A Study to Determine the Effect of Membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the Performance of Male Students Taking Standardized Tests in Hampton, Virginia

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT
OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MALE STUDENTS TAKING
STANDARDIZED TESTS IN HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

A Research Paper
Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies
at Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Master of Science in Education Degree

By
William E. Yarnall III
June 1996
This research paper was prepared by William E. Yarnall III under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science of Education.

APPROVAL BY:

[Signature]
Dr. John M. Ritz
Advisor and Graduate Program Director

6/16/96
Date
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Headlines from across Hampton Roads: "Tabb student arrested, suspended after gun found" (Daily Press, 1996, p. C3). Headlines like this can be found throughout the United States from the rural heartland to the sprawling cities. It is getting tougher and tougher to grow up in this world. Children are growing up faster than nature had intended.

Critics today agree that the alarming number of families with single parents, most of them women, place a serious effect on the development of our youth. While single parent households are not a guarantee for the failure of a child's development, they are a contributing factor. What can be done to give the youth some direction?

Eighty-five years ago a movement came to this nation from Great Britain, a movement targeted to the development of young men. The Boy Scouts of America was founded in New York City in February of 1910 and since that time it has contributed to the positive development of millions of young men. The primary focus of the Boy Scouts was to prepare boys to become young men who are an asset to society and not a hindrance. It was felt that we only have one resource to make a man and we only have one chance (Scoutmaster's Handbook, 1981, p. 8).
The Boy Scouts not only train a boy how to camp, cook, and tie knots; it trains boys to use good hygiene, the benefit of exercise and proper diet, and the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The program is structured so each boy progresses at his own pace; the lion's share of responsibility for advancement rests with the boy. As a result, boys learn to budget time and resources, set goals, and work as a team and become assets to society.

A side benefit of involvement in Boy Scouts is a boy's academic abilities in school. Since schools offer a myriad of extra-curricular activities, these are mostly structured as group activities and do not rely on the boy working on his own initiative. This study focused on the boys who are in Scouting and how their performance on the Virginia State Assessment Program compared to the rest of the students in the same grades in the City of Hampton, Virginia. It examined the possibility that if boys are active in Scouting, their academic performance and scores would improve.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine the effect that involvement in Boy Scouts has on the performance of scouts on standardized tests.
HYPOTHESIS

To answer this problem, the following hypothesis was established:

H₁: Students who participated in Scouting activities will outscore students who have not been active in Scouting on The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills standardized tests.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Boy Scout Motto, "Be Prepared", does not imply that a properly prepared Scout has a first aid kit or survival kit with him at all times. There is no possible way for anyone to be prepared for every emergency or situation that arises. People tend to think that for a Scout to be prepared, he has a backpack full of everything he may need. For a Scout to Be Prepared, he must be ready to handle any situation as it arises, prepared mentally, not in a material sense. "A Scout prepares for whatever comes his way by learning all he can" (Salzman, 1992, p. 591).

People have always relied on Scouts to be prepared in time of need. Troop leaders show meaningful ways to help the family, community, nation, and world. Small acts of kindness performed everyday improve the lives of others. In an emergency, a Scout is ready to do whatever the situation requires (Boy Scout Handbook, 1990, p. 9).
Scouting teaches boys to become young men. The process is not an easy one; boys learn new ideals and expand their values to include a promise to live their life according to a set of rules called the Scout Law. Their promise to abide by this law is called the Scout Oath or Promise. In this oath, they pledge their duty to God and Country, duty to others, and duty to self using the twelve points of the Scout Law as a guide. They promise to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. These oaths and laws have not changed in the eighty-five years since scouting started in the United States (Boy Scout Handbook, 1990, p. 583).

Scouting also teaches a young man to set goals and work toward their accomplishment. In learning to set goals the ability to manage their time and other resources becomes a vital learning experience. Through this learning process Scouts tend to allow the habits they learn in Scouting to spill over into their everyday life. If a young man learns to manage his resources and harness his abilities through Scouting, he then becomes a better student and scores better on tests.

Should the result of this study prove young men involved in Scouting out perform their peers in academics, greater emphasis should be placed on involvement by society.
This program, as well as similar programs, further enforce the family concept and bring some hope to youth who may not have any in their near future. America's youth need a gentle nudge in the right direction; it is our job as parents, teachers, etc., to keep our youngsters on the right path.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to Boy Scouts in Hampton Troops 10 and 84, Heritage District, Colonial Virginia Council. All Scouts attended Hampton City Schools and participated in the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) administered in March 1995. A letter was given or sent to the parents of the Scouts asking for the release of the Scout's test results. Only Scouts who were in the 4th, 5th, 7th, and 8th grades during school year 1994 - 1995 were included in the study.

