

Cardiff School of Sport
DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA:
 Empirical ¹

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<p>Dissertation title:</p> <p>Supervisor: <input style="width: 300px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="An Examination Of Physical Education Perceptions From Secondary School Children In Years 10 and 11 Compared To Years 7, 8 and 9."/> <input style="width: 250px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="Bev Smith"/></p>	
Comments	Section
	<p>Title and Abstract</p> <p>Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem.</p> <p>Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.</p>
	<p>Introduction and literature review</p> <p>To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/ question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable).</p>
	<p>Methods and Research Design</p>

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	<p>To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol.</p>
	<p>Results and Analysis ²</p> <p>To include: description and justification of data treatment/ data analysis procedures; appropriate presentation of analysed data within text and in tables or figures; description of critical findings.</p>
	<p>Discussion and Conclusions ²</p> <p>To include: collation of information and ideas and evaluation of those ideas relative to the extant literature/concept/theory and research question/problem; adoption of a personal position on the study by linking and combining different elements of the data reported; discussion of the real-life impact of your research findings for coaches and/or practitioners (i.e. practical implications); discussion of the limitations and a critical reflection of the approach/process adopted; and indication of potential improvements and future developments building on the study; and a conclusion which summarises the relationship between the research question and the major findings.</p>
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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

SPORT MANAGEMENT

**(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of
MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT)**

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TITLE:

**AN EXAMINATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
PERCEPTIONS FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN YEARS 10 AND 11 COMPARED TO
YEAR 7, 8 AND 9.**

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Prifysgol Fetropolitán Caerdydd

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Abstract

The purpose of this independent research project is to investigate key factors that influence high school students in year 9, to make the decision to choose or not to choose Physical Education as a GCSE subject. The project includes a review of literature into physical education, focusing specifically on the perceptions that students have of physical education.

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The project adopted a mixed methods research design which enabled qualitative and quantitative data for this study. The methodology process was informed by previous research studies that adopted a similar process. The researcher used questionnaires that included a number of open and closed questions, to enable perceptions, through and feelings to be identified. It was decided that a group of 50 students ranging from year 10-13 from a school in Cardiff would be used as the sample. Qualitative data was analysed through the use of SNAP software. Quantitative data as analysed through identifying common responses which were placed within a table to identify themes.

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Females were increasingly effected by body image, and associated physical education with having to look good to participate. Males were less effected by body image, however found they were effected by the mixture of ability and self confidence which linked closely to the PE teachers themselves, and the lack of encouragement that was being provided. All pupils found PE lessons in previous years (years 7-9) fun because they were with friends, although the majority stated that more opportunity from a variety of activities should have been provided in these years. Physical Education teachers therefore need to provide an enthusiastic experience while PE is compulsory, which will create positive perceptions, hopefully fostering a greater participation level in GCSE's and throughout the students adult life.

This project is significant as its results and findings are current and therefore could be used to develop physical education departments in schools and to determine

what changes could be put into place to ensure an increase of students choosing PE as a GCSE subject. It was fundamental that the researcher exposed the thoughts and feelings of the participants in relation to physical education and their participation to formulate an in-depth discussion.

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

Physical Education (PE) is a compulsory part of education for everybody up until Year 9, and is considered an important subject for young children to develop key life skills for the future by The National Curriculum. Bailey et al (2010) suggests that some persuasive evidence portray that Physical activity can improve children's concentration levels and arousal. It is therefore important to encourage participation at every level throughout pupils schooling life as it could indirectly benefit academic performance. (Bailey et al, 2010) The Department for Education (2011) found that *PE develops pupils' competence and confidence to take part in a range of physical activities that become a central part of their lives, both in and out of school.* Physical Activity is considered an important part of everyday life as it is one factor that prevents obesity developing. Being obese can increase the risk of developing many different diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart diseases (Department of Health, 2012). According to The Health Survey for England (2011), 62.8% of adults that aged 16 or over were overweight or obese, and 30.3% of children aged between 2 and 15 years old were also overweight or obese. The NHS however stated that an increased level of physical activity has the potential to change the above statistics, and reduces the risk of developing any major diseases. Children are continuously developing through their schooling years physically and emotionally, therefore are especially affected by the benefits of activity and equally effected negatively by inactivity (Datko, 2011).

Despite recognizing the beneficial aspect of participating in PE, schools across the nation face increasing challenges such as, time allocation, the number of trained staff available, and the lack of training provided for PE teachers (Sport and Development.org, no date). Many argue that without the support from teachers themselves alongside family and friends, participation levels will continue in the same direction.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim to this research project is to study what influences are in place that effect the decision to select or not select PE as a GCSE subject through, examining what physical education as a product looks like to secondary school children in years

10 and 11 compared to years 7,8 & 9. Three key objectives have been set, to allow the aim of the project to be met:

Objectives

- To determine the key factors effecting student thoughts/perceptions, and the differences between girls and boys.
- To analyse any significant differences in thoughts/perceptions between the pupils who have chosen to continue studying physical education to those who have not.
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations about what might be done to improve the selected age groups response to physical education as a product.

1.2 Overview

The project aims to be conducted through an independent structure made up of six chapters. The literature review will be used to evaluate and critique previous research that already exists around the subject area. The methodology will reflect on previous literature in order to identify a suitable method to be used. The methodology will demonstrate the procedure being adopted for the study to be completed. A discussion will take place once data has been gathered through analysing the results that have previously been organised into figures. The project will finish with a conclusion that summarises the main findings. In order to make future recommendations about what could be done to improve, a reflection on the research process will be undertaken.

CHAPTER TWO:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.3 Physical Education History

PE has been a part of everybody's lives for a long period of time. To maintain being fit and healthy has become of more importance over the last few years as the numbers of unwell and overweight people have risen due to the lack of exercise. Research has been done into the area of eating healthy and keeping fit, and has become clear that these elements put together can help towards a better and longer life.

In the late 1980's there was a public debate in Britain about PE. Since this period PE has been adapted emphasising equal opportunities (Kirk, 1992). Due to the 1944 Butler Education Act a reflection on societal change at the time was carried out leading to new views on physical education and the way it is taught in schools within the curriculum (Kirk, 1992). Since the act, modern gymnastics, dance and apparatus including ropes, benches and climbing frames are introduced (Atherton et al, 2004).

The debate recognised and raised issues around the area of social construction of school knowledge, and to what physical education was to be defined as. As a result of these issues, progress had begun to create PE as a subject within schools more enjoyable as a compulsory part of the school day. Due to changing views of PE, many researchers and philosophers attempted to explain the importance of physical education regarding its educational status and its values (Carr 1997; Kirk 1992; White 2003). The work of White (2003) suggests that physical education is considered by sports organisations as an essential foundation for the future of participation and excellence in sport. This suggestion has a connection with the work of philosopher, Carr (1997), who refers to sports and games (following Barrow, 1981) as a valuable part of someone's schooling, but argues is not always educational.

Kirk (1992) suggests that one of the shifts from the debate that moved physical education forward appeared in the late 1985's when *The Times Educational Supplement* reported that representatives from different associations including Football, Rugby Union and Cricket attempted to collaborate with the Central Council for Physical Recreation, (CCPR) in order to co-ordinate the physical education and sports in and out of schools. The CCPR's argument was based on the fact that so many different activities and sports had been brought into the schooling education system that respective sports had been pushed to one side. From the report,

allegations were being made into the decline of team games and the misguided ideas about promoting individualistic activities to pupils. However by 1986 *'The Times Educational Supplement'* argued that schools were turning their backs on competitive sport and stated 'traditional competitive sports in schools are under a cloud'. As a result of the debate a shift in physical education teachers ideas towards competition emerged and the Physical Education Association's *'Commission of Enquiry into physical education in schools'*(1987) heavily supported the new ideas and renewed interest in health and fitness. Therefore a new, different physical education lay behind the debate, and physical education was not looked upon any longer as the traditional approach, that concentrated on the health and fitness of students with the view of encouraging participation during lessons in the hope that their positive experiences influence their decision to choose PE in year 10 for GCSE.

Within the schooling system, according to White (2003) the foundation stage of physical education relies heavily on school involvement and providing an education within sport for all pupils. The work of Fletcher (1984) and Scarton (1992) suggests that PE in a school environment may not be of equal importance in regards to taking part and providing every pupil with an equal opportunity to take part in a variety of activities, compared with other subjects within the curriculum. This seems to have had an influence on the way pupils perceive physical education (Estyn, 2007). Throughout the years of PE changing in the way it's taught in schools and teacher training has improved which has contributed to a better pupil experience. Up until the 1970's both men and women PE teachers were trained separately within sex-segregated colleges (White, 2003). Following this teachers categorised students in relation to gender, resulting in PE within schools being seen as a limitation of education, categorising different sports to girls and boys, making it difficult to provide fair activities that include both genders. However recently the system has been adapted and all PE teachers now train through co-educational courses. However some traditional aspects have been followed through within the PE curriculum, with most secondary school classes still being taught predominantly sex-segregated.

