NASCAR Winston Cup Drivers:

A Sociological Profile

A Thesis

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Automobile racing has become one of the world's most popular spectator sports. "Attendance at 16 major North American auto racing series increased by nearly a million spectators in 1988, surpassing for the first time the 10 million mark according to statistics compiled by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company" ("Winston Cup," 1989). "Public interest in automobile racing in America is at an all time high" said Leo Mehl, Goodyear director of worldwide racing, "and appears to be still on the upswing" ("Winston Cup," 1989). In the United States, attendance figures for auto racing are second only to baseball.

The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) was formed in the United States in 1974. In the early 1960's, racing moved from tiny dirt tracks to high banked speedways drawing capacity crowds nearly every weekend. The decade of the 1970's brought the involvement of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company into stock car racing. R. J. Reynolds has served as the major sponsor of NASCAR racing since the 1970's. The Winston Cup Series is the big leagues for stock car racing and is so named because of the sponsorship by the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and its product, Winston cigarettes. "The NASCAR Winston Cup Series reached a milestone by drawing over three million spectators in 1988, and the circuit continues to be the world leader in total attendance, attracting 3,044,300 fans to 29 events in 1988, up nearly 19 per cent over 1987" ("Winston Cup," 1989). The stock car drivers that drive in Winston

Cup Series races are referred to as Winston Cup drivers. Winston Cup drivers are considered to be the best stock car drivers in the United States, much the same way as National Football League football players are considered the best football players in the United States.

The Winston Cup Series season consists of 29 races. The racing is primarily focused in the southeastern portion of the United States with 21 of the 29 races held in North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The remaining nine races are held in New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Michigan, California, and Arizona. The Winston Cup Series traditionally starts in early February with the famous Daytona 500 at Daytona Beach, Florida and concludes in late November with the Atlanta Journal 500 in Atlanta, Georgia. Races are normally held on Sunday afternoons throughout the season.

Racing teams that compete in the Winston Cup Series are normally comprised of a team owner(s), team business employees, car builders and mechanics, pit crew chief, pit crew, team souvenir vendors, road crew, driver(s), and sponsors. Without sponsorship from large companies, a racing team could not afford to race due to the very expensive nature of the sport. Sponsoring race teams is an important way for major companies to advertise their products since the company name appears on the race car, team vehicles, and team clothing. Thousands of race fans are exposed to the sponsors of race teams and associate the team sponsor with their favorite driver. Companies such as Kodak, GM Goodwrench, Tide, Folgers, Budweiser, Miller, Coors, Hardees, and Motorcraft

sponsor racing teams. The involvement of large companies has helped Winston Cup racing grow in dramatic fashion.

Winston Cup racing teams compete for the Winston Cup Championship. The NASCAR Winston Cup champion is decided each year via a points system that awards a driver points according to the position he or she finishes in each entered race. Competition for the Winston Cup title is very keen and many drivers have said that winning the title is worth more than two million dollars to their race team. Of course, large amounts of money can be won by race teams at individual races.

There are no set number of racing teams for the Winston Cup Series. Individual races establish the number of cars that will make up the field; racing teams must qualify for each race. Time trials determine car speeds and the fastest cars earn the positions available for the race. The fastest qualifying car earns the pole position, which is the inside position of the first row for the start of the race. Winning a race from the pole position earns the race team additional prize money in addition to the first place purse. NASCAR has licensing procedures for drivers and strict rules and regulations govern all NASCAR races.

Once thought of as a "red neck" sport, stock car racing has evolved into a well-respected sport and is very much part of the American sport milieu. The popularity of NASCAR racing is very strong as can be seen by the three million attendance figure achieved in 1988. Fans often camp outside the track or on the track infield during the weekend of a race and form a "race community"; these collections can consist of many thousands of people. Fans will often travel great distances to watch the races. People from different parts of the country meet and socialize in their "racing community". Fans are loyal to particular drivers and often

like to show who their favorite driver is by wearing representative clothing. Personal vehicles are painted to represent a team or simply bear a sign or bumper sticker to represent their favorite driver. Old school buses are sometimes customized and painted to represent race teams and become a "race chasing" vehicle, as fans like to call them. Motor homes are popular vehicles to drive to the races and some fans travel from race to race in this fashion.

Most of the races occur in the southeastern and northeastern parts of the U.S. The north truly meets the south when a race occurs because fans will travel north or south to follow the races. This author has attended races both in the north and the south and experienced living for a weekend in a "racing community". The socializing of the fans has always been very friendly and appears to be as much fun as watching the races.

A race weekend can be very expensive what with travel expenses, food, lodging, and ticket prices. A Winston Cup race ticket ranges from $30 to $75 apiece. Often there is a Grand National race at the track on the Saturday prior to the Winston Cup race; the former requires another ticket. A race fan will often watch both races and spend close to $100 for race tickets for one weekend. When the fan is not attending the races in person, he or she is likely to watch them on television. The Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) covers the majority of Winston Cup races. CBS, ABC, and WTBS also cover some Winston Cup races. The increase in television coverage of the Winston Cup Series is an indicator of the growing popularity of the sport. Television coverage draws sponsors to teams because the company's products can then be advertised on the cars. Race fans are loyal to companies that sponsor Winston Cup teams.

The world of stock car racing is made up of many different components. The NASCAR governing body, officials, team owners, race teams, race equipment and technology, drivers, track owners, sponsors, vendors, media, advertising, fan clubs, and the race fan all help make up the "racing scene". However, the race car driver remains the main focus of attention to fans and media alike. Despite their popularity, little descriptive research has been done on the drivers.

A review of the sport sociology and auto racing literature reveals a limited amount of research relating to NASCAR Winston Cup drivers. For example, according to Aveni (1976), "A physical culture perspective in sport sociology has been one of several causal factors in the lack of development of research in the field of motor-sport sociology." According to Aveni (1976), sports where the athlete is the main focus of attention have been researched more than motor-sports where the driver and the vehicle often share the attention. Motor-sports have been viewed as less physical because of the use of a vehicle.

Auto racing books such as The Speed Merchants by Keysor (1973) are very broad in nature and give only limited attention to Winston Cup drivers. Neil Bonnett's autobiography (Webb, 1979) and David Pearson's autobiography by (Hunter, 1980) provide valuable, insights but do not speak to the entire social category of Winston Cup drivers. Dawson (1979) studied fitness levels of Grand National Stock Car Drivers and Dobbins (1985) studied fitness levels of auto racers. Endurance, fast reactions, and good eye sight have all been found to be very critical for success in auto racing.

Assenza (1987) studied how racing schools help drivers get started as well as how some veteran drivers use these schools to sharpen their skills. Any edge

gained by a driver can be the difference between success and failure. Roemer (1971) compared the sports car race goer in the United States to race fans in Germany. Three hundred fifty fans were interviewed and compared on the variables of income, education, nationalism, liberal-conservative, and technical information. The Germans were found to be more international in outlook, to have smaller incomes, to be less educated, and to be better versed in technical knowledge.

The technology involved with auto racing has been discussed in several places. Technological advances are often incorporated into passenger cars. General Motors and Ford are currently the only car companies with model cars in Winston Cup racing. The body of the car is basically the only part that resembles a passenger car. Most of the car has been modified for racing.

Driver autobiographies, racing books, driver fitness studies, technological reports, and racing publications all give some attention to Winston Cup drivers. Grand National Scene is a weekly newspaper that covers Winston Cup racing and Grand National racing. However, researchers have yet to formally study Winston Cup drivers from a sociological perspective.

Statement of the Problem. The purpose of this study was to describe Winston Cup stock car drivers from a sociological perspective. The study analyzed such personal characteristics as age, race, sex, marital status, number of children, and education. Drivers' place of birth and upbringing were also studied. Data were also collected for the drivers' family involvement in racing and the drivers' reasons for entering

racing. The researcher was also interested in the fitness training engaged in by the drivers as well as their athletic participation. To round out the sociological profile the drivers' racing experience, time involvement in racing, career satisfaction, and feelings of success were also included. Where it was possible, these characteristics of Winston Cup drivers were compared with United States Census data to try to determine if these drivers were unique in any way. This was an exploratory, descriptive study of a sport group that has yet to be examined from a sociological perspective. A qualitative and quantitative profile of the "typical" Winston Cup stock car driver was developed based on responses to a 33-item questionnaire.

Delimitations of the Study. The following delimitations were imposed by the researcher:

(1) The subjects were restricted to the active Winston Cup drivers who participated in the 1987 Winston Cup Series season.

(2) The only source of data were the subjects' responses to a 33-item questionnaire.

Limitations of the Study. The following were limitations of the study:

(1) Validity and reliability of the data were dependent on the subjects' honesty. There was no way to control for false answers.

(2) Because the study only examined Winston Cup Series stock car drivers, generalizability of the findings are limited; it would not be appropriate to apply them to any other group of race car drivers.

(3) The questionnaire was not field-tested before it was mailed to the survey sample.

CHAPTER II. PROCEDURES

SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH METHOD

According to McIntyre (1971), descriptive research can best be interpreted when a triangulation of measures is used to collect data, e.g., questionnaires, interviews, non-participant observation... While this type of research would have produced the best sociological profile of the drivers, time and money factors deemed such an undertaking impossible. Questionnaire survey methodology was selected to describe the sociological profile of NASCAR Winston Cup drivers. According to Thomas and Nelson (1985), descriptive research is valuable because quantitative and qualitative data about people and situations can usually be obtained. "Descriptive research is a study of status which is widely used in education and in the behavioral sciences. Its value is based on the premise that problems can be solved and practices can be improved through objective and thorough observation, analysis, and description. The most common descriptive research method is the survey, which includes questionnaires, interviews, and normative surveys" (Thomas and Nelson, 1985; p. 182).

DELIMITING THE SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS

Winston Cup drivers that left Winston Cup racing prior to 1987 were not included in the survey sample for practical considerations of time and cost.

The subjects for this study were limited to the 94 Winston Cup drivers who were active during the 1987 Winston Cup Series season. Mr. Bob Kelly, Public Relations Director for the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco U.S.A. Company, provided the author with the names of the drivers and their home addresses. See Appendix A for a list of the drivers.

PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTERING QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Thomas and Nelson (1985), the most common descriptive research method is the survey which includes questionnaires, interviews, and normative surveys.

The questionnaire used in this study (See Appendix B) included 33 questions about the drivers' personal characteristics (e.g., age, race, sex, marital status, number of children, education), place of birth and upbringing, family involvement in racing, reasons for entering racing, fitness training and athletic participation, racing experience, and drivers' feelings of career satisfaction and success. Closed questions were used to facilitate data analysis.

The questionnaire was mailed to the 94 drivers on December 20, 1988. That time of year was selected because it was between Winston Cup Seasons and it was assumed that most drivers would be home for the holidays and free to respond. During the Winston Cup Season, the drivers spend most of their time either travelling to races or at the track so the December date was chosen as the best time for sending out the questionnaire.

A cover letter (See Appendix C) informed the drivers that Mr. Bob Kelly of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco U.S.A. had provided the author with their addresses. The drivers learned that all current Winston Cup drivers had received the questionnaire and that their participation was very important to the success of the study. The cover letter informed the drivers that information would be reported in group statistics and that all names would be kept strictly confidential.

The first part of the questionnaire (See Appendix B) informed the drivers that the study had been approved by the Physical Education Department of the State University College at Brockport for research purposes. The drivers signed the questionnaire to give their permission for the answers to be used for research purposes.

The questionnaire was clear, easily understandable, and short enough to help ensure a high return rate. The cover letter, a copy of the questionnaire, a sharpened pencil, and a self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to the drivers in a large envelope. The drivers were instructed to return the questionnaire at their earliest possible convenience and thanked for their cooperation.

CHAPTER III. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Source of Data

The success of a study of this nature depends upon a high rate of return. According to Thomas and Nelson (1985), "if a significant number (e.g., over 20%) of persons do not return the questionnaire, this poses a serious threat to the validity of the results" (p. 196).

Questionnaires were mailed to the 94 active 1987 Winston Cup drivers. Sixty four drivers initially returned the questionnaire. A month after the initial mailing, a follow-up letter (See Appendix D), a second copy of the questionnaire, and a stamped return envelope were mailed to the thirty drivers who did not respond initially. Two questionnaires never reached the intended drivers because of address problems. Thirteen of the 28 drivers that received follow-up questionnaires returned them, bringing the return rate to 77 or 84%. Interestingly, some of the drivers included written responses besides the responses called for by the questionnaire.

