

Attainment Value and Developmental Experiences in Youth Sport: Exploring
the Role of Gender and Age.

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*This thesis is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), Murdoch University, 2010.*

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

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Abstract

This study examined associations between attainment value and experiences in adolescent sport, and explored whether gender and year level moderated this association. A sample of 690 year ten and 304 year twelve students from schools across Western Australia responded to a computer-administered self-report survey. Participants were asked to report the developmental experiences in adolescent sport in 4 domains: identity (exploration, reflection), initiative (goals, effort, and time management), team work and social skills and the negative experience of stress. The findings indicate that higher levels of attainment value in sport predicted more experiences of identity, initiative, team work and social skills, and stress. In addition, the role of gender and year level was explored, with both gender and year level moderating the attainment value and identity reflection link, which was pronounced for year 12 adolescent males. The value or importance that an adolescent attaches to their sport may facilitate the psychological benefits experienced, especially for year 12 adolescent males in relation to reflecting on their identity. Implications of these findings and suggestions for future research are presented.

Keywords: adolescence, sport, attainment value, experiences, gender, year level.

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