2.4 The Marketing Mix

According to researchers such as Armstrong & Kotler (2009), Jobber (2001) marketing and elements of the marketing mix are an important part of an organisation, to achieve corporate goals and meet customer needs better than the competition. Relating to PE in a school environment, the school is considered the organisation, which needs to promote the benefits and how developmental their PE department is in the school, to gain interest of the parents. Schools are in competition with each other to try and gain the most pupils, and therefore it is important for them to promote their product, in this case PE, to gain these pupils.

The marketing mix consists of everything the organisation can do to influence the demand for its product (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009). Within an educational establishment, the customers are the pupils and their parents as they are the important people that need to be convinced of the school's advantages, so that they can make an informed decision whether or not to send their children there. To meet customers' needs a business must develop products to satisfy them, charge the right price, get the goods to the right place, and it must make the existence of the product known through promotion (The Times, 2013). Therefore a school needs to develop every department, as this is their product, to the highest standard in order to provide the best educational experience to the pupils. Armstrong & Kotler (2009) agree that all four of these elements are blended together to produce the response it wants from the target audience.

Products can be described as the tangible assets the company has for sale or its intangibles such as services (Jobber, 2001). Consumer's demands will play an important part within the production process of the organisation and influence what product/service will be on offer. As technology and demands change, the organisation must adapt its products and services to something new to enable customers value (Jobber, 2001). For example, in physical education, the use of equipment is important and can influence a student in whether they take part or not. New equipment is being made constantly for different sporting activities and therefore it is important for schools to consider the quality of the equipment and keep up to date to enable highest participation levels.

Within an education establishment, promotion of PE would be of main concern. Promotion relates to how information regarding the product or service reaches the customer. This could be done in a school, through the use of posters around the school, promoting different sporting activities, and displaying what GCSE PE involves. The aim of the promotional element is to achieve positive responses from the customers and therefore gaining positive responses should increase product sales (Schwarz & Hunter, 2008).

It is important to consider all elements of the marketing mix when relating marketing to physical education within schools. The consumers of physical education within the school environment is the students, and whether the subject of Physical Education has been marketed correctly and effectively in a way that will gain attention and interest of the students to participate, and further educate their knowledge in that subject. The way students perceive physical education as a product relies heavily on the marketing element of physical education, and what is being offered to them in regards of the curriculum and enjoyment.

Some children are more interested in history, maths or science and don't have an interest in Physical Education. The difference between all the other subjects and PE is that within PE, pupils are excused with a letter, here as they are not excused out of a maths or history lesson if they are ill. Therefore it is the teachers role to change the mind of these students and satisfy their customers. Jobber(2001) suggests that customer value is dependent on how the customers perceive the benefits of an offering and the sacrifice that is associated with its production. Therefore students in year 7-9 are influenced by many different factors, and this is a barrier to the way they perceive physical education, and their decision to select or not to select PE through GCSE.

Booms & Bitner (1981) explain that looking at four P's oversimplifies reality of the marketing management and argues that the seven P's approach is more appropriate as people, process and physical audience are not sufficiently accounted for within only four P's. The work of Rafiq & Ahmed (1992) expands on the argument to include industrial marketing. The interaction approach to industrial marketing emphasises success does not come from manipulation of the marketing mix alone and that long term relationship building leads to a bond between the buyer and seller

that acts as a banner to entry for out-suppliers. Within a school the relationship between the physical education teacher and the student should be strong to enable promotion of PE to be successful, and to keep students interested once involved within the subject.

2.3 Sport Marketing

Researchers such as Mullin et al (2007), Kotler & Armstrong (2001), Shank (2005), all offer similar definitions of sport marketing as it has become increasingly popular as a significant part of a successful organisation.

Mullin et al (2007)'sport marketing consist of all the activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sport consumers through exchange processes.

Kotler and Armstrong, (2001) 'a social and managerial process whereby individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging product and value with others'

Shank (2005) 'sports marketing is the specific application of marketing principles and processes to sport products and to the marketing of non-sports products through association with sport'.

Therefore all three researches agree that sport marketing is put in place and followed through within organisations to ensure satisfaction of the needs and wants of the consumer, to maintain and achieve set goals of the organisation considering their vision and mission and to be a step ahead of the competition to enable maximum potential (Schwarz & Hunter, 2008). The marketing aspect of sport focuses on the functions and components involved within the transfer, including ; advertising, promotion, publicity and sponsorship. Therefore in relation to sport marketing with physical education as the product or service, it is vital to promote, advertise and publicise different activities that are being offered throughout the school to gain interest of potential consumers.

2.4 Physical Education Issues

The proportion of young children showing low levels of Physical activity is a cause of some concern (Curries et al. 2004).

Many reports (Sport Wales., 2011; Sport England., 2012 and The Department of Education., 2012) show that the level of participation among adolescence differ from when they start high school in Year 7 to when they leave in Years 10-13, suggesting that different interest become more important to the young adults as they develop through education, implying the importance of physical activity is not being noticed or implied to the pupils at this age.

A Sport Wales (2011) report showed, that the participation levels of pupils in Year 10 were lower than in Year 7. The report showed that 75% of students were taking part in extracurricular activity while in Year 7 compared to 58% in Year 10, suggesting that pupils are participating in sport outside of the school, however barriers are influencing their decision to not participate in PE. The decrease in figure of extra curriculum activities suggest that participation rates in a school PE are likely to drop from Year 10 onwards, where the subject becomes an option.

Sport Wales (2011) also identified that within primary school student there was a slight difference, although students were generally more likely to take part in extracurricular activity, showing 62% in Central South, 66% South East and 68% in the Mid, West and North regions. The fact that the difference is lowered within primary school age students suggests that there is an underlying issue within the high school physical education delivery scheme, resulting in older students being turned off taking part in physical activity.

A report by the UK government also suggests that there is an issue with participation figures within physical activity. They suggest that their target of getting 70% of the population to be reasonably active by 2020 is ambition. The report explains only 37% of men and 24% of women in the United Kingdom currently meet the benchmark of taking part in 30 minutes of physical activity five times a week. A percentage of the benchmark set by the UK government could be met through PE, during lessons. As the percentage meeting this benchmark is relatively low, it could suggest the importance of participating in PE is not being enforced to pupils in school.

Two reports from Sport England (2010) and Department of Education(2010), identify the decrease in participating within secondary school education. Sport England (2010) stress that the real concern is the fall in the number of young people aged between 16 and 19 playing sport. The Department of Education (2010) agree with this concern showing that not enough secondary school students are participating in at least 120 minutes of curriculum Physical Education, with figures showing 87% in year 7-9, 64% in Years 10-11 and only 23% of pupils participating in Years 12-13. Comparing these figures with 95% of student from Years 3-6 participating is clearly evident that there are many influential factor creating barriers for secondary school children.

These reports clearly identify that physical education among adolescence is of concern. It could be suggested that physical education subject within school is suppose to educate the students, and prepare them for the future to be healthy and live an active lifestyle for benefits of their own. The department of Health (2012) comments on how physical activity can decrease the chances of become obese, *“Increasing physical activity can also be helpful alongside calorie reduction in achieving weight loss and sustaining a healthy body weight, as well as improving overall health”*. Figures identified from Sport Wales (2011) report suggest that the biggest worry among young adults starts from when they hit high school, and begin to decrease significantly by Year 9/10. Student are able to decide what subjects they would prefer to study, furthering their knowledge, when in Year 10. PE is not seen as one of the most education subjects (Carr, 1997), and underlining issues need to be addressed and adapted so the perception of physical education changes.

Research from Milosevic (1996) identifies that there is a difference in attitude towards PE among boys and girls. A study carried out by Milosevic suggested that the majority of girls attitude towards PE was far higher towards the negative spectrum than boys, suggesting that girls were twice as likely as the boys to miss PE and could create excuses to excuse themselves from PE classes far more often than boys. The study suggests that gender is an important issue regarding why participation levels are low in secondary school students, and that girls are effected negatively by the situation. Scully & Clarke (1997) suggest that girls of this are exposed to gender stereotypes, and feminine behaviour from an early age and has a strong influence on their lives. The fact that young children are exposed to

stereotype behaviour suggests that many decisions made by the students within school are heavily influenced by other elements, resulting in students not wanting to participate in physical activity because of how others will perceive them.

2.5 Rationale

Finalising a research question

After analysing the findings from the literature research, it has become clear that there is a need for further discussion and investigation into the link between the dropout rate of students in physical education within schools, and the underlying issues that are a result of this decrease in participation. Many researchers have gone into depth and detail in researching the area around physical education participation in schools, and how the schooling system has changed massively throughout the years. As a result of previous literature it could be suggested that the way physical education is looked upon by students in regards to the marketing side needs more investigation, as to how physical education is perceived by the students as a product. The findings of researchers within the review will allow a better understanding of investigations and will prove to be a vital information source to 'determine what physical education as a product looks like to secondary school children in years 10 and 11 compared to years 7,8 & 9'. Although research has been carried out surrounding the chosen subject area, a considerable amount of field research needs to be carried out to provide an educated debate and reasoning for the decrease in participation. The result of the field research could be an important part of information to suggest how the schooling system and the curriculum regarding physical education could adapt different elements to provide a better subject to students and gain more interest resulting in participation levels increasing and more people living a healthier lifestyle. The importance of this study is to focus on the time in education that students are in a position to choose the subject they wish to undertake.

