

**Cardiff School of Sport**  
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<b>Student name:</b>	<input type="text" value="Cerian Davies"/>	<b>Student ID:</b>	<input type="text" value="St20002933"/>
<b>Programme:</b>	<input type="text" value="SC"/>		
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<b>Supervisor:</b>	<input type="text" value="Nicola Bolton"/>		

Comments	Section
	<p><b>Title and Abstract (5%)</b></p> <p>Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem.            Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.</p>
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**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**  
**Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd**

**CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT**

**DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)**

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**AN EXAMINATION INTO THE ISSUES ASSOCIATED  
WITH YOUNG FEMALE (18-24) PARTICIPATION IN  
SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACITIVY: A FOCUS ON RURAL  
AREAS.**

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

**CERIAN DAVIES**

**ST20002933**

**AN EXAMINATION INTO THE ISSUES ASSOCIATED  
WITH YOUNG FEMALE (18-24) PARTICIPATION IN  
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AREAS.**

Cardiff Metropolitan University  
Prifysgol Fetropolitian Caerdydd

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## **Abstract**

Research by Sport England has found that female participation rates are still low compared to males. This research investigates why such a gender gap still exists and focuses on examining this issue amongst 18-24 year olds living in Ceredigion, a rural area situated in Mid Wales.

The key barriers identified were the lack of transport, distance to facilities, lack of appropriate facilities, urban/rural differences and how women often feel discouraged from viewing themselves as strong, competent individuals and thus will be inclined to withdraw from partaking in sport and physical activity.

A qualitative approach was used for this study, by undertaking semi structured interviews with six female participants. The female interviewees lived in three different rural villages within a 16 mile radius of the closest town of Aberystwyth, in Ceredigion, Mid Wales. The primary objective of the interviews was to explore the barriers that women are faced with and to see whether their rural geographical location might further hinder their participation.

The key findings highlighted the lack of access, scarcity of facilities, little or no public transport and travelling a further distance to use facilities were all significant challenges. Other themes that emerged from the results included the participants feeling at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts, and there were no suitable clubs available for women in the area. These findings suggest that, in addition to the known barriers affecting women's participation, living in a rural part of Wales brings further challenges which are often overlooked by providers who tend to focus on an 'urban' model of provision

**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODCTION**

Sport and physical activity has comprehensive benefits in promoting wellbeing, good health, improving quality of life and enhancing social inclusion (Bailey, Wellard & Dismore, 2005). The role of sport as a key form of physical activity has achieved an increasingly high profile by all policy sectors, including central government, based on the assumptions about its potential contribution to areas such as social and economic regeneration, crime reduction, educational achievement and health improvement (Coalter, 2007; Robson & Mckenna, 2013). Individuals are encouraged to participate in sport and to make healthier lifestyle choices. This would contribute towards reducing the incidences of coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer and a wide range of other sedentary-related illnesses. Improvement in health would reduce demands placed upon pressurised health care budgets, whilst enabling individuals to play a more productive role in everyday life (WHO, 2006; Robson & Mckenna, 2013). However, in spite of there being a range of potential benefits in taking part in sport and physical activity, participation levels still remain relatively low. The gap between male and female participation continues as shown in the recent Sports England Active People's Survey (2013). This research found that during the period from April 2012 to April 2013 the number of males participating in sport or physical activity once a week was approximately 8.4 million which showed a 44,000 increase compared to the previous year. Additionally, The Active People Survey (2013) also identified that the number of females participating in sport and physical activity once a week had also seen an increase from 6.2 million in 2010-2011 to 6.7 million in 2012-2013. Although the results do show a slight increase in participation rates amongst males as well as females, it also highlights the continuing gap between male and female participation.

There are a variety of different reasons as to why individuals choose not to partake in sport and physical activity. Researchers such as Hylton and Totten (2008) and Charlton, Potter, McGinial, Ramanou, Slade and Hewiston (2010) believe that the main factors include disposable income, occupational status, culture, gender, sexuality, age, disability, social class, ability and ethnicity. With regards to this study, the group of particular interest is young females between the ages of 18-24.

Lack of female engagement in sport and physical activity has been a topic of concern for a number of years, with extensive research being carried out on the reasons behind low female participation rates, Coakley and White (1992); Finch and White (1997); Bailey et al., (2005); Allender, Cowburn and Foster (2006); Sport England (2006). It is known that

women's participation rates decrease significantly once they leave school, and while this could be linked to a number of life transitions of an individual, it is a complex area requiring further study. However, there are issues and topics which have not been considered in detail. One area where there is a shortfall of research is exploring the circumstances that contribute to lack of participation amongst young females between the ages of 18 – 24, within a rural area such as Ceredigion. This study will therefore aim to explore these issues and consider the factors that can potentially hinder participation within this particular age range within this rural County.

The study adopts a qualitative research method, through the use of interviews. The participants in this study were selected from three villages situated in Ceredigion, within a 16 mile radius of the closest town of Aberystwyth. By using qualitative research methods, this allows the interviewees to express their feelings and thoughts regarding the factors that they feel affect their participation in sport. A critical analysis of the results will be undertaken, with the identification of key themes, which will then be compared against the review of literature in order to identify similarities and differences.

### **1.1. Importance of the study**

This research is important as it has the potential to notify clubs, schools, sport councils and national governing bodies of the problems that individuals face in rural areas. This can help organizations to gain a better understanding of what changes and support needs to be put in place to facilitate the requirements of individuals in rural locations.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1. Overview of chapter**

The following chapter contains a critical evaluation and analysis of existing literature. The chapter will begin with a brief discussion on young female participation rates in sport and physical activity, and how existing research show the differentiation between male and female participation. Key barriers were identified and discussed, Hylton and Totten (2008) categorized these barriers as physical, economic, motivational, cultural and political. The chapter will end with a brief conclusion and explanation of the aims and objectives of the research.

### **2.1.1. Key Definitions**

For the purpose of this study, key words that have been identified in order to provide a better understanding of the topic area are as follows:

**Sport** – An organized, competitive and skilful physical activity requiring commitment and fair play (Carnell, Ireland, Mackreth, Miller, Wely, 2009)

**Physical Activity** – Casperson, Powell and Christenson (1985, p126) stated that physical activity can be defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure. Physical activity in daily life can be categorized into occupational, sports conditioning, household or other activities.

**Urban Areas** – Scott and Gilbert (2007, p4) defines urban areas as “a town or city that is free-standing, densely occupied and developed with a variety of shops and services”

**Rural Areas** - “range from small settlements on the fringe of large towns and cities to remote villages and hamlets and from ‘green belt’ agriculture to areas of extensive arable farming or grazing” (Scott & Gilbert, 2007, p4).

**Society** – Giddens (2001) described society as a system of structured social relationships connecting people together according to a shared culture.

**Barriers** – Bastra, Smith, Thomas and Hodge (2012), states that a barrier is “Something that for some reason or another prevents a person from taking part”.

