

Introduction

Participation in physical education is important as it not only affects your physical health but also your mental health and can teach you a lot of fundamental skills. Through participating in PE lessons, children will develop their motor skills, it will improve their physical fitness, it can help reduce stress and anxiety and this could then improve a children's self-confidence and self-esteem. (ROES, 2019) Also, the health benefits of participation in sport and PE lessons is it can reduce the risk of obesity, osteoporosis, heart disease etc. Participation can also contribute to better concentration in other lessons throughout the day, so it can have a positive effect on students learning across the school, not just in PE itself.

For the dissertation the resources I will be using to conduct my research will be relevant literature to back my research and data that I will be collecting from interviews I will be conducting with secondary PE teachers, to see their perceptions on the barriers.

Adolescence, the age between 12 and 18 years of age (NCHS, 2006), in this time there is a dramatic change where you lay the foundations of life long participation. Girls between these ages are not active enough, and research suggests that "80% of women aren't doing enough exercise to stay healthy" (WSFF, no date, online)

The question chosen has come from my experience on placement observing physical education lessons in a secondary school. From my observations, I picked up on certain aspects which gave me an interest to further study into the reasons behind what I had noticed whilst on my placement. What I noticed was a lack of participation amongst girls within key stage 3 and 4, so I would like to find out what are the factors contributing to what makes girls participate and engage with lessons.

In 2016 a survey was carried out by Youth Sport Trust, and 28% of girls from ages 11-16 said they were not confident, 27% said they didn't like people watching them, 24% said that they were not good at it and 21% of girls said they don't like they boys watching them. This makes it clear as to why I am carrying out my research, the girls who are not participating because of these reasons are missing out on fundamental exercise that is important for their physical and mental health, more awareness needs to be raised about the lack of participation amongst young girls and there needs to be appreciation as to the reasons they do not wish to take part.

Hopefully while I conduct this research, it will produce relevant information and this can then help teachers understand how the girls feel and also think when it comes to PE lessons, and hopefully they will generate and support interventions to help solve the problem of low levels of participation.

I feel like it could add to current research as I will be finding out more modern reasons as to why there is a lack of participation and engagement.

Rationale

During my time on placement in the PE department a secondary school I noticed that there was a lack of participation amongst teen girls. There were a lot of excuses and letters handed in to excuse them from the lessons, and a percentage of the girls who would participate were not fully engaged with the lessons.

From my observations, in the lessons that the students had the choice of what activity they were to do, I found that there was an increase in their engagement within the lesson, for example, a group of year 9 girls had the choice of using the gym to do a circuit session or play basketball in the hall.

There are studies out there to back up the reason for my research like 'Exploring teachers' biographies and perceptions of girls' participation in physical education' (Rich, 2004), in this article Rich (2004) studied female PE teacher's perceptions on the "problem of girls' low participation in PE".

Penney (2002) also suggests that teachers must be weary of 'representing girls' attitudes towards different activity areas', that the curriculum has an emphasis on team sports in England and Wales, and that the curriculum stresses activities that 'girls tend to dislike'.

While I was on placement, I did notice that there was more enjoyment and engagement in more inclusive lessons, such as problem solving, where the teacher sets a task and the students had to come up with a solution in groups to solve it. And that in netball or hockey lessons, the percentage of enjoyment and engagement tended to be lower.

Aim of the study

The question of my study is Understanding influences on key stage 3 and 4 girls' participation and engagement within secondary PE. The aim for my study will be to find out what factors are and why they are restricting girls from participating. An article from the BBC 'How fear puts girls off PE' from November 2017 looks into what stops girls from taking part in PE. Gracie Rowe the subject of the article talks about her experiences as to why she would sit out and watch PE lessons rather than enjoy. She felt like she had a "devil on her shoulder telling me I couldn't do it" (Burns, 2017). Through my research I hope to find ways that will help girls overcome the fear of PE. I am hoping to find out what are the main factors that contribute to girls participating, from social reason with friends and family, to personal reasons such as self-confidence and mental health. Biddle et al. (2005) found that girls are hesitant to take part in PE lessons due to dislike to team and competitive sports, they had problems with mixed sex lessons, they lack confidence in their own self (connections to negative body image) and looked at sport as uncool to participate in. I would like to study whether there having single sex lessons will contribute to an increase in participation, also reasons why girls do not like taking part in PE in front of boys. To finish I would like to establish methods and ways to overcome the barriers in PE participation for girls, and also support interventions that are already in place.

Methodology

For my study, I am going to use secondary PE teachers as they have a greater insight to seeing the barriers that are there for girls to not engage or participate. I am going to interview 4 or 5 teachers, to gather more information, and in-depth data. Preferably I would like to interview female teachers, as they would understand the girls' perceptions, and can see the barriers that are there that influence girls' opinion on physical education. I will conduct face to face, semi structured interviews with the teachers with a list of open ended questions on why they think that girls often avoid participation, what influences them, what sort of reasons do they give to avoid taking part etc, and hopefully gain a greater insight to what the barriers are in the eyes of the teacher. During this dissertation the type of research that will be conducted will be qualitative, as use of relevant literature will be used to support my data collection and findings.

Data analysis

Before the interview stage, I will create a participant consent form for the participants to read and agree to, on the consent form will be the title of my study so they know the nature of the interview, and ask for consent for them to take part in the study, for them to be recorded in the interview process, consent for the use of anonymous quotes to be used in my study, that they know that participation is voluntary and can stop taking part at any time. The interviews that will be conducted will be semi-structured questions, and open questions so that on the answers the participants can elaborate on their answer so it is more in depth. It will be measured by identifying the teachers perception on how girls engage with PE lessons, how great the participation is and what can influence their participation within the lessons. The data collected from the teacher interviews will be linked and backed up with relevant literature. To analyse the data, I will transcribe the recordings of the interviews, and then use relevant quotes from the teachers throughout my work.

Timetable

Introduction and literature review – December 2019

Methods and research design – January 2020

Results and analysis – February 2020

Discussion and conclusion – March 2020

Presentation of dissertation – April 2020

References

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