CHAPTER THREE:
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The intention of the study was to examine the different perceptions towards Physical Education from a group of high school students. The effects that Physical Education had upon these students were examined in relation to the participation level at Year 10, when able to choose the subject for GCSE study.

3.2 Research method

A mixed method approach was used for this study to collect data using questionnaires that consisted of open and closed questions. Ridenour & Newman (2008) suggest that this is a potential way to think about integrating both paradigms within a study, to gain efficiency, as both Qualitative and quantitative research methods together will explain the research question in greater detail. This method was adopted as it was most appropriate to the study, and would allow for greater information to be collected as two out of four paradigms (qualitative & quantitative) were being used, offering a more powerful way to collect data. (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Qualitative data collection

Qualitative research is a primary data collection strategy that refers to research that involves collection of original data specific to a particular project (Gratton & Jones, 2010). It has three main methods of data, interviews, questionnaires and observations. For this study the questionnaires will involve open ended questions.

One of the advantages of including open questions into the questionnaire is to allow the participants to open up about their thoughts and feelings, and give the opportunity to explain, rather than a yes or no answer. The participants are given the freedom to discuss their thoughts during the questionnaire without being prompted to answer in a specific way or be lead to think that what they are saying is the wrong answer (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

Quantitative data collection

Quantitative research generally uses measured variables to test hypothesized relationships in more controlled situations, which usually start with a theory and tests for confirmation or disconfirmation of that theory (Ridenour & Newman, 2008). The method regarding this research strategy would be closed questions within the questionnaire, and the many advantages of this method influenced the decision for it to be used for the study. Quantitative data is a way of collecting data that can be analysed and understood simply, by putting quantitative data into numbers, figures and graphs, and process it using statistical procedures (Rasinger, 2008). One advantage of questionnaires with closed questions is that it can enable trends and averages within a given population to be formulated. Questionnaires can also be seen as a good way to avoid bias (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The participants are not in a situation where they can react to different expressions and body language passed on by the study leader. Gratton & Jones(2010) agree that a good questionnaire will allow minimal opportunities for this to happen.

However there are disadvantages of using questionnaires that provide closed questions such as once the process has begun it becomes inflexible. One of the most important disadvantages that needs to be overcome includes the understanding of the questions. Some participants may not understand what the question is asking of them and therefore as a closed question does not allow for probes or for the participant to explain, irrelevant responses could be gathered. The study overcame this disadvantage by conducting a pilot study with boys and girls from the same age group as the sample. The adapted questionnaire was then handed out to the wide sample groups within the school. Adaptations are noted within section 3.4 pilot study.

3.3 Sample

The participants used for this study were from a Welsh High School within Cardiff. A purposive sample was chosen for the study, because a variety of participants were required. Gratton and Jones (2010) state that purposive sample is used when you are not trying to generalise the findings to a wider population but to a set group of subjects. Chien (1981) suggests random sampling is not used in many cases because the purpose of many studies is not to do with all of the population.

The sample for the study needs to meet the criteria of the research question, in this study females and males from Year 10-13 had been purposely selected as the sample. Once the participants had been decided, and agreed to take part, the sampling was then separated into two groups. This was to make it easier for the school to track where students were as not all the participants were from the sixth form class. The 50 participants were taken from Years 10-13, and were an equal mixture of boys and girls. From the different genders, half of the girls were GCSE Physical Education students and the other half were non GCSE physical Education students, with the same applying to the boys. This was to ensure that opinions and thoughts from all types of students were considered and analysed.

Therefore it was important for the success of the study to gain vital information from both groups, to understand the reasoning behind not choosing physical education as a subject to those who are physically active outside of the school environment, alongside those who do decide to continue with physical education GCSE.

3.4 Procedure

A permission letter was sent to the head teacher of the school to ensure that they were happy for me to carry out the study with their students. Following this was a phone call conversation confirming the date and participants who were going to be available to take part in the study.

An information sheet (appendix 1) was handed out to all participants to read, that stated the purpose of the study was.

Due to the majority of the participants being under the age of 18, previous to the questionnaires being handed out a consent letter (appendix 2) was given to each of the pupils, which required them to sign that they were willing to take part in the study.

Due to the size of the room provided for the study, the questionnaires were completed in two groups. The first group of students from Years 10 & 11, and the second from Years 12 & 13, as this was the most appropriate for the majority of teachers that were leading classes. All participants, completed the questionnaires together. While students completed the questionnaires they did not confer with one another. Once the questionnaires had been handed out, a full explanation of the structure and requirements of the questionnaire were explained to both boys and

girls. Due to the participants being older in age, a review of each individual question was not given, and therefore any individual questions from the participant were answered if unsure of a specific question. However no questions were answered on anything other than the question understanding, as this could have influenced the students answer and eventually effect the analysed results.

The students from Years 12 & 13 also gathered in a class room that was allocated to myself but the participants from both years completed the questionnaire at different times during the allocated hourly slot provided, because of the nature of their education time tabling. The same explanation was given.

Confidentiality of the questionnaires was explained, and all students understood this along with the understanding that anybody could withdraw from taking part at any time, as it was optional for all participants to take part. Each student had the opportunity to leave just before asking them to complete the questions individually.

The groups took approximately 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire including the explanation before plus the hand-in of the completed document.

3.5 Pilot Study

Pilot study is considered a study but on a smaller-scale than the final, done examine and modify the design and procedures along the way (McBurney & White, 2010). A pilot study was undertaken before the final questionnaires were finalised and handed out to ensure issues had been adapted. Gratton & Jones,(2004 p. 127) explain that a pilot study is important to “check that the sequence of the questionnaire is clear and logical to respondents”.

From the pilot study a number of adjustments had been made to the questionnaire which included the use of PE instead of Physical Education. Replacing Physical Education with ‘PE’ in the questionnaire made it clear to the participants that school education was the focus, because some participants were unsure and could have interpreted Physical Education as being sport or Physical activity in general.

A second issue that arose after undertaking the pilot study included the understanding and the responses given to some of the questions. A small number of the questions were not clear enough to the participants, and irrelevant information

was being provided. This issue was overcome by adjusting some of the questions and creating more in depth multiple choice answers for the participants to select rather than Yes or No answers, followed by "Please Explain" questions.

The finalised questionnaire consisted of 20 questions, that were laid out in a way that was easy for the reader to understand and answer. The questionnaire was created by using the computer and SNAP 9 software. It was presented within two columns because the majority of questions required a yes/no answer and the layout seemed more effective.

Every question was thought out carefully in order for the participants to understand and gain the most honest answer out of them, to avoid bias and ensure validity and reliability.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important part of any research, as it provides an overview of the data collected and attempts to formulate the data in a simple, easier way to make sense of it and answer the research question (Gratton and Jones, 2004).

A programme called SNAP was used throughout the study to analyse the data collected from all 50 participants of the questionnaires. The data was filtered in a way firstly that formed graphs to enable understanding of the participants answers to the closed questions. The programme secondly constructed the results of the open questions in a way that identified trends in thoughts from the participants responses.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Before the study could be conducted and carried out a University Research Ethics Committee had to be informed of the study's intentions along with who was going to take part and what was going to be needed. The study was approved by the University's Ethics committee and therefore was not seen to be a risk and was considered socially acceptable.

Due to the age of the students chosen to participate within the study an informed consent form was given to each participant so that their parents/guardian were aware that they were taking part and to provide consent for their participation. Attached to the consent form was an information sheet. The sheet explained the

intention of the study, and how it was going to be carried out, also who was going to be involved. It also provided a contact number and e-mail so that any of the participants could contact myself with questions. The participants were also required to read the information sheet so they understood what was required of them. The voluntary factor of the study was explained to all participants on a number of occasions, ensuring full understanding that they were able to withdraw at any point. Anonymity of the questionnaires was reassured to participants, ensuring they understood any answered given were never going to be related back to them.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Cohen et al (2007) explained that, validity is an important key to effective research. Any elements of research being invalid becomes worthless to the study. The study ensured all data collected erased any possible invalidity, through trust and honesty. Cohen et al (2007) agreed that validity could be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved. The study undertook a mixed methods approach and therefore qualitative analysis was used. Maxwell (1992) suggests that it is more suitable to use the term 'understanding' than 'validity' while using this method. Taking this into consideration it was a vital part of the study to ensure all participants understood the meaning of the open ended questions to ensure valid responses were given.

