# Cardiff School of Sport

**DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA:**

**Empirical**

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<td>KEY STAGE 3 BOYS PERCEPTION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AROUND THE COTSWOLDS</td>
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## Comments Section

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<td><strong>Title and Abstract (5%)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.</td>
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2 There is scope within qualitative dissertations for the RESULTS and DISCUSSION sections to be presented as a combined section followed by an appropriate CONCLUSION. The mark distribution and criteria across these two sections should be aggregated in those circumstances.
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)
SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

2013-4

KEY STAGE 3 BOYS PERCEPTION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE COTSWOLDS

(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of Pedagogy)

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KEY STAGE 3 BOYS PERCEPTION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AROUND THE COTSWOLDS
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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this study was to identify what motivates 12-14 year old boys to participate in physical activity and education. More specifically to identify the barriers they may experience which prevents them from engaging in their physical education (PE) lessons. The identified barriers were used to encourage the participants to identify strategies that could be put in place to improve the PE provision in their school.

Method: Twenty boys aged twelve to fourteen from two schools in the Cotswolds participated. The data that was collected from four focus group interviews. Themes were identified such as pupil’s motivation in physical education, learning environment, activity choice and stereotypes, which represented the opinions of the boys.

Results: The findings demonstrated the various external factors that can influence a young individual to take part in physical education. Although gender stereotypes affected participation, it became clear that stereotypes relating to image were of a greater concern. Concerns were expressed relating to co-educational lessons, in particular, the variety of activities that would be available if girls were included in the lesson. In addition boys acknowledged that a limited activity choice within one school was a reason for disengagement in PE.

Conclusion: In all of the key themes, the PE teacher was seen to be the most influential factor in ensuring that pupils participate in PE. Implementing strategies to involve young people in decision making regarding their learning has been shown by the participants in this study to positively influence their motivation and improve the learning environment
Chapter I
Introduction
INTRODUCTION

Throughout the past five years, a great importance has been placed on individuals’ lifestyle choices, particularly focusing on young people (Carnethon et al., 2005). Carnethon went on to say that this was partly down to the increasing global obesity epidemic and the perceived impact it will have on the future generation of adolescents. There have been various reasons given for this situation, which included the increased amount of food consumption, well above the recommended levels for an average child, as well as the low levels of physical activity in and out of the school environment (Levine, 2010). (Sothen, 2004) suggested that the way in which we can improve the unhealthy lifestyles that young people are adopting, could be to increase the understanding and importance of their own nutritional requirements to sustain a balanced diet for the lifestyle they have chosen. However, this is not the only important aspect that needs to be addressed, as young people also need to take part in regular physical activities helping to reduce the risk of health issues occurring such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Hayes, (2009, p111) described physical activity as “any activity that requires the uses of physical skills such as speed strength and flexibility. Subramaniam & Silverman (2007) stated that if positive attitudes were engorged throughout PE lessons, young people would be more likely to take part in physical activities outside of a school environment. This is backed up by Strokes & Sanders (2008), who suggested that a way of increasing the participation of young people would be to introduce positive experiences from a young age by creating a comfortable environment for them to participate in.

The National curriculum includes core and foundation subjects. PE is a part of this curriculum and set as a core subject. State schools should provide pupils 5-16 years of age the opportunity to take part in physical activities (Ha et al., 2003). A section of the National curriculum suggested that each pupil should partake in the minimum physical activity, which is equivalent to two lessons of planned activity during a week of school. Fisher et al. (2010) supports the
guidelines by stating that children should carry out at least 60 minutes of moderate exercise every day. However the activities that are made available to the pupils are dependent on the opportunities and facilities that the school can offer.

Regardless of previous or current strategies throughout England’s educational system, Beunen et al., (2010), Findley et al., (2009) and Kjonniksen et al., (2009), state that participation levels of young children within physical education are still decreasing during the stages of adolescence. Lowry et al., (2001) researched the figures of young people that participate in regular physical activity, consisting of at least twenty minutes three or more times a week. They revealed that levels of participation fell considerably from the age range of 12 to 14 years old from 69% to a much lower 38%. With these figures it is clear that young adults’ participation in physical activities have decreased. This however has given other researchers an opportunity to explore these trends further, as well as identifying other trends such as gender and stereotyping. Broderson et al., (2007) identified that during adolescence, participation levels differ between genders. A decrease of 56% was seen in girls aged between 11-16, compared with boys, where a 23% decrease in participation was noted. It is clear to see that this research shows that there is a greater decline in girls’ participation levels. However it is important to recognise that there is also a significant decline identified in boys’ participation levels during adolescence.

Between the critical ages of 11-16 years old, attitudes of pupils towards PE have been identified as one of the key areas that can impact on lifelong participation in PA. Subramaniam & Silverman (2007, p602-611) suggests that factors such as gender, skill levels, activity choice, stereotyping and previous negative experiences in PE can influence the attitudes of pupils toward participating in PE lessons. They go on to state that age can have a harmful impact on the attitudes of adolescence towards PE, by suggesting that with the increase of age there is a decreased in positive attitude towards PE. As age has such a major impact on attitudes towards PE, it is important to identify the
factors that can influence the participation of adolescents. At present in the National curriculum of PE (2008), Key Stage 3 (KS3) pupils are encouraged to develop their skills learnt from the lower key stages in a competent and confident way. This is offered through tasks working within a team, individually and in groups to widen personal and social skills. The National curriculum also encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle and life long physical activity, by educating young people about decisions made in everyday life. With the importance of developing the decision-making that may affect their lives in the future, further investigation is needed to see why the pupils start to disengage from PE towards the end of KS3 and going into KS4. It is also important to see if the pupils are able to make their own decisions about the content of the PE curriculum, to see whether or not this impacts positively on their perceptions and whether it contributes towards maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

It is clear to see there is plenty of previous research specific to girls and their perceptions of PE. However, there is very little that focuses solely on boys. This shows limitations around the subject as the percentages of boys that are disengaging from PE are increasing constantly. This leads on to the aims of the project as it is aimed solely at boys and their perceptions of their PE lessons. Concentrating more on the potential barriers boys face from PE within school.

The purpose of the study is to identify perceptions that key stage 3 boys have towards PA the secondary aim was to identify thoughts; feeling and experiences that key stage 3 boys have during PE. The aims of the study are to:

- Identify potential barriers that these boys may face during their PE lessons.
- Identify strategies that could be implemented by the PE department to reduce the amount of disengaged pupils.
Chapter II
Literature Review
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will critically review previous research around the areas of participation and gender in physical education (PE) and activity (PA). The review will investigate the learning environments structured around the national curriculum and the activity choices that form PE lessons, as the majority of participation in PA occurs through PE for adolescents. Goudas & Dermitzaki, (2004) suggested that if the feedback about PE provided by adolescents to educators was used appropriately it could effectively facilitate learning in PE. So in addition, this chapter will look to identify what motivates or prevents pupil participation within PE lessons.

PE aims to provide an environment for young people to learn fundamental movements and healthy life styles, which tries to encourage lifelong participation in PA. PE can provide positive experiences that can have a constructive role on future participation in PA away from school life (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991). PE tries to develop young people’s confidence and capabilities to participate in a variety of PA. These can be influential in everyday life, in and out of a school environment (QCA, 2007). An important way to improve participation within PE is to gain an understanding of the barriers that young people face in their daily lives and, more specifically, in PE lessons. Couturier., et al (2005). Suggested that the areas to focus on include: Motivations in PE, the learning environment, activity choices and stereotyping. Subramaniam & Silverman, (2000) stated that teaching, type of curriculum and enjoyment are all factors that influence students’ attitude towards PE. Therefore, it is vital to consider the opinions of students regarding their thoughts on the curriculum and the type of activities they are participating in. This will help to develop the quality of the PE teaching.
2.1 Motivation in Physical Education

When participating in PA, whether it is in a school environment or extra curricular sports clubs, a motivational climate will be created. ‘The term ‘motivational climate’ has been adopted to encompass the study of environmental factors that lead individuals to construe competence in different ways and pursue different goals’ (Braithwaite et al., 2011, p628–638). This can have a major impact on how each individual participant perceives the learning environment. Papaioannou et al., (2007) implied that each individual’s view, related to the goal and achievement of the task set, would affect their perceived motivational climate. While there are a number of different barriers that will have an affect on an individual's perceived motivational climate, it is important to acknowledge relevant motivational climates that assist pupils' learning, which in turn, encourages engagement (Atlintas & Asci, 2008).

Ntoumanis (2001) has stated that pupils’ behaviour within physical education and activities can be categorised in to three different categorises of motivation. The two types are: intrinsic (mastery), extrinsic (Ego). Intrinsic motivation has been defined as ‘the individual is interested in the activity itself’ (Ntoumanis, 2001,225-242). The opposite of this is extrinsic motivation, which solely focuses upon the outcome of the task that is being performed.

