Cardiff School of Sport

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‘Factors that motivate females over the age of 18 to participate in football in Wales’

(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of Management & Development)

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the reasons which motivate females over the age of 18 to participate in football in Wales. According to The Sports Council for Wales Active People Survey (2010) women aged 16-24 in Wales had a participation rate in sport of just 21.1%, in comparison to 49.9% of men the same age. It is suggested by numerous authors that a high number of girls drop out of sport by the age of 16 (The Sports Council for Wales, 2009; Youth Sport Trust, 2010; Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012a; Sport England, 2013). However, the rise in women’s football in Wales seems to be breaking this assumption with a growth of around 4,000 registered players since 2000 (UEFA, 2013b). Despite this statistic, there has been very limited research looking into the motivators for women’s football in Wales. Therefore, it is important to explore the reasons which motivate females to continue their participation in football past the assumed drop-out age.

Six participants were identified to take part in this study. These participants were women over the age of 18 who play football in Wales. A qualitative framework of semi-structured interviews was used to explore the motivators to participation for this group.

The results identified four key themes that motivate women to participate in football. These included: social factors, psychological factors, environmental factors and competitive sports. Key motivators identified by all participants were the influence and social support from friends and family and the relationship they had with their coach. Other motivators such as confidence, self-esteem, the competitive nature of sport and the experience of sport through their educational years seemed to be important factors in a female’s decision to participate in football. A recommendation for future research would be to conduct a similar study in other countries such as England and Scotland in order to compare and analyse themes and motivating factors.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
1.0 Introduction

Research suggests that participating in sport can bring benefits to an individual’s physical, social and mental health. Some of these benefits include the prevention of several onset chronic diseases, improved confidence levels and improved relationships (Mulvihill, Rivers, & Aggelton, 2000; Warburton, 2006; World Health Organisation, 2009; Houlihan & Green, 2011). Despite there being such a range of benefits, participation levels are still low. According to The Sports Council for Wales Active Adults Survey (2010), in Wales between 2008 and 2009, only 56% of adults (15 years and over) participated in any sport or physical activity which is a decrease of around 3% from the 2004-05 survey. Furthermore, The Sports Council for Wales (2010) recognised that women aged 16-24 in Wales had a participation rate in sport of just 21.1% in comparison to men of the same age who had a rate of 49.9%.

Despite these low participation rates, the rise in participation levels of women’s football is impressive. It is currently ranked the most popular team sport for women with an increase of around 4,000 registered players in Wales since 2000 (The FA, 2011; WSFF, 2012, UEFA, 2013a). It is important to look at the reasons why there has been such an increase in women’s football, especially as it is suggested by numerous authors that females tend to drop-out from playing sport by the age of 16 (Scheerder, 2006; The Sports Council for Wales, 2009a; Youth Sport Trust, 2010; WSFF, 2012a; Sport England, 2013a). The reasons which motivate and barriers to women and girls sport participation is a subject that has been and continues to be widely researched by numerous authors (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Thompson, Humbert, & Mirwald, 2003; Bois, Sarrazin, Brustad, Trouilloud, & Cury, 2005; Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006; Dwyer, Allison, Goldenberg, Fein, Yoshida, & Boutilier, 2006; Scheerder, 2006; Sirard, Pfeiffer, & Pate, 2006; Warburton, 2006; The Sports Council for Wales, 2009; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009; Youth Sport Trust, 2010; WSFF, 2010; Keathley, Himelein, & Srigley, 2013; Sport England, 2013a). Despite this vast amount of research into general sport and physical activity participation for women and girls, there has been very limited study into the reasons which motivate women to participate in football in Wales; therefore further research must be conducted.
There are many different reasons that can affect an individual’s decision to participate or not to participate in sport. Hylton and Totten (2013) suggest that the main factors which influence participation include: disability, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disposable income, social class, age, occupational status and levels of educational attainment. The group that will be the focus of this particular study will be women over the age of 18.

1.1 Research Aim
The aim of this research is to explore the factors that motivate women over the age of 18 to participate in football. This will help to develop an understanding of why women choose to continue sport participation despite the common statistics that show most girls drop out by aged 16 and onwards. Furthermore, results from this study have the potential to impact on the ability of other sports to promote and develop participation and performance in the future.