Rubin & Babbie, (2010) suggest that reliability is a function of consistency, which could be argued that if the study was to be carried out again with a similar sample, similar results would be collected. Reliability was ensured during the study by providing acceptable questions that are suitable for every participant involved within the study. The need to change any of the questions depending on the sample was not necessary ensuring that all participant were handed the same information to answer.

CHAPTER FOUR :

RESULTS

4.0 Questionnaire results

Figure 1 - Physical Education GCSE and non GCSE participants.

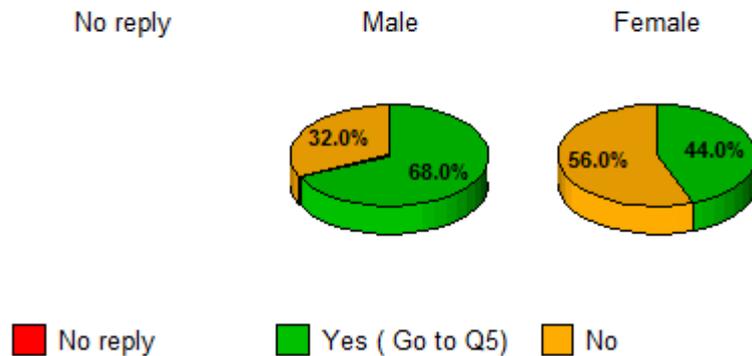


Figure 1 shows the participation rate for those participants who did, or did not choose Physical Education(PE) as a GCSE subject at the end of Year 9. The results have also been split according to their gender, showing that 68% of 25 Male's chose PE as a GCSE subject, but only 44% of 25 Female's chose PE as their GCSE subject. The questionnaire results therefore suggest that the male-female ratio is male dominant in regards to taking part in PE in years 10 and 11. 24% more male's are choosing to continue with PE as a GCSE subject across the 4 different school Years that were questioned, where as females seem to be less attracted to continuing.

Figure 2 - Participants awareness of the benefits of PE/Sport.

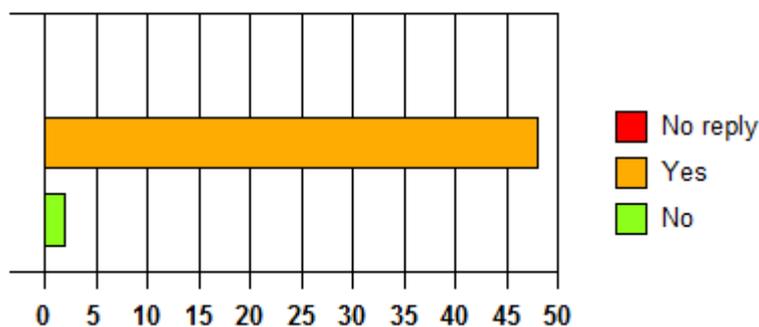
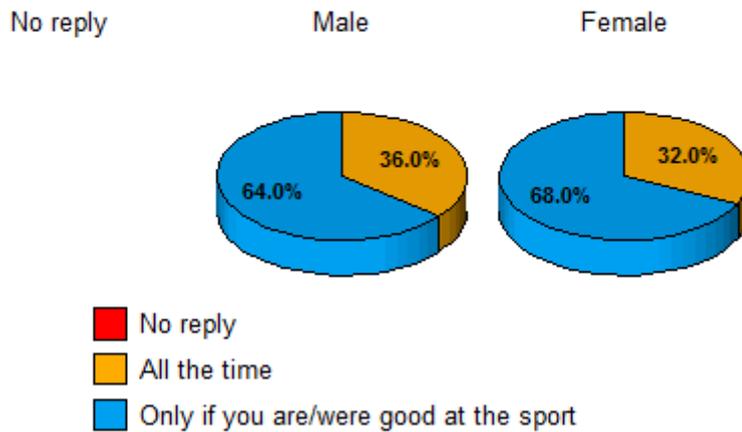


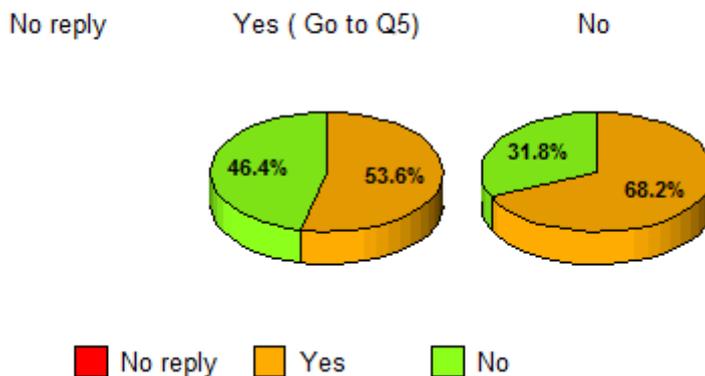
Figure 2 displays a clear assumption that 95% of the 50 participants that undertook the questionnaire did understand the benefits related to taking part in regular Physical Education and activity.

Figure 3 - Participants encouragement to participate in school sports teams



The results in figure 3 are interesting as they show that both males and females were under the impression that they couldn't take part in extra sports and join different sports teams if they were not really good at that sport. 64% of 25 males and 68% of 25 females agreed.

Figure 4 - Was Physical Education lessons fun during years 7-9.



Participants were then asked about their PE experience through the years 7-9, and if they thought the lessons were enjoyable. The results were then split between participants who chose PE as a GCSE subject and those who did not. The significance of this result showed that 68.2% of the 25 participants who did not

choose PE as a GCSE subject still thought the lessons during years 7-9 were fun and that they enjoyed them.

Figure 5 - Do you take part in any extra curriculum Activities.

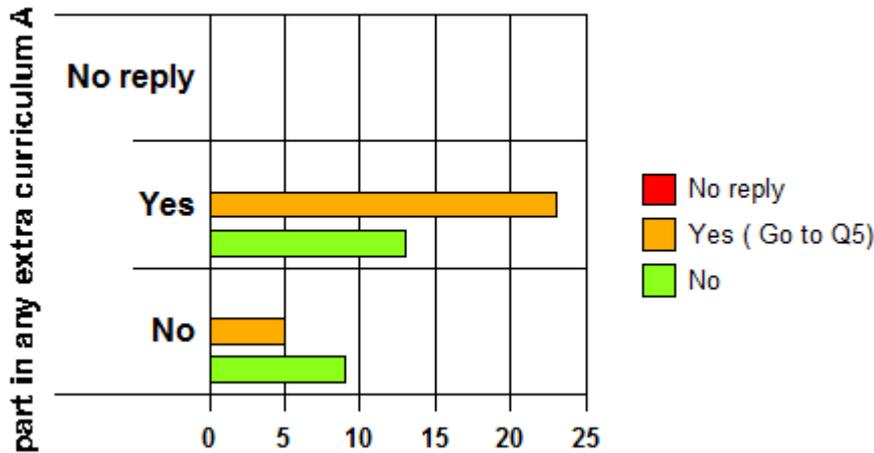
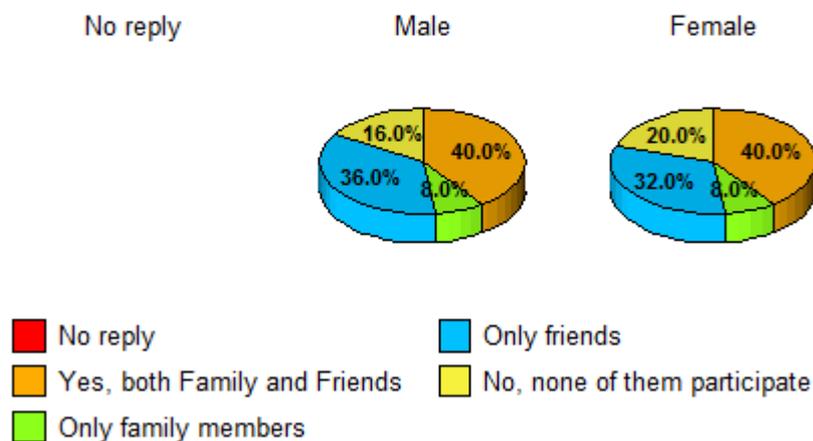


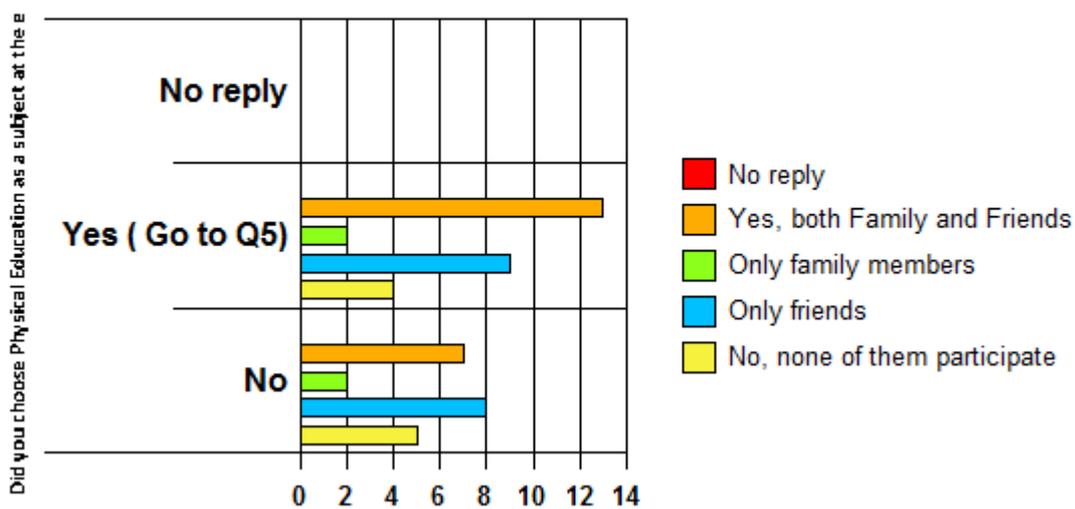
Figure 5 asked about their participation in extra curriculum activities (outside of the school environment or during lunch time breaks). It shows that 63.6% of the 25 participants who did chose PE as GCSE subject, took part in extra curriculum activity. 36.1% out of 25 participants, who did not select PE as their GCSE subject, said they took part in extra curriculum activity.