In summary, the data presented in this study were provided by 84% of the active 1987 NASCAR Winston Cup drivers. These data were then entered into an Apple Macintosh Plus computer program which calculated percentages and graphed the data for statistical purposes. All these data are represented as group mean statistics

Personal Characteristics of Winston Cup Drivers

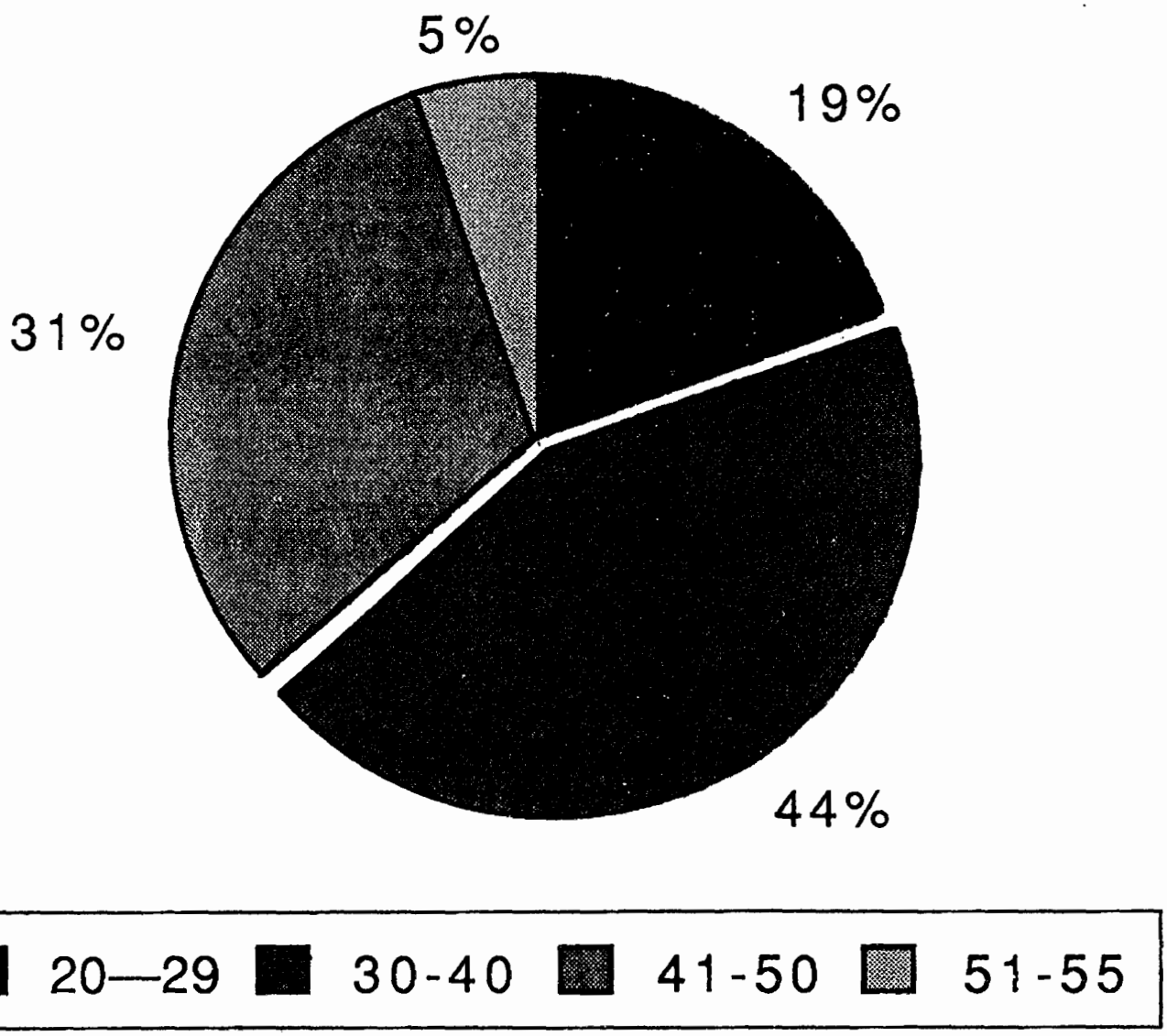
Age Distribution

Figure 1 presents the age distribution of the 1987 Winston Cup drivers. Only 19% of the drivers were between the ages, 20-29. Drivers' early years are often spent racing in the "minor leagues" of stock car racing in order to gain the experience needed to compete successfully at the highest levels of stock car racing, e.g., The Winston Cup Series. Only a few talented drivers are good enough to drive the Winston Cup Series at a young age. Sponsors look for talented, experienced drivers to endorse their products so a young and relatively inexperienced driver will find it very difficult to gain the financial backing needed to compete on the Winston Cup Series. Forty-four per cent of the drivers were between the ages, 30-40. A driver between the ages of 30-40 has had time to gain valuable driving experience and secure sponsorship. Drivers between the ages 41-50 represented 31% of the Winston Cup drivers. Drivers over forty still possess the physical attributes necessary to drive successfully. Five per cent of the drivers were between the ages, 51-55. An examination of the age distribution of these stock car drivers shows that 80% were over 30 years of age. This suggests that maturity and experience are critical factors.

Race and Sex of the Drivers

All of the stock car drivers were male Caucasians. Although auto racing has traditionally been viewed as a male sport, women have begun to enter lower racing divisions. Since 1987, a few women have raced in Winston Cup races, but no woman has ever run every race on the Winston Cup Series schedule.

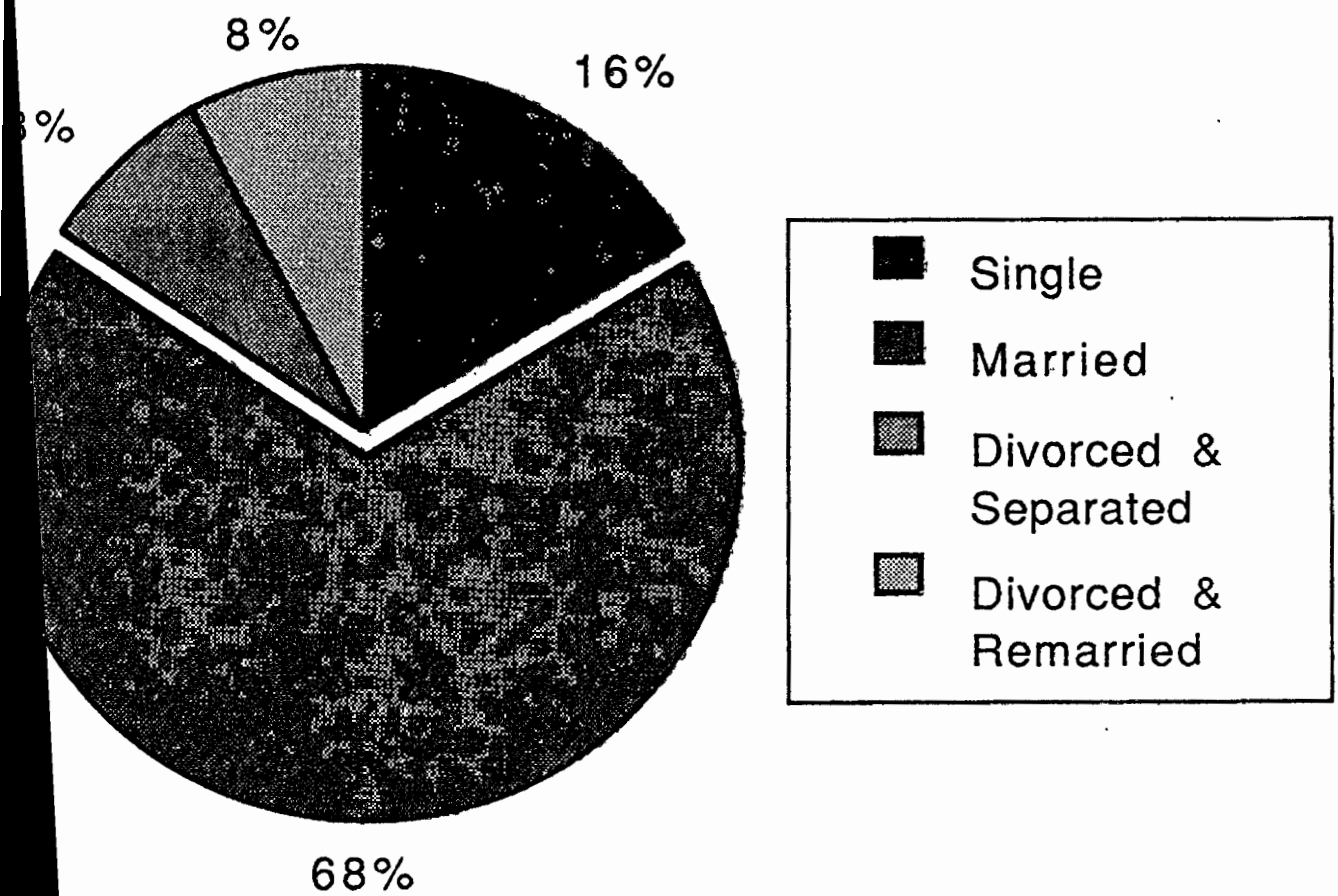
Figure 1. Age of Drivers (years)



Marital Status

Figure 2 shows the marital status of the 1987 Winston Cup stock car drivers. The United States Bureau of the Census reported in 1986 that 67.2% of white males in the United States were married. In 1987, 76% of the drivers were married. Eight per cent of the married drivers had at one time been divorced. Sixteen per cent of the Winston Cup drivers were single.

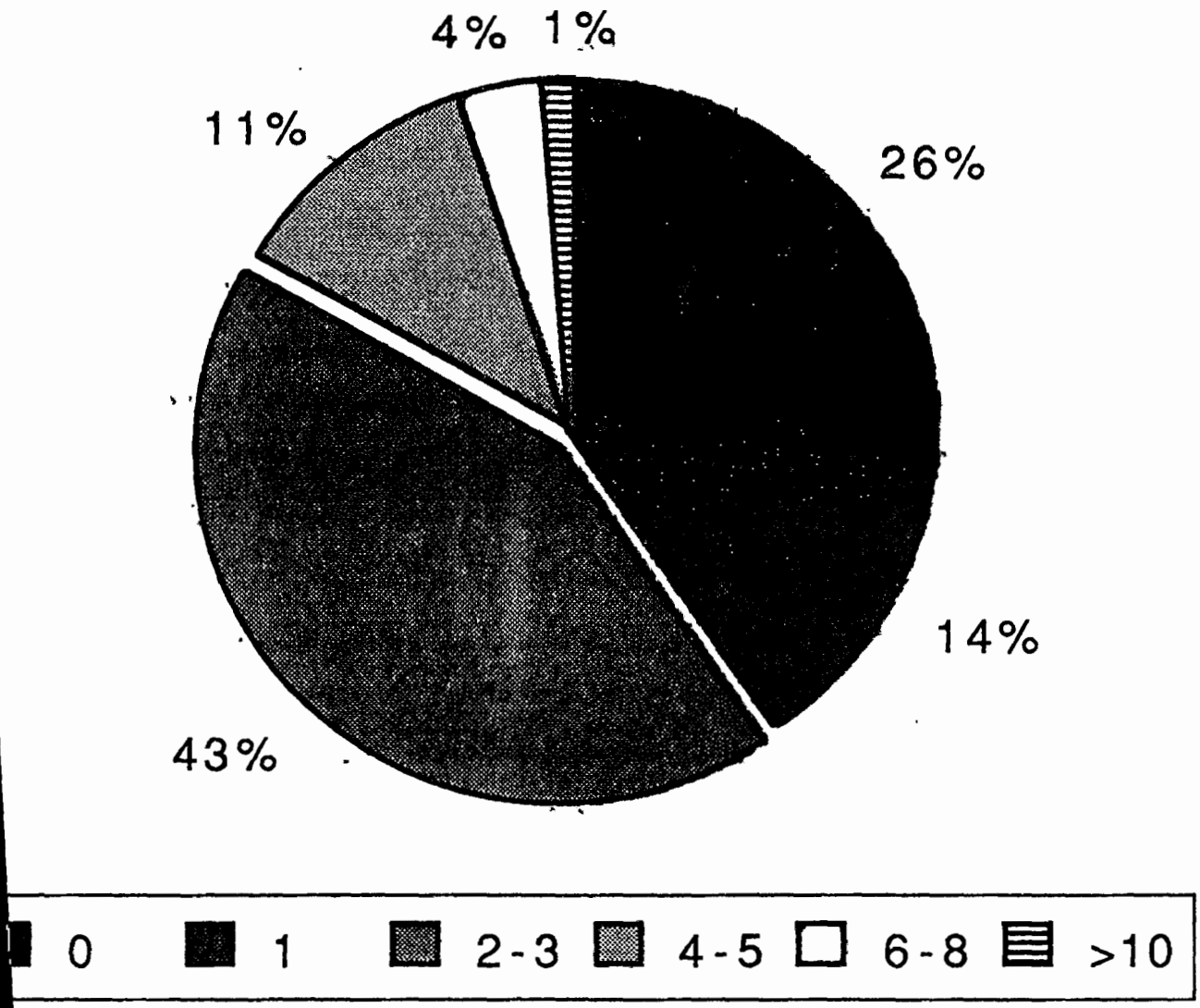
Figure 2. Marital Status



Children

Figure 3 presents the number of children the drivers had. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that families averaged 1.16 children in 1989, and that the number of childless couples is growing. Seventy-four per cent of the Winston Cup drivers have children. Most of the drivers with children have two or three. Fourteen per cent of the drivers that have children have one child. Eleven per cent of the drivers with children have four or five. Four per cent of the drivers with children have six to eight children and 1% of the drivers with children have more than ten. Winston Cup drivers do not differ very much from national figures. Most married couples in the U.S. have an average of two children; and 43% of the drivers with children reported having two or three.

