participation and school image, (2) the subscale that indicates the most significant difference between the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes is student-participation, and (3) the subscale that indicated the least significant

difference (in fact, a negative difference) between athletes and non-athletes is student-counselor. To say the least, data dealing with athletes and non-athletes show inconsistencies and are dependent on many factors.

Academic Achievement

This investigator found research comparing scholastic achievement and involvement in athletics. The results vary depending on the instruments used for measurement and variables which differ from study to study. A number of exemplary studies are discussed below.

Burley and Anderson (1955) studied the relationship of athletic ability and intelligence (measured by the Hanmon-Nelson Tests of Mental Ability) of 51 junior and senior high school athletes and 962 non-athletes. No significant relationship was found between this intelligence measure and athletic ability as measured by a test of athletic ability and power (vertical jump).

Junior high school athletes and nonparticipants from the Palo Alto, California, school system were compared in scholarship measures by Aireldi, Peterson, and Webb (1966). The athletes scored higher on the School and College Ability Test scores and on grade point average. When members of the two groups were matched on SCAT scores, the athletic group had higher academic achievement ratings.

Buhrmann (1968) studied the longitudinal relationship between athletic participation and various academic achievement measures of 63

matched pairs (matched by economic status and sixth grade grade point average) of junior high school athletes and non-participants. Athletic participation was significantly and positively related to the measures of scholarship at all grade levels in junior high school. Athletes participating in five to nine sport seasons exceeded their matches more, academically, than did athletes participating in only one to four sport seasons.

Beu (1926) studied the intelligence and scholastic records of secondary school athletes and nonathletes in Illinois. Athletes were found to have as much native and acquired intelligence as non-athletes and possessed an equal amount of mental ability, however, they did receive slightly lower academic grades.

Cook and Thompson (1928) compared the intelligence and scholarship characteristics of 100 athletes who participated in football, basketball, track, baseball, swimming, and tennis, and an equal number of non-participants at Hughes High School, Cincinnati, Ohio. No significant differences were found between the athletes and non-participants; athletic participation, however, was credited with encouraging students to remain in school until graduation.

Snoddy and Shannon (1939) used the Otis Self-administering Tests of Mental Ability and the Myers-Ruch High School Progress Test to compare upperclass athletes and non-athletes; eleventh and twelfth grade students were used to equalize the opportunity for athletic

participation and educational background. Athletes and non-athletes were found to be approximately equal in intelligence and academic achievement characteristics.

Ray (1940) investigated the mental ability (Terman Group Test) and academic grade achievements of 136 senior class athletes and non-athletes. Team sport athletes were found to have slightly lower intelligence quotients and slightly higher grade averages than those athletes in individual sports. The non-athletes had grade point averages eight percent below the total population of the senior class and thirteen percent below the total athletic group; athletes were superior in mental ability and in academic achievement and had fewer academic failures.

Tuttle and Beebee (1941) studied the scholastic achievement of 577 athletes in ten sports at the State University of Iowa. Scholastic attainment was measured by scores on the University of Iowa Qualifying and Placement Examination and grade point averages. Results from this study indicated that : (1) the scholastic attainment of athletes was approximately equal to other male students, (2) a correlation of .80 existed between placement scores and grade point averages, (3) grade point averages tended to decrease during the competitive season, and (4) individual sport participants (cross country,

golf, tennis, wrestling, and gymnastics) had higher grade point averages than team sport participants (swimming, track and field, baseball, basketball, and football).

ATTITUDES AND MEASURING ATTITUDES

Studies dealing with attitudes have to address two main problems. One problem is the issue of how to define an attitude. The other is how to measure an attitude once it is defined.

According to Thurstone (1928) attitudes are the "sum total of man's inclinations and feelings, prejudices or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about any specific topic" (p. 531). They are composed of two aspects, a predisposition to act and to value.