1.2 Key Terms
For the purpose of this study the key term that must be defined is ‘sport.’ According to Hylton and Totten (2013, p.39) sport can be defined as “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.”
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
2.0 The Importance of Participation in Physical Activity and Sport

In recent years there has been an increased emphasis placed on the importance of physical activity and sport. Allender et al. (2006) suggested that increased funding of community sport and ambitious national targets prove that sport and physical activity are gaining political importance. This is true of the UK Government who are ensuring that P.E remains a compulsory part of the National Curriculum, are investing a further £160m into community facilities and are providing £50m of funding to well-run sports clubs and voluntary groups (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012). The ‘Climbing Higher’ strategy for Wales recognises that increasing levels of physical activity and sport, and engaging communities in an active lifestyle will make important contributions to other strategic priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government. These include better education and lifelong learning, regeneration of local areas and reduced crime (WAG, 2006). A main catalyst for the Government to achieve these objectives comes from the growing number of obese people in the UK. Statistics show that 61.9% of adults and 28% of children are classified as obese (BBC, 2013a; Department of Health, 2013). According to the DCMS (2002), a 10% increase in adult physical activity would save around 6,000 lives and bring economic benefits, saving at least £2 billion a year. Currently, health problems associated with being overweight or obese cost the NHS more than £5 billion every year (Department of Health, 2013).

2.1 Sport for Sport’s Sake

In 2008, the introduction of the new sports minister ‘Gerry Sutcliffe’ saw a shift in the Government’s agenda from ‘sport for good’ to ‘sport for sport’s sake’ (DCMS, 2008). It was recognised that success in sport not only benefits an individual’s health but can also benefit a country as a whole by improving their reputation as a sporting nation, assisting with economic growth and inspiring the next generation of young talent (DCMS, 2013). DCMS (2013) suggest that playing sport at school or in a local club is the first step to competing at the highest level and thus accruing these benefits. As a result of this, The Sainsbury’s School Games was created to give primary and secondary school children the opportunity to take part in competitive sport up to National level (Sport England, 2013b). Furthermore, clear progression pathways are recognised as being important tools in sustained participation and helps support player development through grassroots to elite (UEFA, 2013b). This has been effective in female football as the introduction of the ‘Girls Player Pathway’ for Wales clearly represents the route from grassroots to National level. This helps the Welsh Football Trust (WFT) to ensure they continue to raise standards and
challenge the next generation of developing players in Wales (see figure 1). A further benefit of sport as recognised by DCMS (2008) is that it helps to create and develop a successful pool of elite athletes who have the potential to benefit their own and other countries. It gives the opportunity for the country to demonstrate the vitality of their economy, the modernity of their cities and their rate of social development through hosting or participating in major sporting events. Sport Wales (2010) suggested that the staging of major events can have a positive impact on the interest and participation in sport, economic growth and the success of a country. The Welsh economy experienced a boost of £82.4 million due to the success of the 2010 Ryder Cup held in Newport (Ryder Cup, 2010). Additionally, elite athletes have the opportunity to act as role models by promoting participation at grassroots level thus contributing to physical activity targets as well as the development of sport (DCMS, 2008; Houlihan & Green, 2011). The creation of role models in football is therefore important as they have the ability to promote healthy living and raise awareness of particular health issues (NHS, 2006). Role models are particularly important for adolescent girls because this is the period when identity exploration and development occurs (Marcia, 1994; Vescio & Crosswhite, 2002). A number of authors have doubts over the success of ‘sport for sport’s sake’ (Green, 2007; Collins, 2008; Sotiriadou, Shilbury, & Quick, 2008; Collins, 2010). It is believed that the ‘sport for sport’s sake’ policy is misplaced and its effectiveness will prove short. There are further doubts over the ability to equally manage mass participation and elite sport.