Figure 3. Number of Children

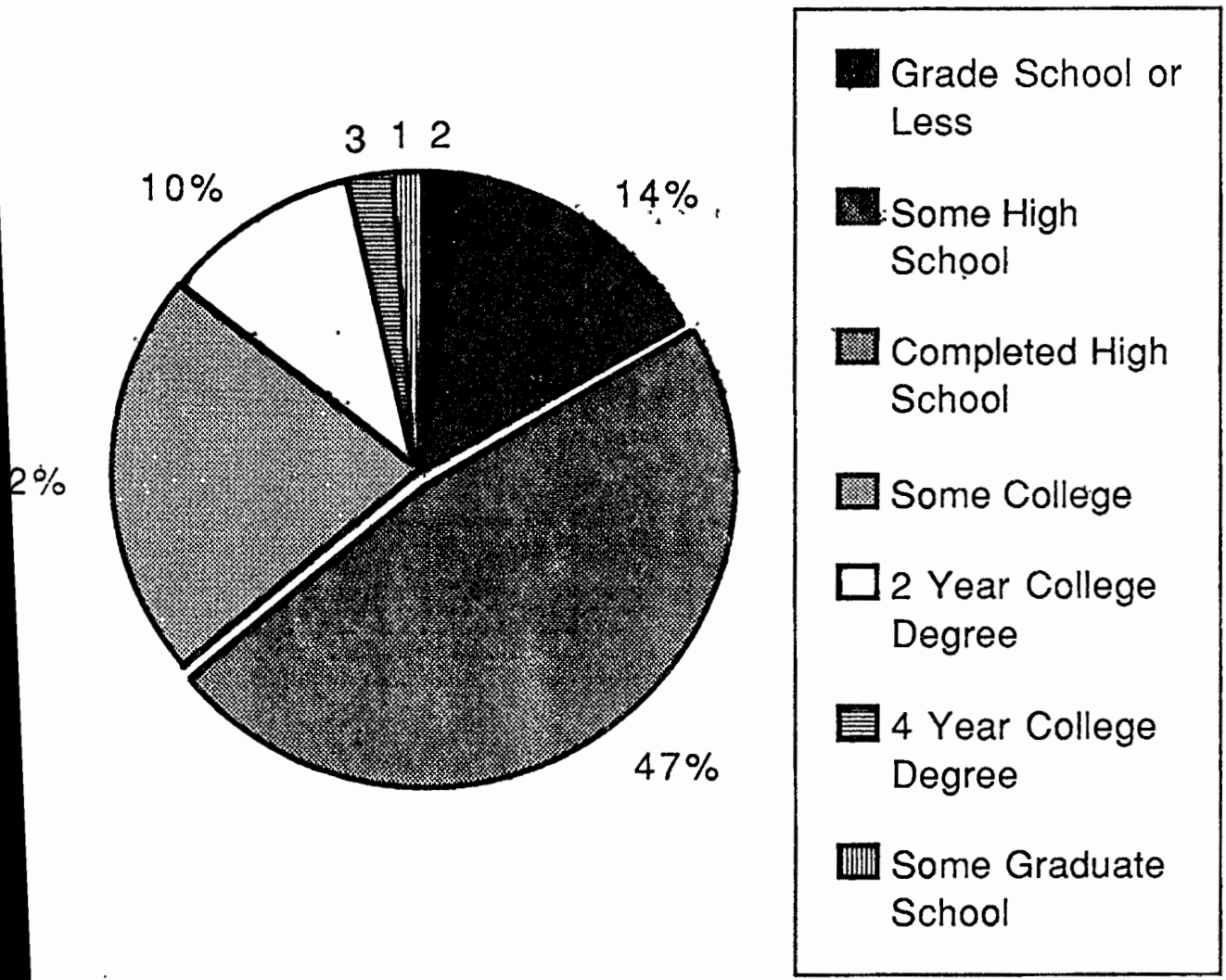


Drivers' Formal Education

Figure 4 presents the amount of formal education obtained by these Winston Cup drivers. According to the United States Bureau of the Census, 22.7% of white males over the age of 25 have had less than a high school education. Sixteen per cent of the Winston Cup drivers never finished high school which compares favorably with the national statistics. Census figures show that 78.3% of white males over the age of 25 have completed high school. Eighty-four per cent of the Winston Cup drivers completed high school, 5.7 percentage points above the national average. According to the Census figures, 17.2% of white males over the age of 25 have completed 1 to 3 years of college. Twenty-two percent of the Winston Cup drivers reported that they had completed some college and 10% of the drivers had a two-year college degree. The Census figures show that 24.5% of white males over the age of 25 completed four years or more of college. Only 4% of the Winston Cup drivers have completed four years or more of college.

These data reveal that Winston Cup drivers are undereducated vis-a-vis national figures for white males over the age of 25. The low percentage of drivers who have completed college may be explained by the fact that stock car racing is not a college sport like baseball, football, basketball, and hockey. Drivers cannot gain valuable driving experience in college or win scholarships.

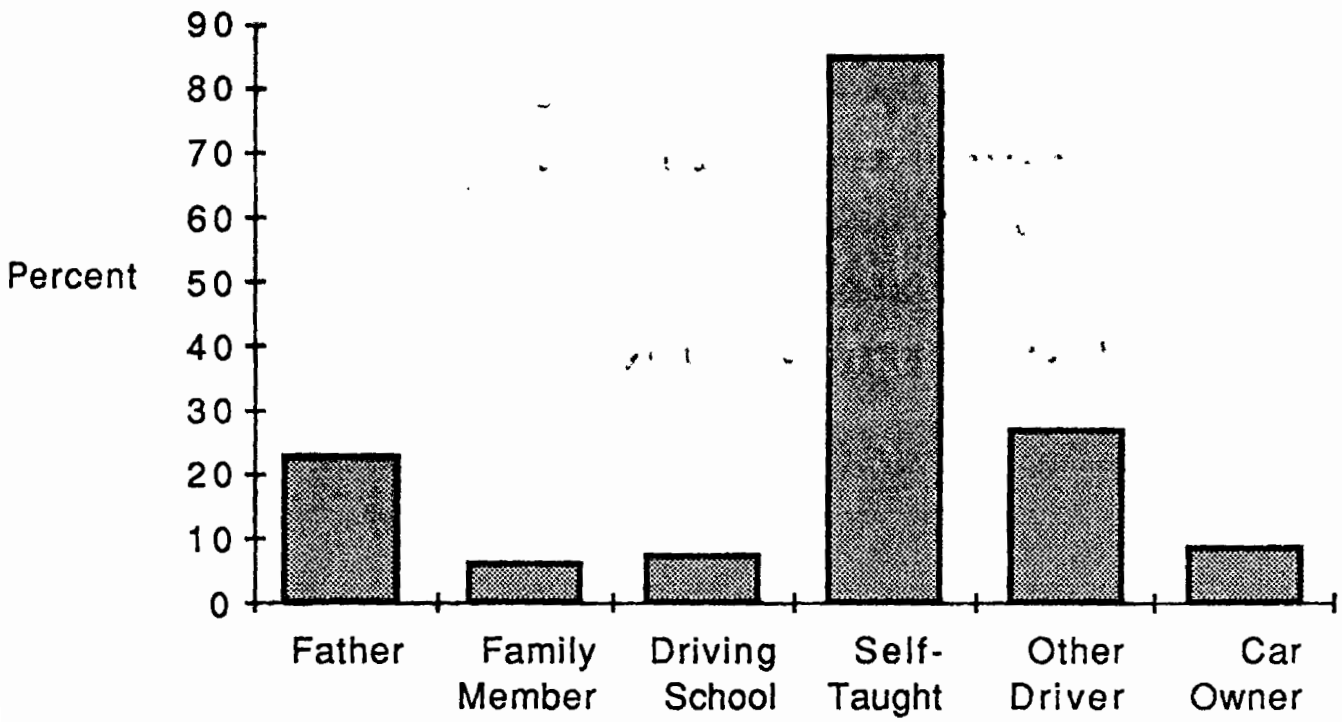
Figure 4. Amount of Education



Education for Stock Car Driving

Figure 5 shows the means by which the drivers acquired their stock car driving skills. Stock car drivers responded that they were either taught by their fathers (25%) or another driver (30%), a large percentage (87%) said they were self-taught. Only 6% of the drivers said they acquired their driving skills from a driving school and less than 10% of the drivers said they had been taught by a family member other than their father. Ten per cent of the drivers said a car owner taught them their driving skills. The opportunity to spend many hours driving a stock car is probably the best way to gain the driving skills needed to be a Winston Cup stock car driver.

igure 5. Education for Stock Car Driving (more than 1 response allowed)

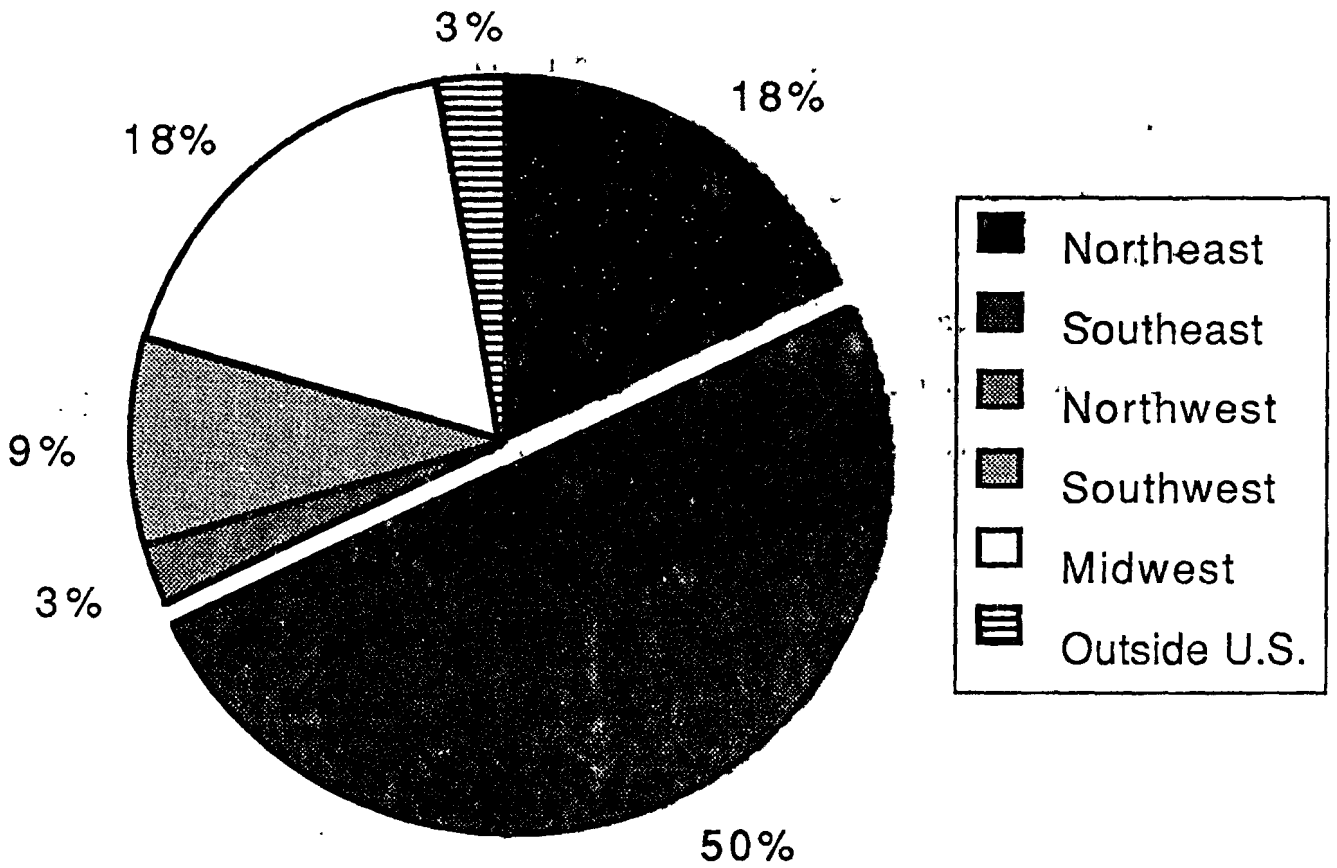


Drivers' Place of Birth and Upbringing

Birthplace

Figure 6 presents data on the drivers' place of birth. As can be seen, 50% of the drivers were born in the southeastern portion of the United States. Eighteen percent of the drivers were born in the midwest and 18% in the northeast. Nine per cent of the drivers were born in the southwest, 3% in the northwest and only 3% were born outside the United States. The high percentage of drivers born in the southeast suggests that stock car racing is a regional sport. Twenty-one of the 29 Winston Cup races are held in the southeastern portion of the United States. Exposure to Winston Cup racing probably influences people to become race car drivers, and that explains why so many of the drivers were born in the southeast.