A measurement of attitudes is possible if one assumes that attitudes are learned. Osgood (1957) states that there seems to be a general agreement of most authorities in the field that attitudes are learned and implicit.

Shaw and Wright (1967) state that the most frequently used methods of measuring attitudes require subjects to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a set of statements about the attitude object. In the Thurstone method of scale construction, the statements are scaled for the degree to which the statement expresses a favorable or unfavorable attitude, based upon the consensus of judges.

Likert-type scales are also commonly used to measure attitudes. According to Kiesler, Collins, and Miller (1969) the main difference between Likert's technique and Thurstone's method is that the respondent to a Thurstone attitude scale is asked to check all of the opinion statements with which he agrees, while the respondent in the Likert is asked to indicate the degree of agreement or approval of all items on a five-point scale. The advantage of this scale is that a relatively few statements may indicate a particular attitude.

Summary

The review of literature has discussed the value of interscholastic athletics. This researcher has reviewed the areas of: (1) contributions to education, (2) individual values, (3) scholastic achievement, and (4) attitudes and measuring attitudes. The evidence is nowhere near conclusive for or against the value of athletics. Most of the research deals with men's participation in athletics. This was because the women's scene in athletic competition is fairly new. Very little research has been completed dealing with women's participation in athletics.

The review of literature gives the reader information to show the significance of this study. Further research dealing with the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes toward school is needed, especially if a different analysis technique is used to assess the attitude of

students. When the budget cutting process begins, we should know as much as possible about the value of interscholastic athletics to education.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

The major purpose of this study is to determine variables, as shown by the Student Opinion Inventory, which may be used to distinguish between seventh and eighth grade athletes and non-athletes at Big Timber School, Big Timber, Montana, during the 1977-78 school year.

Population Description

The population of this study is all seventh and eighth grade students in attendance in Big Timber School during the 1977-78 school year.

The Sampling Procedure

Every member of the population in attendance on the fourth day of May, 1978, was surveyed. Students absent from school on this day were not surveyed.

Method of Collecting Data

The National Study of School Evaluation created and assembled the Student Opinion Inventory used to measure the attitudes of students toward their school. This questionnaire is used to measure the students' attitudes toward school in six different areas. Areas included are: (1) attitudes toward teachers, (2) attitudes toward the counselor, (3) attitudes toward the administration, (5) attitudes

toward the school image, and (6) attitudes toward participation in school activities.

The questionnaire consists of 34 multiple choice questions with five choices for each question. The choices are "5" for very favorable, "4" for favorable, "3" for neutral, "2" for unfavorable, and "1" for very unfavorable. The number of questions dealing with each area is as follows: attitudes toward teachers--seven, attitudes toward the counselor--five, attitudes toward the administration--six, attitudes toward the curriculum and instruction--five, attitudes toward the school image--six, and attitudes toward participation in school activities--five.

The school counselor administered the questionnaire after receiving instructions from the investigator. The investigator chose the school counselor to administer the questionnaire because she also had the total population in class during some time of the day. She administered the questionnaire in her own classroom when the students came for their regularly scheduled class on May 4th, 1978.

Reliability and Validity of Student Opinion Inventory

Coefficient alpha reliability coefficients of internal consistency are given in Table 1 for the six subscales. The reliability coefficients are based on the responses of 1,157 secondary students during February, 1973, for 43 high schools selected from the entire continental United States membership of the regional accrediting associations.