Alderman et al., (2006), simplified the concept of pupils' motivation, suggesting that the interaction and enjoyment with peers during activities was the key reason for why young participants engage in PE. Carroll & Loumidis, (2001); Hagberg et al., (2009); and Schneider & Cooper, (2011) support this concept as they all go on to identify that pupils who take pleasure in activity will participate more regularly. A mastery climate that includes intrinsic motivation is seen positive to pupils participating (Papaioannou et al., 2007). Papaioannou (2007) goes on to say that a climate that is more geared towards extrinsic motivation and performances goals could create a negative environment for the pupils. However, the research from Xiang et al., (2011) acknowledged that
trying to remove the external influences within PA, such as winning or beating opponents, would have a great impact on the motivation and engagement of the pupils as the competition element has been taken away. This research is backed up by Salvara et al., (2006) who stated that having an environment that focused upon performance goals would create extra motivation as the use of rewards, such as winning, could increase the motivation for pupils to participate.

When in PE lessons boys tend to adopt a more performance orientated environment. For example, they like to beat their friends and peers when participating. On the other hand, girls may display more mastery goals as they will focus on their own individual improvement throughout the performance rather than trying to better someone else (Greene and Backer, 2004, p91-120). This statement suggests that some boys are more focused on the competitive element, as they are more concerned with other pupils’ performances when participating in PE. This may be because boys believe that it is important to maintain physical competence. This will happen as a result of the use of goal orientation by boys, which will relate to socialisation and identity (Biddle. 1995). The research of Wersch (1990) backed up the finding of Biddle (1995) by identifying that the motivation of most boys in PE are linked to competence and appearance and not on improving their own performances to better themselves.

Gao’s (2009) identified that another issue is the belief in their own ability can have an effect on pupils’ participation. The research states that individuals will decide to participate or not in certain tasks on the basis of their perceived ability and or their fear of failure. This study is closely related to the work from Altintas and Asci (2008) who concentrated on self-esteem of adolescences. They went on to suggest that social factors would have an affect on the participation levels. Social factors such as the particular body image that the media portray, as well as the expectation from their peers and teachers, it will affect pupils’ willingness to partake in PE because of feelings of inadequacy in comparison to an unattainable ideal image.
2.2 Perceived barriers to participation

2.2.1 Creating the learning environments

There are plenty of aspects that could have an impact on pupils’ attitudes towards PE within a school environment: such as facilities, teacher interaction and grouping. Some aspects, of which, can be altered to suit the needs and demands of the young people. This will help to increase motivation, which can result in a greater engagement when participating in PE.

Rikard & Banville (2007) suggested that teachers are capable of having a major impact on a young person’s life throughout their school lives. They can influence attitudes and motivational levels by adapting the way in which content is delivered and having an enthusiasm for what they are teaching.

Mosston & Ashworth (1994) introduced the spectrum of teaching styles. This spectrum was designed to review the different styles of teaching and the effect it can have on a pupils’ learning. Since this spectrum was introduced, the role and performance of the teachers within PE has become more important as it looks to cater for all needs of the pupils. Salvara et al., (2006) suggested that the classroom is dependent on the way in which content is delivered and this will have an effect on the learning process within that classroom. Additionally, having a number of different teaching styles throughout each learning environment is encouraged. The teaching styles are from two clusters; either reproductive or productive. These should be used as a way of enhancing all pupils learning.

The reproductive cluster consists of teaching styles that are very teacher-centred. Styles such as command and practice are in the reproductive cluster while the opposite of this is the productive cluster. The productive cluster encourages more self taught techniques where it is more learner-centred. Reciprocal learning is an example of a productive style (Morgan et al., 2005).
Cothran (2010) supports the work of productive teaching styles by stating that the productive cluster encourages interaction with other pupils. This has been found to have a positive influence in regards to activities that require pupils to work in teams and will allow more pupil responsibility in the outcome of PE lessons.

Teachers tend to choose more reproductive styles as this is seen to be a more traditional approach, which allows the teacher to have more control over the group (Salvara et al., 2006). Morgan et al., (2005) supports this by stating that, generally, PE classes are teacher-centred and therefore more focused on providing instruction. Although reproductive teaching styles are more popular, Salvara et al., (2006) identified that the productive cluster influenced positive attitudes from the pupils also. However, the reproductive cluster has been known to have negative effects on some pupils, as they tend to disengage when being controlled and have no input into the lesson. Morgan et al. (2005) stated those teachers that have good knowledge of the different teaching styles manage to engage pupils more. As a result of this, a more positive learning environment is built within PE. However, as boys are more influenced by socialization and their individual identity, different teaching style are likely to not be a major contributing factor to the engagement of boys in PE (Salvara et al., 2006). Teaching styles are an important factor in teaching, but also the attitude of the teacher can have an influence in a PE environment (Elliot, 2008). If a teacher manages to create a comfortable learning environment, it is much easier to incorporate alternate methods of teaching, such as empowerment, that allows pupils to have more control and empowers them within PE (Subramaniam & Silverman 2007).

A different aspect that could influence the learning environment is the availability of a co-educational setting within the classes of PE. “Physical education is the most sex-differentiated and stereotypical subject in the schools’ curriculum” (Green et al., 2007, p.68). Flintoff & Scraton (2001) support this by stating that as PE is taught through co-educational classes, this would allow
girls to have better access to different activities. Hannon & Ratliffe (2005) found that having males in the group would influence whether girls would participate or not. Hannon & Ratliffe, go on to say that with the dominance of boys in team sports, girls would opt to not participate in a co-educational setting.

Flintoff & Scraton (2001, p5-21) stated that mixed gender classes traditionally tended to favour boys. This is because girls were seen to have less experience and an inadequate skill level. However, frequently teachers would not present the opportunity for boys to take part in traditionally female sports. On the other hand, Green (2003) found that sports such as gymnastics and dance were two activities in the curriculum that presented the opportunity for mixed gender classes and encouraged girls to participate and engage. Even though there are opportunities for girls to participate in coeducational lesson. However girls still favoured single sex lessons in PE as it provided them with more opportunities to participate in lessons (Lirgg., 1994). The study went on to state that some boys favoured co-educational classes. Nevertheless, both genders found that the classes were less competitive when in a mixed gender class. Ryan et al (2003, p28-42) stated that since the increase of co-educational lessons in physical education, there has also been an increase in pupils’ enjoyment within those lessons.

**2.2.2 Activity choice**

As motivation of the pupils is becoming more and more important in PE, it is vital to understand the needs of the pupils within the activity that is chosen. Ntoumanis (2001, p225-242) suggested that a pupil’s motivation could be affected by the availability and choices of the activities that are compulsory in PE. He then goes on to say that if pupils have more choice within PE, it allows them to develop their interpersonal skills. However, O’Sullivan & Macphail (2010) state that more activity choice should be introduced in PE. As traditional sports it encourages the development of power and strength in individuals. This is because the sports singles out the highly skilled and developed individuals
and does not allow the less skilled individuals to develop thus creating a negative experience of PE.

Smith et al (2009) found that a school setting can restrict pupils’ access to participate in PE. This may be caused by the limited opportunities provided within lessons. The National curriculum can also limit the teachers’ ability to provide a number of different activities. The purpose of the national curriculum in PE is to improve pupils’ skills. Teachers are advised to focus on a small number of game specific activities such as netball and football (NCPE, 2008). In contrast, Smith et al (2009, p401-420) argues that teachers still try and provide pupils with a variety of activity choices in PE and not just the traditional and game based sports such as rugby and hockey.

Seventy five percent of pupils have said they would like to be able to pick their own activities in PE (Couturier et al., 2005) It is also known that a high percentage of pupils did not like having to take part in lessons where they did the same activities throughout the year (Couturier et al., 2005, p170-178). Belanger et al (2009, p180-186) supported this as the research suggests that the type of activity offered and the intensity are two reasons that adolescents do not take part in PE. Penney & Harris (2000, p249-273) suggest that there are key differences between boys and girls and the opportunities that are provided to them within PE. Although it is clear that a more varied and greater activity choice has been requested by the pupils, boys seem to be provided with a wider range compared to the girls. Despite the observation that boys are offered a wider range of sports and opportunities, Kremer et al., (1997) states that boys would still choose the traditional team games such as football and rugby, compared to girls who more frequently favoured individual activities.

Olafson, (2002, p67-74) similarly suggested that pupils would prefer to have a choice in PE. This is because it would prevent a barrier being formed when participating in PE classes. Additionally, Rikard & Banville (2007, p385-400) stated that pupils appreciated a more varied curriculum, suggesting that
presenting different opportunities within the lesson would maintain or even increase the group participation in those lessons. It is clear, therefore, that pupils would be more responsive and engaged with activities that they personally selected. Nevertheless, Belanger et al., (2009, p180-186) specifically applies this to Key stage 4 (KS4) only, proposing a wider range of activity choices should be exclusively given to this age range. This will help to introduce a focus on more independent learning compared to the younger key stages.