Figure 6 - Do your family members & friends take part in regular PE.



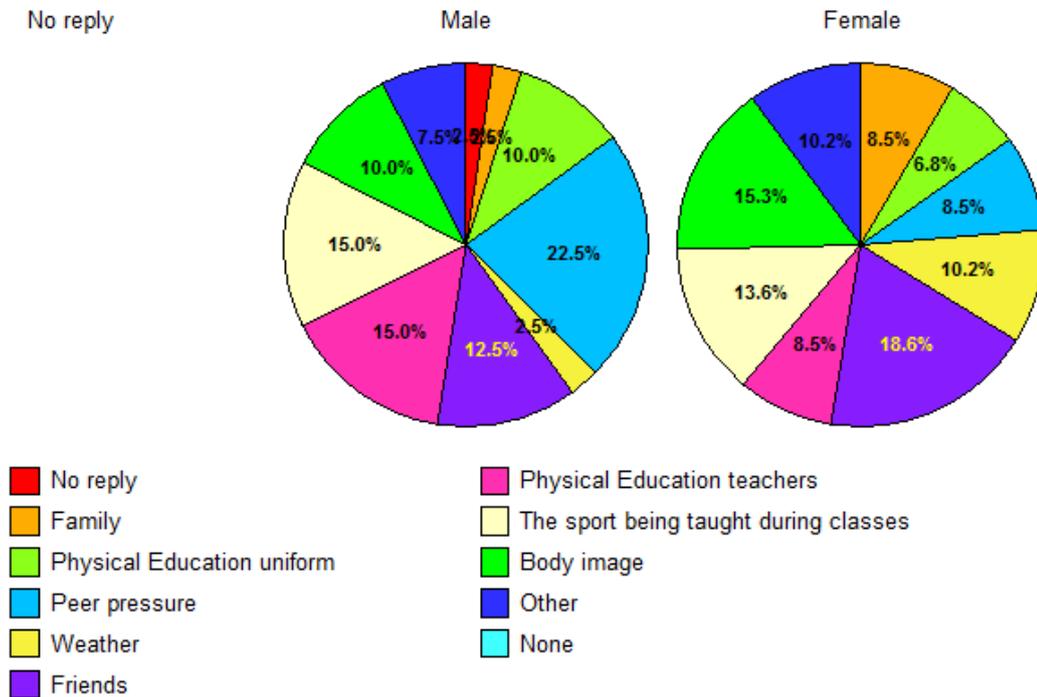
The question was asked whether family and friends took part in regular physical activity, to gain a better understanding of what influenced these participants. The figures suggest that both Males and Females within the study were fairly equal on their reactions to family and friends participation. 40% of 25 males and females mentioned that both family and friends took part in physical activity. The figure displaying none of the participants family or friends took part in physical activity was 20% for females, and 16% of males.

Figure 6.1 - Do your family members & friends take part in regular Physical Activity... by Chosen Physical Education for GCSE.



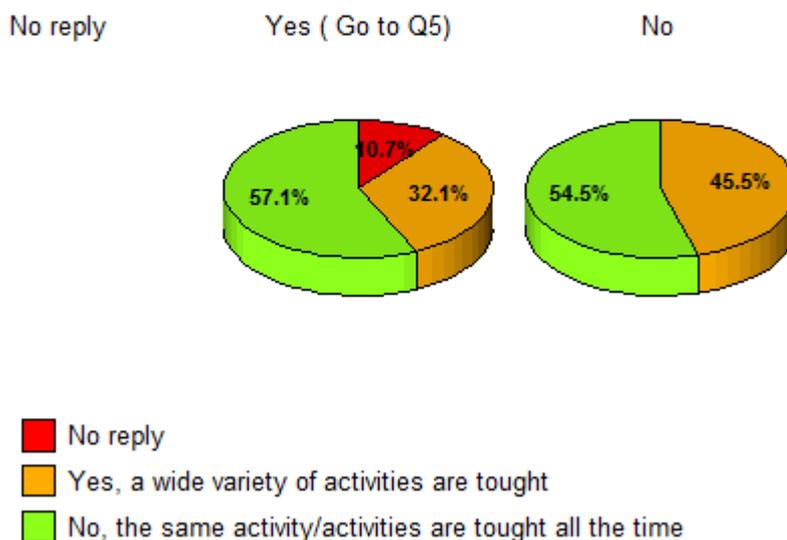
From figure 6.1, it is clear to see that the majority of participants who chose PE as a GCSE subject's family and friends take part in regular physical activity, with the figure showing 46.4%. 32.1% commented only their friends took part, 14.3% neither friends nor family took part and 7.1% said only family members participated. In comparison 22.7% of the students who did not choose PE, said that none of their family or friends participated within physical activity. 32% commented both family members and friends took part, 35% only friends and 9.1% only family members.

Figure 7 - What influences the majority of students in Year 7-9 to avoid getting involved during PE lessons.



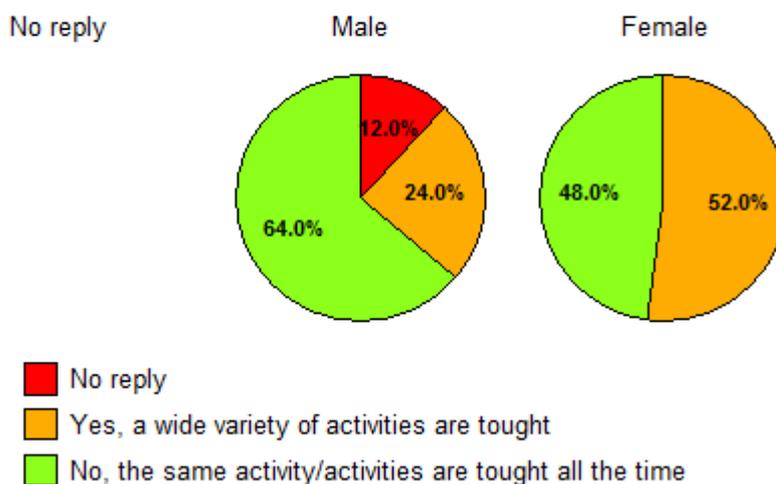
Participants were asked what they thought had the most effect on students to not participate during PE lessons in previous years (years 7-9). As the pie chart demonstrates the results have been split according to their gender, to make it clear to understand what/if any differences appeared between Males and Females.

Figure 8 - Is there enough choice during PE lessons in Years 7-9... by Did you choose PE as a subject.



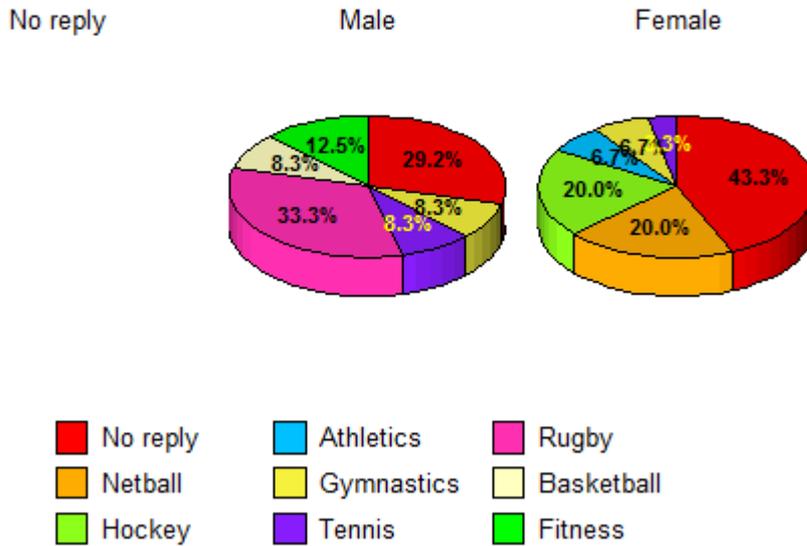
The next set of questions moved on to identify how the participants felt about the variety of activities on offer to them during lessons, and whether or not they thought it was sufficient compared to the number of students that were in a class. It also examined whether the chosen activity involved everyone and created a motivational vibe for everyone to take part and progress. The results showed that both GCSE (57.1%) and non-GCSE participants (54.5%) didn't think that there was enough variety of activities being offered to everybody during previous years 7-9. The GCSE participants agreed, that they may have chosen PE as a subject at the end of year 9, however the opportunity to develop in different activities was not available to everyone during Years 7-9.