Figure 6. Place of Birth

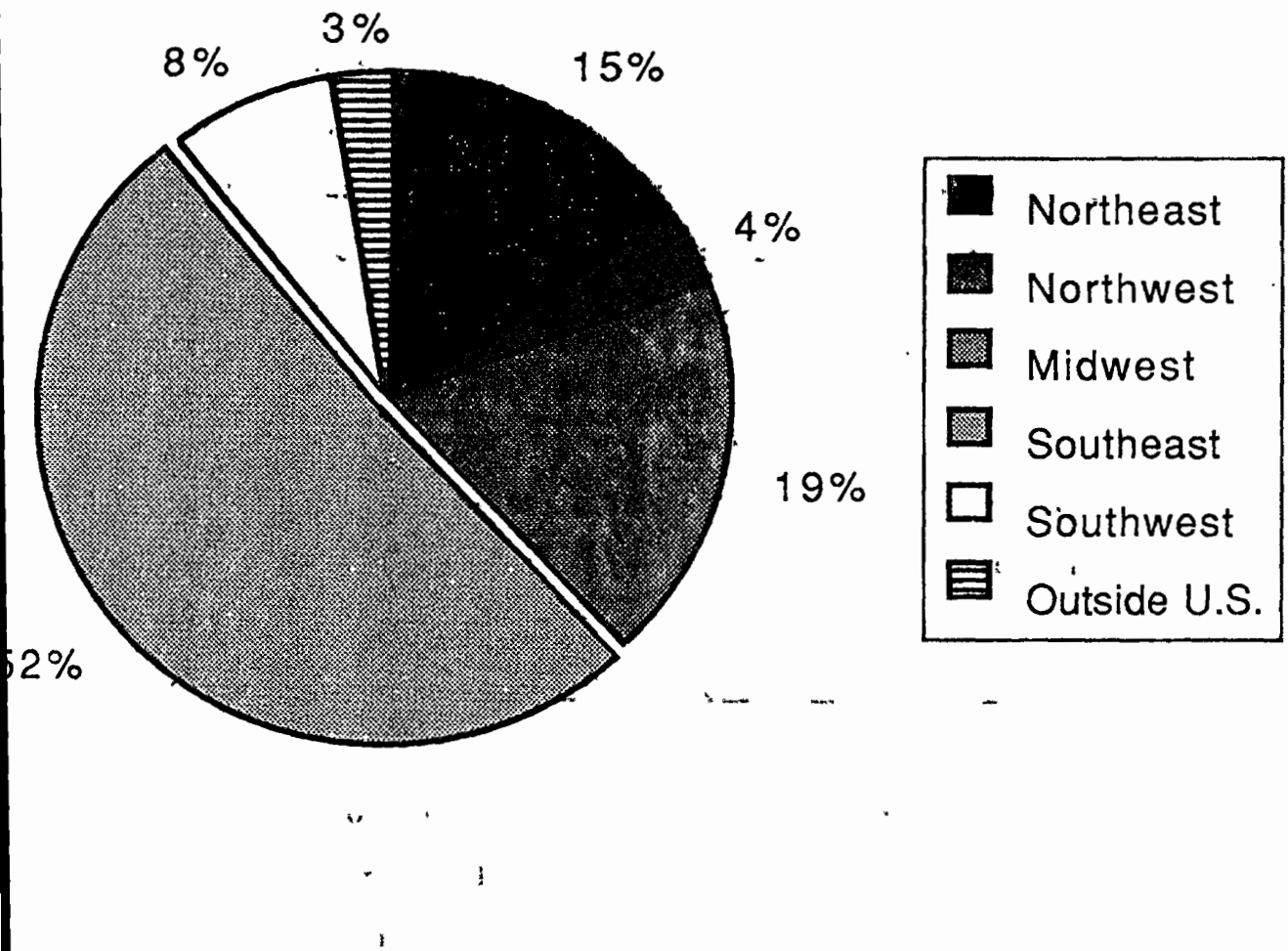


Place of Upbringing

In figure 7 we see where these drivers were raised. As expected, most of the drivers (52%) were brought up in the southeastern portion of the United States. Nineteen per cent of the drivers were brought up in the midwest, fifteen per cent were brought up in the northeast, eight per cent were brought up in the southwest, four per cent were brought up in the northwest, and three per cent were brought up outside the United States.

These findings show that most of the drivers were brought up in the geographical locations where they were born. It makes sense that geographical location is a determining factor in whether someone will become a stock car driver. Most races are held in the southeastern portion of the United States, which means that there is probably greater interest in the sport in this area than anywhere else in the U.S.

Figure 7. Place of Upbringing



Family Involvement in Racing and Drivers' Reason for Entering Racing

Family Members Involved in Racing Previous to Drivers Entry Into Racing

This study examined the drivers' family involvement in racing prior to the drivers' entry into racing. Nearly 50% of the drivers responded that a family member had been involved with racing prior to their entry into the sport. Forty-seven per cent of the drivers' fathers had some type of racing experience. Thirty-two per cent had fathers who were stock car drivers themselves. Eleven per cent had an uncle involved in racing. Fourteen per cent had a brother involved in racing. Six per cent of the drivers' mothers were involved in racing. Five per cent of the drivers had a cousin involved in racing.

Twenty-three per cent of the drivers had more than one family member involved in racing prior to their entry into the sport. It appears from these data that family involvement with racing was an influencing factor for many of these drivers.

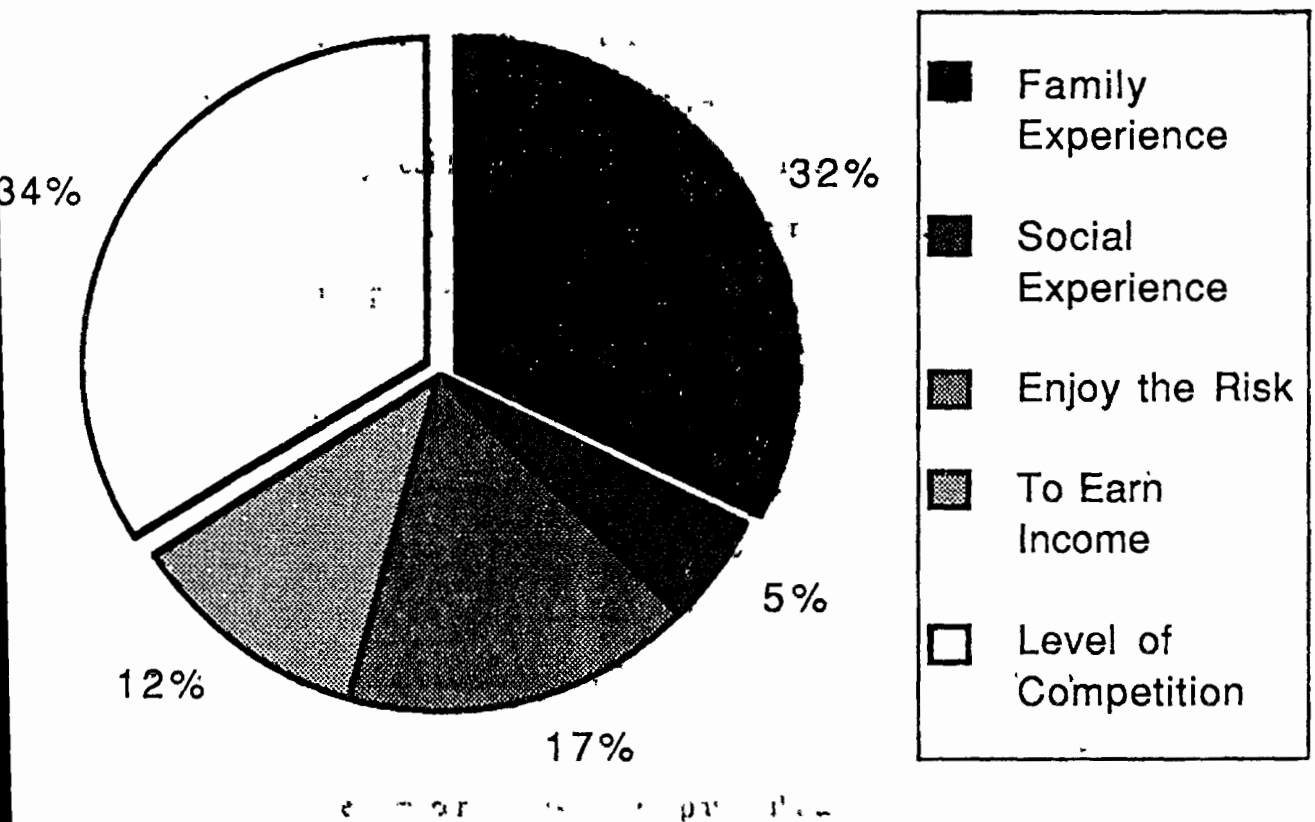
Family Members Involved in Racing at the Time of the Drivers' Participation in Racing

The study also examined the percentage of drivers that had family members involved in racing during the 1987 Winston Cup Series season. Eighty-eight per cent of the drivers had a family member involved in racing during the 1987 season. Fifty-five per cent of the drivers' fathers had some type of involvement with racing in 1987 and eight per cent of the drivers had a son who was involved. It appears that father-son relationships in racing are very common

Drivers' Reason for Entering Racing

An examination of the reasons for entering racing revealed that thirty-two per cent of the drivers entered because of their family's experience in racing and 34% entered because they loved the competition. See Figure 8. Seventeen per cent of the drivers entered racing because they enjoyed the risk involved. Twelve per cent of the drivers entered racing to earn income and 5% of the drivers entered racing for the social experience. It appears that the family is a major socializing factor in the driver's life since nearly 50% of them had one or more family members involved in racing before they entered racing. It was not surprising that 34% of the drivers entered racing because they loved the high level of competition involved. Previous family involvement in racing, the love of racing, and the love of competition appear to be the main reasons why these drivers entered racing.

Figure 8. Reason for Entering Racing



Driver's Fitness Training and Athletic Participation

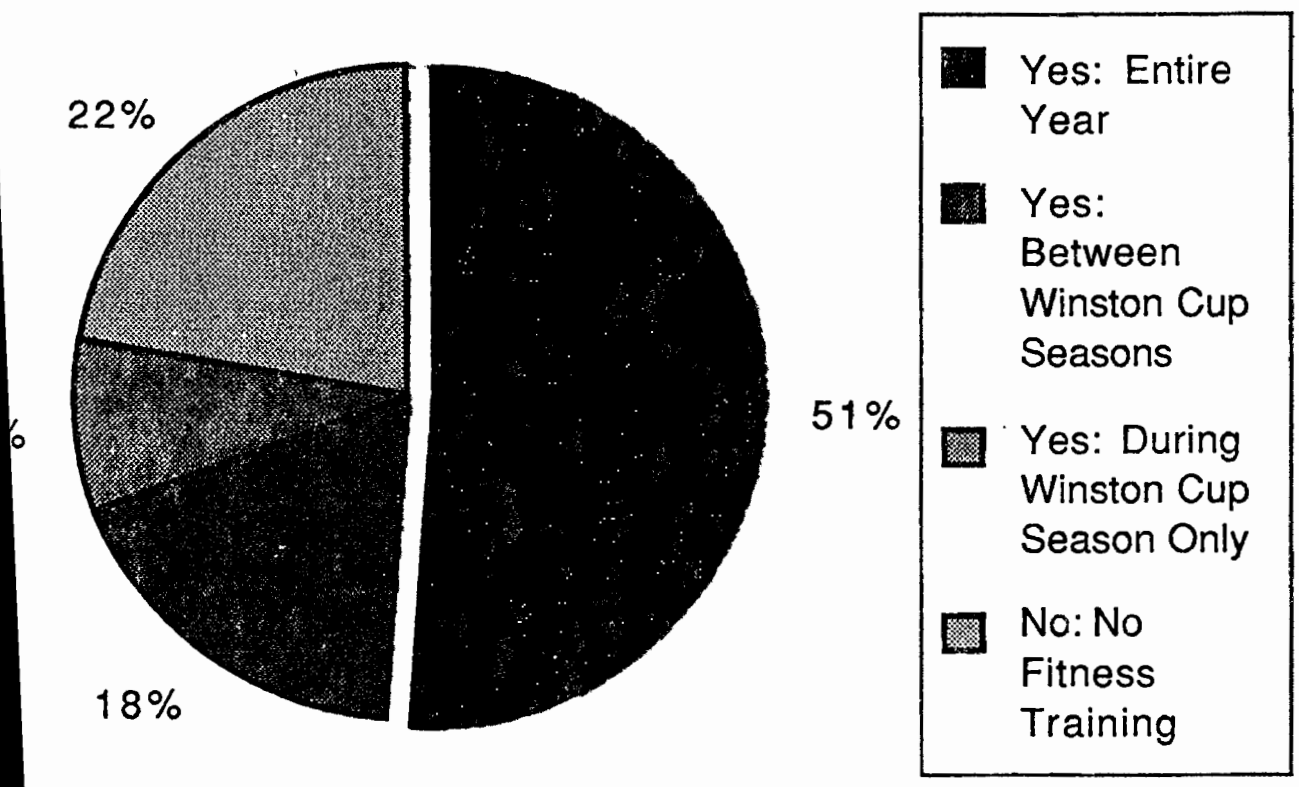
Driver Participation in Fitness Training

Figure 9 reveals how much time the 1987 Winston Cup drivers spent physically training. Physical endurance is necessary to drive at high speeds for long distances. Fatigue can effect a driver's concentration and any loss of concentration can result in disaster. Seventy-eight per cent of the drivers engaged in some type of physical fitness program. Eighteen per cent of the drivers did not engage in any fitness training program. Fifty-one per cent of the drivers trained the entire year. Nine per cent of the drivers only trained during the Winston Cup season and 18% of the drivers trained only between Winston Cup seasons.

The drivers were asked if they felt fitness training was necessary to be successful on the Winston Cup Series. Seventy-six per cent of the drivers felt that training was necessary to be successful and 78% of them did train.

The number of times a week the drivers worked out was also examined. Of the drivers that trained, 64% trained 2-3 times a week, 17% trained 4-5 times a week, 9% trained 6-7 times a week, and 10% trained once a week. It appears that these drivers were very serious about their physical training and that they worked very hard to maintain their fitness.