In a study from Cothran (2010, p49-62), male pupils were found to prefer participating in sports that they possessed a pre-existing knowledge of and were familiar with. He went on to suggest that the teachers would start to see more engaged feedback from the boys and a higher level of interaction. Overall, positive behaviour was noticed when conducting activities that they favoured. Football, for example, was preferred when conducting activities that they favoured. In contrast to Cothran’s (2010, p49-62) study, Bramham (2003, p57-57) argued that boys would like a broader range of activities despite individuals that took part in the study saying that they would not participate in the lesson if they did not enjoy the sport. They felt that the range that was provided was still very vague and that more adventurous activities could be provided such as high ropes and mountain biking.

There is a lot of research that states students should have more of an input towards decisions relating to curriculum activities and their own learning. Ha et al., (2003, p194-212) has identified that the level of interest has declined within PE and that a lot of pupils’ favourite activities are not in the current curriculum. The study also goes on to state that 67% of boys that participated in the study think that the pupils should have an input in the curriculum decision-making. However, the downfall of this research is that it does not recognize why there is high percentage of disengagement. Meanwhile, it states that with a change to the system there may be the possibility to stimulate a positive impact upon participation.
2.2.3 Stereotypes

Schmalz et al., (2008, p276-298) has stated that another reason for the decline in adolescent participation within PE is that society categorises people to fit specific stereotypes. One major aspect of stereotyping is gender within sports. Kremer et al., (1997) stated that children from a young age are exposed to feminine and masculine behaviours and this can influence their thoughts and actions towards physical activities. Schmalz & Kerstetter (2006, p64) suggested that a sporting environment could be dictated by social norms. Young people often run the risk of being stigmatised by others. This is true if girls are perceived to demonstrate traits typically identified as masculine or, likewise, if a boy was to show characteristics that socially constructed norms recognise as feminine. Young students often find excuses not participate in PE lessons, as they do not want to fall under a particular social norm. Wellard, (2007) believes that this type of stereotyping can affect young peoples future participation in PA both inside and outside of a school environment, as this does not provide the individual with the confidence to get into other sports than the traditional ones they already participate in during school.

Oliver’s (2010, Ch.3) study found that boys identify girls as being ‘too girly’ and not ‘interested’ in the sports they play. Through the perceptions of girls it is main indicator of why girls demonstrated lower participation rates rather the boys when in PE. Constantinou et al. (2009, p85-97) supported this as their study focused upon the perceptions of girls in PE, stating female participation rates are affected by teachers’ expectations, gender roles and stereotypes.

While much of the research that has been done focuses on the stereotypical views of girls, there are also a number of studies that have identified the boy’s perspective. Bramham’s (2003, p57-59) work focused upon the gender specific PE lessons. It identified that games highlights boys’ physicality and dominance in the game situation, allowing them to express their masculinity in a school
environment. It also states that boys have an expectation to be more competitive, tough and opinionated individuals. This is supported by Green & Hardman (2008) who state that PE encourages boys to develop their physical strengths and aggression while simultaneously building their confidence. If the confidence of individuals increases throughout PE lessons, the individual will feel more determined to try more difficult tasks, such as new sports, or participating in fitness tests if they are over weight. Conversely, if the individuals’ confidence is not built up during PE then everyday task may become a huge challenge for that individual.

Ricciardelli et al., (2006, p577-587) identified the importance of sport when it comes to boys development, stating that sports can be used as a social tool to help form friendship groups and interactions between adults and adolescents. It goes on to say that boys found it easier and were more comfortable discussing their own image concerns within sport, helping them to identify their own ways of developing these areas. Parker (1996, p141-158) found that muscularity is a significant factor in PE. This suggests that masculinity can have an affect on participation rates because individuals may not respond well to the competitive nature of boys within sport. However, Kremer et al., (1997) disagrees as they go on to state that the involvement of masculinity in PE can in fact encourage pupils to continue to participate. However this depends on the pupil’s perceptions. Wellard (2007) suggests that due to the overall dominance of masculine behaviours in traditional sports, society expect males to maintain a physical dominance within any sporting environment.

From the research, it is clear to see that PE maintains its own specific environment and factors such as previous experiences, weight issues and social groups can have major or minor influence upon young peoples’ lifelong participation in sports. Barriers such as stereotyping can be evident within in a PE environment and it has been proven that this directly influences the participation of pupils. These stereotypical views come from the pressures of society to fall under a specific category. More barriers can be found from the
learning environment that is created during the lessons. However, these environments can be changed. Factors such as teacher’s interactions, mixed gender classes and the activities that are chosen can positively impact participation rates. It is from these factors that we can identify whether boys’ opinions support the research. As a result, specific factors can be altered to suit the pupils’ individual needs thus encouraging a higher participation rate.
Chapter III
Methodology
METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to outline the research procedures used to address the research question. It is divided into six sections. The first focus will be the rationale for the qualitative design. The second section discusses the necessary ethical procedures for conducting research with young people in a school environment. The third concentrates on the pilot study and participant. The fourth will be focused upon the focus groups and observations. The Fifth section is dedicated to the data analysis, and the final section will focus on the trustworthiness of the study as well as the methodological problems experienced while working on the project.

3.1 Design

In order to address the research question a qualitative approach was adopted. One main advantages of qualitative research is that it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants, personal constructs and experiences (Patton, 2002). In accordance with this, Enright and O'Sullivan (2012, p 203-222) state that: ‘A qualitative approach enables researchers to gain a more in depth understanding and meaning, of thoughts, feelings and perceptions’. A qualitative approach was therefore adopted, as it was appropriate for an in-depth investigation seeking to understand the complexity of the boys’ thoughts on potential barriers within physical education (PE).

Holloway (1997) described qualitative research as a system that focuses on the way individuals interpret their personal experiences throughout their life according to social inquiry. In comparison, quantitative research, according to Creswell (2009), is best used to ‘test a theory by specifying narrow hypotheses and the collection of data to support or refute the hypotheses’. A qualitative approach permitted researches to explore in more depth, through the use of interviews. Justification of this qualitative approach has been recognised by Flick (2007, p.1) who suggests that qualitative research allows the researcher to
“explore the experiences of individuals or groups”. Together with this, qualitative methods require the researcher to obtain further meaning through asking additional questions; whereas quantitative research does not allow this extra technique (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

According to Baxter and Jack (2008, p544), a qualitative approach to research uses a variety of data sources to examine phenomena within its context. Due to the qualitative nature of the research, the design was used to determine the perceptions of adolescent boys (12-14 years) in the Cotswolds in their respective scholastic settings. The lost of ‘sports college’ status and the shift of GCSE results between the two schools was the reason behind its selection.

Focus groups were used for this research. Krueger and Casey (2000) stated that focus groups allowed the participants to contribute to insights of an issue as well as providing a variety of perceptions throughout the group. This then allowed the chances to build upon each other’s responses. Additionally, they allow the group to ‘facilitate comparisons’, which is not provided by other methods (Barbour, 2007, p.41).

Patton (2002) has stated that research based around a more child-centered approach, is becoming more relevant as it aims to use the child as the primary source of research. This child-centered approach will stop the information that is gathered being lost in translation from the adult or teacher acting on the child’s behalf. This research will, therefore, adopt the child-centered approach, thereby ensuring it is based upon the information gathered from the chosen group of children and young people.
3.2 Ethics

Cardiff Metropolitan Research Ethic Committees (UREC) approval for this study was granted in October 2013. Before any research could take place a valid CRB was required, as all participants were under the consenting age of 18. The CRB was approved and provided by Cardiff Metropolitan University. Following this, two schools around the Cotswolds area were approached, with a letter being sent to each (Appendix A), requesting the commencement of research within their school. Permission had to be granted from the head of PE department, which was obtained successfully. The young age of all participants involved in this study meant that they could not legally provide their own informed consent. As a result of this, permission was also granted from their parents/guardians. To obtain the necessary permission, assent and consent forms were given to all participants, parents and teachers. Once parents/guardians had received their information sheet and completed their consent forms for their child to participate (Appendix B), teachers received an information sheet and completed a consent form to allow all pupils to participate (Appendix C). Finally, assent forms were given to the participant prior to the study informing them of the requirements of the study (Appendix D).