## **2.2. Female Participation in Sport**

Carnell et al., (2009) stated that discrimination against minority groups in sport is still evident in areas around the UK. Jones, Millward and Buraimo (2011) suggested that the decision to participate in sport is affected by a wide range of demographic and socio-economic factors. Social influences such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, health and other responsibilities act as barriers or gateways to participation in sport (Hylton & Totten, 2008;

Jones et al., 2011). Over the past twenty years, a considerable amount of research has been undertaken on female involvement in physical activity. Despite the many health benefits, Pratt, Macera and Blanton (1999) found that there is a gradual decline in participation levels in young people throughout adolescence, and this decline is most obvious amongst young females. For this reason, many studies have focussed on the reasons for this decline (Wang & Biddle, 2001). Recent collected data demonstrate young girls between the ages of 15 – 16 are most likely to drop out from any form of physical activity, and are most likely to remain this way (Pratt et al., 1999; Evans, 2008; Lee & MacDonald, 2009). Sports England's Active people survey (2010/11) discovered that the percentage of men partaking in physical activity was 20.3% compared to 12.8% of females. The National participation survey (2010/11) also discovered that the rates amongst females had declined from 13.1% the previous year.

### **2.2.1 Gender-role socialisation**

According to Blinde, Taub and Han (1993) as a result of gender-role socialisation, women often feel that they are discouraged from viewing themselves as strong, competent and self-determined individuals. They tend to refrain from participating in certain sports and view sports as male dominated. Hall (2002) also found that in the sporting industry males have always been perceived as the predominant gender. Due to the stereotyping, women often think that certain individual sports are more socially acceptable than participating in team sports. Individual sports allow women and young girls to remain a true stereotype to their gender (Boutlier & SanGiovanni, 1983). During this study these factors will be considered in order to analyse and determine the reasons for the lack of participation in sport amongst women in rural areas.

According to Eime (2008), a possible reason for young female participation rates being lower than males might be down to the number of life transitions that occur during adolescence. Lack of physical activity during young adulthood (ages 18–29) could be related to the period of increased assimilation into adult work and family roles (Caspersen et al., 1999). This suggests that young females often put work and family commitments first, before taking part in any form of physical activity. The Welsh Assembly's Government Policy (2008) of participation in sport and physical exercise identified that females are often lacking family support and therefore refrain from participating in physical activity. This particular policy review goes on to state that females should be of a higher sporting priority than men in order to close the gap between the sexes. This suggests that the government

are aware that young females are lacking support and sporting initiatives, and more needs to be done in order to try and overcome the barriers they face.

### **2.3. Urban Rural Differences**

Kavangha et al., (2005) suggested that individuals living in urban areas are at an advantage compared to those living in rural communities. Payne, Elime, Casey and Donaldson (2010) states that urban living provides better resources in improving a person's quality of life and participation rates in physical activity and sport. They also go on to suggest that there are more opportunities available in urban regions, such as London, Sheffield and Manchester, because there are numerous sporting facilities that are of a high standard and easily accessible to the community. Sport Northern Ireland (2010) also suggests that a medium-sized city can be far more conducive to levels of participation than a rural area as it is easier be active in sport in urban areas.

Research conducted by the Labour Government (2005-2006) on club memberships and sports participation in local counties in England points out that urban areas such as Reading and Aylesbury have higher participation rates than rural areas such as Lincolnshire and Devon. A few possible reasons for this could be high quality sporting facilities and sufficient transport links available in urban areas (Hylton & Totten, 2008). One concern with this research by the Labour Government (2005-2006) is that it fails to take into account disadvantaged members of the community such as people with disabilities or young females. If certain changes were made to transport links and facilities, this might create changes in participation rates in these rural areas.

The results from Sport England (2007) survey, suggested that two thirds of local authorities with low participation rates were in fact rural areas. Research conducted by Eime (2008) & Arnadottir, Gunnarsdottir, Stenlund and Lundin (2012) also agree with this by stating that participation rates are relatively lower in rural areas compared to metropolitan areas. However, other evidence by Wages, Jackson, Bradshaw, Chang and Estabrooks (2008) contradicts the work of Eime (2008) and Arnadottir et al., (2012) and paints a different picture, by suggesting that on average rural counties had higher participation rates. The Adult Active Survey conducted by Sports Council of Wales (2008-2009), found that rural counties such as Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire are in fact above the national participation rate of 39%, with urban counties such as Merthyr

Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen being significantly below the national participation rate.

The section above has demonstrated contrasting views on participation rates between urban and rural communities. However, it remains clear that barriers still exist in rural communities and there is a substantial gender gap between male and female participation. Sport England has prioritised these issues by investing in projects and initiatives in order to minimize these barriers and gender gaps. Sport England's £10 million investment in 2009, was provided in order to create sporting opportunities for those individuals living in rural communities. The aim was to get more people participating in sport, and also help to fund sport initiatives and projects in the rural communities. Another £10 million initiative was put in place by Sport England in 2011; the aim of this project was to target women, in order to get them more actively involved in sport. This is a large investment by Sport England on rural areas and female participation, which suggests that these particular groups face major barriers that can hinder participation and opportunities to develop. This is the theme that the literature review will now address.

#### **2.4. Barriers to participation**

Charlton et al., (2010) stated that many social research studies that have been conducted over the past fifteen years have tried to pinpoint reasons on why individuals choose not to participate in sport, art and cultural activities or events. Finch and White (1997) suggest there are many barriers and circumstances that affect women's participation levels in physical activity. Hylton and Totten (2008) listed some key barriers in this regard such as 'disposable income, levels of educational attainment, social class, gender' (p52). Charlton et al., (2010) agrees with this and added 'high cost, lack of facilities, lack of time, fear of injury and that people are simply not interested' (p.16). These key barriers or social influences can either empower or hinder sports participation. Hylton and Bramham (2008, p.52) categorised these barriers as 'physical, economic, motivational, cultural and political'. Hylton and Bramham (2008) go on to describe the five categories and suggest that physical barriers to participation include facility, location, the physical access into those facilities and also the activities and services offered. According to Green (2010) economic barriers relate to the financial side of participation, with these including the cost of service provided, affordability and lastly the perceived cost. Motivational barriers include a person's self-image and self-confidence relating to certain activities. Finally, cultural barriers include direct conflicts with codes, customs and conventions or values inherent in

an activity (Hylton & Bramham, 2008). Females may disengage from physical activity as they often feel they are challenging the traditional boundaries of femininity by participating (Collins & Kay, 2003). Suckling, Ryan and Dent (2009) findings suggest that transport and motivation are key barriers to participation, whereas Payne et al., (2010) claim that the main barriers that occur are lack of money and lack of transport to activities. These barriers must be dealt with in order to overcome low participation levels in physical activity especially amongst women.

#### **2.4.1 Economic.**

The Sports Council of Wales (2001) suggested that urban areas are more likely to be excluded due to unemployment and low incomes. However, recent studies made by the Welsh Local Government Association (2008) suggest that around eight out of nine rural councils are below the Welsh average income. A study by ATL (2008) also supports this by confirming that 20% of families that live in rural communities live below the poverty line. This may not seem like a big percentage of the population however, in terms of participation rate, this gives us a strong valid viewpoint as to why rural areas participation rates are lower (ATL, ONLINE, 2008). The reason for this is most likely down to economic barriers. According to a report commissioned by the Welsh Government (2012) the three main issues that they identified as potential factors leading to a downward spiral of rural disadvantages were resource, opportunity and mobility deprivation. These three factors suggest that there are links between a family's economic position and sporting participation (Northern Ireland Assembly Government, Accessed online 2013). The Welsh Government (2012) also suggest that the largest single element of extra cost was transport to venues, therefore the more rural the location, the more significant this cost becomes. This, along with the studies by ATL and the Northern Ireland Assembly Government, confirms that an individual's financial position can have a considerable effect on participation rates.