Table 1

Reliabilities of the Student Opinion Inventory Subscales

Subscale	Number of Items	Coefficient Alpha
Student-Teacher	7	.83
Student-Administration	6	.76
Student-Counselor	5	.82
Student-Curriculum	5	.75
Student-Participation	5	.69
Student-School Image	6	.78
Total Instrument	34	.91

In order to study the validity of the Student-Curriculum, Student-Participation, Student-Administration, Student-Counselor, and Student-Teacher subscales, six corresponding semantic differential subscales were constructed. The semantic differential Student-Participation and Student-Curriculum subscales were constructed to measure the same concepts as the corresponding Student Opinion Inventory subscales. The semantic differential Student-Counselor, Student-Teacher, and Student-Administration subscales were constructed to measure how well students liked their counselor, teachers, and administration, respectively. Seven selected secondary schools supplied 367 student responses for the validity study. The Student Opinion

Inventory subscale scores of the 367 secondary students are correlated with the corresponding semantic differential subscales scores. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation Between the Student Opinion Inventory and Semantic Differential Subscales and the Reliability of the Subscales

Student Opinion Inventory Subscale	Reliability	Correlation With Semantic Differentials Subscale	Reliability of Semantic Differential Subscale
1. Student-Participation	.66	.50	.84
2. Student-Curriculum	.75	.59	.78
3. Student-Counselor	.18	.49	.87
4. Student-Teacher	.78	.34	.70
5. Student-Administration	.75	.49	.84

The reliabilities of the Student Opinion Inventory subscales for the validity study approximated those found for the national sample used in establishing reliability. Table 3 presents the intercorrelation of the subscales based on the 367 responses from the validity study.

Table 3

Intercorrelations of the Student Opinion Inventory Subscales

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Student-Teacher						
2. Student-Administration	.51					
3. Student-Participation	.47	.46				
4. Student-School Structure	.42	.47	.48			
5. Student-Curriculum	.61	.51	.37	.47		
6. Student-Counselor	.29	.35	.23	.32	.33	

Statistical Hypothesis

This study tests the following research hypothesis:

H_0 - There are no distinct variables related to attitudes toward school which can be used to distinguish between seventh and eighth grade athletes and seventh and eighth grade non-athletes.

Analysis of Data

A Likert-type scale is used to register the attitudes of the students for this study. These data are then subjected to a discriminant analysis statistic which is used to ascertain the variables that can best distinguish between athletes and non-athletes. According to Klecka (1975), discriminant analysis begins with the desire to

statistically distinguish between two or more groups of cases. To distinguish between the groups the investigator selects a collection of discriminating variables that measure characteristics on which the groups are expected to differ. For this study, the variables consisted of 34 questions on the Student Opinion Inventory.

Two types of discriminant analysis are used in this study. Klecka (1975) states, "Stepwise discriminant analysis begins by selecting the single best-discriminating variable according to the user-determined criterion. A second discriminating variable is selected as the variable best able to improve the value of the discrimination criterion in combination with the first variable. The third and subsequent variables are similarly selected according to their ability to contribute to further discrimination. Eventually, either all variables will have been selected or it will be found that the remaining variables are no longer able to contribute to further discrimination" (page 436). The direct method of discriminant analysis simply enters all variables into the analysis at the same time.

Discriminant analysis is also used as a classification technique in this study. The direct method is used to classify the population as athletes or non-athletes.

Precautions Taken for Accuracy

The investigator reviewed the questionnaire with the counselor who administered the questionnaire. This acquainted the counselor

with the instructions and procedure to use during the administration of the questionnaire.

The results of the questionnaire were hand tabulated and confirmed by the counselor. The raw scores were transcribed to an IBM Fortran coding form and analyzed at Montana State University using the SPSS discriminant analysis program.

Summary

Every member of Big Timber School in attendance during the 1977-78 school year was surveyed. The Student Opinion Inventory questionnaire is used to measure students' attitudes toward school in six different areas including: teacher, administration, counselor, curriculum, school image, and participation. The questionnaire was administered by the school counselor after proper instruction was given by the investigator. Discriminant analysis is used to ascertain the variables that can be used to distinguish between athletes and non-athletes. These data are used to test the null hypothesis that there are no distinct variables related to attitudes toward school which can be used to distinguish between seventh and eighth grade athletes and seventh and eighth grade non-athletes.