The information sheets included the purpose of the study, the participants’ involvement and what was expected of them, the type of questioning and their confidentiality within the research. The contact details of the researcher were also provided to each participant (Biddle et al, 2005). Clarification about withdrawing from the project was thorough, and explained that participants could withdraw at any point without reason. In addition to the information sheet, prior to the group discussion, the participants were informed of the confidentiality and anonymity of the study, however any information that caused potential harm to the participants had to be passed on to the head of year or school welfare officer. Each focus group were told prior to the discussion that they would be recorded.
3.3 Pilot study

A pilot study is a small exploratory study that is intended to set the guidelines for the future study, and was used prior to the completion of the data collection for the main study (Connelly, 2008). A pilot study was conducted using six twelve to fourteen year old boys in a secondary school. This pilot study was utilised in order to test the considered questions and the reliability of the research materials (Dictaphones). Conducting a pilot study will help the researcher to become familiar with the interview process and the environment in which focus groups will be run. The pilot study indicated that the discussion took approximately 20-25 minutes to complete allowing participants relevant information. During the pilot study, a number of questions were considered as ambiguous and therefore misleading to the participants. This resulted in the participants asking additional questions to check understanding. This was changed for the final interview structure (Appendix E).

The aim of the focus groups was to create a discussion between the participants about set questions asked from the researcher. Throughout the interview, responses were targeted back towards the researcher rather than promoting a discussion between each other, this was an issue, as it didn’t allow for the discussion flow, which then made the researcher to deviate from the set structure of questions. Connelly (2008) stated focus groups that seamlessly flow generate more detailed discussions. Subsequently, it become clear that setting a task for the participants to focus on through the use of flipchart paper was likely to stimulate a more detailed discussion, due to the content of the questions in which the flip chart was used for. Questions such as: what motivates people to participate in PA, reasons why they participate, potential barriers in which could cause people not to participate. The use of flipchart provided the participants with a visual aid and the interviewer with a written record of the discussion that took place.
3.4 Participants

The participants chosen for this study were twenty adolescent boys aged between twelve to fourteen years of age, all in their third year (year 9) of secondary school. Two schools in the Cotswolds were chosen to be involved in the study due to the lost of ‘sports college’ status of one school and the shift of GCSE results between the two schools was the reason behind the selection, with ten boys being selected from each school by the PE teacher as core PE was compulsory subject within the school. Of these boys, 40% had chosen to study GCSE PE when moving in to key stage 4 (KS4). Very few studies have focused on adolescent boys compared to adolescent girls in relation to participation levels and their opinions about the PE curriculum. Recent studies have identified that between the ages of eleven to fifteen boys participation levels have reduce dramatically (Litt et al., 2001). Therefore this study will concentrate solely on KS3 boys. In order to ensure confidentiality, real names were replaced with pseudonyms to protect participant’s identities.

3.5 Procedures

In total, four focus groups were conducted from the two schools involved. Two focus groups of five participants were held in each school. Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest that no more than eight participants should be in a focus group, and provided guideline duration of around forty minutes. The PE departments within each school were made responsible for allocating participants to a focus group. In the first school (School A), one focus group consisted of members from the top two classes, and one group from the lower classes. The second school (School B) were asked to form one group using members from the middle group of their spectrum and one group using members from the lowest set. The PE department assessed the groups by on their application to a range of curriculum activities and core skills. These groups were used as it provided the researcher with first hand detailed information, and also allowed the
researcher to identify the cognitions of adolescent boys regarding issues that are presented to them, and why they maintain those views (Bell, 2005).

The focus groups were exploratory in nature (Whitehead and Biddle, 2008) based on a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix E/F). The interview guide was constructed following further research into a range of themes that encompassed the participation and non-participation of adolescent boys in PA and PE. The plan followed a logical structure of open-ended questions, which encouraged discussion outside of the related topics. This allowed participates to elaborate on their experiences, which may have been overlooked by the researcher (Ivey, 2011). This will provide a more detailed insight into the thoughts and feelings of all the participants taking part.

The format of the focus groups remained the same with each group being provided the same questions. This ensured consistency throughout the study. The initial part of the interviews included the use of flip charts to answer two separate questions to generate a simple discussion and note down what motivates participation in PA, and barriers that pupils may face in PE. The responsibility of noting the discussion points was given to the boys in order to maintain full engagement of the group. Due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, additional questions were asked dependent on the responses of the participants in order to gain more detail (Krueger and Casey, 2000). This allowed the interview to flow much smoother. The participants were encouraged to speak about their own experiences and reflect on topics as a group. Many of the experiences discussed related to PE as a core subject. This ensured that all participants were able to contribute to the conversations.

All participants were thanked for their time after the focus group had ended, with each focus group lasting between twenty to thirty minutes.
3.6 Data Analysis

Patton (2002) identified that a deductive method, more commonly known as direct content analysis, ‘Generates concepts or variables from theory or previous studies is also very useful for qualitative research, especially at the inception of data analysis’, Berg (2001) claimed ‘This process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison’. The use of this procedure allows the study to follow a deductive method in the initial parts; it then becomes inductive as it identifies different themes. Finally, it resorts back to deductive, resulting in a final revisit of the theory. This method worked successfully as quotes from the focus groups were gathered and categorised into importance relating to the aim and objectives of the study. Patton (2002) stated the importance of the reviewing process, which consists of reading and re-reading in order to identify reoccurring themes in the data collected. All codes from the researcher were compared until the consistency was agreed. The use of open coding and an inductive method through the initial stage allowed the researcher to identify significant quotes. These quotes were then paired to similar quotations according to and depending on their meanings (Patton, 2002).

3.7 Trustworthiness

The role of trustworthiness plays a significant part within qualitative research, as the findings should reflect exactly what occurred during the process. Guba and Lincoln (1981) stated the four aspects to trustworthiness to be credibility, conformability, dependability and transferability. Credibility was a main focus throughout the research. In an attempt to increase credibility, the key issues of reliability and validity were taken into account. This was because personal experiences were drawn upon from the informants (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).
Krefting (1990) stated that reliability has an involvement with the consistency of the researchers approach across different projects and findings, whereas validity is concerned with what is being measured by the data collected (Patton, 2002). As suggested by Whittemore et al. (2001) typed up transcripts were presented to the participants for them to identify any mistakes, make further elaborations and to ensure answers were their own. This strategy was employed in order to increase credibility. Each transcript was listened to and revisited several times to verify the participants’ answers, and to rectify any misunderstood information. Rolfe (2004) suggested this method would ensure that all transcripts were correct in accordance to the participant’s own thoughts and feelings.
Chapter IV
Results and Discussion
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will critically evaluate the opinions of boys from KS3 about barriers that they feel influence their engagement in physical education (PE). It will identify the thoughts of pupils in relation to a number of key themes including: pupils’ motivation in PE, stereotypes, the learning environment and activity choice. From these themes, perceived barriers to learning will be discussed in an attempt to identify strategies for improving the PE provision within two schools in the Cotswold. Throughout the discussion, various opinions of the participants will be shared and relations to their own experiences in PE were drawn upon.

4.1 Pupils’ motivation in physical education

Younger and Warrington (1996) stated that ‘Physical education is one of the most popular subjects within boys’ education and will continue to provide a platform for young children in their physical development in the future’. Ntoumanis (2001, p 225-242) suggested, ‘a pupils enthusiasm to participate can be categorised under three different types of motivation; some are seen to focus on the outcome of the task with others taking interest in the activity itself while some pupils demonstrate no connection between outcome and action’.

However pupils adopts a variety of motivations for different activities. Papaioannou et al., (2007) acknowledged that a motivation that is focused on the task and skill development could be seen to have positive affect on the learner. In comparison, Alderman et al. (2008) stated that young people participate in physical activities (PA) simply because of the enjoyment factor and the interaction with peers.

Many of the boys from this study expressed a real enthusiasm for PE. Sam enjoyed the subject so much that he stated: ‘the worst part of PE lessons has to be when it actually finishes. This is because it’s the only subject that you look forward to’. Many participants agreed, and expressed a positive attitude
towards PA and PE. Popular reasons to participate were for enjoyment, socializing and health (Appendix G). Enjoyment was highlighted as the most important factor for participating in PE this was supported as Sam said: ‘If PE isn’t enjoyable then pupils won’t want to do it and make excuses not to’. It is clear from this that it is vital to understand what encourages boys to take part in PE lessons if high participation rates are to be reached and maintained.

Green and Backer (2004) identified that boys adopt a more ego climate in PE. Ego climate has been described as ‘a climate that centers on the ability to demonstrate superiority over other athletes/teams (i.e., a focus on performance goal)’ (Darnon 2010). In contrast, McNeill et al., (2011) identified that boys show no preference to the type of motivational climate created within PE lessons, and recognised that the development of new skills was the reason to participate. However, participants involved in this study showed a mixed response in relation to the motivational climate created within their PE lessons. When asked about the importance of competitiveness within PE, different responses where given from the boys. Mitch demonstrated the importance of competitiveness, by stating ‘you want be better than your friends just to have the bragging rights around the playground’. A number of boys demonstrated an ego orientation by identifying that ‘everyone likes winning, as it makes you feel good about yourself’, and that they feel it is important to win.