#### **2.4.2 Facilities**

Facilities are a vital element in inspiring participants and creating opportunities to take part in sport. Wales has a generally good range of provision in terms of facilities, an excellent network of regional and national facilities and a superb natural environment for sport. Many facilities, however, are nearing the end of their lifespan and do not meet users' expectations. (Sport Wales.org, Accessed ONLINE, 2013).

Sport Wales's Community Sport Strategy sets out some key expectations, one of the main key priorities is to have appropriate facilities. High quality facilities will help create opportunities for individuals by providing inspirational environments and programmes. Charlton et al., (2010) suggested that the nature of the physical environment, and the quality of the venue, can influence an individual's decision whether or not they are going to participate. Sports Wales, Appropriate Facilities survey (2012) stated that many sporting facilities located in Wales were built around twenty to thirty years ago; therefore they need significant investment in order to carry out refurbishment. The survey also suggests that new participants would be put off by poor facilities, as mentioned by Charlton et al., (2010). The implication is that there is lack of appropriate, high quality facilities in Wales which can have a detrimental effect on participation rates, and could be a big factor in why individuals choose not to partake in any form of physical activity. Research by Henderson and Winn (1996) suggested that many existing facilities in rural areas are often of poor condition, and often restrict the number of diverse activities that can take place due to the age and design of the building.

The standard of facilities available is an important issue. However in some circumstances the facilities are not available. Active Places Cymru (2013) contain details of more than 2,000 facilities at around 8,000 sites in Wales, which includes swimming pools, leisure centre, golf courses, indoor athletics and tennis centres etc. The research from Active Places Cymru (2013) compared a search of a 15 mile radius of sporting facilities in Cardiff from (CF24 4TP) and a 15 mile radius from Ceredigion (SY25 6ER). The results demonstrated that within Cardiff they had over 200 sporting facilities available, these included public and private centres, clubs and a wide range of sporting activities. However, the results within the 15 mile radius of Ceredigion, showed that there were only 16 sporting facilities, with half of these facilities only catering for golf, bowls and tennis activities. These results reveal that rural counties such as Ceredigion, are lacking sporting facilities and opportunities for individuals that want to participate in sport and physical activity.

### **2.4.3 Transport**

Moore, Gierach, Schatzkin and Mathews (2010) state that young females are often limited in deciding their daily routines and are restricted in gaining access to sport facilities without transportation. They go on to state that young females often rely on family and friends to take them to these leisure facilities. According to Payne et al., (2010), transport issues must be dealt with in order to give individuals the opportunity to partake in physical activity.

The Sport England's (2004) framework highlights that in rural areas a lack of transport is often the main barrier. As previously quoted the Active Places Cymru (2013) showed that within a 15 mile radius of (SY25 6ER) there were only 16 sporting facilities. This would imply that the geographical location in which an individual lives will have a potential impact on their physical activity levels, as they would need to travel further to participate. It is highly important that there are sufficient transport links for individuals living in rural areas in order for them to have the same opportunities as those living in urban areas. This is highlighted by the Commission for Rural communities (2009) which suggests that a possible way of increasing participation levels would be to improve transport and accessibility.

As highlighted earlier, rural areas are often faced with deprivation compared to their urban counterparts. The Welsh Assembly Government (2011) suggests that rising fuel costs directly impacts the participation levels of individuals. Over the past decade, fuel prices have seen an estimated increase of around £0.30p per litre (PetrolPrice, 2007). The increase in fuel price affects individuals living in both rural and urban areas. However, the higher cost of travelling has a greater effect on rural communities as participants have to travel further to access the facilities.

## **2.5 Summary**

Considerable research has been conducted to identify why women between the ages of 16-24 drop out of physical activity, and the barriers they face. Existing research clearly suggest that different geographical locations suffer from a number of barriers that can ultimately affect their participation in sport, as highlighted by the work of Kavangha et al., (2010). Sport Wales identified in their study that rural areas have higher participation rates than their urban counterparts. However, work undertaken by Sport England (2007) disagrees with this and suggests and identified that there are more barriers in rural areas. Several sources including Henderson and Winn (1996), Charlton et al., (2010), Appropriate Facilities (2012) and Sport Wales have concluded that one of the main barriers is the lack of high quality sporting facilities in rural areas, whilst Payne et al., (2010) suggest that transport issues is a major problem in rural areas. Transport issues can be linked closely to the economic situation with individuals often refraining from taking part in sport and physical activity as they are unable to afford transportation due to the rising cost of fuel. Women often face more barriers than men, and according to the work of Blinde et al.,(1993) and Hall (2002), this may be down to gender-role socialization, where

young females often do not take part in sport or physical activity as they perceive it as being a male dominated activity.

It is important to examine this particular subject area further, as it currently appears that young females are still lacking engagement in physical activity compared to males. As identified in the literature review, it is clear that there are differing barriers between rural and urban areas, therefore it is important to delve deeper into the topic area. It is essential to attempt to change this so that every region in the UK has enough access and equal opportunities for people to participate in sport, regardless of their age, sex, disability, race and financial situation (UK Sport, 2012).

## **2.6. Research Aim**

This projects aim is to examine and explore the issues associated with participation in sport and physical activity in rural areas. The specific focus is to consider this issue in relation to young adult females between the ages of 18 – 24. To undertake this research a case study area around the village of Pontrhydfendigaid has been selected.

## **2.7. Research Objectives**

- To understand the potential issues/barriers affecting participation
- Explore the attitudes of young females between the ages of 18-24, who currently participate, towards sport and physical activity in rural areas.
- To consider how these issues/barriers could be addressed.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The aim of the study was to explore potential barriers to participation in sport and physical activity for young adult females between the ages of 18 – 24, focusing on rural areas. Thomas and Nelson (2005, p.3) described research as ‘a careful and systematic means of solving problems’. Gratton and Jones (2010, p.4) suggested that ‘Research is a systematic process of discovery and advancement of human knowledge’. Hussey and Hussey (1997) summarize the different purposes of research as follows; to investigate some existing situation or problem, explaining a new phenomenon, generating new knowledge, providing solutions to a problem and so on.

This chapter will consider the various methods and techniques of research, before examining the type of research that was used in this particular study and a justification on why this approach was adopted. The chapter will also explain why the specific sample group was chosen for this research.

### **3.2. Quantitative and Qualitative research**

Smith (2010) identified two types of research methods, these being quantitative and qualitative research. There is a strong distinction that is commonly made between these two types of research methods (Walliman, 2011). Not only does the relevant data have various characteristics, but they also have different techniques for their analysis. Therefore, both research strategies can be placed at opposite sides of the research continuum (Robson, 2002). Gratton and Jones (2004) referred to the use of numerical measurement and analysis as a quantitative approach. This is reinforced by Bell (2005) who suggests that ‘quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another, they then use techniques that are likely to produce quantified, and if possible generalised conclusions’.