2.2 The Effect of Sport Participation

Sport has the potential to have both a positive and negative impact on an individual’s physical, social and psychological health (Houlihan & Green, 2011). Warburton (2006) suggested that there is a linear relationship between physical activity, sport and health status. That is, an increase in physical activity and sport participation will lead to improvements in health. There is undeniable evidence of the role that regular participation in sport and physical activity has in preventing the onset of several chronic diseases (Warburton, 2006; WHO, 2009). These diseases may include coronary heart disease, type
2 diabetes mellitus, obesity, hypertension, some cancers and osteoporosis (Hallal, Victoria, Azevedo, & Wells, 2006). Sport can act as a means to improving the elements of fitness such as cardiovascular fitness and endurance which can act as a motivator to sport participation for females in particular (Allender et al., 2006; Hylton, 2013). Another factor that is particularly valued by females when considering participation is the impact that sport can have on weight control and weight management (Rees et al., 2006). This is supported by the works of Thompson et al. (2003) and Keathley et al. (2013) who suggest that most women consider participating in sport or physical activity as a means to attaining or maintaining their ideal body weight. However, pressure on women to look good means body image can also act as a barrier to participation. Pressure to conform to typical stereotypes of beauty in terms of body shape is recognised as an important reason to participate. However it can be argued that traditionally, women grow up encouraged to 'look good' rather than be physically active so those women who do want to be active may feel self-conscious about their body (Allender et al., 2006; WSFF, 2013). It can be argued that some women may be discouraged from playing football due to the masculine stereotype that is linked to the sport (Collins & Kay, 2003; Parsons & Betz, 2003). However, with the number of registered female players in England and Wales at an all-time high at approximately 104,000, it seems women still want to play despite the stereotypical media slur of players as either 'butch' or 'girly' (Hong & Mangan, 2004; BBC, 2005). Football is a good sport for acquiring the physical benefits of health, which can act as an incentive to participation for some women (Rees, Kavanagh, Harden, Shepherd, Brunton, Oliver, & Oakley, 2006; The Telegraph, 2010; Keathley et al., 2013). Additionally Keathley et al. (2013) found that football can provide the opportunity for regular exercise and motivation to eat healthier diets which are all motivators to participation in female footballers. On the other hand, due to the intensely physical nature of many sports, there is an inherent risk of injury which can discourage many people from participating (Hylton, 2013). Additionally there is the risk of musculoskeletal disorders and the possibility of developing an eating disorder; this is especially prone in female athletes (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2004; Hyde & Gengenbach, 2007). Despite this, Melzer, Kayser, and Pichard (2004) argue that overall, the physical health benefits of sport participation far outweigh the risks.
In addition to physiological health benefits, sport can also positively impact on one’s psychological well-being (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). Works by numerous authors explain the psychological benefits that sport can bring (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Warburton et al., 2006; Le Menestrel & Perkins, 2007; Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013). For women in particular, sport can bring a sense of achievement, improved feelings of confidence and greater educational attainment. Additionally sport can lead to an improvement in psychological well-being through the reduction of stress, anxiety and depression. Furthermore, improved self-esteem, social interaction and fewer depressive symptoms are particularly evident in team sports due to the social nature of participation. Despite these benefits, sport has the potential to negatively impact on a person’s confidence and motivation. For women in particular, not feeling competent enough to take part and feelings of inadequate skill development were seen as factors that decreased self-confidence thus preventing participation (Thompson et al., 2003; Rees et al., 2006). Furthermore, some female footballers believe that sport can increase stress levels from pressure put on by teammates, coaches or even themselves (Keathley et al., 2013).

Relationships with family, friends and coaches are important tools in determining participation from a female perspective (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Sirard et al., 2006; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009). For female footballers in particular, the relationship with their coach is critical to sustaining participation. Coaches can act as father figures and have positive influences outside the sport (Keathley et al., 2013). A number of authors support this point by stating that coaches play an important role in youth sports experiences as they can have an effect on their motivation, self-esteem and enjoyment of the sport (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2006; Vazou, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006; Keegan, Spray, Harwood, & Lavallee, 2010). However, the role of a coach may also act as a barrier to participation and can be one of the reasons why a female footballer drops out of the sport (Butcher, Lindner, & Johns, 2002; Sherman & Hume, 2002; WSFF, 2012a). When dealing with female athletes, coaches should not be mean or rude, yell at players or be overly negative (Sherman & Hume, 2002). Key findings from the work of WSFF (2012a) were that coaches who have favourites and who are overly aggressive and critical were key motives for discouraging female participation. For football in particular, WSFF (2011) found that females had dropped out of the sport because of the managers on their team; if the manager did not like them then they would not play. Parents play a key role in a young person’s participation and thus longevity in sport. They act as role models and provide physical, emotional and financial support (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2003).
Mothers can have a particularly powerful influence over females in regards to sport participation due to the prominent role they play in their child’s daily life (Bois et al., 2005; WSFF, 2012b). However, despite the fact that parents are very influential during a child’s younger years, they may not always be supportive of engagement in sport. Parents who did not participate in sport themselves did not understand the value attached to it and tended to discourage participation in their children. Additionally, these parents provided limited funding and resources for sport participation therefore hindering the experience of their child (Thompson et al., 2003). Females place a particular emphasis on social support and the opportunity to make friends as an important motivator to participating in football (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Sirard et al., 2006; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009). This is particularly evident when comparing experiences between male and female players. Keathley et al. (2013) reported that females perceived greater friendship quality in football in comparison to male players. This is supported in the work of Ullrich-French & Smith (2009) who suggest that positive friendship quality is an important aspect in football continuation for females. Athletes with poorer social relationships were more likely to leave the sport (Keathley et al., 2013). Similar to a parent’s role, the attitudes and belief of friends during childhood and adolescent years can have a direct impact on whether a person is physically active or not (Sallis, Prochaska, & Taylor, 2000). Youth sports participation is important because it increases the likelihood of continued participation in sport in later years (Pfeiffer, Dowda, Dishman, McIver, Sirard, Ward, & Pate, 2006; Walters, Barr-Anderson, Wall, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2009).