In contrast to the boys that created an ego climate, some of the participants identified the importance of improving in relation to prior performance. This relates to the improvement of self. Matthew agreed with this, as he identified that competing against previous performances will provoke improvements. He believed that ‘it’s human nature to want to do better. It is important to compete against yourself, as you will improve’. Jamie demonstrated the need for self-development rather than comparing performances with others. He stated ‘it’s more about yourself rather then others, it is your fitness not theirs’.

The participants’ comments reveal that each individual creates their own motivational climate as identified by Cetinkalp and Turksoy (2011). From the
data collected it is evident that some participants acknowledge that competition is an important element of PE, but others felt that there are different elements of importance, such as developing new skills and fitness levels.

Competitiveness can be closely linked to self-confidence; this may have an impact on an individual’s motivation to participate in PA. Altintas and Asci (2008) claimed that there is an expectation by peers to reach and maintain a particular standard of performance within PE. This however could have a negative effect on participation levels in PE. Although there can be pressures from peers, Gao (2009) suggested that an individual’s own beliefs about their ability can have an effect on participation in PE. Many of the participants of the study suggested that they would be less likely to participate in an activity or sport if they were not very good at it, stating that ‘if there are stronger pupils that enjoy the activity they will just step back and watch’. The participant identified that the lack of ability can lead to bullying if peers do not accept their performance levels. Rhys observed ‘some people get bullied or picked on if they were unable to do a skill or just not very good at that sport’.

Celinkalp and Turksoy (2011) recognised that motivational climate can be dependent on the activity itself, as satisfaction and achievement contribute towards an individual’s motivation. The participants demonstrated this, suggesting that certain activities were seen as ‘really boring, and cross country when you just run around a track is rubbish as well’. Although the pupils did identify some aspects of PE that were boring and disengaging, there were mixed opinions in the responses, as some were seen to be positive experiences.
4.2 Perceived barriers to physical education

4.2.1 Creating a learning environment

Wedgwood (2005) highlighted the importance of teacher interaction by stating that it can influence an individual’s future opinion about PA. Taylor and Ntoumanis (2007) supported this by suggesting that a student’s motivation in PE can be determined by their attitude towards the teacher. In contrast, Elliott (2008) found that a teacher’s attitude could influence a PE environment.

Throughout the study, a number of participants identified that their teacher maintained a positive attitude during lessons. This helped to keep the pupils motivated and also engaged. Numerous participants stated ‘He is brilliant, the guys a legend, he could not be any better as a teacher, he always encourages us, pushes you to better yourself and takes an interest in you as an individual which helps to get to know you better throughout school’.

Pupils in the higher groups of both schools demonstrated positive attitudes, but some participants in lower groups noted that even though the teacher maintained the same rapport between the different groups the teachers did not get involved in the lower groups lessons as much. This created negative experiences for some of the participants, who noted ‘he does not do anything, he is a legend, but he does not do anything during class. He just picks teams then just stands on the side watching us’.

The comments made by the participants emphasize the importance of teacher-student relationships and the interactions throughout all PE lessons. Teachers can provide great opportunities for pupils. This can be essential for the future development of each individual. Cothran (2010) documented that pupils are able to maintain a positive attitude towards PE when they are working in groups or teams that provide opportunities to be independent. Some of the participants discussed the ways that their teacher provided them with the opportunities to
work on their teamwork and leadership skills. Dave stated ‘at the start of the teaching block we organised and held a mini tournament to determine teams, this gave us the chance to show our leadership skills’. Another practice that teachers used to encourage pupils to develop leadership was to give individuals certain roles throughout the lesson; these roles were; being in charge of warm-ups, officiating, and team management. Silverman and Subramaniam (2007) acknowledged that if teachers are able to create a comfortable learning environment, they are able to empower pupils. This then motivates pupils as it provides different responsibilities with in PE and promotes engagement for the duration of the lesson (Perlman, 2010). However, although some participants recognised the ways in which their teachers try to encourage the development of skills such as teamwork, leadership and organisation, others didn’t not share in the same experiences. Jamie explained: ‘Sir just picks captains that are the best players every time, then they pick teams then we play the whole lesson’.

The boys that expressed their negative experiences also noted that only a few pupils were actually engaged for the whole lesson. This again highlights the importance of the teacher’s interaction with the group, as well as providing different responsibilities that help to motivate them throughout the duration of the lessons. Although the participants shared their experiences on their teacher’s interactions, they were also able to recognise the positive impact a better teacher interactions would have on pupils.

Dan noted ‘if there were responsibilities for pupils, there would be more structure. Instead of the teacher telling us what to do, we would have different groups doing different things instead of following the teacher, it would help us to think of are own exercises’.

However, its been said that boys are less likely to be affected by different teaching styles due to the influence of socialization and individual identity (Salvar et al., 2006).
Coeducation has become an important topic for schools to consider during the delivery of PE. Bibik et al. (2007) has suggested that the introduction of coeducational lesson has become more popular as pupils prefer mixed gender classes to single sex classes. However this view is not strongly supported as coeducational classes can also be seen as detrimental to pupils’ learning with single sex lessons being favoured (Hannon and Williams, 2008; Osborne et al. 2002). Flintoff and Scratton (2008) found that pupil’s involvement during PE was greater during single sex lesson, as the opportunities for equal participation is limited. However Lirgg (1994) stated that even though coeducational lessons can be more male dominant, both genders found them less competitive.

It was highlighted that the core PE lessons of the participating schools were single sex, however participants noted that their future GCSE lessons would be co-educational. The participant gave a mixed reaction when asked about their opinions to coeducational lesson. Some pupil’s identified that having girls in the class would not have a negative effect, while others stated girls would disrupt the class and provide added pressure for boys to perform. Michael stated that ‘the boys would get distracted if we had girls in our class, it would also add pressure to the boys to perform to a certain standard; as they may want to impress the girls’. Another participant noted that ‘I think its wrong as the girls don’t take PE seriously anyways, they would be worse if they know the boys were watching.’

The participants from the study challenged Lirgg’s (1994) theory as they claimed that it would be more competitive in coeducational lessons. The pupils stated ‘I think the boys would be more competitive as they will be trying to better each other to show off in front of the girls, with the girls trying to do the same’. They go on to say ‘boys don’t want to be beaten by a girl, as it would bring a lot of ‘banter’ from the others, and girls want to beat the boys to prove they can do better’. Bibik et al., (2007) found that one aspect of PE was that coeducational lessons were most enjoyable as it had a positive impact on the participation.
Tom recognised that it would be beneficial to introduce coeducational lessons as he had experienced the structure during his time in his previous school. He stated ‘it works very well as you learn to respect the opposite sex in a way you wouldn’t otherwise’. He continued to explain how taking part with girls has impacted on how he will view females in the future stating: ‘if you start from a young age continuing to secondary school it becomes the norm’. This pupil’s experiences can be highlighted in Van Essen (2003) who identified it is beneficial for individuals to continue coeducation from primary to secondary school as it has been shown to work through their primary years.

Through the duration of the study the participants showed concern over the safety of the girls if they participated in coeducational PE lessons. Scott stated that ‘boys can be aggressive when playing against other boys, so if girls got involved they wouldn’t be used to the strong challenges or tackles being made so you would have to be nice to them’. Although the boys were concerned about the safety of the girls, there were other variables as well, like the sports they got to participate in. Tom stated ‘we wouldn’t be able to play contact sports such as Rugby, as you can’t tackle girls. So we would have to play Tag-Rugby and that’s boring’. Many of the other participants acknowledged that it would depend on the activities as to whether coeducational lessons would work, noting that it would work with activities such as cross-country and athletic, which are predominantly individual sports.

The participant’s opinions to coeducation lessons reflect the continued debate discussed throughout the research. Various opinions have been highlighted through their personal experiences of coeducational lessons, which have been shown to be successful.
4.2.2 Activity choice

Teachers have found that activity choice is an important factor to consider when planning and delivering their PE lessons as the activity can influence how pupils interact during lessons. Ntoumanis (2001) noted that a young person’s motivation could be reliant on the activity provided to them in PE. Couturier et al., (2005) supports this by stating that there is a need for variation of activity during PE. Smith et al., (2009) identified that having a greater choice in activates leads to a greater enjoyment within subjects.

Numerous pupils’ identified that there is a need for change in activities in PE. The pupils’ stated that changing the choices of activities would be an area they would change about PE. Liam claimed ‘having an option to change the activities is good, as doing the same ones can get boring’. However, Rhys from one school did not wish to change much about their curriculum. He reflected on his experiences in PE as a positive one, stating: ‘Before you start secondary school you hear about what sports you get to do, however we get to do a massive range of sports. We’ve had the change to do Danish longballll, cricket, football, rugby, gymnastics, basketball, wakeboarding and covered loads of stuff. We get to do loads in PE, its amazing’.