Figure 8.1 - Is there enough choice of Activity during PE lessons in years 7-9... by What is your Gender.



The same question was then compared by gender and figure 8.1 show that the Male's had a higher percentage (64%) than the Females (48%) when asked where the same activities taught all the time during lessons. This could suggest that the male physical education teachers were more focused on one or two sports, and tried to influence this upon everyone. Whereas the female physical education teachers had a wider variety of activities on offer, as 52% of the females stated that there was variety of activities being taught in lessons, but could have chosen to concentrate on a selected few the majority of lessons.

Figure 8.2 - What activities where repeated.



Following from the previous comparison, figure 8.2 focuses on the participants who replied saying there that the same activities were taught during lessons all the time. The results were split according to male and female to compare the different activities both male and females thought were being taught repetitively. It is clear to see that a vast majority of males thought Rugby, 33.3% was the main activity repeated regularly during lessons. However Females discussed how Netball and Hockey, both being 20% were the activities most repeated in PE lessons.

Figure 9 - Awareness of any posters around the school advertising activities that are available.

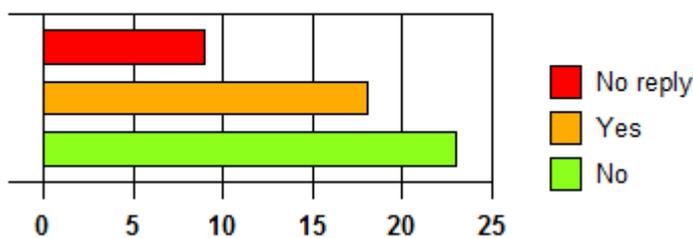


Figure 9 demonstrates how aware the participants are of posters advertising activities available to them around the school. 46% of the participants said they were not aware of any promotional methods; however 36% of participants commented they

were aware of posters that had been put up around the school advertising different activities.

4.2 Questionnaire results; Open ended questions

Themes and common responses have been identified from the open ended questions which are shown on Table 1.

Table 1

Theme	Common Responses
Non-GCSE participants and why they didn't chose PE.	<p><i>"Everyone does loads of sports who chose it, and I don't do that much"</i></p> <p><i>"other subjects seemed more fun, because I knew a lot of people picking them"</i></p> <p><i>"Thought everyone would be good at sport"</i></p> <p><i>"I didn't get along with the teachers, which put me off taking PE in year 10"</i></p> <p><i>"Other subjects were in the same options box that I wanted to pick more"</i></p> <p><i>"Didn't know what the theory involved"</i></p> <p><i>"None of my close friends were taking it"</i></p> <p><i>"I wasn't amazing at one sport, I felt the teachers didn't really care"</i></p> <p><i>"I enjoy doing PE with my friends, but they didn't pick it and everyone else that picked it was really competitive with everything"</i></p>
Difference between GCSE and non-GCSE lessons	<p><i>"boring"</i></p> <p><i>" no motivation by the students in the non-GCSE lessons"</i></p>

	<p><i>“no one wants to be there and get involved when the non-GCSE student are in the class, so not many games can be played because there’s not enough people participating”</i></p> <p><i>“teachers attitude change, they don’t seem to bothered in the lessons with non-GCSE people”</i></p> <p><i>“we get to pick what we do practically in GCSE lessons”</i></p> <p><i>“teachers obviously know who chose PE and who didn’t, so they are more friendly and joke around with the few who picked it”</i></p>
<p>What activities were repeated</p>	<p><i>“Rugby was always the sport in PE, and I’m not interested in playing Rugby”</i></p> <p><i>“Netball & Hockey all the time”</i></p> <p><i>“Netball, and not even that many people wanted to do it”</i></p> <p><i>“teachers only cared about Rugby, everything was Rugby”</i></p> <p><i>“we did Hockey all the time, I wanted to do gymnastics and we hardly ever did that”</i></p> <p><i>“was unfair because Rugby skills were always being practiced when half the lessons didn’t even play”</i></p>
<p>Future developments to the PE department to enhance participation levels in Year 10</p>	<p><i>“More choice in activity in previous years”</i></p> <p><i>“we should be able to pick what sport we want to do in year 9, to get a feel of what it’s like”</i></p> <p><i>“should be allowed to wear our own</i></p>

	<p><i>clothes if the weather is cold, because that's why I didn't want to get involved most of the time"</i></p> <p><i>"smaller groups should be arranged</i></p>
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CHAPTER FIVE :
DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results of the questionnaires in detail, through analysing the collected data that were shown in figures in the previous chapter. The study used questionnaires to discover the thoughts and perceptions of PE within schools, and if there were any differences through the transition of choosing GCSE subjects in relation to participation within PE. In particular, what had an influence on the participant's motivation to take part in lessons during school, if they were happy with the physical education lessons they received and they were prompted to suggest what they thought would make a difference in PE to encourage participation during lessons and increase the GCSE participation figure.

Through the analysis, a number of different themes and common responses emerged as a result of the information provided by the participants. The recognised themes will be discussed alongside relevant literature. This will provide a greater understanding of the participant's thoughts, and what issues have been noticed that most influence the participants to participate in PE. Gaining this understanding could help assist future PE teachers to create a motivational environment where participants are felt encouraged to improve their skills and participate within lessons and joining sports teams. Identifying this understanding should encourage a meaningful physical education for them also (Smith et al., 2007).

A number of questions were categorised into themes, as they were based around the same subject and the results could be connected to inform a better understanding for future developments to the Physical Education department. Key themes that were identified and will be discussed in this chapter include, participants perceptions, influential factors, activity choice and future physical education. These were identified from the questionnaire, and allowed the participants to look at different elements of PE and express how they felt about their experience during previous years in the school.

5.2 Participants perceptions of Physical Education

A number of perceptions were identified through critical analysis of the results. The responses gathered seemed to portray negative feelings towards the physical education that was delivered during Years 7-9.

A theme emerged from the Non-GCSE participants, when they were asked to explain why the decision was made to not choose physical education as a GCSE subject. The general responses suggest that the reasons were not because these participants were not physically active or not interest in sport, but because their previous experiences during lessons were negative. Self-confidence also appeared to be a reason for some of the students not wanting to continue with PE. This could suggest, although they enjoyed the lessons, the ability and participation within extra curriculum activities of others was an off putting factor for many. This is supported by the response of these two participants,

“Everyone does loads of sports who chose it, and I don’t do that much”

“Thought everyone would be good at sport”

Although 25 out of the 50 participants who took part in the study did not chose PE as a GCSE subject, Figure 4 identifies an interesting point that the general consensus, with 68.8% agreeing that the lessons in previous years were still fun and enjoyable. All participants that agreed the lessons were fun regardless of whether they continued studying PE, or took part in extra curriculum activities. From this result it is therefore assumed that there are other underlying issues related to why students perceive PE the way they do. Carr (1997) refers in the literature to sports and games being a valuable part of schooling, but not always educational. This could be the way these participants refer to PE, as they think it is a fun experience but do not refer to PE as being an important subject and therefore other subjects are prioritised during the selection process.

Friendship seemed to be the main reason for the participants stating the lesson were fun, as they enjoyed taking part with friends, and did not feel left out if they were not as skilful as other. Friendship as a sub-theme appeared among many of the main themes identified which will be highlighted further along in the discussion.

However, GCSE participants felt that there was a different atmosphere during their GCSE lessons in comparison to the mainstream lessons that are provided in Years 10 & 11. It was discovered that Females identified more of a difference between the two lessons than Males, with female participants stating the main difference being the lack of interest and involvement, which creates a poor atmosphere. One participant commented,

“No one wants to be there and get involved when the non-GCSE students are in the class, so not many games can be played because there are not enough people participating”

This concurs with the literature reviewed. White (2003) emphasised the importance of the foundation stage of physical education and noted that it is reliant on the schools involvement including teacher’s encouragement and the provision of education within physical education for all students.

As only a handful of girls are participating, this then limits the available choice of activity as there are not a sufficient number to enable a team based activity to be played. This could suggest a number of things including the fact that females at this age are adapting to their body changes as many of them would have already come across puberty, and feel uncomfortable participating in PE in large groups when adapting to this change. Estyn (2007), who examined girls participation in physical education, explained that a large number of girls find a way to avoid participating in physical education through the use of excuses. As this has already been recognised, teachers should be able to recognise that specific females aren’t participating within lessons on a regular basis, and should try overcoming this issue with encouragement and motivation that would hopefully make them feel welcome to get involved, regardless of any issues.