In order to gain the benefits that participation in sport can provide, it is reported that adults should take part in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate exercise, five times a week. For children, 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise, 5 times a week is recommended (DCMS, 2002; Beaulieu, 2008). However, Medeiros (2002) argued that this is not sufficient and adults should complete 60 minutes of moderate physical activity in order to gain the benefits. Statistics from the Active People Survey (2012) shows that only 12.8% of women take part in the recommended amount of sport and physical activity in comparison to 20.3% of men. This number has declined since the results of the 2007/2008 survey which reported 13.1% of women completed the recommended amount. Therefore this inactive population are at greater risk of the health problems that a lack of sport participation can bring.
2.3 Participation Trends for Women in Sport

Despite the discussed benefits of participation in sport, numbers still decline during teenage years, particularly in females who are lagging behind males at all ages (Duncan, S., Duncan, T., Strycker, & Chaumeton, 2007; Tucker Centre, 2007). The Sports Council for Wales (2010) support this statement, as their statistics suggest that 47% of adult males are more likely to participate in sport in comparison to 31% of adult females. Additionally, according to The Sports Council for Wales Active Adults Survey (2010), women aged between 16-24 had a participation rate in sport of just 21.1%, which is less than half of men the same age who had a rate of 49.9%. It is believed that some girls are put off sport for life by their experiences in school sport and P.E lessons. A study by WSFF (2012a) found that a total of 23% of women and 51% of girls were put off sport from these experiences. The gender imbalance that is clear in sport is particularly prominent in football with recent research showing that for every one woman taking part, there are 14 men and just 5.8% of 16-24 year old women play football in comparison to 59.6% of men of the same age (WSFF, 2011). Figure 2 demonstrates this data across all age groups. Despite these statistics, female football is recognised as one of the fastest growing female sports and is currently the most popular team sport for women (The FA, 2011; WSFF, 2011). In Wales in particular, there has been an increase of around 4,000 registered players, 150 clubs and 90 senior teams since the year 2000 (UEFA, 2013a). Despite the statistics that demonstrate that the popularity of women’s football is on the rise, it is still currently ranked only ninth in popularity in comparison to other sports. However, it is positively ranked first place for the most popular team sport for women (WSFF, 2013). This shows sufficient change since 2006 where football was not even placed in the top ten popular sports for women (UK Sport, 2006).
2.4 Females in Football

The development of women’s football in Wales has grown from strength to strength in recent years and this is demonstrated through the growth of around 4,000 registered players since 2000 (UEFA, 2013b). This may be partly due to the emergence of WFT who is responsible for identifying and developing young female players in the country (WFT, 2010). In addition to the player pathway that has been introduced for girls from grassroots to elite (see figure 1), WFT provide development centres and regional squads to assist in supporting and developing talented players to progress through to the national squad (WFT, 2013b). In addition to the focus on performance level, there are various community based initiatives such as ‘KickIt Sports Coaching’ and ‘Only Girls Allowed’ sessions that focus on increasing participation for female footballers in particular.

As a result of the increased number of women playing football in Wales, the Welsh Premier League was formed in 2009 with the intention of presenting Welsh footballers on the European Stage. The best teams from the North and the South of Wales play against each other throughout the season and the team who tops the league at the end of the season represents Wales in the UEFA Women’s Champions League (Women’s Welsh Premier League, 2011). Due to its popularity, the League has developed from 8 teams to 12 since its formation in 2009.

Further positive development for Welsh Women’s football is the introduction of the ‘UEFA Women’s Football Development Programme’. This programme aims to promote the women’s game within all National Associations. It is ensuring that all Football Associations have a domestic women’s league and are encouraging them to set strategic and financial objectives including women in key positions. This programme is also focusing on grassroots, player pathways and ensuring facilities and playing environments are suitable for players, officials and spectators (UEFA, 2012). The Football Association of Wales launched its strategy for women’s football in September, 2013, outlining its 10 year plan for female football in Wales. Key themes running through the strategy include, increasing the profile, participation, investment and the overall scale of female football in Wales. Additionally, grassroots football is heavily featured with detailed targets for participation, refereeing and coaching. There is now a clear pathway for female referees to achieve international status through the female game (UEFA, 2013a). A further indication that female football is growing in popularity in Wales was the introduction of ‘Trish Turner’ as the first woman to be appointed onto the FAW council since 1876. Furthermore, in August
2013, Wales hosted the UEFA European Women’s Under-19 Championship; the first of its kind in the country (UEFA, 2013a).

From the discussed literature, it is clear to see that although participation in sport and physical activity for women generally, is far lower than what it should be; the increase in participation in women’s football contradicts this theme. It is important to understand what makes women’s football so popular and what they are doing to increase participation and sustain it. This information can then be applied across a range of sports and used to help increase female participation and performance in general.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY
3.0 Research Framework

The aim of this study was to explore the reasons which motivate females over the age of 18 in Wales to participate in football. Therefore, a qualitative framework was adopted. Creswell (2009, p.4) defines qualitative research as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. The aim of qualitative research is to understand social phenomena ‘from the inside’ (Flick, 2009) and capture meanings or qualities that are not quantifiable (Gratton & Jones, 2010). It can be argued that qualitative methods of research collection are essential in order to fully understand people (Atkinson, 2012). Quantitative methodology includes techniques that acquire information numerically through experimental protocol and large-scale surveys (Atkinson, 2012). On the other hand, qualitative studies can use interviews, focus groups or ethnography to collect more in-depth data from fewer participants. The inductive nature of qualitative research allows for data to emerge from personal experiences of the participants in comparison to the pre-determined hypotheses testing of quantitative research (Allender et al., 2006). For these reasons, qualitative research in the form of interviews was recognised as most appropriate for this study. This approach allows for interaction between the researcher and the participant which encourages more detailed responses and discussions. Furthermore, interviews are better at collecting richer data from a smaller sample group (Gratton & Jones, 2010). However, a potential weakness of qualitative data may be that it is largely based upon individual opinions so cannot be generalised to the whole population (Nykiel, 2007).