The PE department of this school can clearly provide a wider range of activities, which is reflected in the enjoyment and enthusiasm of their pupils. The schools PE curriculum counteracts the work of Smith et al (2009) as they suggest that the National curriculum that schools follow can restrict teachers’ activity choices. However, the second school of this research only manages to provide their pupils with a few choices such as football, rugby (traditional team games) during PE, which is reflected in the participation during the lessons. Ryan stated ‘in rugby a few weeks ago there were only 12 boys that played, there were two groups of boys that played, the football players and the rugby players, the others just stood and chatted and some made excuses so they didn’t have to play’.
These comments suggest that there were fewer activities choices provided to the pupils’ within the second school. This could be linked to Subramaniam and Silverman (2007) work, as they stated if a greater challenge were set upon for the students there would be an increase in engagement. Playing the same sport during the term may not offer pupils challenging enough goals to reach. Rikard and Banville (2007) supported this by stating that if different sports were introduced during term greater improvements could be shown, rather than continuing with skills they already know. In contrast to this, Cothran (2010) found that pupils prefer to participate in activities that they found familiar.

As the traditional sports were the only option for one school, some of the participants did recognise that having the opportunities to try different activities could lead to them performing at a higher lever. Matt noted ‘if we got to play different sports, you may find someone that’s better compared to the boys that play football or rugby’. When asking the boys about the type of activities they would like to see incorporated in to PE suggestions such as ‘Golf, Lacrosse, Mountain Climbing, Water sports, Snooker, Cycling, BMXing, Mountain biking and Go-karting’ were made.

The participants suggested a number of both individual and team sports that were not included in their current curriculum. This disputes Kremer et al. (1995) work, which states that boys would choose team sports if given that option. Even though a variety of activities were mentioned during the discussions, many of the boys stated they would still choose some traditional sports for PE. This supports Bibik et al.’s (2007) work, which found that learners prefer the more traditional methods. It goes on to stay that this could be a result of the inexperience in participating under the guidance of other, different, curriculums. However alternative methods could change this view toward PE.

Ha et al., (2003) suggested that pupils would like more involvement in curriculum choices, as this could help improve their motivation towards participating. The majority of pupils involved in this study expressed positive
experiences of their current curriculum. However, many of them had clear ideas on ways to improve the structure and opportunities during lessons. A familiar suggestion was that teachers could discuss the activities the pupils will be participating in during each term with the pupils completing a questionnaire so the information gets back to the teachers. Dan suggested: ‘if we did a questionnaire at the start of the year it would let the teacher know how many people wanted to do which sports, and the ones you didn’t’. However some participants expressed a concern about choice due to the idea that the popular more traditional sports would be chosen. Having a wide range of activities is still welcomed, as long as numerous opportunities are given to everyone.

4.2.3 Stereotypes

The existing stereotype with in PE is thought to have a relation to gender. Schmalz and Kerstetter (2006) suggest that a sporting environment can be dictated by social norms, with the risk of the stigma if boys demonstrate exceedingly feminine traits or girls identify overly masculine behaviours. Wellard (2007) wrote that these social norms could affect participation, as it does not allow exploration to other sports. Larsson et al. (2009) stated that PE is an environment were masculinities are encouraged and any behaviours that are seen to be outside the desirable atmosphere are seen as a negative and are at risk of being scrutinised. Tischler and McGaughtry (2011) supported this notion as they identified that an individual’s image can be different, but are not as openly accepted in PE. They continue to suggest that the lack of variety of activities within PE is restricting the views of young people towards certain social categories, which doesn’t allow for a broader look at different sporting abilities. These views do not challenge gender stereotypes, as they tend to stick to traditional sports. Hannon et al. (2009) noted that adolescent boys, and girls, perceptions are specific to activities that are suited to their gender and related to physicality.
It is clear by discussing gender stereotypes with the boys that these perceptions do exist in schools. A number of the boys identified that gender is viewed stereotypically in PE. When asked if they believed stereotypical views exist within PE, the response relating to gender given by Liam demonstrated that there were pressures on young people to fall under a participial social category in order to avoid judgment. He noted, ‘yes, if boys dance, they’re gay and same for girls playing rugby. If a girl plays rugby then she are seen as manly, a lesbian. And if a boy like ballet or dancing they think he’s gay’.

The boys of this study identified that gender differences had an effect on the activity choices within PE. They acknowledged that the pupils are not provided with equal opportunities to participate in gender traditional games noting: ‘girls in the school do not get to play rugby and like wise boys do not get chance to play netball or hockey’. Following this the boys were asked if they would like to get the opportunities to participate in hockey and netball, the responses were mixed. A lot of the boys in the higher groups simply said ‘no’. However Mitch stated other wise, by stating ‘I would like to be able to play more hockey’. Further questions were asked to expand on his response, which found that he was a member of the local hockey club outside of school. This shows that the pupils would appreciate having an option. The boys also noted that girls might appreciate the opportunity to participate in games such as rugby and football. Sam stated ‘girls want to join in sometimes, as some asked to join in with rugby lessons, however the teacher said ‘no’ as it would be too rough for them’.

Wellard (2007) stated that there is a perceived expectancy for boys to maintain a physical presence during PE in order to demonstrate masculinity. The topic of stereotypical image was mentioned in the discussion with the participant. Dave identified that he see image as a restriction to participate. He stated ‘image is how you look and the way you look will affect how you are perceived by others, I would say image stops people from participating’. If a certain image is not maintained it is believed to affect the attitudes of individuals towards themselves and how others see them. The boys suggested that they found image an important factor, as they believed that girls would be more attracted to boys that
are good at sport. Tischler and MaGaughtry (2011) supported this by stating that boys are seen to be powerful, strong and athletic while participating in PE.

The participant acknowledged the concerns adolescents could have in relation to image. A number of boys noted the implications of being overweight could have on pupil’s attitudes within PE. They stated ‘if you’re over weight you may not want to be seen running or out of breath by your fitter peers, if they were uncomfortable with themselves others may think the same’. The boys stated ‘that embarrassment would be a factor influencing the participation of some people’. Matt said ‘if you’re a bigger lad then you don’t really want girls looking at you out of breath struggling’. Along with the influence that girls have on boy’s attitudes to take part in PE. Their peers can also have an affect on attitudes. Many of the boys stated that being overweight could lead to exclusion in PE. Some boys said ‘you would pick everyone else before the overweight person’.

Being excluded due to weight has become a frequent issue in PE. Trout and Graber (2009) suggested overweight students are more concerned about their peers than any other issues during PE lessons. In relation to the participation of boys that may be considered overweight, Ryan noted that: ‘when you see someone that’s fat you just think they are going to be rubbish, why do they bother’. This statement shows that pupils still hold judgment on others during PE. These comments contradict Kremer et al.’s., (2007) findings that state presence of masculinity encourages participation, as it could have a detrimental effect on others that do not show masculinity, as they do not maintain a particular physique that is often expected. Masculinity can impact on participation if individuals take ownership. However it has been identified during this study that it can have a negative effect on others, as they may feel less capable of achieving the same competences such as being able to participate during the whole of the lessons.
Chapter V

Conclusion
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that motivate 12-14 year old boys to participate in physical activity (PA), with a clear focus on identifying any barriers that the boys may encounter during physical education (PE) lessons. Two schools around the Cotswold area participated in the study; data was collection using twenty boys divided into four focus groups, to which different themes were concentrated on. Themes such as: pupil’s motivation, the learning environment, activity choices and stereotypes. A number of conclusions can be drawn from the study.

5.1 Pupils’ motivation in physical education

Firstly, boys generally demonstrated a positive attitude towards PE only identifying a small number of reasons that could cause disengagement during lessons, such as orienteering and large amounts of fitness training. The boys seemed to perceive different motivational climates as some showed a clear focus on outcome and other towards performance. Therefore in conclusion, it is important for the PE department to find ways that suit individual needs as well as group needs and to adapt their lessons that challenge all participants. This could be done by setting individual goals for participant, as well as group goal to be achieved throughout the lesson

5.2 Perceived barriers to participation

5.2.1 Learning Environment

In PE it is clear to see the importance of the individual teacher. The teachers need to recognise that their attitude can influence a pupil’s participation during lessons in PE. The participants acknowledged that their teacher’s positive attitudes and their encouragement were important during lessons as it helps to connect with and understand each individual pupil. Teachers should realise the
importance of their role, as the influences they can have over pupils’ attitude toward PE can be enormous and can act as a way to motivate learners to participate.

The participants gave mixed opinions about coeducational lessons. Numerous pupils declared that having girls in the lessons would not have an affect on their attitude towards PE, whilst others showed concern, suggesting they would lose concentration if they had girls in class with them. One pupil however, who had already experienced coeducational lessons in a previous school explained how he had seen it work well. Teachers should therefore consider the pupils’ opinions regarding coeducational lessons before drawing conclusions about whether it is beneficial.