Qualitative research can be defined as an ‘inductive position that emphasises an understanding of human behaviour through methods such as interviews, observation, focus groups, surveys and/or case studies’ (Smith, 2010, p8). According to Gratton and Jones (2004, p22) the aims of the qualitative research are to “capture qualities that are not quantifiable, that is, reduced to numbers, such as feelings, thoughts, experiences and so on...qualitative research uses “non-numerical data and analysis”. Kumar (2005) suggested that the type of research used, is dependent upon the purpose of the study. With regards to this study, the purpose was to investigate the potential barriers that young women face

in sport and physical activity in rural areas. Although some research has been undertaken the literature review indicated a paucity of studies on this topic. It was important that the research provided flexibility and encouraged openness. As such the research was exploratory and was qualitative in nature. Gratton and Jones (2010) suggested that exploratory research takes place where there is little or no prior knowledge of a phenomenon.

### **3.3. Qualitative data Collection**

There are a variety of qualitative methods that could have been used for this study, including observation, focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. With regards to this research it was felt that interviews were deemed the most suitable method. Their purpose was to use an interview schedule and ask questions that would allow in-depth responses around the topic area. Smith (2010, p202) suggested that an interview is 'an approach that requires face to face talk in order to generate data'. Bryman (1988) believes that interviews can be more insightful than other methods as it allows events, action, norms and values to be expressed from the perspective of the participants who are being studied, whilst also having the opportunity to elaborate on any areas of importance. The interviews were conducted in a face to face manner, with a semi structured approach. An interview guide was developed with questions set that were relevant to the research and the review of the literature (see appendix). Other advantages of using interviews according to Gratton and Jones (2004) are that it allows the interviewer to see the participant's body language and facial expressions. By having a face to face conversation, it is most likely that the participant would feel more comfortable as they are familiar with the surroundings. Fifer, Henschen, Gould and Ravissa (2008) suggested that it is important for the interviewer to establish a good rapport with the participants, as by gaining their trust they tend to be more open with their responses, which increases the validity of the study. There are some disadvantages with using interviews that researchers should be aware of, Arksey and Knight (1999) suggested that often an interviewer might be biased without even realising, by giving out verbal and non-verbal signals such as nodding of the head at certain answers. Therefore, it is important that the set questions were asked in a particular way in order to avoid eliciting an answer that is desired by the interviewer, this will also avoid demand characteristics. Carnell et al., (2009) states participants can often start behaving in a certain way in what they think the research circumstance demand of them. Gratton and Jones (2001) suggests that lack of trust and misinterpretation can threaten to lower the validity of a study. In order to avoid this, validity was enhanced by using a variety of

methods suggested by Arksey and Knight (1999) with these being; clear and concise questioning, confidentiality of the study and questions being appropriate to the literature review and from the pilot study.

In adherence to this, all interviews were conducted in the same environment, all participants' interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone, whilst using the same interview guide; this contributed to the reliability of the study by ensuring consistency throughout.

### **3.4. Pilot Study**

A pilot study was undertaken with one individual prior to the full interviews (see appendix). The chosen individual for the pilot study was from a similar area to that of the case study area, Walliman (2011) suggested that it was important to anticipate any problems of comprehension. Thomas and Nelson (2005) highlighted the importance of a pilot study is to check for any potential issues with the interview questions and to give the researcher a chance to run through the questions, which may increase confidence. Grattan and Jones (2004) suggest that pilot studies are often carried out in order to see if the interview questions are clear and easily understood by all participants. By undertaking a pilot study, this added to the validity, as it ensured that the set questions were relevant. As a result of the pilot study, some amendments were made to the interview guide. Changes included adding additional questions to the introduction in order to build rapport before the main interview questions began. It was essential to rephrase some of the questions in order to encourage in depth responses.

### **3.5. Participants**

The participants used for this study were young adult females between the ages of 18-24. Finch and White(1997) suggested that many women between the ages 18 – 24 are said to be at an 'in between' stage in their lives, this six year span covers a transition time from childhood to adulthood. Six young female adults from rural Mid Wales (areas in Ceredigion) were selected for this study. This specific sample was used as it is known for being situated in a rural region in Mid Wales (Carnell et al., 2009). The participants were carefully recruited through personal contacts to ensure that they were from the rural community. Andrews, Mason and Silk (2005) explained snowball sampling as the most common sampling method used in qualitative studies. Snowball sampling involves contacting one participant via the other (Browne, 2007). The advantage of this form of sampling is that it helped to identify other candidates that were appropriate to the

research. A participant can introduce other individuals of similar background, enabling the researcher to have additional people to interview. Before the interviews began, it was made clear to the participants that the study was voluntary, and that they were able to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants were asked to sign a voluntary informed consent form. This contributes to the validity of the study as participants were aware of their rights.

The interviews were undertaken between the 09/01/14 – 11/02/14. The participants were from three villages in Ceredigion, within a 16 mile radius of Aberystwyth. The interviews were undertaken at a neutral location. Timings varied, with each interview taking between 10 – 25 minutes.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Gratton and Jones (2004) state that analysis is an important aspect of any research as its main aim is to try and make sense of the collected data in order to try and answer the specific research question. This particular study involved obtaining qualitative data via interviewing the participants; therefore no statistical analysis was required. 'Qualitative research gathers information that is not in numerical form' (McLeod, 2008). During the transcribing period, a content analysis was used in order to categorise the main themes that occurred during the interviews. Holt (2008) identified content analysis as a method of data collection that gathers information from the contents of magazines, television programmes, newspaper or recorded conversations. Bell (2005) suggested that by interviewing individuals on a one to one basis it enables the interviewee to gain more information by the responses they make such as facial expression, hesitations, tone of voice etc. By doing this, data can be easily interpreted.

### **3.7. Ethical Considerations**

Participants were given voluntary informed consent forms and an information sheet was attached. This documentation was an important aspect in order to explain the study and for everyone to understand what was going to take place and what was expected from them. The information sheet ensured that those involved were made aware that their participation would be kept confidential, and they were able to withdraw at any time (Ashcroft, Dawson & Draper, 2007). In the transcribing stage all participants were addressed as participant 1, 2, etc. Prior to the commencement of this research, it was

approved by the University Research Ethics Committee and it was not considered to be a high risk study.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

## **4.1. Overview**

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the information gathered from the six interviews that were conducted. A number of key themes have been identified. These will be discussed in detail below in order to gain a better understanding of the subject area. Throughout the interview process, there were several consistent themes that emerged that influence participation in sport and physical activity by young females, between the ages of 18-24 in a rural area of Ceredigion. These included the lack of facilities and lack of transport to facilities, opportunities, limited marketing and the overall emphasis on male dominated clubs within the area. These main themes identified have been categorised under the following sub headings: personal factors, social and circumstantial and opportunity factors.

## **4.2. Personal Factors**

There are a number of personal factors that influence young female's decisions to partake in sport and physical activity. The key personal themes that emerged from the interviews were confidence and body image issues, the perceptions of female participation in sport and physical activity, attitudes and motivation and stage in life.