ASSUMPTIONS

In this study, it was assumed that:
1. All Scouts participated in ITBS testing.
2. Test results would be provided by a majority of the parents contacted; one hundred percent participation was not anticipated.
3. All students were tested under the same conditions at the same approximate point in the school year.
4. Student scores reflect their abilities, and knowledge compared against a national average.

PROCEDURES

The ITBS score sheets were acquired from the parents of the Scouts. The records of the Hampton City School system were accessed to determine the average score of all students in the same grades as the Scouts who provided test results. Data was then analyzed, the two groups compared, and results interpreted to see if involvement in Scouting effects the academic progress of students while in school.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were used throughout this study:

ITBS--Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, given annually to selected grades to compared students against a national average.

District--the area where a troop is located, usually a part of a city or in rural areas, a portion of a county, or the whole county or numerous counties.

Council--a grouping of Districts headed by full-time professional staff which provide training for volunteer leaders and helps every troop have a successful program. The size of the professional staff depends on the number of boys involved in the area of responsibility.

Scouting--refers to any program associated with the Boy Scouts of America.
OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the performance of male students taking standardized tests in Hampton, Virginia. This chapter provided a brief description of the purpose and need for conducting this research, the way in which it was conducted, and various terms used throughout the study. Chapter II will provide information on previous related studies and expert's opinions on this and similar topics. Chapter III will consist of a detailed description of the procedure and process used to reach conclusions. Chapter IV will present all relevant data which was collected and analyzed. The final chapter, Chapter V, will summarize the study and make recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the performance of male students taking standardized tests in Hampton, Virginia. While a complete review of the literature on this subject was done, no information on the specific topic was found. However, information was found on several topics relating to the Boy Scouts of America and its role in the development of today’s youth. No correlation was made between standardized test performance and participation in Scouting. Information was found on the benefits of Scouting in relation to future academic involvement and preparation for future citizenship in our communities. This chapter will discuss: 1) Scouting activities, 2) learning by doing, and 3) role models and discipline.

SCOUTING ACTIVITIES

Scouting is attempting to make future leaders from America’s inner cities. For the first time boys are being taken out of the city and being taught how to pitch a tent and cook over an open fire. In communities where there is not much of a scouting or outdoors tradition and where few adults are available or want to volunteer as a leaders,
Scouting has made some progress (Parenti, 1993, p. 64). Many of the activities the Scouting program uses focus on informal and formal learning, personal hygiene, sexual responsibility, and drug and alcohol abuse. The activities are geared for participation by all regardless of skill level; each program is aimed at a specific age level, in terms the youth can understand (Moon, 1992, p. 54). Through these activities, boys are given the opportunity to grow and prosper, at least part of the time, as they mature.

Parents of young teenage boys are increasingly fearful that if their boys are not involved in supervised activities, they are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior or become victims or perpetrators of crime. Without youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts, large numbers of young men can fall into the traps of dangerous and harmful behavior. Thousands more would seek companionship, thrills, and power by joining youth gangs or resort to drugs and alcohol as an escape (Hechinger, 1992, p. 191).

**LEARNING BY DOING**

Key to the program of the Boy Scouts of America is a commitment to the effective development of boys into young men, reliance on small-group activities under the guidance of committed adults, and the boys working as a team in the
process of cooperative learning (Hechinger, 1992, p. 193). Cooperative learning can be best described as group learning at one's own rate. Information is usually presented to the group as a whole; the boys are then required to interpret and learn the material in their own way and finally they are tested on the material to ensure they have retained the information as intended. Much of the progression through the Boy Scout ranks is at the scout's own pace. It is his responsibility to ensure his progress. This method attempts to teach the boy the values of goal setting and time management. If he does not progress, he has no one to blame. Along the way adults guide and nudge the boys in the right direction when they start to stray from the intended goal. Through the completion of Merit Badges, boys learn about different careers and subjects. Some of these subjects are plumbing, aviation, chemistry, citizenship, and nature to name a few of the over one hundred and twenty available. The interest a boy generates by completing a Merit Badge may help him decide on a future career as an adult. Some Merit Badge topics relate closely to subjects taught in school, such as chemistry, and may cultivate an interest in that subject that leads to improved performance in school. Completion of badges covering citizenship not only teach the scout about history and our rights as
citizens but may help the scout grow into a responsible, informed citizen and voter.

Planting the seeds of knowledge in boys at this young age can benefit several years later when they select high school or college courses. It is also satisfying to know that topics learned at this age may remain with the scout his entire lifetime (Lyons, 1991, p. 24). There is little doubt that any scouting activity will prepare the scout better for any situation he may encounter as an adult.

ROLE MODELS AND DISCIPLINE

What do 65 percent of college graduates, 72 percent of Rhodes scholars, 75 percent of military academy graduates, 65 percent of U. S. Congressmen, 85 percent of airline pilots, 85 percent of FBI agents, 11 of the 12 astronauts who walked on the moon, and 108 of all 172 astronauts have in common? They were all Boy Scouts (Salzman, 1992, p. 591). Only three percent of all beginning scouts attain the Eagle rank.