5.2.2 Activity choice

The need for variety of activities was expressed by the majority of the participants during PE. They recognised that alternative activities would be appreciated, as the wider choice would potentially increase participation. However, the boys also realised that too much variety would not be valued, as they would like to continue with the traditional sports. The participants expressed that they would like to contribute to the choices of activity that are being provided by completing a questionnaire at the start of each year. Teachers should therefore consider the opinions of their pupils in regards to activities. From the responses the teacher could then try and incorporate the variety of different activities into their curriculum. This will hopefully cater for all pupils’ abilities, as shown by one school involved within the study.

5.2.3 Stereotypes

The boys demonstrated that stereotypical views exist in PE however, they identified that the aspect of body image was a more predominant factor linked with stereotypes as opposed to gender, which has been identified in research.
Even though the boys acknowledged that gender specific stereotypes have an impact on participation, their experiences identified that the bigger issue related to image and how individuals were viewed by their peers, as the main contributor of disengagement within in PE.

In all of the themes identified, the PE teacher was seen to be the most influential factor for ensuring that pupils stayed engaged in PE lessons. Implementing strategies to include the pupils in the decisions about activity choices and in regards to their learning, as well as providing them with different responsibilities during lessons, has been shown throughout the study to help influence their motivation and as a result reduce disengagement and increase the participation levels.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Originally three secondary schools were contacted about participating with two focus group interviews being conducted in each school. However one school pulled out last minute, which reduced the number of focus group interviews that were conducted. Another limitation was that there was a two-hour window to conduct the interviews, which was the boy’s practical PE lesson and some of the boys were reluctant to fully engage in the focus group. Finally, the focus groups used semi-structured interviews, with a number of questions being prepared for different topics. One of the topics chosen for the discussion was the interaction with the teachers. However, as a member of the teaching staff had to oversee the focus groups, the topic had to be adapted as there was a risk that he may make the participants uncomfortable, which may have lead to biased answers.
5.4 Areas for future research

Couturier et al., (2005) and Olafson (2002) have looked at the opinions of individual genders towards PE. Studies that concentrate on attitudes of students at sport specialist and non-sport specialist colleges; motivation towards sport verses budget restrictions is rural verses intercity will provide all PE teachers with an insight into the opinions of a cross section of pupils towards PE.
References


Appendices
APPENDIX A

FAO: Head of Physical Education Department.

Dear Sir / Madam

As part of my Sport and Physical Education course at Cardiff Metropoliaton University (UWIC), I am required to complete an investigation within Physical Education.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct a research project within your department. With your permission and assistance, I am hoping to conduct several focus group interviews with a handful of male students.

The aim of this investigation is to indentify reasons as to why students may choose not to participate in Physical Education. I intend to use this information to develop ideas that could be used to develop a PE curriculum to engage any disaffected students and help avoid any participation issues.

The information gathered through this project and the responses from your students may prove beneficial to your department. I will be happy to share all my potential outcomes for you to use as you believe necessary. I welcome and appreciate any advice and help to get my project started. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please let me know if you are happy for me to conduct this research at your School. My contact details are: Email, ST10001125@outlook.Cardiffmet.ac.uk Moblie: 07805613042

Yours sincerely

Richard Tremblen
APPENDIX B

Title of project: Key stage 3 boys’ perceptions of physical education lessons in secondary schools around the Cotswolds

Parents Information sheet

Background

This investigation is going to attempt to address the issues behind the motivation of key stage 3 boys within physical activity. The study would be under supervision of the physical education teacher; this study will be completed within the pupil’s school during a time that is convenient for pupils and teachers.

The investigation will look into:

- The attitude of boys towards physical activity in schools
- The areas which impact participation of physical activity in schools
- Whether pupils having a choice of which activity they are able to partake in would impact on sport participation.

Once information has been gained the results will be put into a year three dissertation.

Why your child has been asked

Your child has been asked to participate in this investigation because it is thought that the information they give will be of great benefit in finding ways of increasing participation in physical activity.

What happens if you agree to your child’s participation in the study?

If you agree to your child’s participation in the investigation;

1.) You will be asked to complete an informed consent form to allow your child to participate and,

2.) Your child will be asked to complete a 30-minute focus group.
Are there any risks?
We do not think there are any significant risks to your child from taking part in the study. If they feel uncomfortable in answering any questions they may choose not to answer.

Your rights
Participating in the investigation does not mean that you give up any legal rights. Your child may withdraw from the investigation at any time.

What happens to the results of the investigation?
The informed consent forms will be stored securely in locked filing cabinets at Cardiff metropolitan university (UWIC) along with the transcripts from the interviews. The results will be presented in a dissertation form but with no reference to your child.

Are there any benefits from taking part?
Once the investigation has been completed the results will help to find different ways of getting young people more involved in PE/PA whether this is through changing the national curriculum or not.

What happens next?
With this letter you will find an informed consent sheet for you (the parent) to complete if you are happy for your child to participate. Your child will then be asked to take part in an interview with his peers.

Further information
If you have any questions about the investigation or how I intend to conduct the study, please contact me.

Richard Tremblen
Tel: 07805613042   E-mail: ST10001125@outlook.uwic.ac.uk
Title of Project: Key stage 3 boys Perceptions of physical education lesions in secondary schools around the Cotswolds.

Name of Researcher: Mr Richard Tremblen

Parent of Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

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.

I understand that the participation of my child is voluntary and that it is possible to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

I also understand that if this happens, our relationships with Cardiff Metropolitan University (UWIC), or our legal rights, will not be affected.

I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes, but that my child will not be identified.

I agree for my child to take part in this investigation.

Name of Child: _______________________

Name of Parent: _______________________

Signature of Parent ____________________ Date

Name of person taking consent________________________ Date

Signature of person taking consent ________________________
APPENDIX C

Title of project: Key stage 3 boys Perceptions of physical education lesions in secondary schools around the Cotswolds

Teacher Information sheet

Background
This investigation is going to attempt to address the issues behind the motivation of key stage 3 boys within physical activity. The study would be under supervision of the physical education teacher; this study will be completed within the pupil’s school during a time that is convenient for pupils and teachers.

The investigation will look into:

- The attitude of boys towards physical activity in schools
- The areas which impact participation of physical activity in schools
- Whether pupils having a choice of which activity they are able to partake in would impact on sport participation.

Once information has been gained the results will be put into a year three dissertation.

Why your pupils have been asked
Your pupils has been asked to participate in this investigation because it is thought that the information they give will be of great benefit in finding ways of increasing participation in physical activity.

What would happen if you agree to your pupils’ participation in the study?
If you agree to your pupils participation in the investigation;

3.) You will be asked to complete an informed consent form to allow your pupils to participate and,

4.) Your pupils will be asked to complete a 30-minute focus group.

Are there any risks?
We do not think there are any significant risks to your pupils from taking part in the study. If they feel uncomfortable in answering any questions they may choose not to answer.

Your rights
Participating in the investigation does not mean that you give up any legal rights. Your pupils may withdraw from the investigation at any time.

**What happens to the results of the investigation?**
The informed consent forms will be stored securely in locked filing cabinets at Cardiff metropolitan university (UWIC) along with the transcripts from the interviews. The results will be presented in a dissertation form but with no reference to your pupils.

**Are there any benefits from taking part?**
Once the investigation has been completed the results will help to find different ways of getting young people more involved in PE/PA whether this is through changing the national curriculum or not.

**What happens next?**
With this letter you will find an informed consent sheet for you (the teacher) to complete if you are willing for your pupils to participate. Your pupils will then be asked to take part in an interview with his peers.

**Further information**
If you have any questions about the investigation or how I intend to conduct the study, please contact me.

Richard Tremblen  
Tel: 07805613042  
E-mail: ST10001125@outlook.uwic.ac.uk
Title of Project: Key stage 3 boys Perceptions of physical education lesions in secondary schools around the Cotswolds

Name of Researcher: Mr Richard Tremblen

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

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.

I understand that the participation of my pupils is voluntary and that it is possible to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

I also understand that if this happens, our relationships with UWIC, or our legal rights, will not be affected.

I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes, but that my pupils will not be identified.

I agree for my pupils to take part in this investigation.

Name of Child_____________________

Name of Teacher_____________________

Signature of Teacher_____________________

Date

Name of person taking consent_____________________

Date

Signature of person taking consent

_____________________

C-3
APPENDIX D

Title of project: Key stage 3 boys Perceptions of physical education lessons in secondary schools around the Cotswolds

Participant Information Sheet

Background
This research is going to investigate issues behind the motivation of key stage 3 (year 9) boys within physical activity. The study will be under the supervision of the PE teacher and completed within the school, at an agreed time.