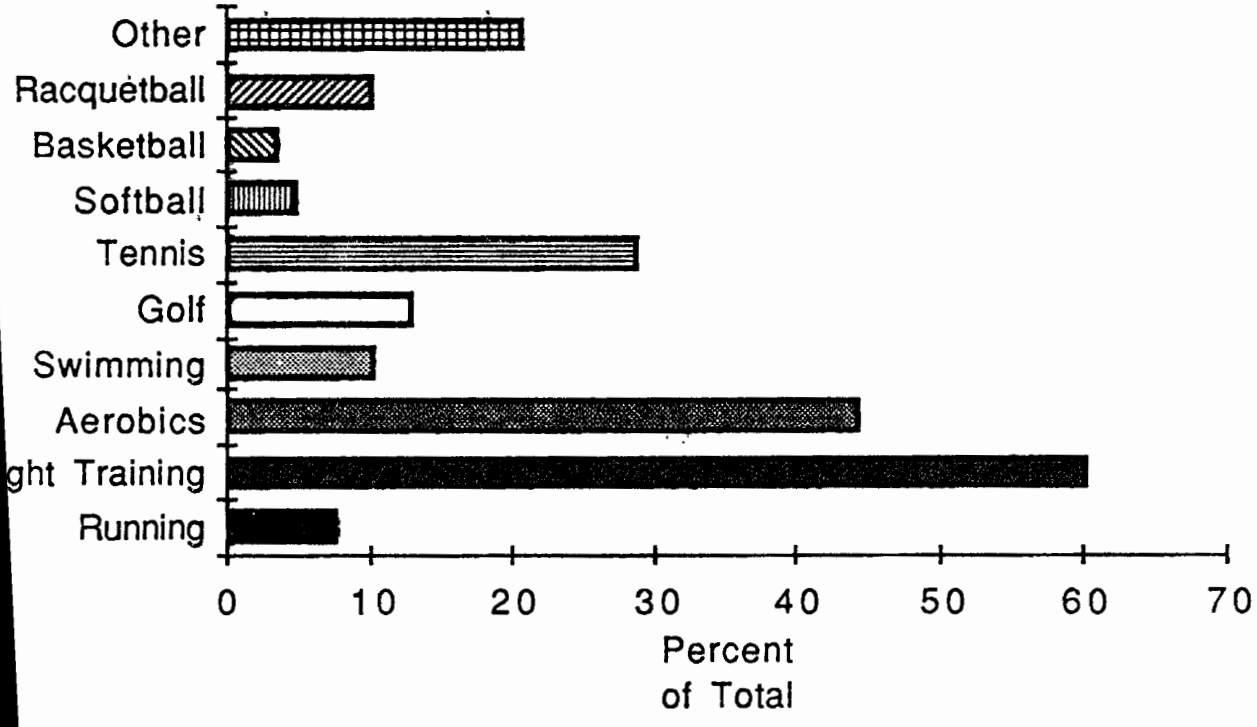
Figure 9. Physical Fitness Training



Physical Training Activities

Figure 10 shows the activities the 1987 Winston Cup drivers engaged in to physically train themselves for racing. Weight training and aerobics were most frequently mentioned. Tennis was the sport that drivers most often mentioned as a means of training. Racquetball, basketball, softball, golf, swimming, and running were not very popular choices.

Figure 10. Physical Training Activities

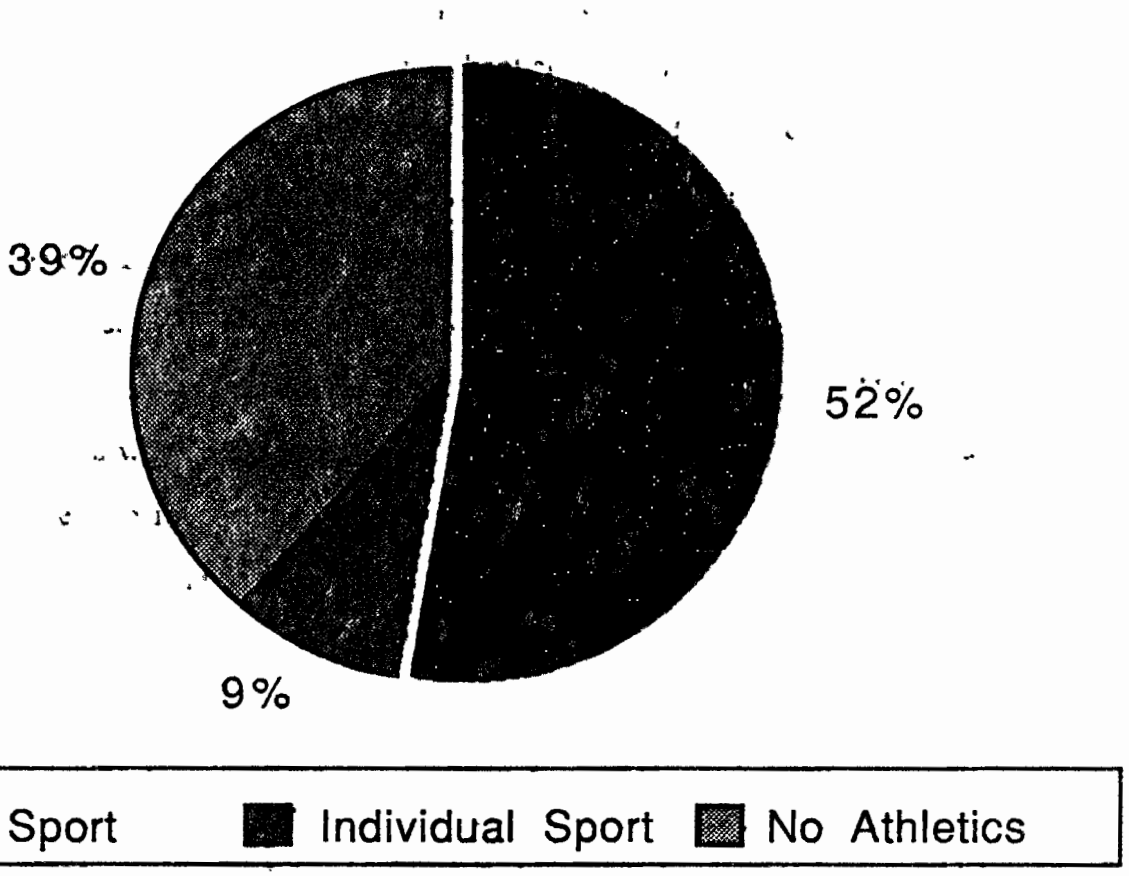


Drivers' High School Athletic Participation

Figure 11 reveals the percentage of drivers who participated in high school athletics. Sixty-one per cent of the drivers were either team sport or individual sport athletes in high school. Fifty-two per cent of the drivers participated in team sports and 9% were individual sport athletes. Interestingly, most of the drivers' athletic backgrounds were team sport oriented.

Only 9% of the drivers were college athletes. This can be attributed to the fact that only 36% of the drivers ever attended college.

Figure 11. High School Athletic Participation

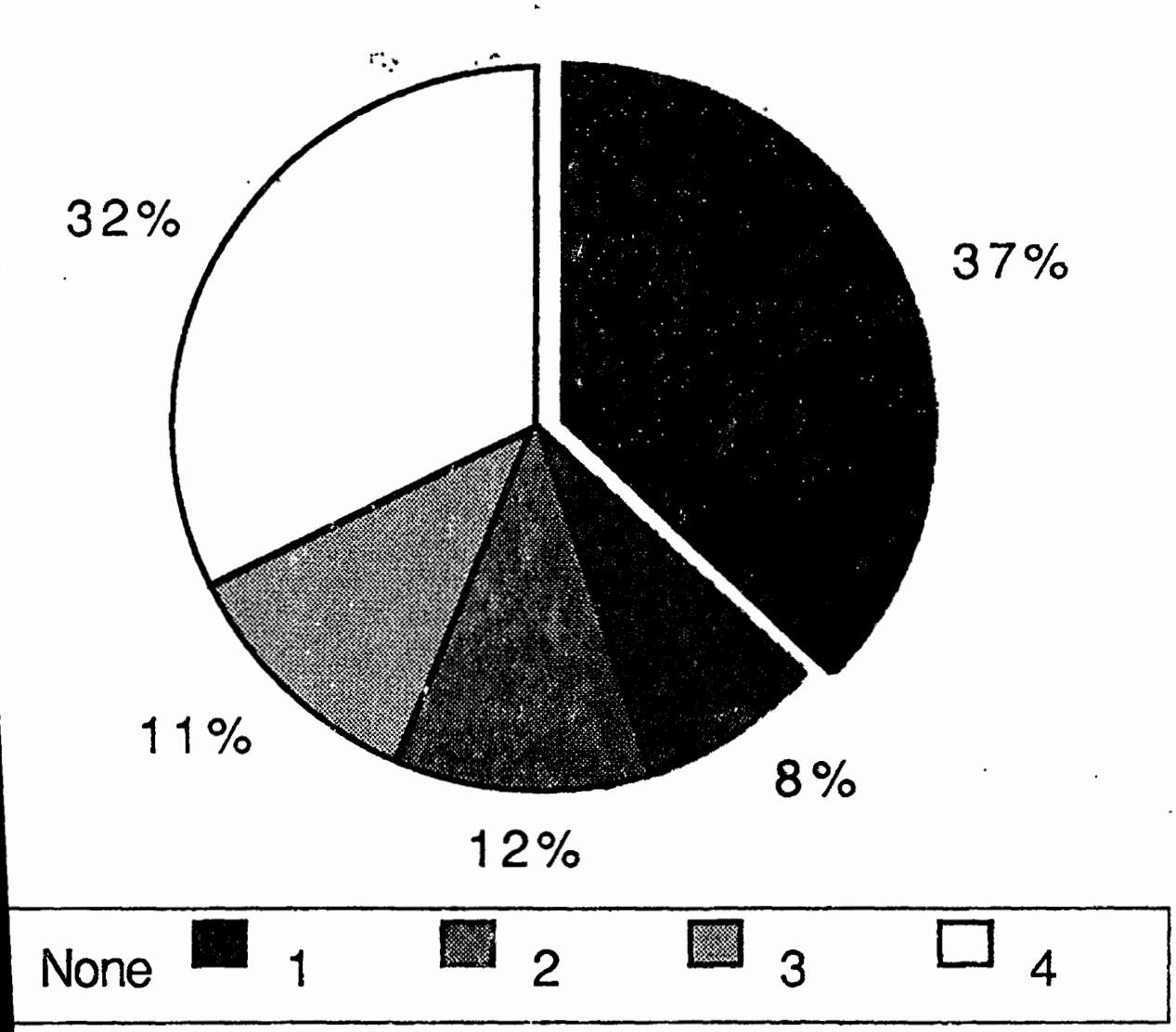


Years in High School Athletics

Figure 12 shows the number of years the driver participated in high school sports. Of the drivers that participated in high school athletics, 32% participated for four years. Eleven per cent participated for three years, twelve per cent of the drivers participated for two years, and 8% only participated for one year. Thirty-nine per cent of the drivers never participated in high school athletics. Of the 61% of the drivers that participated in high school athletics, 70% participated for 3-4 years. Sixty four per cent of these same drivers participated on two or more athletic teams per school year. This shows that the drivers who were high school athletes were generally active throughout their entire high school career.

The study also examined the extent to which drivers were involved with auto racing while they were in high school. Sixty four per cent responded that they were involved with auto racing when they were in high school. This shows that many were also involved in some manner or form with auto racing prior to graduating from high school.