### **4.2.1. Body Image**

Most of the participants felt strongly about body image and confidence issues. The issue of body image is said to be a major problem, and this issue has already been highlighted by many researchers (Allender et al., 2006., Coleman, Cox & Rucker, 2008). The interview results show that the participants believe that body image can affect participation in sport, with participant 6 stating *'that many women are very self-conscious about their body, especially these days because the ideal body image is those of women on the front of magazines with very thin figures and stuff like that, and males are very opinionated on how women should look'*. This suggests that the individuals often feel pressurised from society to look good, and often worry what other people might think of them if they do not look the part. This might explain why many young females who are marginally overweight refrain from participating in sport and physical activity.

Confidence is another issue that hinder women's participation in sport and physical activity; all interviewees had a negative view on exercising in front of males. Participant four stated that its harder to take part in front of males *'because you think they're better than you, like I guess body conscious as well, like you don't want them to think why are*

*they here or she's not fit enough or she's not good enough or anything like that really.'* Participant six explained *'I would rather go with a partner if I knew the males in the class or gym'*. However participant three suggested *'it would depend on the type of session that it was. For example if it was a very structured session like a circuits or something I probably wouldn't feel as confident because I would be worried that I wouldn't be able to keep up with the level the males are doing, and feel a bit unconfident and stuck in the mud sort of thing. But if it was say going to the gym and it was full of males I wouldn't mind doing that at all'*. All these statements suggest that females are often worried about what others might possibly think of them, this is underpinned by Coleman et al., (2008), who suggests females often choose not to participate as they are worried about their appearance and often feel very self-conscious.

#### **4.2.2. Stages in life**

The number of transitions in an individual's life can potentially influence a young females decision to participate in sport and physical activity. The key themes that emerged from the interviews were their maturity, education and time available to individuals. The results found that as individuals got older, their attitude towards sport and physical activity began to change, and this had a direct impact on their participation levels: *'Well, when I was younger I used to participate a lot but maybe about four to five times a week. This included a bit of football, hockey, squash on a weekly basis, but then when I went to Uni that stopped completely'*. This statement supports the research done by Craike et al., (2009) who reported that as females get older, their interest in sport and physical activity changes. The possible reason for this is when individuals were younger; it was far more enjoyable and fun. When participants reach a certain age and employment commitments and university work become the main priorities in their lives, sport and physical activity can be overlooked. Participant 6 confirmed this by stating that *'as I got older due, to other commitments I have stopped participating in those events'*, with participant 1 also explaining that *'I've since got a job in beauty industry and it takes up a lot of my time, I work 12 hour shift and after that, the last thing on my mind is going to take part in any physical activity or sports.'* This supports research carried out by Coleman et al., (2008). They highlighted that transitions within education and work often had a negative impact on participation levels of young females in sport and physical activity. Sport England (2006) discussed the impact of life transitions and perceived that individuals had less energy, less time and had increased self-consciousness. More research needs to be completed to establish what could be done to eliminate negative impacts on participation.

### **4.3. Social and circumstantial Factors**

There are a number of social factors that are believed to influence a young female's decision whether or not they partake in sport and physical activity. These include friends, family and social groups within the clubs and sporting organisations.

#### **4.3.1. Friends and Peer group**

All six participants had friends and family that participated in sport and physical activity, and believed that this did have a positive influence on their interest and participation: *'I think it is also helpful that I do come from an active background, as it encourages you to stay active and keep fit and healthy rather than, you know, not having that role model of the way to act'*. This statement backs up the research done by Coackley and White (1992); they acknowledged that support from parents in a child's early years is very important on whether or not the child decides to remain active. Whilst parents can be influential in getting their child involved in sport at an early age, this does not mean that their participation will be sustained as the child matures. The Welsh Assembly Government's policy review recognised that females are often lacking family support and therefore choose not to participate in sport and physical activity. Family influence and their backing is highly important and has an impact on the children's interest and their involvement in sport.

In addition to family, another key factor that contributes to participation in sport in young females, is that of their friends: *'I would say my friends are fairly active too, so all in all I have quite an active support system around me, which I believe does encourage me to stay active, yes'* (participant 6). Whilst participant 1 stated that, *'I couldn't motivate myself to go I'd need a friend to make me'*. This indicates that having an active peer group can contribute positively towards motivating individuals and that they are most likely going to partake if their friends are involved too (Coleman et al.,2007).

Another point that had not been considered during the review of literature was that of social groups that develop within a team squad. The research found divided opinions amongst participants, with participant 4 suggesting; *'because of the small community and you know everyone, it can get you more active because you're not afraid to participate and get involved in the team with people that you know, whereas in Cardiff, if I was to join the hockey club, I would have felt really nervous and contemplate attending training and*

*games because like I would feel an outsider*’, However this statement is different from the opinions of the other participants, with participant 5 suggesting *‘I guess another barrier is feeling intimidated of joining these clubs and gyms, especially as in a small area, groups are often more cliquy and you are scared you may feel like an outsider when going to these clubs’*. Another participant agreed with participant 5 and stated that *‘a lot of the groups have been established for a long time, with the same sort of groups, so it’s hard to get into those groups as they’ve already got a bit of clique’*. These statements could be linked with the personality traits of the individual, as participant 4 already knew the members from the club back at home so had no problem joining. However, the other two appeared to have low self-esteem and lack of confidence. This trait could possibly have played a part in making them feel self-conscious and apprehensive about joining a new team.

#### **4.4. Opportunity Factors**

Opportunity factors tend to relate to the support services and opportunities available with these namely being: perception of opportunities, type and quality of facilities and clubs, transport issued, and advertisement.

##### **4.4.1. Facilities – Type and quality**

Charlton et al., (2012) suggested that *‘lack of’* and the *‘conditions of’* existing facilities could be a possible barrier to individuals living in rural areas. The research conducted by Appropriate facilities (2012) also agreed with this statement, and proposed that many sporting facilities are in poor condition and need improving. During the interviews, the participants were very critical of the poor conditions of the facilities available to them in the area. Participant 3 suggested that *‘the facilities are quite poor, the gyms very small, and you couldn’t probably fit more than six people in there’*, whilst participant 2 described the gym as *‘small’* with limited equipment and goes on to state that *‘there’s about two running machines, there’s not a lot of options and if the gym is quite busy you are having to wait your turn to use the running machine’*. This would validate the comments made by Appropriate facilities (2012) and Charlton et al., (2012) that the standard of facilities available are *of poor quality, and are far from satisfactory*. Participant 5 even proceeded to say that, *‘the gym is very small, it has limited equipment, and the equipment is pretty old, which for me personally puts me off attending.’* This statement supports the research done by Charlton et al., (2010), in which they found that due to poor standard of facilities and equipment, it has a detrimental effect on an individual’s participation rates, and could be a

major factor in determining why individuals choose not to participate in sport and physical activity. Sport Wales should examine the issues in rural areas to try and address the problems and improve facilities in these communities.

A study conducted by Active Places Cymru (2013) revealed that within a 15 mile radius of Ceredigion, (SY25 6ER), there were only 16 accessible sporting opportunities available to them. The participants highlighted that this number is slowly decreasing due to funding issues: participant 4 implied that one of the main barriers to her was *'the facilities, because there aren't any! Especially now, as the rumour that the local leisure centre might be closing down as well as the local swimming pool, which will mean that people will have to travel up to half an hour to go to the gym, or swimming pool'*. This means that individuals living in rural areas are at a direct disadvantage compared to those individuals living in bigger towns and cities. Participant 3 also stated concerns over local facilities *'the local swimming pool has recently been shut due to structural damage, and it's unlikely it's going to open again, which is a real barrier for a lot of people because it was quite well used'*. These comments agree with a study in Northern Ireland (2010) that concluded 'that a medium sized city can be far more facilitative of participation than a rural or urban area'.