3.1 Qualitative Data Collection

Gratton and Jones (2010) and Atkinson (2012) believe that interviews allow participants to converse about their own experiences and are open to more in-depth responses and discussions. Furthermore, interviews offer the opportunity for in-depth and detailed information in a way that is not possible with other forms of data collection (Pettigrew, 1990; Pettus, 2001; Amis, 2005). For these reasons, interviews were identified as the best data collection method for this study in comparison to any quantitative approaches. There are a number of different types of interviews such as structured, semi-structured, unstructured, and focus groups (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were utilised in this study as this allows for greater flexibility; the interviewer can ask further exploratory questions, elaborations or probes (Amis, 2005). However, there are some potential challenges when using interviews to collect data. Gratton and Jones (2010) identified that interviews may become slightly biased as a result of subconscious body
language from the interviewer, such as nodding at certain responses. This may encourage the interviewee to answer dishonestly; impacting on the validity of the research. Additionally, the interviewee may become dominant in response which could lead the interview in unwanted directions. It is important that the information acquired is used correctly, otherwise the research may become capable of disempowerment (Amis, 2005). It is imperative that a researcher is aware of these potential issues in order to minimise the impact they may cause.

3.2 Participants

The participants used during this study were female footballers over the age of 18 who play football in Wales. Females over the age of 18 were chosen as it would be interesting to find out what motivates this group to continue playing football when research shows that female drop-out from sport tends to happen from the age of 16 onwards (Scheerder, 2006; The Sports Council for Wales, 2009; Youth Sport Trust, 2010; WSFF, 2012a; Sport England, 2013). Furthermore, only a small percentage of young females continue participation in sport past the age of 16 therefore there may be something to learn from this post 18 age group that may impact on the ability of sports to promote and develop participation and performance in the future. A small sample size of six female footballers was chosen for this study as research shows that a smaller sample size is most beneficial in qualitative data collection. It can be argued that large sample sizes can actually be detrimental to the study as more time should be spent on preparing the interviews and analysing them rather than the quantitative presupposition of the ‘more interviews the better’ (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Atkinson, 2012). This study used purposive sampling as it focused exclusively on female footballers. Purposive sampling is useful when you are attempting to reach a certain group of people in a short space of time (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Atkinson, 2012). Flick (2009) suggests that sampling in qualitative research is not related to random selection but should be conceived in such a way as to purposely distinguish a formalised sampling group. Additionally, the sample size should be chosen based on the researcher’s access to the sampling group (Flick, 2009). For these reasons, the sample for this study (female footballers aged 18 and over in Wales) was carefully chosen, as it is an easily accessible and convenient group who can contribute greatly to the study. However, the researcher may encounter some problems when choosing a particular sample. Atkinson (2012) suggests that people may be reluctant to participate, withdraw or not show up for the study. To minimise the risks of these problems, the participants were approached two months before the interviews took place and were made
aware of the aim of the study and why they had been selected through a participant information sheet (see Appendix B).