Figure 12. Years in High School Athletics

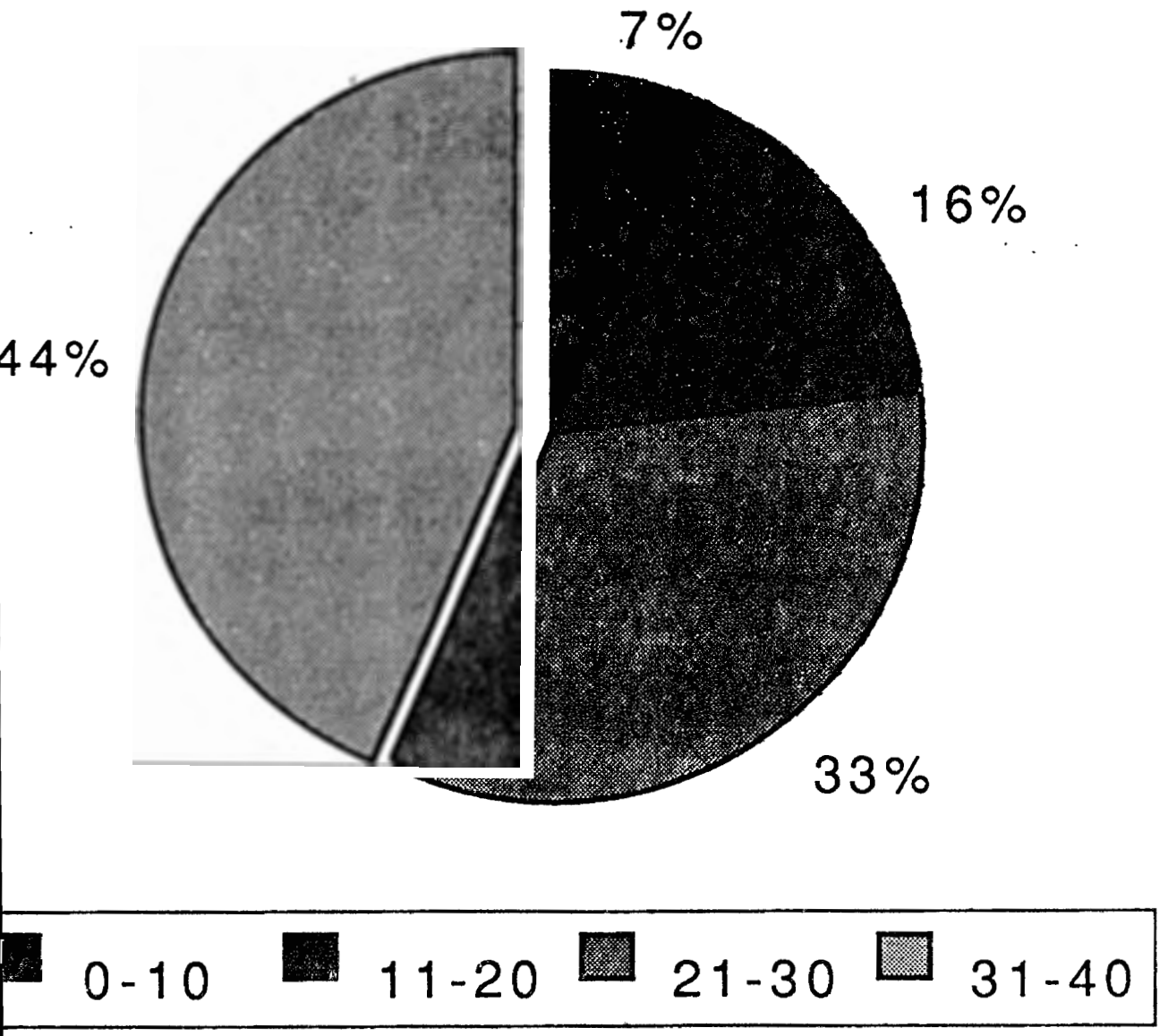


Drivers' Racing Experience and Time Involvement in Racing

Racing Experience

Figure 13 presents the number of years the sample of drivers were involved in racing. Forty-four per cent of the drivers had been involved with racing 31-40 years, 33% of the drivers had been involved 21-30 years, 16% of the drivers 11-20 years, and 7% 0-10 years. Most of the drivers (77%) have been involved in racing for over twenty years. Forty-four per cent of the 1987 Winston Cup drivers had been involved with racing 31-40 years; only 7% had less than 10 years of involvement in racing.

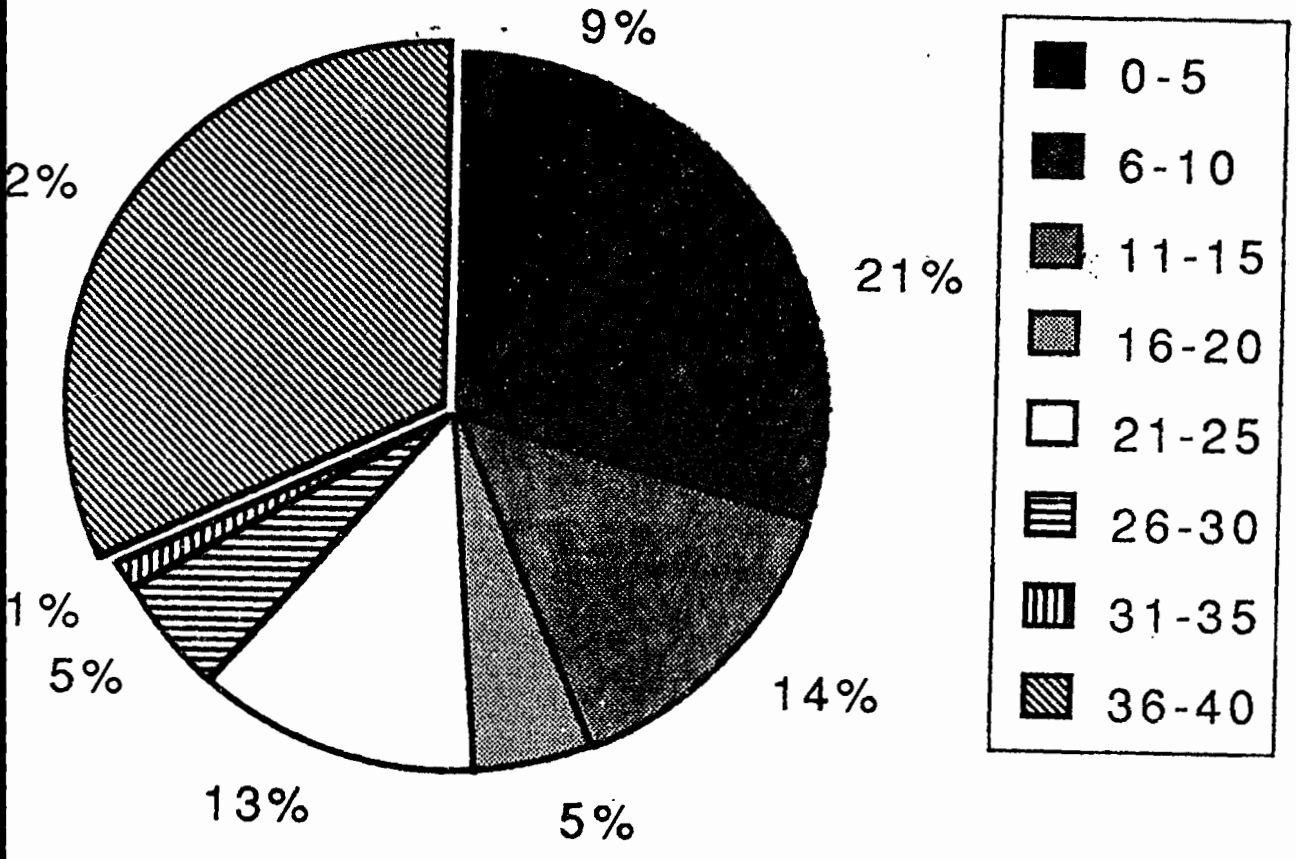
Figure 13. Involvement in Racing (years)



Winston Cup Stock Car Driving Experience

Figure 14 reveals the number of years these Winston Cup drivers have driven stock cars professionally. Seventy per cent of the drivers had been at the Winston Cup level 10 years or less, 18% had raced for 11-20 years, 9% had raced 20-30 years, and 3% had raced for over 30 years. While 93% of the drivers had raced professionally for over ten years, only 30% of the drivers had raced on the Winston Cup Series for over ten years. While the drivers had many years of professional stock car driving experience, most of the driving experience was acquired at lower levels of competition.

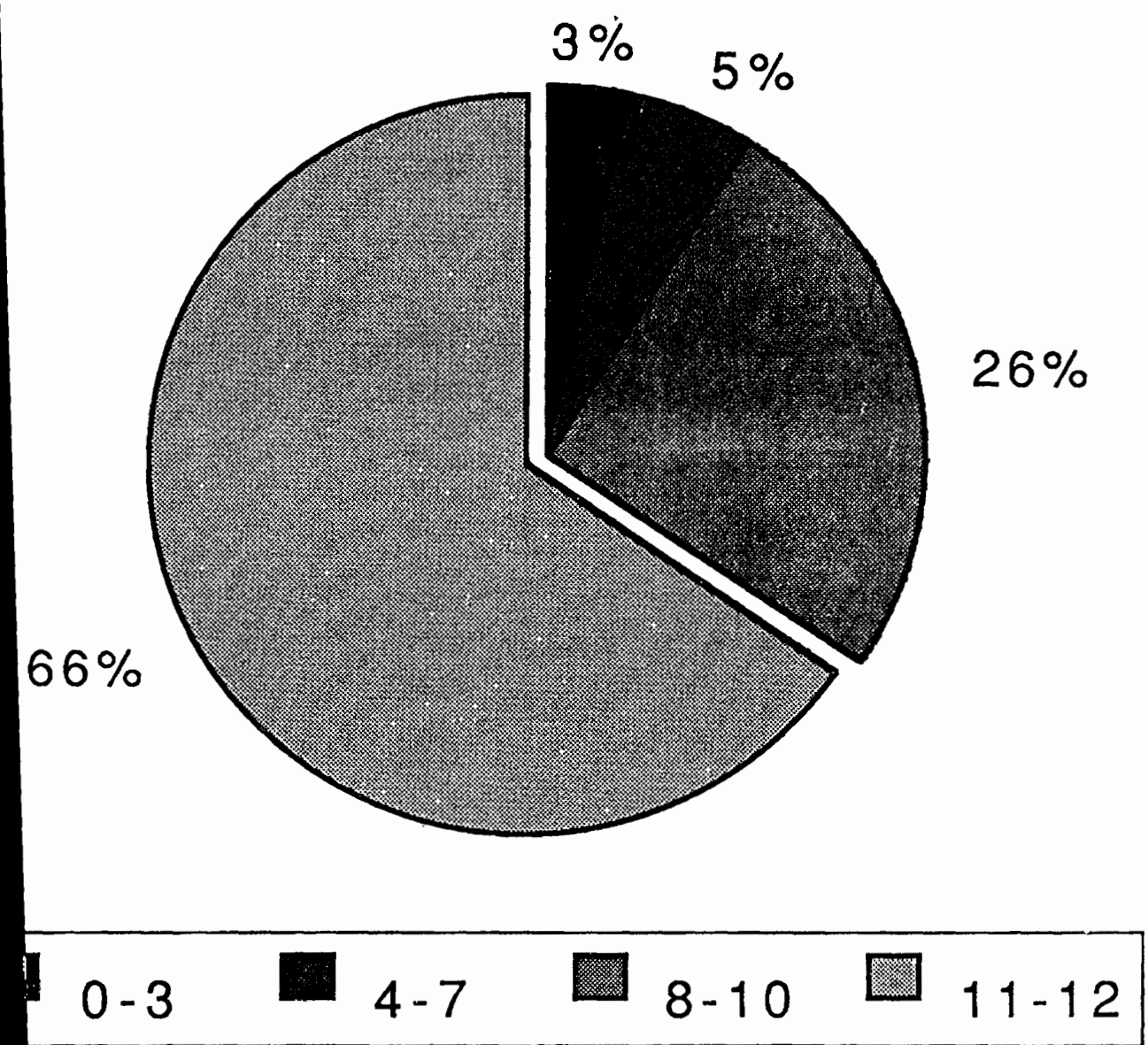
Figure 14. Professional Stock Car Driving Experience (years)



Yearly Involvement in Racing

Figure 15 presents the number of months per year that these drivers spent racing. Most of the drivers were involved with racing almost the entire year. Sixty-six per cent of the drivers were involved 11-12 months, 26% 8-10 months, 5% 4-7 months, and 3% 0-3 months. The Winston Cup Series season is one of the longer pro sport seasons since it lasts a total of 10 months. Between seasons, most race teams are busy testing cars for the up coming season. Thus, it is not surprising to see that 66% of the drivers were involved with racing 11-12 months, and 16% 8-10 months.

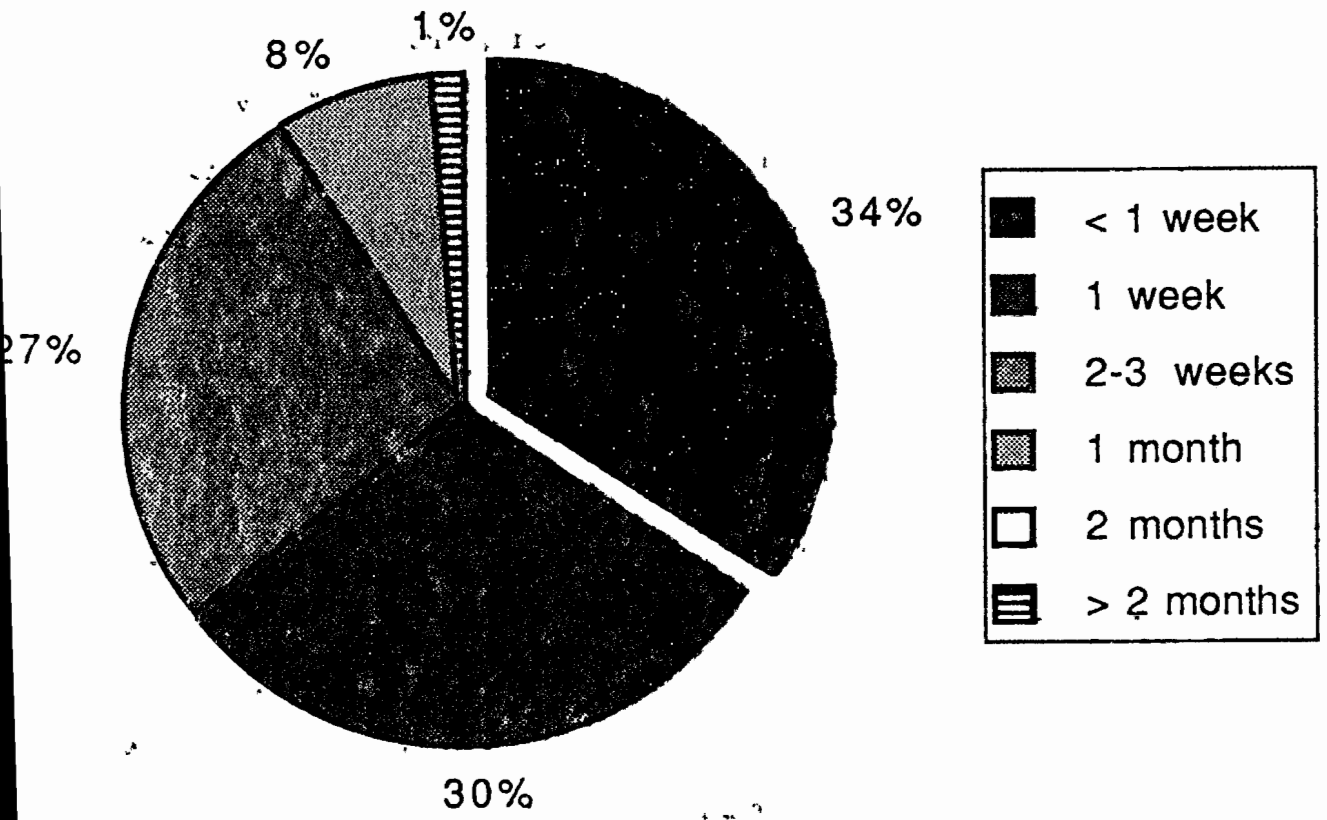
Figure 15. Yearly Involvement in Racing (months)



Vacation Time

Figure 16 reveals the amount of vacation time these drivers took during the year. Thirty-four per cent of the drivers took less than one week a year, 30% one week a year, 27% 2-3 weeks a year, 8% one month, and 1% more than two months a year. The ten month Winston Cup Series season and other commitments to racing e.g., testing, practice, and promotions demand most of the drivers time. Sixty-four per cent of the drivers took one week or less vacation time which tells us that for drivers, racing is a full-year commitment.