Chapter 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This study asks one main question; What variable can best be used to distinguish between the attitudes toward school of athletes and non-athletes? In order to answer that question, data compiled from the Student Opinion Inventory given to 76 seventh and eighth grade students are analyzed within this chapter. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses how discriminant analysis is used to determine the variables that best distinguish between athletes and non-athletes. The second section discusses the variables chosen and gives a comparison of the responses of athletes and non-athletes.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Discriminant analysis provides a way to ascertain the best variables that can be used to distinguish between: (1) athletes and non-athletes, (2) seventh graders and eighth graders, and (3) males and females. The five variables found to only discriminate between athletes and non-athletes are used for further analysis. Table 4 shows the variables chosen that best discriminate between the above mentioned groups.

The stepwise method of discriminant analysis is used to choose the variables. The variables chosen predict to which group an individual belongs. This is according to the individual's responses to the

Table 4

Variables Chosen to Discriminate Between Groups

Step	Athletes Non-athletes (variables)	Seventh Grade Male-Female (variables)	Eighth Grade (variables)
step 1	2	4*	6*
step 2	3*	19*	13
step 3	22	26*	16
step 4	12	16	23*
step 5	34*	22	17
step 6	33	15	10*
step 7	13	20	28*
step 8	16	5*	32
step 9	18	32	25*
step 10	14	12	8*
step 11	9*	30	30
step 12	7*	2	33
step 13	1*	18	24*
step 14	31		29*
step 15	15		31
step 16	17		14
step 17	30		11*

* variables unique to discriminate only between these groups

The complete list of variables can be found in the appendix.

variables. The correct prediction percentages are found in Table 5. The seventeen variables chosen to discriminate between athletes and non-athletes (Table 4) are used to correctly predict the group in 92.11% of the cases.

Table 5
Prediction Results Using Variables from Table 4

Actual Group	Number of Cases	<u>Predicted Group Membership</u>	
		Group 1	Group 2
Group 1 (Athletes)	49	45 91.8%	4 8.2%
Group 2 (Non-athletes)	27	2 7.4%	25 92.6%
Percentage of grouped cases correctly classified: 92.11%			
Group 1 (Seventh Grade)	33	32 97.0%	1 3.0%
Group 2 (Eighth Grade)	43	4 9.3%	39 90.7%
Percentage of grouped cases correctly classified: 93.42%			
Group 1 (Male)	44	37 84.1%	7 15.9%
Group 2 (Female)	32	7 21.9%	25 78.1%
Percentage of grouped cases correctly classified: 81.58%			

The five variables chosen to separate athletes and non-athletes are listed below with accompanying analyses: (1) item 1, (2) item 3, (3) item 7, (4) item 9, and (5) item 34.

Item 1 is:

In how many of the student activities that you participate in are students involved in planning the activity?

- A. All
- B. Most
- C. About half
- D. Few
- E. None

Table 6 shows the comparison of the responses of athletes and non-athletes to item 1 of the Student Opinion Inventory. Athletes felt (26.53%) that students are involved in planning half or more of the activities in which they participate, whereas only 14.82% of the non-athletes felt the same way. Non-athletes felt (44.44%) that students are not involved in planning any activities. This large percentage may be due to the fact that non-athletes might not participate in as many activities as athletes. However, data on this subject has not been obtained.

Table 6

Item 1 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory

Response	Athletes	Non-athletes
	Frequency and Percentage	Frequency and Percentage
A	3 (6.12%)	0 (0%)
B	3 (6.12%)	2 (7.41%)
C	7 (14.29%)	2 (7.41%)
D	24 (48.98%)	11 (40.74%)
E	12 (24.49%)	12 (44.44%)

Item 3 is:

How many student activities (clubs, parties, plays, athletics, etc.) that you would like to participate in, do you participate in?