The investigation will look into

- The attitude of boys towards physical activity in schools.
- The areas which impact participation of physical activity in schools.
- Whether choice of activity impacts upon pupil participation rates in sport.

Why you have been chosen
Through participating in this study you will be contributing towards increasing Physical Activity rates.

What would happen if you agree to participate in the study?
You will be asked to participate in an interview, providing honest answers.

Are there any risks?
There are no risks in participating in this study and if at any time you feel uncomfortable in answering any questions you may refuse.

Your rights
You do not give up any rights participating in this study, withdrawing at any time.

What happens to the results of the evaluation?
Teacher consent forms, pupil assent forms and interview transcripts will be stored safely at UWIC. Results will be presented anonymously in a dissertation.

Are there any benefits from taking part?
This study’s results will help to find ways in getting people like you involved in PE.

What happens next?
Participants will be interviewed alongside 4 more of their peers.

Further information
If you have any questions about the study, please contact me.

Richard Tremblen
Tel: 07805613042 E-mail: ST10001125@outlook.uwic.ac.uk
CHILD’S ASSENT FORM

Title of Project: Key stage 3 boys Perceptions of physical education
Lesions in secondary schools around the Cotswolds

Name of Researcher: Mr Richard Tremblen

Please fill this form by ticking the box by each question that you think is best for you.

Y        N

I understand the purpose and my contribution to the study

I have had a chance to ask questions and get them answered

I know I can stop at any time and that it will be OK

I know that information about the study might be published

but nobody will ever know that it’s me

I am happy to be taking part in the study

__________________________________________

Your Name ___________________ Date

Your Signature __________________________________________________

Name of person taking consent_______________________ Date

Signature of person taking consent__________________________________
APPENDIX E

Pilot study interview structure:

Boys in Key Stage 3 motivations to take part in physical activity

Venue:

Date of Interview:

Number of Interviewees:

Number of Interviewees thinking of doing PE as a GCSE subject:

Introduction (Not Recorded)

- Introduce researchers
- Aims of the research project
- Aims of this focus group:
  o To discover your thoughts and feelings about physical activity and education
- Protocol
  o Request for honest answers
  o Identify issues of confidentiality and anonymity
  o Request for discussion and build on each others answers
  o You may feel you are repeating yourself, this is fine
  o Ask questions if you’re not sure what I mean
  o First question will ask you discuss your general thoughts so far, before being more specific
- Any questions before we start?

Motivation in PE

I would like you to discuss between yourselves your thoughts about why you participate in physical activity.

What enables you to do that?

- If you could rate all the responses on importance, which would be of more importance to you?
- Is competitiveness important in sport?

Discuss the reasons why you think individuals don’t participate in physical activity?
Learning Environment

Within your Physical Education class, what would you say you enjoy the most?

- Do you feel your teacher and his/her interaction with yourself and the class is good?
- Do you have opportunities to develop your leadership and team work skills in physical education?
  (If not; would you want to have this opportunity?)
- Do you find anything in PE boring or disengaging?
  (Ways in which this can be changed?)
- Discuss between you what your thoughts are on coeducational lessons, (girls and boys mixed together in a class)

Stereotypes

Do you believe that stereotypical views exist within physical education?

- Stereotypes = categorizing a certain group of people.

Activity Choice

What is it you like about your physical education curriculum?

- Any improvements that can be made?
- If you had the choice to take part in other activities, what activities would you choose?

Would you change anything about the structure of Physical education lessons?
APPENDIX F

Final Interview Structure:

Boys in Key Stage 3 motivations to take part in physical activity

Venue:

Date of Interview:

Number of Interviewees:

Number of Interviewees doing PE as a GCSE subject:

Introduction (Not Recorded)

- Introduce researchers
- Aims of the research project
- Aims of this focus group:
  - To explore how thoughts and feelings about physical activity and education
- Protocol
  - Request for honest answers
  - Identify issues of confidentiality and anonymity
  - Request for discussion and build on each other's answers
  - You may feel you are repeating yourself, this is fine
  - Ask questions if you're not sure what I mean
  - First question will ask you discuss your general thoughts so far, before being more specific
- Any questions before we start?

Motivation in PE

Flip Chart – Black pen

I would like you to discuss between yourselves your thoughts about why you participate in physical activity.

What enables you to do that?

- If you could rate all the responses on importance, which would be of more importance to you?
- Is competitiveness important in sport?
**Flip Chart – Red pen**

Discuss the reasons why you think individuals don’t participate in physical activity?

**Learning Environment**

Within your Physical Education class, what would you say you enjoy the most?

- How do you feel about your teacher and his/her interaction with yourself and the class?
- Do you have opportunities to develop your leadership and team work skills in physical education?
  (If not; would you want to have this opportunity and if so how?)
- Do you find anything in PE boring or disengaging?
  (Ways in which this can be changed?)
- Discuss between you what your thoughts are on coeducational lessons, (girls and boys mixed together in a class)

**Stereotypes**

Do you believe that stereotypical views exist within physical education? If so how?

- Stereotypes = categorizing a certain group of people.

**Activity Choice**

What is it you like about your physical education curriculum?

- Any improvements that can be made?
- If you had the choice to take part in other activities, what activities would you choose?
- What would you change about the structure of Physical Education lessons?
APPENDIX G

Competitiveness

Because you’d want to be better than your friends just to be able to have the bragging rights and to better yourself at the sport as well so you can be competitive in that sense as well.

It’s quiet important, you always want to and you play to win but it’s not the most important thing, it doesn’t matter if you don’t win.

Because sometimes you need that competitive edge in order to do it right, but sometimes if it gets too over board it you can’t have fun and enjoy it.

It pushes people above the minimum.

Ye, because you have to be competitive that’s the whole point, to improve, you get better at a sport if you are want to get better, if your competitive you want to be better than everyone else.

Stereotypes

Some people might think that people who aren’t so good think the other people are better so they don’t want to be shown up or anything.

There are some but like not everyone wants to be a class A jock or wants to be a really good footballer at the end of the day, P.E is there for you to have a proper workout and have fun, there are some stereotypical things in physical education but not all the time.

It’s never from the teacher though, it’s always student-to-student, I think some people do stereotype because maybe people aren’t so good at what were doing.

There’s also, there used to be, there’s nothing anymore, there used to be with weight. if a girl does rugby then there seen as a masculine person, a lesbian and if a boy does ballet they think they’re gay.

Coeducational

I think it’s wrong, the girls don’t take it serious anyway but they will take it less seriously because they know the boys will be watching and also got pressures to like perform to a certain standard, I’m not being funny but it’s a group of girls so you might want to impress them.
Girls and boys play different sports as well, girls play netball and hockey and we play football and rugby. Although we play hockey at the moment.

I’m used to it. my old school did it. it works very well because both genders respect each other in a way that they wouldn’t otherwise.

There would be more competition because obviously a boy doesn’t want to be defeated by a girl because that brings a great amount of shame and the girls want to beat boys to prove whatever. Either way one side is going to be shown or one of them will be competing like crazy.

if they have from a young age it’s like playing football with a group of boys. If you do it from the age of 6 or continue up to secondary it’s just like playing football with say more boys

Activity Choice

I like the range of things that we do, because you hear that when you go to secondary school all your going to do is football and rugby every term but we’ve done a massive range of things. We’ve had Swedish long ball, cricket, rugby, football, gymnastics, basketball and covered loads of stuff. Even though it’s quite cold outside now and the pitch is rock hard we still do things inside like we go down to the gym and do weight lifting, basketball, multi stage fitness test. The amount of things that we do in P.E it makes you think.

nah I like it, I like doing new stuff, it’s good that we change every now and again but don’t do it too much just keep making it fresh.

Rugby, Football, Athletics, Tennis, Gymnastics, Basketball

Golf, cricket, lacrosse, mountain climbing, bench ball

We should have a choice of what we want to do, say someone likes swimming then they should be able to do swimming and I like rugby so I should be able to do rugby. Everybody should do their own thing not everyone should do the same thing.

Teacher Interaction

He’s a legend, he’s brilliant, couldn’t be better, he’s really encouraging.

He pushes you harder, connects with each person in the class and gets to know you throughout the years.

At the start of the lesson we sort our own teams out fairly, so that it give us a chance to show our leadership.
He helps to develop our skills in the sport.

Someone different to lead the team, because we usually have the same people.

It’s bias because they pick the same people and we don’t get to be captains.

If there was teamwork there would be more structure, instead of the teacher telling us what to do we would have different groups doing different things instead.
### APPENDIX H

Table 1. Why boys participate in physical activity?

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APPENDIX I

Date: 22/10/13

To: Richard Trembley

Project reference number: 10001125

Your project was recommended for approval by myself as supervisor and formally approved at the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee meeting of 16th October 2013.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Supervisor