Many scouting age boys, depending upon family background and social circumstances, need strong and exemplary role models (Lyons, 1992, p. 24). Adult leaders are committed to the boys progression into adulthood, as an asset, not a liability to society.
For the program to be effective it must constantly evaluate how to best appeal to the needs and wants of today's youth. Two primary attractions to any youth group is fun and friends, not very much different from what adults look for in their own organizations and clubs they join. Another thing youth look for are activities that pertain to their lives, present and future, such as career training. The rules for most youth organizations are simple but crucial: do not hang out with gangs, do not use drugs or alcohol, and be the example for your organization and represent it proudly (Hechinger, 1992, p. 193).

Discipline in youth organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, must be fair and swift. Rules must be set and familiar to all members; rules devised by the membership are usually accepted better than mandated rules from adults. Treatment must be the same for all committing the same infractions. Discipline must be swift and sure to prevent reoccurrence. Time should not be spent dwelling on the infraction, handle the incident and move on; stagnation will only serve to disrupt the organization.

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the performance of male students taking standardized tests in
Hampton, Virginia. This chapter provided information on previous related studies and expert's opinions on this and similar topics. While specific research is not available, we have seen that youth activities have a major impact and developmental influence on students.

Research has shown that involvement in youth activities, such as Boy Scouts, can reduce gang involvement and prepare students for future careers. These are two areas of great influence on today's students. Participation in these activities enhances a student's abilities and helps them mature and improve their overall academic performance.

It has been concluded that in many ways participation in Scouting can impact students. This paper will attempt to show that involvement in Scouting has a direct effect on a student's performance on standardized tests.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the performance of male students taking standardized tests in Hampton, Virginia. In order to determine this, a population was selected, data were collected and compiled, and statistical analyses were performed. This chapter will discuss each of these areas, in addition to the research method used in the study.

POPULATION

The population in this study were 15 boys who are members of Boy Scout Troops 10 and 84 who were enrolled and tested in the Hampton City School District in 1995. From this population test results were requested from parents and city-wide grade level averages were obtained from the Administrative Offices of the city school district. All grade levels were grouped together since not enough response was received to do an accurate correlation in one grade level.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The data collection instrument used was the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The ITBS is a standardized test administered annually to thousands of school children around
the United States. The test is written and scored by Uniscore Incorporated. The test is made up of questions derived from grade level curriculums around the nation. Students are scored on the number of correct responses and their score is compared to a national average. The test is constantly used to compare the adequacy of schools and their ability to teach our children. This, like any other statistic, is very misleading. Children do not learn at the same levels; they do not have the same advantages or disadvantages in the home or school; they do not live in the same environment. These and many other factors including creativity are not taken into consideration when the scores are correlated. This tool is strictly a means to compare one student against a national average.

RESEARCH METHOD

The main method of research used in this study was a correlational study. First, Scoutmasters of Hampton Troops 10 and 84 were asked if they concurred with using data from their respective troops. Next, a letter was written to all Scout parents explaining who the researcher was and what was being studied. These letters were reviewed by the Scoutmasters prior to distribution to the parents. Parents who wanted to participate in the study provided their son’s
test results to the researcher at a troop meeting. The Hampton City School Administrative Offices were contacted for the city-wide test results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 who were tested in March 1995. The data was recorded on a master list and the scouts average scores were to be correlated to city-wide averages and analyzed for a relation.

DATA COLLECTION

In order to collect the data needed, each Scout's parent, in both troops, were given a letter, Appendix A, explaining the reason for the study and an assurance that test results would be kept strictly confidential; no names were to be used. Test results, Appendix B, were collected by the researcher for recording and compilation. After test results were recorded they were destroyed by shredding. The city-wide averages were obtained from the Psychological Services Division of the Hampton City School District. This data was considered public information so no release was required. Data were arranged into tables in the same order they appeared on the standardized test score sheet; each table was arranged in the same manner for clarity.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Once all the data collection and compilation were completed, statistical analyses were performed. A t-test
was selected for its ability to determine if there was a significant difference between the two samples. The sample means used will be the means of the scores for the Scouts and the grade level average.

SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methods and procedures which were followed to accomplish the research goals. A population was defined and data collected, compiled and analyzed. The findings, conclusions and recommendations will be reported and discussed in Chapters IV and V.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the performance of male students taking standardized tests in Hampton, Virginia. This chapter will present the findings of the research conducted.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The first set of data is an anonymous list of test results for the scouts who provided test results, (Table 1). Their scores were recorded and averaged.

The second set of data is a list by grade of test result averages for the City of Hampton, (Table 2). These grades were totaled and averaged providing a value that may be correlated. The tables are constructed using the same format for ease of comparison.

