



What Makes a Good After-School Program?

Evaluating Enrollment of a YMCA After-School Program in San Diego



Team TAP (Meschelle Weaver,¹ Karen Yang,¹ Cynthia Sanchez¹), Nancy Binkin, MD, MPH,¹ Rebecca Fielding-Miller, PhD, MSPH²

¹BSPH Honors Program, Department of Family Medicine and Public Health and ²Division of Infectious Disease and Global Public Health and the Center on Gender Equity and Health, University of California, San Diego

BACKGROUND

- High quality after-school programs contribute to academic and psychosocial success
- The Copley-Price YMCA in San Diego's City Heights neighborhood provides two after-school enrichment programs:
 1. **Y-Teen Achievers (Y-TAP)** focuses on academic enrichment and health
 - Experienced low enrollment in 2018-19
 2. **Y-Strong Girls** focuses on women's empowerment, academic enrichment, and health
 - Has had high enrollment for many years
- Most YMCA program participants are from Hoover High, which has a highly diverse student body and is adjacent to the YMCA
- Hoover High has its own on-site, after-school program (**IMIN**) with high enrollment

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the influences that affect enrollment into Y-TAP and other after-school programs
2. Identify local high school student awareness and perceptions of the YMCA
3. Provide feedback to YMCA staff on designing an after-school program that meets student needs to increase Y-TAP enrollment

METHODS

Focus groups

- One focus group with 8 Y-TAP participants, two with a total of 11 Y-Strong Girls, and one with 7 Hoover High IMIN participants
- Sessions voice recorded, transcribed, and coded
- Examined interests, awareness, deciding factors, perceptions of the YMCA
- n= 26

Survey

- Cross-sectional
- Convenience sample from Hoover High IMIN participants
- Sample size calculated in Epi Info 7
- Administered on Google Forms
- Assessed student demographics, awareness, interests, perceptions of YMCA, and deciding factors in after-school program enrollment
- Responses recoded and analyzed with Excel and Epi Info 7
- n= 85

RESULTS

Type of program: fun vs academic?

- The majority of students preferred fun after-school programs (74%)

Most important characteristics in after-school programs to students?

- Free food (71%), safe space (51%), flexible program schedule (43%), supportive/energetic staff (24%), organized workshops that cater to their interests (22%)

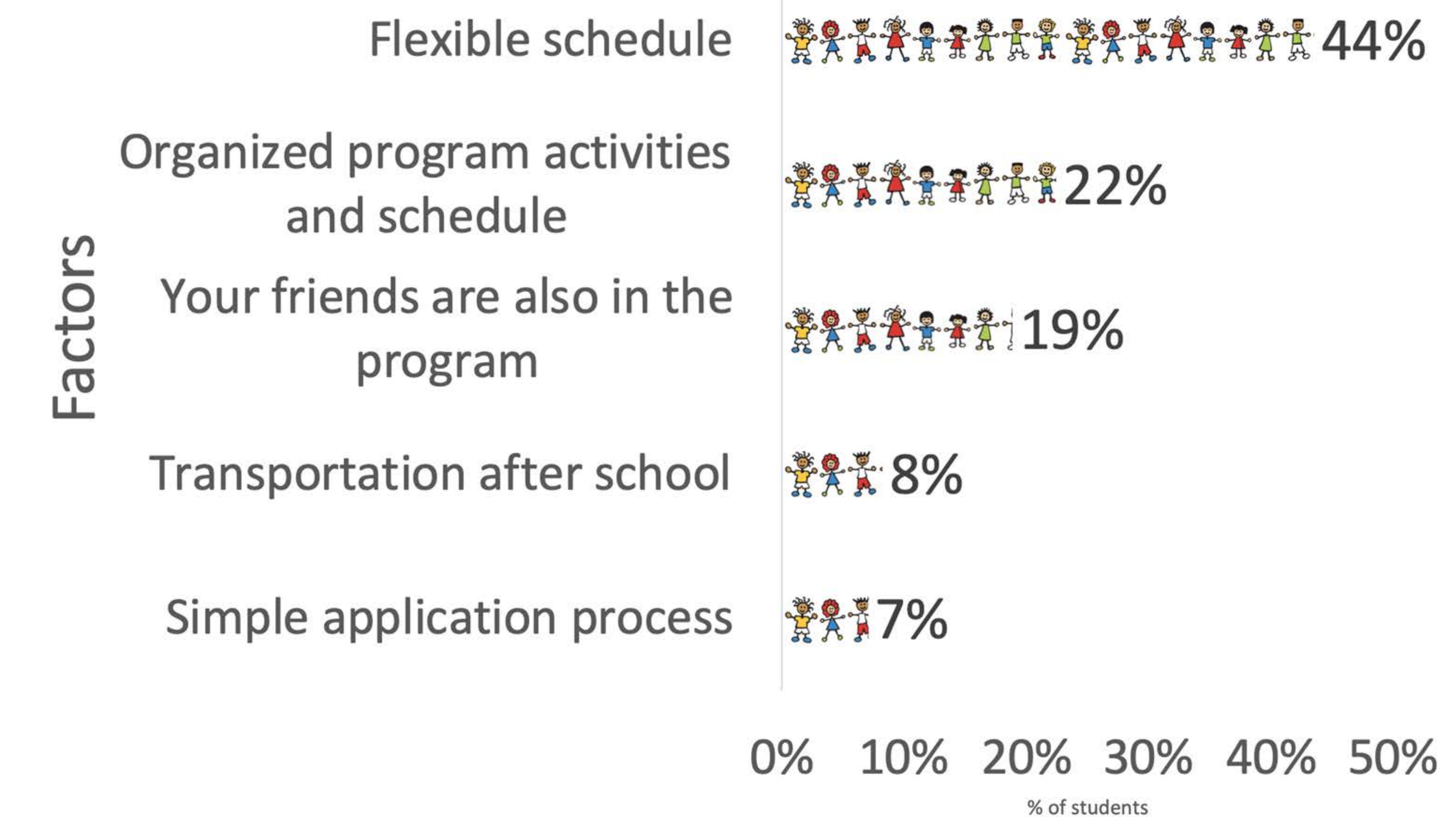
Are Y-TAP's advertising and incentives attractive to local students?

- Most students heard about after-school programs through flyers/posters (58%)
- 30% of students had heard about the YMCA programs, of whom 63% learned about them through friends
- 57% consider the YMCA membership a good incentive to join Y-TAP

What do students think about the YMCA?

- The majority (87%) associate the YMCA with being "just a gym"
- Most IMIN students (60%) view students who participate in YMCA after-school programs as "Healthy/Fit"

What are the most important features of an after-school program?



IMIN students' most important deciding factors when choosing an after-school program to join

What do the students think?

"[The YMCA] doesn't promote enough to where the community knows... there are new programs."

"I like the people that work here and [having] different activities."

"People think [the YMCA is] too expensive or just a gym."

"We can all go and talk about our experiences in the program...Like Teen Ambassadors."

"...I thought [the YMCA] was going to be more wack because it's in City Heights... but I realized I was wrong."



CONCLUSIONS

Student wants/needs

- The majority of students want a fun, safe place to hang out after school, rather than an academics-based program
- Most interested in getting free food, but having a flexible schedule is most important when deciding which program to join

Recommendations to the Y

- Better organization of activities and events is needed in Y-TAP
- Activities of Y-TAP should be updated to match students' interests
- Having students promote YMCA teen programs to their peers would increase awareness of Y-TAP