65% of GCSE and non-GCSE stated they understood and were aware of the benefits from participating in regular PE/sport (see figure 2). From this it is assumed that that all participants are aware of the importance of looking after their bodies and maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle to increase their lifespan. However, based on the low figure for participating in GCSE physical education it can be suggested that the awareness of the benefits of keeping fit and healthy are not promoted enough to be an important influential factor to gain a higher participation rate within

PE. It could be assumed that there are elements within the PE schooling system that need to be adapted in order to change the views on PE, which will hopefully encourage a higher level of participation. The work of Kirk (2005) supports this suggestion as he discovered that the promotional element of healthy living was a big part of physical education. This suggests theory should be promoted by the school to students regarding healthy living to enable a more informed decision to be made, and avoid students being influenced by outside factors such as friends as their friends could be heavily involved within physical active outside of the school environment.

5.3 Activity choice

Four questions were clustered together that focused on the activity choice aspect of PE, and how much choice the participants had. It became clear from both GCSE and non-GCSE participants, that the responses were heavily weighted towards the fact that there was not enough choice during lessons. From the results of Figure 5, it could be assumed that the opportunity to experience different activities is simply not available to students within a school environment as 36.1% of student taking part in extra curriculum activity are participating within a sport that is not on offer within the school. This could be suggested as one of reasons why students don't choose to continue PE as a GCSE subject.

It is also apparent through figure 8 and 8.1 that participants felt strongly about the repetition of the same activities throughout the 3 years from Year 7 to 9. Whitehead, (2010) supported this through explaining the need for participants to have experienced a range of different physical activities, however they should furthermore have adequate time to become familiar with these different settings.

Female participants identified that Netball and Hockey were activities that seemed to be prioritised over others in lessons (see figure 8.2) and students felt as though these activities seemed to always be taught during PE lessons, even if the majority of people within the lesson would have preferred to do something else. Through analysing the male participation it was discovered that an emphasis was put upon rugby within the school (see figure 8.2). Many males felt that unless they were good at rugby, then physical education was not for them as the teachers were less

interested, and only had enthusiasm for rugby. This was supported with a response from one participant who stated,

“Rugby was always the sport in PE, and I’m not interested in playing Rugby”

Although Netball, Hockey and Rugby were made priority within the school, participants suggested that other activities including rounders, fitness and gymnastics were selected, but were disappointed with the time allocation and attention given from teachers. An assumption could be made to suggest that more students could be encouraged to choose PE at GCSE level if other sporting activities had more attention paid to them in previous years to enable skill development to be accomplished before Year 10. Providing the time allocation was increased towards other activities are not currently seen as priority, a positive attitude towards PE could be formed.

The Department for Education (2011) also supported the suggestion that it is vital for the opportunity to be available for participants to experience new activities. It stated that physical education should allow learners to discover what they like to do and make informed choices about lifelong physical activity (The Department for Education, 2011). The statement suggests that students should have the opportunity within the school environment to discover new activities, and teachers should openly provide this opportunity and every chance. The results clearly suggest that many participants felt teachers were only interested in those who were good at the activities that were chosen for lessons on a regular basis. As a result of not experiencing a wide variety of activities, participants were avoiding choosing PE as a GCSE subject as they were not aware of other activities available to them.

5.3 Key factors influencing student’s perceptions and thoughts

Results from figure 5, demonstrated that participation in extra curriculum activity is fairly high. There may be a noticeable difference between those who chose PE and those who did not as only 36.1% admitted to participating out of the non-GCSE sample compared with 63.9% who were GCSE participants. Even though the results are showing there is participation in extra curriculum activity on the whole, and therefore people are generally involved within some sort of sporting activity, they also show that not all are participating which implies other barriers must be

influencing their decisions to not participate. From the results in general, the main influential factors include social and psychological factors, along with external factors.

Friends & Family

The majority of participant, 47% of males and females, portrayed the view that friendship was of significant influence when decisions needed to be made regarding participating and getting involved in lessons. Friends and peer pressure from friends was therefore considered an important factor that is a strong enabling tool for motivation and encouragement to participate. A comment from one participant that supports this is,

“None of my close friends were taking it”

This was a clear indicator that the reason why this individual did not choose PE at GCSE level was simply because their friends were not participating, and therefore suggests how powerful friendship and social grouping within the school environment is. Figure 6 and 6.1 display how many of the participants' friends and family members are physically active on a regular basis, and whether this has any connection to the percentage of participants who undertook PE as a GCSE subject. Figure 6 displays, 1 in 5 males and females stated none of their family nor friends take part in physical activity on a regular basis. It could be suggested from these results that this is an influential factor regarding participation and subject choice at GCSE level, as if none of the person in questions family or friends participate then it is likely the motivation levels of this individual will be low and non-existent because their social environment doesn't consist of Sport or physical activity generally. Research from Sport England (2006) & Allender et al (2006) also found that if a person's social group (friends) were not participating, then the likelihood of them participating is sufficiently decreased, as it is not seen as part of their daily lifestyle, and they are not around people that are participating regularly.

The results configured from figure 6.1 display that a 46.4% of participants who chose GCSE, friends and family took part in regular physical activity. However it identifies that the percentage is lower part when looking at those who did not chose PE,

suggesting not having regular contact through friends and family with sport has had a negative influence upon them, resulting in them not choosing PE.

Family members would be considered to have an influence upon their children in general life, with regards to support, providing money and transport. Figure 6.1's findings display that family members do not necessarily have an influence with regards to decision making within physical education. Both GCSE and non-GCSE participants had a fairly equal percentage to 'only family members take part' therefore no influence can be suggested as the percentage would need to be considerably higher from the GCSE participant to assume family has an important influence. Coakley and White (1992) recognised that support from parents when their children were younger was particularly important on their choice of whether or not to participate.

It is believed that friends along with the encouragement and support from family has and will also continue to have an impact upon Males and Females participation levels within physical education. Within a school environment students spend the majority of their time with friends, meaning if surrounded by a group who have a positive perception of PE it is likely to encourage others to participate. This suggests that the school needs to work hard to ensure a positive perception of PE is perceived from Year 7. Encouragement from teachers is overt for students to mix with others within lessons, so peers can motivate each other. The problem of peer pressure is overcome as students from year 7 will hopefully gain a balance of friends consisting of friends who like to participate and some who may not be as interested.

Many psychological factors seemed to influence the participants' decisions on whether or not they chose PE as a GCSE subject. Factors that were found included body image, ability, peer pressure and self confidence.

A number of the female participants identified that they believed body image was one of the main influences that effected peoples decisions to participate and continue with their studies in PE, (see figure 7). All participants were aware of the benefits from participating in physical activity on a regular basis, as identified in figure 2. However as the majority of female participants commented on their body image being a barrier to getting involved, it could be suggested they are under the impression they need to look good in the first place to get involved. Many females in

this age group are very self aware of their body and image in general as they are in a new environment when they enter Year 7 and are unsure how to react. If the females aren't confident with their image in the first place then this has been identified as a reason to stop them participating, therefore school teachers need to make an effort in identifying those students who are self conscious of their body image, without it looking as though the teachers are individually picking them out of a crowd. Research that has been completed by Allender et al (2006) also highlights body image to be a significant problem, especially for females of this age range to participate in sport.

The Male participants identified that body image was also of concern, however figure 7 shows they believed peer pressure from others about their ability was of more concern to them as being a barrier to participating in PE. Common responses from males included those which implied they were unhappy participating in large groups because of mixed abilities. A response that supports this was,

"I wasn't amazing at one sport; I felt the teachers didn't really care"

From these responses it could be assumed that male's are more judgemental of those whose ability is seen as low. This could be linked with the influence of PE teachers and the encouragement they provide to students during lessons (see figure 3).

Key objectives were set prior to the study being carried out, which have been met to some extent throughout the study. Key factors that effect students thoughts and perceptions have been identified, including, friends, family, peer pressure, body image and PE teachers. Each factor was discussed and evaluated throughout this chapter. Although the factors were identified, a more in-depth understanding could have been conducted indentifying the difference between Male and Female perceptions.

A clear analysis of the significant differences between the GCSE and non-GCSE participants was done, focusing on their thoughts about the PE lessons and the amount of activity that was available.

Finally. the last objective was not fully met to the extent in which was required. Future suggestions were made throughout the discussion, suggesting what PE

teachers could change to enable encouragement and motivation. However, more recommendations could have been suggested through analysing the results and discussion, which would provide current data to make informed solutions.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this research project was to examine the perceptions of Physical Education, and to highlight any difference in thought, and the reasons behind this, as the subject becomes an option to high school children from year 10-13. This research was conducted in an attempt to gain a better understanding about why the participation level is relatively low once physical education becomes an option for GCSE. The aim was achieved through setting a number of objectives including, comparing the different perceptions from males and females; determining key factors that effect their perceptions; and evaluating their opinions in an attempt to propose future developments that will enhance participation levels of this age group.