- A. All
- B. Most
- C. About half
- D. Few
- E. None

Table 7 shows the comparison of the responses of athletes and non-athletes to item 3 of the Student Opinion Inventory. The athletes felt that they participate (75.51%) in all or most of the student activities in which they want. Only 33.33% of the non-athletes felt

they participate in all or most of the student activities in which they want. This may show that non-athletes want to participate more in student activities but do not for some reason.

Table 7

Item 3 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory

Response	Athletes	Non-athletes
	Frequency and Percentage	Frequency and Percentage
A	13 (26.53%)	4 (14.81%)
B	24 (48.98%)	5 (18.52%)
C	6 (12.24%)	4 (14.81%)
D	6 (12.24%)	7 (25.93%)
E	0 (0%)	7 (25.93%)

Item 7 is:

How often do your teachers clearly explain what to do on assignments?

- A. Always
- B. Usually
- C. About half the time
- D. Seldom
- E. Never

Table 8 shows the comparison of the responses of athletes and non-athletes to item 7 of the Student Opinion Inventory. There seems to be very little difference in the responses of the athletes and non-athletes on this item. A large percentage of both athletes and non-athletes feel teachers usually or always explain the assignments clearly.

Table 8
Item 7 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory

Response	Athletes Frequency and Percentage	Non-athletes Frequency and Percentage
A	9 (18.37%)	8 (29.63%)
B	31 (63.27%)	13 (48.15%)
C	4 (8.16%)	4 (14.81%)
D	4 (8.16%)	2 (7.41%)
E	1 (2.04%)	0 (0%)

Item 9 is:

How many of your teachers make sure you understand what they teach in class?

- A. All
- B. Most
- C. About half

D. Few

E. None

Table 9 shows the comparison of the responses of athletes and non-athletes to item 9 of the Student Opinion Inventory. Of the athletes, 75.51% felt most or all of their teachers make sure they understand what is taught in class. The non-athletes (51.85%) felt most or all of their teachers make sure they understand what is taught in class. Athletes to a greater extent seem to feel that more teachers try to make sure they understand what is taught in class.

Table 9

Item 9 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory

Response	Athletes Frequency and Percentage	Non-athletes Frequency and Percentage
A	13 (26.53%)	8 (29.63%)
B	24 (48.98%)	6 (22.22%)
C	5 (10.20%)	7 (25.93%)
D	5 (10.20%)	3 (11.11%)
E	2 (4.08%)	3 (11.11%)

Item 34 is:

How statisfied are you with the number of student activities that your school offers?

- A. Very satisfied
- B. Satisfied
- C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- D. Dissatisfied
- E. Very dissatisfied

Table 10 shows the comparison of the responses of athletes and non-athletes to item 34 of the Student Opinion Inventory. The athletes (26.53%) are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied at the number of student activities the school offers. In comparison, 11.11% of the non-athletes are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This may be a factor associated with the nature of Big Timber which is a small rural school in which activities are limited. Once the athletes get involved with school activities they may feel the need for further involvement.

Table 10
Item 34 Responses of the Student Opinion Inventory

Response	Athletes	Non-athletes
	Frequency and Percentage	Frequency and Percentage
A	1 (2.04%)	0 (0%)
B	19 (38.78%)	14 (51.85%)
C	16 (32.65%)	10 (37.04%)
D	8 (16.33%)	2 (7.41%)
E	5 (10.20%)	1 (3.70%)

The preceding five variables are used to classify the population as athlete or non-athlete. The direct method of discriminant analysis is used to classify each individual. Table 11 shows the results of the discriminant analysis.

Table 11
Prediction Results using the Five Selected Variables
Generated by the Discriminant Analysis Statistic

Actual Group	Number of Cases	Predicted Group Membership	
		Group 1	Group 2
Group 1 (Athletes)	49	40 81.6%	9 18.4%
Group 2 (Non-athletes)	27	8 29.6%	19 70.4%
Percentage of grouped cases correctly classified: 77.63%			

Since the five variables correctly classify a high percentage (77.63%) of the cases the investigator rejects the null hypothesis that there are no distinct variables related to attitudes toward school which can be used to distinguish between seventh and eighth grade athletes and seventh and eighth grade non-athletes.