Figure 16. Vacation Time



Drivers' Career Satisfaction and Success

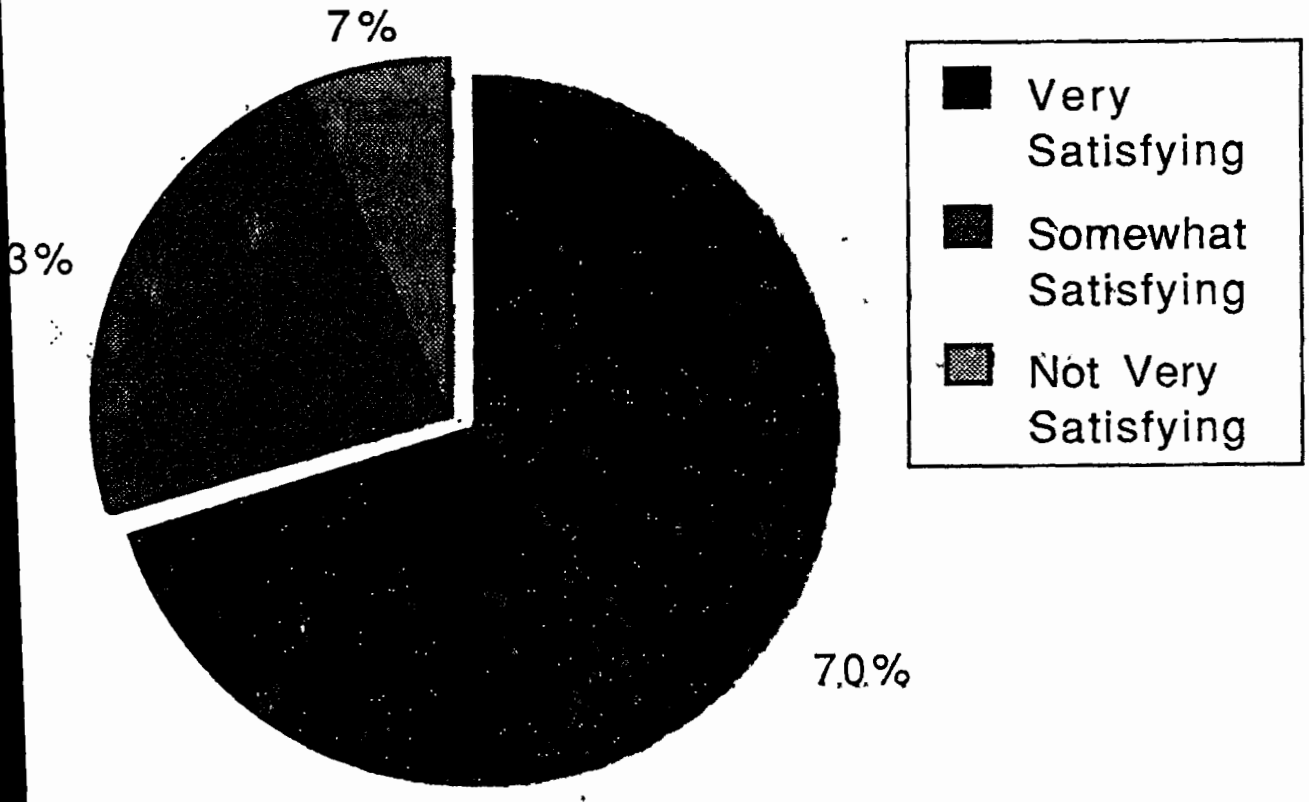
Career Satisfaction

In Figure 17 we see how satisfied the 1987 Winston Cup drivers felt about their Winston Cup careers. Seventy per cent of the drivers felt "very satisfied" with their careers. Twenty-three per cent of the drivers were "somewhat satisfied" and only 7% were "not very satisfied". Ninety-seven per cent of the drivers felt that stock car driving was their "most desired career". It appears that these drivers were doing what they most wanted to do and were "very satisfied" with their careers.

Feelings of Success

Eighty-eight per cent of the 1987 Winston Cup drivers felt "very successful" or "somewhat successful" as Winston Cup drivers. Only 12% of the drivers felt that they "have not been very successful" or "not successful at all". Although many of the drivers had never won a Winston Cup Series race, they felt successful by doing well in races, improving their finishing positions, finishing well in the Winston Cup Series point standings, obtaining good sponsorship, having good relations with the race team, and being known as a Winston Cup Series driver.

Figure 17. Career Satisfaction



A Profile of Winston Cup Drivers Surveyed in This Study

Introduction

While all Winston Cup drivers are individuals, a profile of a "typical" Winston Cup driver does emerge from this analysis. This profile is based on an analysis of their responses to a 33-item instrument.

1987 Winston Cup Series Drivers

The "typical" 1987 Winston Cup Series driver was a 37-year old white male. He was born in the southeastern portion of the United States and raised in the same area. His father was a skilled, manual worker who also had some type of involvement in racing. The typical racer participated in high school athletics (3-4 years) and played 2 or more sports per school year. He was also involved with auto racing during high school. He graduated from high school but did not go on to college. He entered racing because of his family's involvement in the sport and because he loved the competition. He was taught racing skills by his father, another driver, or, taught himself. He has over 30 years of racing experience of which 20 years have been at the professional level. Less than 10 years of his professional driving experience have been as a Winston Cup Series driver. Other family members of his were involved in racing. He feels that fitness training is necessary to be a successful Winston Cup driver so he trains 2-3 times a week the entire year. He weight trains, does aerobics, and plays tennis to get fit. He is involved with racing 11-12 months out of the year and takes no more than one week of vacation per year. Racing is his most desired career and he feels "very

satisfied" with what he has accomplished; in short, he gives evidence that he had high job satisfaction.

CHAPTER IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a sociological profile of the 1987 Winston Cup stock car drivers. Winston Cup stock car drivers were treated as an intact sport group for the purposes of this study.

The subjects were 77 Winston Cup drivers that were active during the 1987 Winston Cup Series season. Winston Cup stock car racing is recognized as the highest level of stock car racing in the United States so these drivers had reached the highest level of stock car racing possible.

A survey questionnaire was used to gather data about the drivers. The questionnaire was sent to the entire group of 1987 Winston Cup drivers (94 drivers); and 84% returned the instrument.

The data collected included: (1) drivers' age, (2) drivers' race, (3) drivers' sex, (4) drivers' marital status, (5) drivers' number of children, (6) drivers' education, (7) drivers' place of birth, (8) drivers' place of upbringing, (9) drivers' family involvement in racing, (10) drivers' reasons for entering racing, (11) drivers' fitness training, (12) drivers' athletic participation, (13) drivers' racing experience, (14) drivers' feelings of career satisfaction, and (15) drivers' feelings of career success.

An understanding of some important personal characteristics of Winston Cup stock car drivers was gained from this study. The following findings were drawn from the analysis of the data:

1. Most of the drivers are white males with a mean age of 37.
2. Most of the drivers were born and raised in the southeastern portion of the United States.
3. Most of the drivers' fathers were skilled, manual workers and had some type of involvement in auto racing.
4. Most of the drivers participated in high school athletics 3-4 years and played 2 or more sports per school year.
5. Most of the drivers were involved with racing when they were in high school.
6. Most of the drivers were high school graduates and did not go on to college. The percentage of drivers that graduated from high school was very close to national figures and the percentage of drivers that attended college was below national figures.
7. Most of the drivers entered racing because of their family involvement in the sport or because they loved the competition involved. Most of the drivers were taught racing skills by their father, another driver, or were self-taught.
8. Most of the drivers got married and had 2-3 children. The percentage of drivers that were married was above national figures, and the number of children that most of the drivers had was above national figures.
9. Most of the drivers had over 30 years of racing experience of which 20 years had been at the professional level. Most of the drivers had less than 10 years experience on the Winston Cup Series which has been in existence since the early 1970's.
10. Most of the drivers felt that fitness training is necessary to be a successful Winston Cup driver and most of the drivers train 2-3 times a week throughout the entire year. Many of the drivers weight train, do aerobics, and play tennis to get fit.
11. Most of the drivers were involved with racing 11-12 months out of the year and usually take one week of vacation per year.
12. Racing was the most desired career of most of the drivers and most feel "very satisfied" with their career.
13. Most drivers described their racing career as being "very successful".

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the data:

1. Previous family involvement with racing appears to be an important influencing factor for one to become a stock car driver.

2. Where an individual is born and raised appears to be an important influencing factor for one to become a stock car driver. The high exposure to stock car racing in the southeastern portion of the U.S. probably influences more people from that area to become stock car drivers.

3. College is not a training ground for stock car drivers, so one that is pursuing a career of stock car driving often does not attend.

4. Winston Cup racing is a white, male dominated sport.

5. To become a Winston Cup driver one usually needs 20 years of racing experience to gain the needed skills.

6. Winston Cup racing is an athletic sport that requires a high fitness level.

7. A Winston Cup career is "very satisfying" for stock car drivers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Further research should be done to determine why more women have not entered racing and why caucasians dominate the sport. A researcher with large financial backing and the necessary time should spend an entire Winston Cup season researching the drivers: ideas, interests, beliefs, symbols, norms, values, language, knowledge, and technology. This research might expose a subculture with unique identity and character. A study of the function of auto racing in modern society would be interesting. Also interesting would be a study of race fans that form "racing communities" at Winston Cup tracks.

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APPENDIX A

VIP LIST

WINSTON CUP DRIVERS

_____	Allison, Bobby	Post Office Box 3220, Hueytown, AL 35023
_____	Allison, Davey	317 Highlander Court, Hueytown, AL 35023
_____	Allison, Donnie	Route 1, Box 60-A, Faunsdale, AL 36738
_____	Arrington, Buddy	Route 2, Box 108, Martinsville, VA 24112
_____	Bailey, H. B.	Post Office Box 45298, Houston, TX 77245
_____	Baker, Randy	5000 Currituck Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210
_____	Baker, Buddy	Rt. 2, Box 200-C, Sherrills Ford, NC 28673
_____	Baker, Charlie	Box 266-A, Oak Hill Dr., Hanover, PA 17331
_____	Barkdoll, Phil	1321 East Lake, Phoenix, AZ 85014
_____	Barrett, Steven S.	3214 Moody Road, Bonaire, GA 31005
_____	Bierschwale, Eddie	711 Southeast Military Dr., San Antonia, TX 78214
_____	Bodine, Brett	322 Hudson Drive, Harrisburg, NC 28075
_____	Bodine, Geoff	Route 1, Box 600-B, Julian, NC 27283
_____	Bonnett, Neil	5640 Victory Lane, Bessemer, AL 35023
_____	Bouchard, Ron	300 Lunenburg Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420
_____	Boys, Trevor	Post Office Box 772, Inman, SC 29349
_____	Brooks, Dick	1309 North First Street, Albemarle, NC 28001
_____	Bryant, Kirk	Route 2, Box 294, Thomasville, NC 27360
_____	Burnette, Randy	Route 11, Box 94A, Winston Salem, NC 27107
_____	Canavan, Earl	PO Box 5150, Carefree, AZ 85377
_____	Christman, Steve	2809 Leesmore Lane, Ft. Wayne, IN 46808
_____	Combs, Rodney	2609 Woodsdale Ave., Kannapolis, NC 28081
_____	Cope, Derrike	601 #19 Farmhurst Lane, Charlotte, NC 28217
_____	Cowart, Delma	1402 Grove Point Road, Savannah, GA 31405
_____	Davis, Dave	R.R. 3, Box 36, Freeport, Maine 04032

VIP LIST

WINSTON CUP DRIVERS (Con't)