#### **4.4.2. Transport**

As well as having a lack of facilities, another aspect that seemed to affect participation in these rural areas is transport issues. Payne et al., (2012) suggested that one of the most prominent barriers was the cost and transport to activities. Whilst Sport England's framework (2004) recognised that barriers to participation in sport differ, with lack of transport often being the biggest factor that affects participation in rural areas. Given these viewpoints from different researchers, it was important to explore this. The participants were questioned on transport issues in order to gain a better insight on the situation in this rural area. As highlighted earlier, the significantly low figure of facilities available (Active Places Cymru, 2013) would suggest that the geographical location in which an individual lives can potentially have an impact on their participation levels, as they would need to travel further afield in order to access these leisure facilities. Participant 6 suggests that *'a lot of people aren't willing to spend petrol to travel that distance in order to just work out for an hour, as it costs time and effort and a lot of money on petrol.'* This statement backs up the research highlighted earlier in the literature review, due to rising fuel prices (Petrol Price, 2007) as well as the distance individuals would need to travel to leisure facilities. These factors are likely to have a direct impact on whether or not individuals will partake in

sport. All participants identified that if individuals could not drive, then they were, to a degree, limited in the number of activities they could do, Moore et al., (2010) supports this by highlighting that young females often relied on family and friends to take them to these leisure facilities: participant 3 stated that *'there are a few of my friends that can't drive, so for them it's a lot harder to get access to these facilities, which means they don't usually participate unless they can get there from a lift or bus, but the bus routes aren't very reliable around here either and unfortunately they're being cut in march'*. Similarly participant 5 suggested that, *'transport is also a barrier, especially for me as I can't drive and it pretty much becomes isolated, and the buses don't run at regular times therefore you're very limited in what you can participate in'*.

These are important factors that Sport Development officers and sport Wales need to consider. They should think of ways in giving those individuals living in rural areas the same opportunities as those living in bigger towns and cities. By cutting bus services from the local villages to the nearest towns, there will be a significant impact on those reliant on public transport. These statements clearly back up the research done by Sport England (2004) and Payne et al., (2012) in suggesting that one of the main issues faced by individuals was the distance to travel and the cost of transport. A major factor that needs to be considered by these researchers is that there is clearly no transport available for those living in rural Ceredigion, especially for those who cannot drive. As participant 5 implied, they are very limited in what sport or physical activity they can participate in without any regular public transport.

#### **4.4.3. Urban and Rural Differences**

A key theme that was discussed in the review of literature, and was predominant in the results of the interviews were the differences between rural and urban areas. According to the literature, there were differing views on whether or not living in rural areas had an impact on participation levels, and these contradicting views were also clear in the interview results, with participants having divided opinions. Kavangha et al., (2005) suggested that individuals living in urban areas are at a direct advantage compared to those living in rural communities. This statement is backed up by Participant 2 who suggested that, *'I suppose because we live in such a small area, those areas that are bigger and they have more participants they have better teams, and then there's regular matches, and have people that attend regularly'*. This clearly suggests that people living in rural areas are at a direct disadvantage due to having fewer facilities and less people to

play different sports; therefore this contributes towards the lack of opportunities. However, research conducted by Sports Wales (2008-2009) found that rural counties, such as Ceredigion have a higher rate of participation compared to those living in urban counties such as Merthyr Tydfil. Interestingly, Participant 4 stated that *'I used to participate in a lot of sport when I was younger and when I lived here, but then when I moved to Cardiff I completely stopped. I didn't even go out running in the week or anything like that'*. This statement made by Participant 4, is interesting and confirms the research conducted by Sports Council of Wales (2008/09).

Recent studies show contradicting opinions regarding urban and rural participation rates; however it remains clear that barriers still exist in rural areas, and the gender gap between male and female is problematic. When questioned, all participants agreed that it was easier for males to participate than females. Participant 2 suggested that, *'there's a lot more going on for the men around here and the boys, there's football teams, there's rugby teams'*. With two others stating *'most of the clubs are male orientated the rugby, the football, there's a big thing in the area for those sort of sports'* (participant 3), *'well I am aware there's more male clubs than females. The sports and clubs in the villages are very male dominated, there's football and rugby. The male football is very popular; therefore they have a team in every village'* (Participant 6). Due to lack of opportunities available to women, it is clear to understand why the gender gap between males and females still exist. A few suggestions that came to light during the interviews, to possibly help overcome the lack of opportunities for women, were that there should be more clubs available that are aimed towards females, such as hockey and women's football. A further option would be more classes in the leisure centres planned for women, for example reopening the Zumba classes.

#### **4.4.4. Advertising**

One issue that had not been considered during the review of literature, but had been a recurring theme that was identified during the interviews, was the lack of marketing available to individuals. When questioned on whether it was easy to get information on what the clubs had to offer, all the participants believed there could be more awareness, *'advertising as well would be a really good area, there's nothing saying what classes are on and when, it's a bit unreliable'*, *'advertisement is pretty poor, it's all through word and mouth really'*. Participant 6 went on to suggest that if they had more information they would most likely participate *'I do know there's a hockey team I would like to become a member*

*of, but advertisement is pretty poor*'. These statements support Sport England's (2006) views that there is a lack of marketing aimed at young people, to try and encourage them to participate in sport and physical activity. These results suggest that local leisure centres and clubs should be doing more in order to try and engage young people, and to make them aware of what opportunities they provide to try and encourage them to participate. Participant 5 put forward that, *'we need more advertising, for the centres to come out to the community get talking to people in order to build rapport and confidence of the individuals that are seriously lacking self-esteem'*. This suggests that if a spokesperson for the leisure centres and clubs visited areas and spoke to women in the community, then they are more likely to participate as they obtain the information and awareness first hand on what the centre and clubs have to offer.

#### **4.5. Summative discussion**

In summary, this chapter has considered the key themes that emerged from the interviews. As this is a small scale study, generalizations cannot be made however it is possible to identify key messages from respondents.

With regards to this particular case study on a rural area in Ceredigion, Mid Wales, it is clear that there are barriers and factors that need to be addressed in order to achieve higher participation levels in sport and physical activity. It is necessary that the Welsh Government and Sport Wales consider these potential issues if sport and physical activity is to remain a policy priority.

Many factors can influence people's choice whether or not they participate in sport or physical activity. Below is an adaption of the model by Torlkidsen (2011) summarising the potential challenges remaining within this particular area. The first group of factors relate to individuals themselves, the second relates to the circumstances and situations in which individuals find themselves, and the third group relates to the opportunity and support services available to the individual. Table 1 (below) summarises the different factors identified in the findings and discussion which fall under the headings. It is an illustration of the complexity and variety of influences on leisure participation and the possible reasons behind them.