Summary

The process of discriminant analysis enables the isolation of five variables that distinguish between athletes and non-athletes. Using the stepwise method of discriminant analysis seventeen variables

are chosen as being helpful in separating athletes and non-athletes. From these seventeen, five seem to only separate athletes and non-athletes. The other twelve separate either males from females or eighth graders from seventh graders (Table 4).

The main differences between athletes and non-athletes, using the five variables, seem to be in the areas of student participation, attitudes toward teachers, and the school image. The five variables predict whether each individual is an athlete or a non-athlete. The direct method of discriminant analysis correctly classifies 77.63% of the cases. This high percentage seems to indicate that the five variables can be used to distinguish between athletes and non-athletes.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Today with the rising costs in education, school systems are re-evaluating the worth of interscholastic athletics. This seems to be especially true at the seventh and eighth grade levels because of the lack of incoming revenue to help support sports programs. Due to lack of funds, some school districts have discontinued seventh and eighth grade athletic programs.

One area of research which seems to be overlooked in dealing with this area of concern is the comparison of attitudes of athletes and non-athletes toward school. Also increasing interest in girls' athletics brings about a need for more research dealing with girls' participation in interscholastic athletics. Thus the problem of this study was to compare the difference between the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes toward school at the seventh and eighth grade level. The study involved all seventh and eighth grade students in attendance during the 1977-1978 school year in Big Timber, Montana.

The review of literature discusses the value of interscholastic athletics. The areas reviewed includes: (1) contributions to education, (2) individual values, (3) scholastic achievement, and (4) attitudes and measuring attitudes. This literature is not conclusive

either for or against the value of athletics. Research dealing with girls' participation in athletics is very limited since interest in girls' athletics is in its outset.

The Student Opinion Inventory questionnaire is used to measure students' attitudes toward school. The questionnaire is administered by the school counselor after proper instruction is given by the investigator.

Through the process of discriminant analysis five variables are found to distinguish between athletes and non-athletes alone. The five variables are analyzed to compare the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes. The variables deal with the areas of: (1) student participation, (2) attitudes toward teachers, and (3) the school image. Using these five variables the direct method of discriminant analysis correctly classifies 77.63% of the cases.

Conclusions

The setting for this study is a small rural community. Therefore, the results may be somewhat similar in other small rural communities in Montana or elsewhere.

The following conclusions are drawn from this study:

1. There do seem to be differences between the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes toward school. Discriminant analysis chose 17 of the 34 items on the Student Opinion Inventory as being helpful

in discriminating between athletes and non-athletes. This many variables being chosen should show there are differences in the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes.

2. Certain variables seem to distinguish only between athletes and non-athletes. From the 17 variables chosen to separate athletes and non-athletes, five are characteristic of separating only athletes and non-athletes. The other 12 can also be used to separate either males from females or seventh graders from eighth graders.

3. The five variables chosen that only separate athletes and non-athletes are fairly accurate in classifying the population into groups of athletes and non-athletes. Through the process of direct discriminant analysis 77.63% of the population is correctly classified as athlete or non-athlete. This high percentage would justify the five variables being used to distinguish between athletes and non-athletes.

4. The five variables chosen deal with certain areas of attitudes toward school. Two variables deal with the attitudes toward student participation, two variables deal with the attitudes toward teachers, and one variable deals with attitude toward the school image. Attitudes of athletes and non-athletes toward student participation would differ probably because athletes participate in more activities. In small rural schools it seems about the same students participate in everything. Attitudes toward teachers may differ since

some of the teachers are also coaches in various sports. This could have either a positive or negative effect depending on the relationship developed during the athletic participation.