COMPARISON OF GROUPS

A t-test was performed using the findings of this research. The average scores were utilized from both groups omitting the score for Complete Battery Composite, since this value is a composite of all scores except Social Studies and Science. The results of the one-tailed t-test was a value of 8.996.
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Mean 72.067 68.467 54.467 60.933 73.2 69.8 68.2 73.4 68.2 71.8 70.867 78.933 65.533 74.4 72.6 70.4 72.4

Table 1
### Percentile Score by Grade
**Average of Grades 4 - 8**

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Table 2
SUMMARY

This chapter reported the results of a correlation of the standardized test scores of Scouts and students. Chapter V will analyze these findings as well as provide conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the performance of male students taking standardized tests in Hampton, Virginia. This chapter will summarize previous chapters, draw conclusions based on the data provided, make recommendations, and suggest ideas for further study.

SUMMARY

This research was conducted to determine if active participation in the Boy Scouts of America had any effect on the academic abilities of involved students. To determine the effect, the score results from a standardized test battery were compared. The Boy Scouts are a unique organization in that the youth member is ultimately responsible for his progression through the program. During his progression adults assume responsibility for certain aspects of the program, for example: planning trips or transportation to campouts.

The review of literature revealed that little or no research had been done to compare a boy’s academic achievement to his involvement in the Boy Scouts. Information was found on several topics relating to the Boy Scouts of America and its role in the development of today’s
youth. No correlation was made between standardized test performance and participation in Scouting. Information was found on the benefits of Scouting in relation to future academic involvement and preparation for future citizenship in our communities.

The population of study was limited to 15 boys who are members of Boy Scout Troops 10 and 84 who were enrolled and tested in the Hampton City School District in 1995. The research was conducted by contacting the city school administration offices and obtaining the test results for grades 4, 5, 7, and 8. The parents of Scouts were asked to provide their son's test results to the researcher. Approximately 57 parents were contacted; 15 responded with test score results. When the research was complete a single-tailed t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant relationship between the mean scores of the two groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The hypothesis of this study was:

$H_1$: Students who participated in scouting activities will outscore students who have not been active in Scouting on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Based on the results compiled this hypothesis is accepted. The t-test score of 8.996 is significant at the .01 and .05 levels using a degree of freedom of thirty. The
value for the .01 level is 2.457 and for .05 is 1.697. The t-test score of 8.996 exceeds both levels. Students who are active in Scouting scored significantly better than the student population average for the City of Hampton. It is concluded that the additional responsibility for personal achievement in Scouting coupled with Scouting ideals provides a boy additional motivation and desire to perform at a higher level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Future administration of standardized tests should have a method to identify students who participate in extracurricular activities such as Scouting, sports, clubs, etc.. This would allow the correlation of a much larger sample giving more data to the process.

2. School districts should support and charter more organizations involved in character building and ideals that result in citizens who are an asset to society.

3. This study should be repeated using students and Scouts from varying locations to determine the effect of urban versus suburban dwelling.

4. Further study, possibly on the college level, could be accomplished to see if the Scouting influence continues after high school.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

Sample letter to parents requesting release of scores
Dear Scout Parent,

My name is Bill Yarnall. I am an Assistant Scoutmaster with Boy Scout Troop 10 in Hampton. I am also on active duty in the U. S. Air Force and enrolled in the Military Career Transition Program at Old Dominion University. I am working towards my Masters Degree and a teaching certificate to be a Middle School Math and Technology teacher.

Earning a Masters Degree requires completion of a research paper. The topic I have chosen for my paper is a comparison of the academic performance of boys who are scouts compared to the results of the City of Hampton. I hope to prove that boys involved in scouting perform academically better than their peers.

In order to complete this study, I need your help. The City will not release any child’s test results to me. The results may only be released by the parents or guardians. I request you provide me with a copy of your scout’s ITBS score sheet he received last year. The tests were given last March to 5th, 7th, and 8th graders in Hampton. The results will be kept completely anonymous. If you like, you may cut off the top two lines of the score sheet before you give it to me. I do not need names, just results and grade level. On completion of my study I will destroy all copies. The ITBS score sheet is gray in color and has a red border. On the top it says Virginia State Assessment Program.

Please send a copy of the score sheet with your son to a troop meeting on any Monday night, I will pick them up personally. Rest assured the results will be held in strictest confidence.

If you would like to contact me, please call 865-7690. Again, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

William E. Yarnall
APPENDIX B
Sample of Iowa Test of Basic Skill score sheet
### District Name: Hampton City Schools

**Student Name:** [Redacted]

**Test Battery:** [Redacted]

**Teacher:** [Redacted]

**Grade:** 08

**School:** [Redacted]

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### Performance Profile Based on National Percentile Index

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**Skills Evaluation Chart**

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- Using a Dictionary
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