3.3 Data Collection Process
The data collection process began by approaching potential participants and asking them if they would like to partake in the study. All those who agreed to participate were handed an information sheet prior to the interview, explaining the purpose of the study. Gratton and Jones (2010) believe that the location of an interview is important in gaining the confidence and trust of the participant. The location should be relatively private so as not to be influenced by the presence of others and in a location free from noise. For these reasons, the interviews took place in the home of the participant as this was chosen by the interviewees as the best location to make them feel at ease. Additionally, this contributed to the validity of the study as participants were more likely to give an honest answer. Once the participants had been approached, a general interview guide was constructed which included different types of questions in relation to the research question and the themes explored in the review of literature. Open-ended questions were primarily designed as this allowed for spontaneous and un-structured responses and additionally gave space for other questions to emerge from the dialogue between the interviewer and participant (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Shelly & Rosenblatt, 2012). Additionally, clarification and elaboration probes were used as these allow the interviewer to clarify any points that may be unclear and to encourage the interviewee to expand upon a point. Gratton and Jones (2010) believe these techniques are helpful because they can increase the quality of data and provide additional information. The interview was conducted face-to-face as this is preferable in order to collect non-verbal reactions and to build a rapport with the participant (Amis, 2005). Gratton and Jones (2010) encourage face-to-face interviews because it allows the interviewer to pick up on body language and facial expressions. It is important to build a good rapport as this can encourage participants to be more honest and open about their thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, this would increase the validity of the interview (Fifer, Henschen, Gould, & Ravissa, 2008). Additional advantages of the interview approach include the ability for unexpected data to emerge and for participants to talk about their experiences from their own perspective (Gratton & Jones, 2010). It is important to ensure reliability is consistent throughout the study because there is a need to demonstrate that the measurement process can be repeated with internal dependability (Atkinson, 2012). The interviews were recorded using an application named ‘Super Note’ on the Ipad 2. Reliability was ensured throughout the study by the consistent use of the
same recording equipment, interview schedule and environment. A pilot study was used prior to the final data collection to check for potential flaws with the interview guide (Atkinson, 2012). One interview was conducted using the original interview schedule that had been formulated based on the findings of the literature review (see Appendix D). It is important to conduct a pilot study because it helps check that the wording of questions are clear and understandable, the questions are set out in a logical order and may also give the interviewer confidence in the interviewing process (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Atkinson, 2012). This contributes to the validity of the study as it ensured that the questions asked were relevant to the research question that is being addressed (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Atkinson, 2012). As a result of the pilot study, slight changes were made to the interview guide. These changes included re-wording some questions in order to gain a more in-depth response and adding in some probes that were important in obtaining more information (see Appendix E). Furthermore the interviewer gained confidence by including more probing questions in the interviews following the pilot study.

3.4 Data Analysis
Data analysis is important in the research process as it can help to make sense of data and gather additional evidence in order to answer your research question (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Almost immediately after the interviews, the interviews were transcribed so that they were still fresh in the mind of the researcher. Transcribing can help to identify themes in participant responses which can make the coding process simpler (Silverman, 2000). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interviews. Based on suggestions by Gratton and Jones (2010) and Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, and Sparkes (2001), the transcripts were carefully read and key themes relating to the research question and themes identified in the review of literature were identified. These themes were then placed into a table and the researcher looked for any relationships in the data.

3.5 Ethical Considerations
Amis (2005) suggests that interviewing does not carry the same threat as certain other data collection methods; however it is vital that the study is both morally and ethically acceptable (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Patton (2002) suggests that interviews have the potential to re-visit memories that a participant may find particularly traumatic. It is vital that ethical considerations are highlighted at the outset of the study (Amis, 2005). With these points in mind, the researcher provided each participant with an information sheet outlining the details of the study (see Appendix B). Each participant was made aware that the
interviews were completely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. Furthermore, anonymity was given and the interviewees were told that all information and findings from the interview would be kept strictly confidential. Additionally, the participants were given an example interview schedule prior to the interview so they were aware of the format. For these reasons, the validity of the study was improved as participants were more likely to be honest in their responses (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Kent (2000) suggests that confidentiality is an important subject and no participant should be recognisable in the outcome of the study unless they have given permission. In the transcribing stage, participants were addressed by numbers (Participant 1). Prior to the start of the study, this project was ethically approved by a University Research Ethics Committee.
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION
Analysis of the interview data revealed a number of key themes that will be discussed in detail below. These themes are: social factors, psychological factors, environmental factors and competitive sports. This discussion will help to gain a better understanding of the reasons which motivate females over the age of 18 to participate in football in Wales.

4.0 Social Factors
There were a number of social factors found to motivate women to participate in football. These included: friends, family, role models and coaches.

All six participants felt friends to be the most significant motivator for them participating in football. “Socially, massively like that’s the main part in football…my football friends are my friends…” This is supported by a number of authors who additionally found the opportunity to make friends as an important factor in motivating females to participate in football (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Sirard et al., 2006; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009). Thus, friends were found to be a key factor in motivating women to start and continue playing football. “One of my friends played for the local girls team so I thought I would go along and have a go…I don’t think I would of ever played really if I didn’t go along with my friend…” These findings suggest that social support is an important factor in the decision of a female to participate in football. Additionally, five interviewees felt the opportunity to play in a team was a leading reason for their participation in football. “I think it’s just the team experience mainly…it just gives people the opportunity to bond within a team.” Another interviewee felt the “opportunity to socialise with the people in the team…” was a key reason for her participation. Authors such as Allen (2003) and Delaney and Madigan (2009) agree that the chance to play in a team is a key factor for participation and if an individual's friends were involved in a sport then it is likely that they would also be involved. This supports the idea that social support is necessary in motivating female participation. Allender et al. (2006) found that friends may also have the potential to act as a barrier to participation for some females as the ability to impress them was more important than playing sport. This was supported by two interviewees who declined opportunities to play football because of their friends. “My group of friends that I have weren’t really interested in football so as I got older…I would turn the opportunity to play football down.” Another interviewee explained how they did not feel pressured by their friends to stop playing football but “missing out on parties and stuff was more annoying the older I got.” On the other hand, if a female has friends who are supportive of their decision to play football then this is an important aspect in football continuation (Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009). This is true of one interviewee who
discussed how her friends have “a lot of faith in me...and as long as...people are still praising me I'll keep going.” Based on these findings it can be believed that the opportunity to play as part of a team and thus gain the social support that comes alongside this are significant factors that has and will continue to have an impact on the participation rates of female football players. Furthermore, these results suggest that if other sports place an emphasis on the friendship affiliation that can be obtained from team sports then this may help to improve female participation in other sports by overcoming the problem of peer pressure. Additionally, schools and sport clubs should work hard to promote positive relationships through sport within friendship groups. This was helpful for one interviewee. “I had a big group of friends during school... [they] did play alongside me...it was great.” If young girls were surrounded by other girls who have a similar interest and positive attitude towards football or any sport, this may further help to overcome the barrier of peer pressure and thus increase participation levels. This is supported by the work of Strine (2007) who found that team sports in schools provide students with the opportunity to interact with people they would not usually connect with in the classroom.