Table 1. Adaptation of Torkildsen’s (2011) table on Influence of leisure participation

<b>Personal</b>	<b>Social and circumstantial</b>	<b>Opportunity Factors</b>
Age	Occupation	Facilities – Type and quality
Stage in Life	Educational and attainment	Access and location
Gender	Disposable income	Awareness
Personal obligations	Car ownership and mobility	Perception of opportunities
Leisure perception	Time available	Distribution of facilities
Attitudes and motivation	Duties and obligations	Resources available
Interest and pre-occupation	Friends and peer group	Activities provided
Health	Social and home environment	Transport
Personality and confidence		Advertising
Skills and Ability		

Out of the list above, and with specific referent to this particular area of rural Ceredigion, the main key themes that were highlighted within the findings were leisure perceptions, confidence of an individual, friends and peer group, the type and quality of facilities, advertisement, opportunities and transport issues. Potential ways of overcoming these key themes that emerged from the interviews will be discussed below. In order to build confidence amongst females it is vital that they are given opportunities suited to them. Appropriate times in the gym dedicated for female only participation is highly important. As not only would this increase opportunities available for females but it will also build confidence and eliminate body image issues as they do not need to exercise in front of male peers. The lack of facilities available is a major issue affecting these rural areas. Government funding is decreasing and local authorities are expected to cut leisure centres and swimming pool expenditure and in this particular area it is having a direct impact. Not only are leisure facilities being closed down, transport links in this case study area are being significantly cut. Therefore, for those individuals that can’t drive to the larger towns, their chance of participating is very limited. The lack of facilities and transport can be

overcome by getting sport development officers into the local area to open up clubs and host sporting days as an optional route.

There are clearly a number of factors and issues to consider within this case study area that can potentially hinder participation, especially amongst this particular age range. These challenges need to be addressed in order to ensure that each individual reach their full potential and are given the same opportunities that others receive in different areas.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

The primary aim of this research was to understand and explore the potential barriers that affect participation levels in sport and physical activity amongst females. The study focused on females aged between 18-24 years and who were living in a rural part of mid-Wales. This particular subject area has had a large amount of research completed by authors such as, (Allender et al., 2006; Blinde, 1993; Coakley & White, 1992; Eime et al., 2008; Finch et al., 1997; Sport England, 2006). However, the findings of the literature review revealed that there was still a significant gender gap between males and females participating in sport. This was highlighted in The Active People's survey (2010) which found that females' participation rates were 7.5% lower than adult males partaking in sport and physical activity.

Kavangha et al., (2005) implied that the environment in which individuals live in can have an impact on participation rates; however the literature review demonstrated there was no differentiation in participation between individuals living in urban areas, compared to those living in rural areas. Nevertheless Scott (2007) suggested that rural and urban areas were very different, with urban areas being densely occupied and developed whereas rural areas varied from small settlements to remote towns and villages. Hall (2002), Eime et al., (2008), Charlton et al., (2012), Green (2010) found a variety of barriers that could be associated with participation levels amongst females in rural areas. These included transport issues, the lack of appropriate facilities for individuals, the number of life transitions that occur during adolescence and women's perceptions on sport and physical activity. Therefore, it is important to explore these areas and to examine the challenges facing participation by females in rural areas.

The results from the individual interviews had similar views to the main themes discovered in the review of literature. They acknowledged that transport was a big issue in these rural areas, and is having a negative effect on participation levels. Participants have to travel further afield compared to their urban counterparts in order to access suitable leisure facilities. Those of whom did not own a car or could not drive; found it very difficult to join clubs or attend leisure centres as public transport is very limited in the area. Public transport is not available at suitable times, with one individual stressing that the buses running in their village will be greatly reduced in the near future which would make it even more difficult for them to participate.

The lack of leisure equipment and the quality was another major issue in these rural villages. Participants stated poor quality equipment is off-putting to potential participants. The shortage of facilities is linked in with transport issues as mentioned above, due to the fact of having to travel further in order to utilise them.

The issue of male dominated clubs was also mentioned, with the fact that sport clubs were simply not available for females. It was felt that women's sport is not as evident as men's and this factor could potentially contribute to why female participation levels are relatively low compared to males. The results recognised that if there was more advertisement, and opportunities available, it could have a major impact in encouraging females to participate. Another issue identified from the results was that body image, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem can be a potential factor in affecting female's participation. Unrealistic images on how females are portrayed in the media, can lead to body issues and a low level of self-confidence. This could influence females to have negative issues with their body image. In turn, this then becomes a barrier for them to participate in sport and physical activity. The media can have a positive impact on female participation by increasing coverage on female sport and making it more visible, along with having more role models. The results acknowledged that if females were granted opportunities in an non-intimidating environment for female use alone, they would more likely participate, as they would not feel as self-conscious. To maximise female's participation in sport and physical activity, the potential barriers identified need addressing and changes need to be implemented.

### **5.1. Limitations**

After a critical analysis of the results, it has been identified that they have helped to increase the knowledge of the factors affecting participation amongst females ages 18-24 in rural areas. However, there are limitations to the study. Firstly, due to the size of the sample used, it could be argued that the study wasn't reliable. If we had conducted more interviews, the consistency of the study would have improved, as the results would be simpler to replicate as suggested by Gratton and Jones (2004). Secondly, how the interviews were analysed could be seen as a potential limitation. As stated in Chapter 2, content analysis was used; one drawback of using this method was that the researcher could have misunderstood the meaning of the associated texts within the interviews transcripts. Thirdly, the researcher was very inexperienced at conducting interviews, with this being her first time.

## **5.2. Further Study**

It is acknowledged that this research is small in scale but has nevertheless identified many interesting issues. More in depth research should be conducted into what females believe is required to encourage and promote female participation, in order to close the persistent gender gap between males and females. To improve this study, more participants could have been used in order to increase the reliability of the results. Or, the sample analysed could have been more stringent, for example all participants should be partaking in sport and physical activity at least three times a week. This study has identified factors that young women are faced with within rural communities. A further study would be interesting to cross examine these barriers with young females living in urban locations in order to see if there are similarities, or to identify if any new factors emerge that are not an issue in these rural communities. A further dimension that might be considered would be to expand the study to consider providers and supply factors. The views articulated in this study need to be examined in more detail. Perhaps a community facilities audit could be completed, or interviews with providers undertaken in order to compare the perceptions of female participants to the actual reality of what is provided in rural parts of Ceredigion, in Mid Wales.

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# **APPENDICIES**

# APPENDIX A

**Title of Project: An investigation into factors affecting young women's (18-24 years) participation in sport: a focus on rural areas.**

## **Research Participant Information Sheet**

This document provides a run through of:

- 1) Background information and aims of the research.
- 2) My role as the researcher,
- 3) Your role as participant,
- 4) Benefits of participating in this research
- 5) How the data will be collected, and
- 6) How the data collected will be used.

The purpose of this document is to assist you in making the correct decision about whether you wish to proceed with this project, and to promote transparency in the research process.

### **1) Background and aims of the research**

Previous research has shown that rural areas suffer from more barriers to participation than urban areas. I as the researcher wish to investigate the factor that affect young women between the ages of 18-24 lack of participation in sport in rural areas.

### **2) My role as the researcher:**

The project involves me (Cerian Davies), the researcher, going through a interview process with you regarding the barriers and factors for lack of participation in rural areas.