5. A larger percentage of athletes feel that students are involved in planning all or most student activities. Over 26% of athletes feel this way as compared with approximately 15% of the non-athletes. Possibly athletes have some say in planning during their athletic participation.

6. A much larger percentage of athletes as compared with non-athletes participate in all or most of the student activities in which they wish. Over 75% of the athletes participate in all or most activities they want compared with just slightly greater than 33% of the non-athletes. The non-athletes may be saying they want to participate but are not allowed to for some reason.

7. More athletes than non-athletes feel most or all of their teachers make sure that they understand what is taught in class. The comparison here is 75.51% of the athletes with 51.85% of the non-athletes. The difference here may be because the athletes are more outgoing and not afraid to ask for extra help. Also, the teachers involved with coaching may know the students who participate in athletics better and therefore spend more time helping the athletes.

8. A larger percentage of athletes as compared with non-athletes are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied at the number of student

activities the school offers. Athletes seem to want to have more activities available in which to participate. Again, this relates to the fact that in small rural communities the same students seem to be involved in about everything possible.

Recommendations

The investigator gives the following recommendations as a result of this study:

1. More research is needed in the area of girls' participation in interscholastic athletics. Since girls' athletics are becoming more popular every day research must be conducted on the effects of girls' participation in athletics. The data revealed by the discriminant analysis (Table 4) indicate a number of interesting variables related to male-female, seventh-eighth grade interaction.
2. Further research should be conducted with comparing the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes toward school. Research in this area could assist school districts in their decision making in regard to interscholastic athletics.
3. Research should be conducted comparing the attitudes of seventh and eighth graders toward school. Using discriminant analysis shows a lot of differences between seventh and eighth graders in the areas of attitudes toward teachers and curriculum (Table 4).

4. Discriminant analysis should be considered in more research designs. It proved very interesting and can be justified for use in many different areas.

5. These type of data may be used by a principal in order to determine what programs might best meet the needs of students.

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APPENDIX

**STUDENT OPINION INVENTORY
Part A**

and

**LETTER OF PERMISSION TO
COPY THE INSTRUMENT**

STUDENT OPINION INVENTORY

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assist your school in learning more about its instructional program. Your opinions and attitudes are of vital importance in helping your school learn more about itself.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. The answers you give will be completely confidential. Do not sign your name or identify yourself in any way.

Remember, you will be assisting your school in learning more about itself.

PART A

Directions

Please read each item carefully. Note there are five responses below each item. Select the response which most clearly represents your feelings, and circle the letter immediately to the left of the response selected.

Example: How satisfied are you with your progress in mathematics this year?

- A. Very satisfied
- ☒ B. Satisfied
- C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- D. Dissatisfied
- E. Very dissatisfied

The Student Opinion Inventory, Part A, is packaged separately and may be purchased in quantity from the National Study of School Evaluation.

NATIONAL STUDY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION

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STUDENT OPINION INVENTORY

PART A

1. In how many of the student activities that you participate in are the students involved in planning the activity?
 - A. All
 - B. Many
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
2. In how many of the activities of your school would you feel that you would be accepted?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
3. How many student activities (clubs, parties, plays, athletics, etc.) that you would like to participate in, do you participate in?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
4. How often do you feel that you "belong" in your school?
 - A. Always
 - B. Usually
 - C. About half the time
 - D. Seldom
 - E. Never
5. How many sponsors of the activities that you participate in seem well suited to the activity?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
6. How many of your teachers seem to care if you learn the subject they teach?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
7. How often do your teachers clearly explain *what* to do on assignments?
 - A. Always
 - B. Usually
 - C. About half the time
 - D. Seldom
 - E. Never
8. How much help do your teachers usually give you with your schoolwork?
 - A. All the help I need
 - B. Most of the help I need
 - C. About half the help I need
 - D. A little of the help I need
 - E. None of the help I need
9. How many of your teachers make sure you understand what they teach in class?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
10. How often do your teachers clearly explain *how* assignments are to be done?
 - A. Always
 - B. Usually
 - C. About half the time
 - D. Seldom
 - E. Never
11. How many of your teachers are willing to give students individual help outside of class time?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
12. How many of your teachers give you enough personal encouragement in your schoolwork?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None