Alongside the influence of friends, the influence of family was also recognised as a key social factor in motivating women to participate in football. Four of the six interviewees identified their family as significant factors in helping them to play when they were younger. “My main factor I would probably say was my family...they have been supportive...with the general opportunity to play really.” Indeed, the literature acknowledges the impact an individual’s family can have on sport participation (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2003; WSFF, 2012). These researchers suggest that parents play a key role in a child’s decision to take up sport by acting as role models and providing physical, emotional and financial support. “Yeah my family have been really supportive taking me everywhere to games and training, buying me equipment and kit.” This further emphasises the idea of the importance of social support. WSFF (2012) suggests that the influence of parents decline as children grow older. One participant agreed with this finding. “As I’ve got older I don’t rely on my parents as much as I used to...” Some authors suggest that mothers have a particularly powerful influence over females in regards to sport participation (Bois et al., 2005; WSFF, 2012b). However, results from this study found that fathers play a more prominent role in a female’s decision to play football. “I’ve had the opportunity to progress through...my father...he’s taken me to the try-outs, to the tournaments, he’s taken me wherever I needed to be.” This finding suggests that male family members are more encouraging than female family members in motivating a female
to play football. Sport England (2002) agrees with this finding as they also discovered that male family members seem to be more active in sport than female members so thus have a greater positive influence. This is true of one interviewee who described how having a father and older brothers who were interested in football influenced her to play through “playing football in the garden and going to watch games.” Therefore, in order to encourage more females into football and into sport in general, there should be more male role models introduced into the female game to act as motivators to young girls and women to get involved with the sport. This would be especially helpful for those young girls who may not have a father figure or any other male role models in their life. Keathley et al. (2013) agrees with this statement as findings in their own study suggested that males can act as father figures and can have positive influences both inside and outside of the sport. However, the importance of female role models and coaches must not be forgotten. Five interviewees discussed the importance of female coaches with four explaining how they are coaches themselves. “I became a level two football coach when I was in second year of college and I’ve continued to coach for the past four years…” It is important to encourage female coaches as these can act as role models to young girls who have strong male influences elsewhere in their life. “More female coaches…can act like role models for younger girls…girls would be more likely to play if there was a girl coaching them…” One interviewee discussed her personal experience with a female coach. “At 10 years old I came across a lady named Cheryl Foster…she said she’s gonna start a team…being a woman she was a role model to me so I was like yes I’d love to go train with her…” Women coaches are important in sport as they offer different life and leadership experiences and qualities and have the ability to understand the psychological and social pressures female athletes may experience (Sports Coach UK, 2012). All six participants agreed that the media has a big role to play in the promotion of female role models in football. “If women’s football was more recognised in the media then it would create more female…role models for girls to look up to.” Lines (2001) commented that due to the huge media coverage of male footballers and the scarcity of media coverage portraying female footballers, young girls and women may look towards male footballers as role models. One interviewee agreed with this comment and suggested that if “women’s football got even a quarter of the coverage that men’s football gets” then there would be many more female role models for young girls to aspire to. Based on these findings it can be suggested that there must be a mixture of both male and female role models within football to motivate and target a wider range of young girls and women. The media must work hard in order to positively promote both male and female role models within football
and Sport Development Workers must ensure that there are quality and inspiring female coaches at grassroots level to inspire and motivate the younger generation. Additionally, male role models should be utilised to motivate young girls into getting involved with the sport. Due to the current rise in participation rates of female footballers, there may be scope in the future, for women to also act as role models at promoting participation and involvement in football.