### **3) Your role as a participant:**

Your roles as a participant of this study it to answer the questions I ask truthfully and openly during the interview. It is highly important that you answer honestly and do not just say what you think I will want to hear.

### **4) Benefits of taking part:**

The information gathered from this study will give individuals a better insight into the factors that affect participation rates in sport amongst young women in rural areas.

### **5) How data will be collected:**

The data from this study will be collected using the answers that are given from the participants in the interviews, the answers given will then be analyzed in order to see if there are any recurring themes.

### **6) How the data / research will be used:**

By agreeing in becoming a voluntary participant, you will be permitting me to use your responses from the interview to join a larger set of data involving other participants. Personal data will be kept anonymous and will not be reported alone, but kept within the total sample of participants.

## **Your rights**

By participating in this study as a voluntary participant you have the right to enter or exit the study at any time. It is entirely up to you whether you want to participate or not, you as participant are in full control on what anonymous information is used in its final reporting.

## **Protection to privacy**

We have taken very careful steps in order to ensure that your identity in any written transcripts, notes, and associated documentation remain anonymous, and to ensure that you cannot be identified from any of the information that we have about you. In addition, any personal information about you will remain confidential according to the guidelines of the Data Protection Act (1998).

## **Contact**

If you have any more queries regarding this study, or need any more information regarding how we intend to conduct the study, feel free to contact me on the details printed below. We will happily answer any questions or concerns regarding the study.

Cerian Davies

Cardiff School of Sport  
Cardiff Metropolitan University  
CF236XD, United Kingdom  
E: st20002933@outlook.uwic.ac.uk

# **APPENDIX B**

# CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

UREC Reference No:

Title of Project: An investigation into factors affecting young women's (18-24) participation in sport: a focus on rural areas.

Name of Researcher: Cerian Davies

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Participant to complete this section: Place initial in each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated ..... for this evaluation study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that it is possible 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 from the study may be used for reporting purposes, but I will not be identified.

5. I agree to take part in this study on the factors affecting participation in sport in rural areas

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person taking consent

Date

When completed, one copy for participant and one copy for researcher's files.

# APPENDIX C

## **Interview Guide – Pilot Interview**

Hello, I'm Cerian Davies.

I am an undergraduate student at Cardiff Met, where I am in my final year studying Sport Coaching.

The study that I am doing for my dissertation looks at the potential barriers to participation in sport and physical activity for young females, focusing on rural Wales.

Your identity will remain unknown, and you do not need to answer questions that you are not comfortable with. You may stop the interview at any time.

Are you happy to participate in this interview?

### **Introductory Questions**

- Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?
- How regularly do you participate in sport or physical activity?
- What sport do you participate in?

### **Main interview questions**

Question	Probe
Can you tell me about the barriers that you believe exist that impact on young female adult participation in sport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Brief summary of barriers affecting participation.</li><li>- transport, facilities, body image etc.</li></ul>
Is there a single main barrier that is relevant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- please explain</li></ul>
Has this particular barrier been an issue to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- School, work etc?</li></ul>
Do you think anything could be done to remove this particular barrier?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Motivators?</li></ul>
Do you think the sports are advertised enough?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Awareness?</li></ul>
To what extent would you say that your peers participate in any physical activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Role models?</li><li>- Encouragement</li></ul>
Are you aware of any local clubs in the area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Women focused clubs?</li></ul>
How would you travel to the leisure facilities in your area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Drive, rely on parents, buses.</li></ul>
Do you think the distance can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Rural compared to urban.</li></ul>

	influence your participation?	
	Do you think the area you live in can affect your participation in sport and physical activity?	
	Do you believe it is easier to participate in sport as a male in your area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If so how?</li> <li>- male dominations during prime time activities</li> </ul>
	What needs to be done in your opinion to get more females participating?	

Thank you very much for your time. Is there anything else you would like to raise?

# APPENDIX D

## **Interview Guide**

Hi, I'm Cerian Davies

I am an undergraduate student at Cardiff Met, where I am in my final year studying Sport Coaching.

The research that I am conducting looks at the potential barriers to participation in sport and physical activity for young females, focusing on rural Wales.

Your identity will remain unknown, and you do not need to answer questions that you are not comfortable with. You may stop the interview at any time.

Are you happy to participate?

## **Introductory Questions**

- Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and the area you live in?
- How regularly do you participate in sport or physical activity?
- What sport do you participate in?
- Do you enjoy taking part?

## **Main interview questions**

Question	Probe
Can you briefly tell me about the main barriers that you believe exist on young female's participation in sport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Brief summary of barriers affecting participation.</li><li>- transport, facilities, body image etc.</li></ul>
Out of the list you have just given, is there a single main barrier that is relevant and an issue to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Barrier – primary, secondary school, college, work transitions?</li><li>- please explain</li></ul>
What do you think could be done to remove this barrier?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Funding/initiatives?</li></ul>
How often do your friends/family participate in physical activity?	Motivators?
Do you feel confident to attend clubs by yourself or do you need a partner to go with you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- If no, why don't you feel confident? how can you change it.</li><li>- Do your friends feel the same?</li><li>- If yes, ask would they feel confident enough to go if the session was male</li></ul>

		dominated? e.g. swimming/judo
How far is the nearest leisure centre to where you live?  Can you tell me about your experience of these facilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good quality?</li> <li>- Appropriate equipment, classes etc.</li> <li>- Appropriate opening hours?</li> </ul>
Are you aware of all local clubs, and are you a member of any?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rugby/hockey/judo/football/swimming clubs.</li> </ul>
How easy was it to get information on how to become a member and what facilities they provide?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women focused clubs?</li> <li>- advertising</li> </ul>
How do you travel to the leisure facilities or clubs?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drive, rely on parents, buses.</li> <li>- Do you find it difficult to fit in with the times?</li> </ul>
Do you think where you live effects you partaking in sport and physical activity, and how does it affect you?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural compared to urban.</li> </ul>
Is there any sport that you would like to partake in but is not available in your area.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- variety?</li> </ul>
Do you believe it is harder for females to join clubs or participate in sport than males in your area?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If so how?</li> <li>- male dominations during prime time activities</li> </ul>
What needs to be done in your opinion to get more females into sport?		

Thank you very much for your time. Is there anything else you would like to add?

# **APPENDIX E**

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014

To : Cerian Davies

Project reference number: (13/5/191U)

Your project was recommended for approval by myself as supervisor and formally approved at the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee meeting of [ include the one that applies 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013].

Yours sincerely

Nicola Bolton

Supervisor

Cardiff School of Sport  
Cyncoed Campus, Cyncoed Road, Cardiff CF23 6XD UK  
Tel: +44 (0)29 2041 6591 Fax: +44 (0)29 2041 6768  
email: [css@uwic.ac.uk](mailto:css@uwic.ac.uk) [www.cmu.ac.uk](http://www.cmu.ac.uk)



Ysgol Chwaraeon Caerdydd  
Campws Cyncoed, Heol Cyncoed, Caerdydd, CF23 6XD  
Ffôn: +44 (0)29 2041 6591 Ffacs: +44 (0)29 2041 6768  
ebost: [css@uwic.ac.uk](mailto:css@uwic.ac.uk) [www.cmu.ac.uk](http://www.cmu.ac.uk)