13. How much help does your counselor give you in the selection of a college, vocational, or trade school?
 - A. All the help I need
 - B. Most of the help I need
 - C. About half the help I need
 - D. Little of the help I need
 - E. None of the help I need
14. How much help does your counselor give you in the selection of courses?
 - A. All the help I need
 - B. Most of the help I need
 - C. About half the help I need
 - D. Little of the help I need
 - E. None of the help I need
15. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way you are treated by your counselor?
 - A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
16. How much help does your counselor give you in the selection of a vocation?
 - A. All the help I need
 - B. Most of the help I need
 - C. About half the help I need
 - D. Little of the help I need
 - E. None of the help I need
17. How much help does your counselor give you in solving your personal problems?
 - A. All the help I need
 - B. Most of the help I need
 - C. About half the help I need
 - D. Little of the help I need
 - E. None of the help I need
18. If you had a problem or suggestion for the administration, how long would you have to wait to talk to a member of the administration?
 - A. I could talk to the administration immediately.
 - B. I could talk to the administration within the day.
 - C. I could talk to the administration within a week.
 - D. I could talk to the administration within a month.
 - E. I couldn't talk to the administration at all.
19. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way you are treated by the administration?
 - A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
20. In general, how often does the administration seem to really care about you as an individual?
 - A. Always
 - B. Usually
 - C. About half the time
 - D. Seldom
 - E. Never
21. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the administration includes the students in making decisions about matters which directly affect the students (dress code, assemblies, etc.)?
 - A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
22. How much personal encouragement does the administration give you concerning your schoolwork?
 - A. All the encouragement I need
 - B. Most of the encouragement I need
 - C. About half the encouragement I need
 - D. Little of the encouragement I need
 - E. None of the encouragement I need
23. Does the administration talk to you as an individual on all occasions?
 - A. Always
 - B. Usually
 - C. About half the time
 - D. Seldom
 - E. Never
24. How much of what you are studying do you think will be useful to you in everyday living?
 - A. Everything I am studying
 - B. Most of what I am studying
 - C. About half of what I am studying
 - D. Less than half of what I am studying
 - E. None of what I am studying
25. In how many of your courses are you satisfied with the methods used to teach the courses?
 - A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
26. Regardless of what your grades may be, in how many of your school subjects would you say that you are "learning a lot" this year?
 - A. In all my subjects
 - B. In most of my subjects
 - C. In about half of my subjects
 - D. In less than half of my subjects
 - E. In none of my subjects

27. How many of the things that you should be learning right now are being taught in your school?
- A. All
 - B. Most
 - C. About half
 - D. Few
 - E. None
28. All things considered, how much do you think you are learning from your schoolwork?
- A. All that I can learn
 - B. Almost all that I can learn
 - C. About half of what I can learn
 - D. Somewhat less than I can learn
 - E. Considerably less than I can learn
29. In general, how proud or ashamed of your school are you?
- A. I am very proud of my school.
 - B. I am proud of my school.
 - C. I am neither proud nor ashamed of my school.
 - D. I am ashamed of my school.
 - E. I am very ashamed of my school.
30. How would you rate "school spirit" at your school? (Consider students support of athletic teams, charity drives, class money-raising projects, etc.)
- A. Excellent
 - B. Good
 - C. Adequate
 - D. Poor
 - E. Very poor
31. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your school?
- A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
32. In general, how well satisfied are you with the variety of the subjects that your school offers?
- A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
33. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the variety of student activities that your school offers?
- A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
34. How satisfied are you with the number of student activities that your school offers?
- A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied

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Mr. John M. Overstreet
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 Belgrade, Montana 59714

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