6.2 The main findings

The main findings of this individual research project were that most participants taking part believed Physical Education was fun, however the majority still had a negative attitude towards the subject. Of most interest, is the clear perception that participants did not think there was enough opportunity and choice for them to develop important life skills, and develop an enjoyment for a specific activity. Therefore Physical Education teachers need to communicate with The National Curriculum officers further to discuss the findings and enable a more flexible Curriculum to be documented. PE is compulsory to pupils during Years 7-9, and this is the time where pupils should be gaining experience in order to influence their decision positively in time for the selection of their GCSE subjects. Creating opportunities for the pupils is a solution that PE teacher can adopt currently by including a variety of different sporting activities into the lessons, and encouraging all to participate.

The results acknowledge that providing there was greater advertising and promotion in the form of posters, and meetings to draw attention to the opportunities available through physical education, participants would have had a better understanding of what was going on. As it stood the majority of participants commented that they were unaware of any promotional method being used around the school to promote physical activities that were being held during lunch times and after school. Providing the promotion was clear, this could have gained a number of participants to take part and get involved with friends.

Friendship was discovered to be one of the main findings, as the results demonstrated it to be the most influential factors to participants of this age group. Friendship seemed to be of main concern to high school student when making a decision around the subject area of PE, and therefore what their friends selected, would tend to be what they would select also.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Although this study was successfully completed, with data being collected in line with the aims and objectives, there are things that could be improved if the study was to be repeated.

- One limitation of the study was the sample size of participants. Providing a larger number of participants were involved in the study, a broader conclusion could have been drawn if the perceptions gathered from this study were of a common response in different schools.
- The study could have benefited from interviews being undertaken with a number of participants and the PE teachers themselves. Interviews from the participants would have provided a more in-depth response, as the open questions only allowed for short responses to be provided. Interviewing PE teachers would reveal whether or not they were aware of the perceptions, and if they did whether they were in a position to do anything to overcome the problem in order to encourage greater participation.

6.4 Further research

The main outcomes of this study were

- The elements that influence students decision to choose Physical Education as a GCSE subject,
- The importance of opportunity within the school prior to the subject selection being undertaken.

Although the study identified these barriers, further research needs to be done with this age group in order to produce a deeper understanding and knowledge for these subject areas. Further research should proceed to ask similar questions, however a

wider sample would provide a greater understanding of Physical Education throughout different schools. Also further research could be done to see whether providing a variety of sporting activities along with providing the opportunity for the students themselves to pick what activities are taught during Years 7-9, would increase participation levels, because this is what participants suggested that would encourage them to participate. If PE was perceived in a positive manner this could also increase the amount of extra curriculum activity that this age group participate in. In addition, research highlighting the PE teachers views and attitudes could be completed, as this could provide a better understanding and greater knowledge about what behavioural aspects to look out for that would need further motivation and encouragement from them to participate. It would also make them aware of the lack of opportunity that is available which is having an effect on their experience during PE lessons, which PE teachers are helping to create.

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APPENDECIES

Appendix 1

Participant information sheet

Project Title: Examination of what physical education as a product looks like to secondary school children and the difference in their thoughts in years 10 & 11 compared to years 7,8 and 9.

This documentation provides :

- 1) The background and aims of the research,
- 2) My role as the researcher,
- 3) Your role as a participant,
- 4) Benefits of taking part,
- 5) How data will be collected, and
- 6) How the data will be used.

This document is to provide you with information so that you can make an Informed decision about if you would like to be involved in this study.

1. Background and aims of the research

Every pupil within high school takes part in physical education, whether it be compulsory or voluntary. Some will take part a lot more than others and will enjoy it differently. As pupils become older and move into higher years in school, they have the choice to proceed with their studies in physical education and develop a better understanding or they have the choice not to continue and therefore do not have to take part in as much physical education through the school. The aim of my study is to seek information on why the pupils who have not chosen physical education have done so, and what are their thoughts on the subject. I will also look for any differences that appear between the pupils thoughts before and after physical education was an option.

2. My role as the researcher :

The study includes me (Bethan Llewlyn), the researcher, providing questionnaire for you to complete in your own time. It also involved me, the researcher, asking you to participate in group discussions and interviews.

3. Your role as a participant :

Your role as the participant will be to complete the questionnaire in your own time with as much honesty as possible. The questionnaire includes basic questions about yourself, what input you already have in physical education, and what your thoughts and feelings are towards physical education within different situations.

Your role is to also take part in a group discussion that will ask more in depth questions on your thought towards physical education regarding the general response to the questionnaires. The completion and participation of the questionnaires and discussions are not compulsory, and you do not have to answer any question you may not wish to.

4. Benefits of taking part :

The information gathered from this study will be used to gain a better understanding into the reasons for not picking to continue physical education in schools, and what if any common factors influence this decision.

From this it will reveal an insight into what actions could be taken in the future to prevent the negative thoughts about physical education as a product. I will be pleased to offer the information found with any of the participants within this study.

5. How data will be collected :

As mentioned above the data will be collected from questionnaires, group discussions and interviews provided to you.

6. How the data/research will be used :

With agreeing to become a voluntary participant, you will be giving me, the researcher to use your responses within the group discussions and questionnaires within a larger project. Your personal responses and data will

not be used alone and will always be part of a larger sample of participants.
Your personal data will also be anonymous throughout and never reported.

Your rights : Your right as a voluntary participant is that you are able to withdraw from the study at any time you feel. This means that you as the participant are able to control entirely how much or how little anonymous information you provide

Protection to privacy : Your identity will remain hidden in any note documentation used to inform this study. Any personal information about you will be confidential following guideline of the Data Protection Act (1998)

Contact : If you are unsure about any part of the study and feel you have any questions, please feel free to contact me on the details provided below.

Miss Bethan Llewellyn

St10001777@outlook.uwic.ac.uk

Appendix 2

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CSS Reference No:

Title of Project: Examination of what physical education as a product looks like to secondary school children and the difference in their thoughts in years 10 & 11 compared to years 7,8 and 9.

Name of Researcher: Bethan Llewellyn

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 3/09/2012 for this study. I have been given the time to consider the information, ask any outstanding questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is based fully on me volunteering and that I am able to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.
3. I also understand that if this happens, our relationships with the Cardiff Metropolitan University, or our legal rights will not be affected.
4. I understand that information gathered from this study may be used in a larger project and could be reports, but I will not be identified.
5. I agree to take part in this study on female athletes within the media Today, and what people like myself think about this. Evaluating their body Image and place in society

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant &

Date _____

Name of person taking consent &

Date _____

Signature of person taking consent

Appendix 3

Students Perceptions Of Physical Education.

Please tick all relevant boxes, and expand on open questions to the best of your knowledge.

- Q1 Year group?
 Year 10-11 _____
 Year 12-13 _____
- Q2 What is your Gender?
 Male _____
 Female _____
- Q3 Did you choose Physical Education as a subject at the end of Year 9?
 Yes (Go to Q4) _____
 No _____
- Q4 If not, could you explain why not?

- Q5 Where the GCSE lessons any different to the mainstream PE lessons, Please explain?

- Q6 Was PE through Years 7-9 a fun and enjoyable experience?
 Yes _____
 No _____
- Q7 Did PE lessons change in any way once in Year 10 (once subject selection had been completed) if so please explain?

- Q8 Do you take part in any extra curriculum Activities (lunch time, outside of the school environment)?
 Yes _____
 No _____
- Q9 Do your family members & friends take part in regular physical activity?
 Yes, both Family and Friends _____
 Only family members _____
 Only friends _____
 No, none of them participate _____
- Q10 Are any theory sessions in PE provided prior to the selection of subjects at the end of Year 9?
 Yes _____
 No _____
- Q11 Is there enough choice of Activity during PE lessons during Years 7-9?
 Yes, a wide variety of activities are taught _____
 No, the same activities/games are taught all the time _____
- Q12 If no, what activities were repeated?

- Q13 What (if any) influence's the majority of students in Years 7-9 to avoid getting involved during PE lessons?
 Family _____
 Physical Education uniform _____
 Peer pressure _____
 Weather _____
 Friends _____
 Physical Education teachers _____
 The sport being taught during classes _____
 Body Image _____
 Other _____
 None _____
- Q14 If other, please explain what?

- Q15 Are/Were you encouraged to join school sports teams or take part in different sports for the team?
 All the time _____
 Only if you are/were good at the sport _____
- Q16 Are you aware of the benefits of participating in regular PE/sport?
 Yes _____
 No _____

Q17 If yes, where have you gained this information from?

Family

Friends

School

Other

Q18 Are you aware of any posters around the school advertising different activities that are being offered to you as a student?

Yes

No

Q19 Are you aware of any other advertising methods promoting PE at year 10?

Yes

No

Q20 What do you think could be changed within PE to create a higher participation level in Year 10?