_____ Duffie, Philip	3542 Milledgeville Road, Augusta, GA 30909
_____ Dwyer, Clark	10840 Robinson Church Road, Charlotte, NC 28215
_____ Earnhardt, Dale	Route 8, Box 463, Mooresville, NC 28115
_____ Edwards, Jonathan L.	Route 2, Box 208-A, Lake Wylie, SC 29710
_____ Elliott, Bill	PO Box 2269, Blairsville, GA 30512
_____ Ellis, Tommy	1240 Elmart Road, Richmond, VA 23235
_____ Faggart, Robby	4937 Buckboard, Concord, NC 28025
_____ Fillip, Chet	2391 Old Dixie Highway, Riviera Beach, FL 33404
_____ Foyt, A. J., Jr.	6415 Toledo, Houston, TX 77008
_____ Gant, Harry	Route 3, Taylorsville, NC 28681
_____ Gerhart, Bobby	502 State Drive, Lebanon, PA 17042
_____ Grissom, Steve	Route 6, Box 82, Gadsden, AL 35901
_____ Hillin, Bobby	Post Office Box 1552, Midland, TX 79702
_____ Horton, Jimmy	RD 6, Box 498-A, Hammonton, NJ 08037
_____ Hume, Don	1305 Coddle Creek, Mooresville, NC 28115
_____ Hylton, James	13200 Asheville Highway, Inman, SC 29349
_____ Ingram, Jack	2720 Westport Road, Charlotte, NC 28208
_____ Irvan, Ernie	20 Cates Court, Harrisburg, NC 28075
_____ James, Clark	924 Flowe Store Road, Concord, NC 28025
_____ Jarrett, Dale	81 Gold Creek, Hickory, NC 28601
_____ Johnson, Slick	3712 Pine Needles Road, Florence, SC
_____ Knoop, Rick	POBox 767, Denver, NC 28037
_____ Kulwicki, Alan	801 Southampton Drive, Concord, NC 28025
_____ Labonte, Terry	1552 Colonial Club Drive, Thomasville, NC 27360
_____ Marcis, Dave	Post Office Box 645, Skyland, NC 28776

VIP LIST

WINSTON CUP DRIVERS (Con't)

_____ Marlin, Sterling	Route 8, Box 2010, Thomasville, NC 27360
_____ Martin, Mark	9443 South 29th St., Franklin, TN 53132
_____ Mast, Rick	Box 20A, Rockbridge, VA 24473
_____ McDuffie, J. D.	3612 Baker Drive, Sanford, NC 27330
_____ McFadden, John William	Route 2, Box 799, Forest City, NC 28043
_____ Means, Jimmy	102 Greenbriar Drive, Forest City, NC 28043
_____ Newsome, Rick	Post Office Box 5004, Lake Wylie, SC 29710
_____ Parsons, Benny	Box 443, 6th & Church St., Ellerbe, NC 28338
_____ Parsons, Phil	Highway 16, PO Box 569, Denver, NC 28037
_____ Paul, Don	9828 U.S. 31 South, Berrier Springs, MI 49103
_____ Pearson, Larry	423 Quail Ridge Circle, Spartanburg, SC 29303
_____ Petty, Kyle	830 West Lexington Ave., High Point, NC 27260
_____ Petty, Richard	Route 4, Box 86, Randleman, NC 27317
_____ Pimm, Ed	6855 Cook Road, Powell, OH 43065
_____ Pollard, Larry	Route 5, Box 41-C, N. Wilkesboro, NC 28659
_____ Potter, Mike	1319 Patrick Drive, Johnson City, TN 37601
_____ Ragan, Ken	P. O. Box 710, School Street, Unadilla, GA 31091
_____ Richmond, Tim	Box 1000, Cornelius, NC 28031
_____ Ridley, Jody	Route 2, Box 297, Chatsworth, GA 30705
_____ Rudd, Ricky	PO Box 1597, Mooresville, NC 28115
_____ Ruttman, Joe	Route 2, Box 69, Oakboro, NC 28129
_____ Sacks, Greg	PO Box 1383, Maitland, FL 32751
_____ Samples, Jesse	106 Marshall Street, Fort Mill, SC 29715
_____ Sauter, Jim	Route 1, Box 244, Necedah, WI 54646
_____ Saylor, Connie	PO Box 5366 EKS, Johnson City, TN 37603

VIP LIST

WINSTON CUP DRIVERS (Con't)

_____ Schrader, Ken	4001 Windy Road, Concord, NC 28025
_____ Shepherd, Morgan	PO Box 623, Conover, NC 23613
_____ Sosebee, David	Route 2, Box 2519, Dawsonville, GA 30534
_____ Speed, Lake	4025 Old Salisbury Road, Kannapolis, NC 28081
_____ Stahl, Mark	1121 Price Dairy Road, Monroe, NC 28110
_____ Stricklin, Hut	Route 1, Box 114, Calera, AL 35040
_____ Teague, Brad	706 Lynn Road, Johnson City, TN 37601
_____ Thomas, Ronnie	PO Box 2137, Christianburg, VA 24073
_____ Trickle, Dick	3230 Reber Drive., Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
_____ Ulrich, D. K.	PO Box 767, Denver, NC 28037
_____ Vanadore, Richard S.	1001 Dickerson Avenue, Anderson, SC 29624
_____ Wallace, Ferdin	216 Bridge Street, Clearfield, PA 16830
_____ Wallace, Rusty	3128 Devoncroft, Charlotte, NC 28213
_____ Waltrip, Darrell	110 Deerfield Court, Franklin, TN 37064
_____ Waltrip, Michael	1862-D Oakdale Circle, Statesville, NC 28677
_____ Wangerin, Blackie	8544 Aldrich Ave., S., Bloomington, MN 55420
_____ Wawak,Bobby	4047 River Road, Midland, NC 28107
_____ Wilson, Rick	Box 1513, Bartow, FL 33830
_____ Yarborough, Cale	500 Smith Street, Timmonsville, SC 29161

APPENDIX B

ROCKPORT
University of New York
e at Brockport
port, New York 14420
Education and Sport
5-2229

You are participating in a survey of all the current Winston Cup Series drivers. This y has been approved by the Physical Education Department of the State University College ockport for research purposes. This survey is being used to gain information about Winston rivers. Information gained will be part of a Masters Thesis which will be titled:

NASCAR Winston Cup Drivers: A Sociological Profile

ssion

_____, give my permission for these answers to be used for research purposes. erstand that my name will be kept confidential.

tions: Place a check mark next to the correct answer for the survey statement or question. cil has been provided for your convenience. If there is any question you do not wish swer simply leave it blank. Upon completion of the survey, a stamped return envelope vided to return the survey to me. Thank you very much for your cooperation!

---

is:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
___

icity is:

on _____
_____
c _____
_____
_____ Please specify _____

tal status is:

..... _____
..... _____
d or Separated. _____
d and Remarried _____
..... _____

this many children:

4-5 _____
6-8 _____
8-10 _____
More than 10 _____

5) I was born in this section of the country:

Northeast _____
Southeast _____
Northwest _____
Southwest _____
Midwest _____
I was not born in the U.S. _____

6) How far did you go in school?

Grade school or less....._____
Some high school....._____
Completed high school...._____
Some college....._____
2 year college degree...._____
4 year college degree ..._____
Some graduate school....._____
Completed graduate school _____
Post graduate school....._____

7) Have you served in any branch of the military?

Yes _____
No _____

8) My family lived in this section of the country while I was growing up:

Northeast _____ Southeast _____
Northwest _____ Southwest _____
Midwest _____ Outside the U.S. _____

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ckport, New York 14420
ica, Expression and Sport
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e occupational status of my father
ile I was growing up was:

ofessional or managerial _____
her white collar.....
e collar.....
mer .....
e car driver.....
ing related.....
er _____ Please specify _____

occupational status of my mother while
as growing up was:

fessional or managerial _____
er white collar.....
e collar.....
mer.....
sewife.....
ng related.....

socioeconomic status of my family before
tered racing was:

r class.....
r-middle class _____
r-middle class _____
ing-class.....
r class.....

ollowing members of my family were involved
racing before I entered racing:
se check all the people who were involved
he type of involvement they had in racing)

r _____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
r _____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
er _____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
r _____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
_____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
_____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
_____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
_____ Driver _____ Mechanic _____ Car owner _____ Other _____ Please specify _____
_____ Please specify _____ Type of involvement _____

llowing members of my family currently have
involved with auto racing besides myself:
all the people who are involved)

_____ Brother _____ Cousin _____ No one _____
_____ Uncle _____ Spouse _____ Other _____ Please specify _____

14) The following members of my family are now driving in the Winston Cup Series now besides myself:

No one _____
Father _____
Son _____
Brother _____
Cousin _____
Uncle _____
Other _____ Please specify _____

15) I have had some type of involvement with auto racing for this many years:

0-5 _____ 26-30 _____
6-10 _____ 31-35 _____
11-15 _____ 36-40 _____
16-20 _____ Over 40 _____
21-25 _____

16) I have been a professional stock car driver for this many years:

0-5 _____ 26-30 _____
6-10 _____ 31-35 _____
11-15 _____ 36-40 _____
16-20 _____ Over 40 _____
21-25 _____

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kport, New York 14420
cal Education and Sport
395 2229

have been a Winston Cup Stock Car Driver
his many years:

_____ 16-20 _____
-3 _____ 21-25 _____
-5 _____ 26-30 _____
-10 _____ More than 30 _____
-15 _____

ease check the one main reason why you entered
to racing:

entered racing because of my family experience _____
th racing.

entered racing for the social experience. _____

entered racing because I enjoy the element of _____
sk.

entered racing to earn money. _____

entered racing to become famous. _____

entered racing because I was pressured to race _____
other people.

ner _____ Please specify _____

you engage in any physical fitness training to prepare
for racing?

, I physically train throughout the entire year. _____
, I physically train only between Winston Cup
sons..... _____
, I physically train only during the Winston Cup
son..... _____
I do not engage in any physical fitness training ____

you feel a physical fitness training program is
essary to be a good stock car driver?

_____
_____

many times a week do you engage in physical
ditioning?

_____ 2-3 ____ 6-7 _____
_____ 4-5 ____

22) What do you engage in to physically train yourself for stock car driving? (you may check more than one item)

Running/Jogging _____
Weight training _____
Aerobics _____
Swimming _____
Golf _____
Tennis _____
Softball _____
Basketball _____
Raquetball _____
Other____ Specify _____
No physical training _____

23) Did you participate on an athletic team when you were in high school? (more than one item may be checked)

Yes, I participated in a team ____
sport.

Yes, I participated in an ____
individual sport.

No, I did not participate in ____
any sports in high school.

24) Were you actively involved with auto racing while you were in high school?

Yes _____

No _____

25) I participated on at least one athletic team for this many years in high school:

1 _____ 3 _____
2 _____ 4 _____
I did not participate on an athletic team. _____

26) During one school year I would participate on this many athletic teams:

0 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
More than 3 _____

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id you participate on a college athletic eam?

es _____
o _____

ow did you gain your skill as a stock car river? (more than one response may be hecked)

ather.....____ Other driver(s) _____
amily member _____ Car Owner.....____
riving school____ Other _____ Please specify:
elf-taught...____ _____

am actively involved with racing this many nths out of the year:

3 _____
7 _____
10 _____
-12 _____

w much vacation time do you take during year?

ss than 1 week...____
veek.....____
3 weeks.....____
onth.....____
onths.....____
e than 2 months _____

you feel you have been successful as a ston Cup stock car driver ? (success s not have to be based on wins or mpionships)

, Very successful.....____
, somewhat successful..____
not very successful...____
not successful at all _____

stock car racing a satisfying career you?

very satisfying.....____
somewhat satisfying..____
not very satisfying...____
not satisfying at all.____

33) If you could have any career that you wanted, would stock car racing be your first choice?

Yes, stock car racing is my most desired career. _____

No, I would rather be in another career field. _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!!

APPENDIX C

ROCKPORT
University of New York
ge at Brockport
kport, New York 14420
cal Education and Sport
395-2229

Dear _____

Mr. Bob Kelly of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco USA provided me with your home address to assist me in gathering data for my Masters Thesis. I am a physical education teacher in Syracuse N.Y. and I am doing a sociological profile of NASCAR Winston Cup drivers as part of my graduate studies at the State University of New York College at Brockport. I am an avid fan of Winston Cup racing and I would like to increase the body of knowledge about Winston Cup drivers with this project. Your participation in this survey is needed to increase the validity of the project. Your name will be kept confidential and will not be used in any reports. There is no evaluation intended or implied with this study.

Participation will require approximately 10 minutes of your time to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire and a stamped return envelope have been included with this letter in the hopes you will agree to be a participant.

I realize that Winston Cup drivers have very demanding schedules and that is why I have mailed this survey to you between Winston Cup seasons in hopes you will find time in your busy schedule to participate in this study. Thank you for your time and participation in this study. I will be very appreciative of your early response.

Sincerely,

Greg Dennis

Dr. Thomas D. McIntyre
Faculty Advisor

Dr. Merrill J. Melnick
Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX D

ROCKPORT
University of New York
ge at Brockport
kport, New York 14420
al Education and Sport
395-2229

Dear _____:

I sent a questionnaire to you and current NASCAR drivers on December 22nd 1988. Mr. Bob Kelly of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco USA provided me with your home address to assist me in gathering data for my Masters Thesis. 62% of the 94 drivers who received the questionnaire have returned it to me. It is important that I receive your response to make the study as valid as possible.

The questionnaire was sent during the holiday season when you may have been away from home. I have included another copy of the questionnaire and a stamped return envelope. It would be most helpful if you could complete the questionnaire and send it to me as soon as possible.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Greg Dennis

Dr. Thomas D. McIntyre
Faculty Advisor

Dr. Merrill J. Melnick
Faculty Advisor