The final social factor that was found to motivate females to play football was the relationship they had with their coach. Five out of the six participants commented that they have a good relationship with their coach. “Yeah I have a good relationship with my coach. I always have done I think.” These interviewees also commented that this motivates them to continue playing football. “A coach, yeah a good relationship helps me to continue playing for sure.” A number of other researchers discovered that the relationship a female has with their coach is vital in sustaining participation in football (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2006; Vazou et al., 2006; Keegan et al., 2010; Keathley et al., 2013). Therefore, it can be seen that a positive relationship with a coach is a key factor in the uptake and continuation of football participation. “If I didn’t get on with my coach as much I’d probably wouldn’t wanna go up and turn up to training week in week out.” On the other hand, a negative relationship with a coach can have a detrimental effect on a female’s decision to participate (Keathley et al., 2013). One interviewee felt particularly uncomfortable when asked about the relationship with her coach. The interviewee revealed how she does not have a good relationship with her coach “simply because there just never seems to be any motivation from him, it’s all negativity.” Subsequently this interviewee revealed how she has currently left the team due to the coach’s attitude. Similarly another interviewee revealed how she “know[s] girls that have left the club because of the coaches.” Sherman and Hume (2002) agree with these findings by stating that coaches who deal with female athletes should not be mean or rude, yell at players or be overly negative. Therefore it is important that quality coaches are developed throughout all levels of the sport development pyramid. Sports Coach UK (n.d) identify the importance of quality coaches, particularly in female sport. They suggested that quality coaching is at the heart of encouraging women’s participation in sport and although high quality coaches require greater time and resources, they are well worth the investment. Furthermore, Sports Coach UK (n.d) identified key characteristics a coach should have when dealing with female athletes. Coaches should be friendly, approachable and pro-active in interacting with participants outside of the session. These characteristics were identified by one
participant when describing her coach. “She’s a great friend of mine…very easy to talk to…believes in not only me but the team as a whole as well…she encourages us and…provides positive criticism…which helps me improve my game and strive to be the best…” Therefore, sports clubs should identify with the work of Sports Coach UK to educate existing coaches or recruit new coaches that are best suited for working with female athletes.

4.1 Psychological Factors

Similar psychological factors were identified by all six interview participants. These included motivation, confidence and self-esteem. “Yeah it [playing football] gives you motivation especially if you are doing well and it can boost your self-esteem as well.” Numerous authors explain the psychological benefits that team sports in particular can bring for females (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Warburton et al., 2006; Le Menestrel & Perkins, 2007; Eime et al., 2013). These include increased motivation, a sense of achievement, improved feelings of confidence and improved social interaction. These benefits were highlighted by all six interviewees who mentioned how playing football has given them “more confidence” and “self-esteem.” One interviewee discussed how receiving “nice comments that I’m still doing well [is] all the motivation I need really.” These quotes suggest that sustained participation in football can be obtained by the presence of a positive team environment and individual comments of encouragement. Although the interviewees were strongly supportive of the psychological benefits that can be obtained through playing football, some did mention how football has the potential to negatively impact on psychological well-being which agrees with the findings of Thompson et al. (2003) and Rees et al. (2006). “I trialled [for the university football team] in my first year and didn’t get in…it knocked my confidence…It stopped me playing altogether for about a year.” This suggests that the competitiveness of some university football clubs can be detrimental in mass female participation. This is in comparison to grassroots, club level football where mass participation is supported. One participant explained how “In university…you have to go through the trial process and you are selectively picked” whereas at grassroots, club level “it’s turn up and play whether you’re a great player or whether you’re not a great player you get the opportunity regardless.” Rees et al. (2006) identified how not feeling competent enough to take part in sport can become an issue for young women in regards to participation. These findings suggest that those who have had negative experiences in football may experience negative psychological feelings which may lead to drop out of the sport. In regards to Sport Development, there must be more
work done to provide opportunities for women of all abilities to play football in order to overcome and prevent feelings of incompetence. Universities in particular must work hard to create these opportunities by formulating more teams and leagues so that more women can get involved and do not experience the negative psychological feelings that can be developed through being unsuccessful in a trial process.

4.2 Environmental Factors

From the data collection, a number of environmental factors were found to motivate women to participate in football. These included: education, facilities and opportunities.

All six participants explained how their time in school, college or university helped them to continue playing football, with two participants highlighting this as the main reason for taking up the sport. “…I got asked to play for the…primary school team and it just went from there really…” This information contradicts the findings of several authors who feel that women and girls are put off sport for life by their experiences in P.E and school sport (Dwyer et al., 2006; Women’s Sports Foundation, 2011; Faulkner, 2012; WSFF, 2012a). Therefore, it may be a common misconception that P.E and school sport regularly provides girls with a negative experience of sport. Current attempts at increasing female participation in secondary schools are girls-only sessions that are being provided through the 5x60 and Dragon Sports initiatives as research suggests that young girls are more likely to take part in sport if they are secluded from the boys (Gorely, Sandford, Duncombe, Musson, Edwardson, Kay, & Jeanes, 2011). Through both girls-only and mixed sessions, 5x60 has seen their retention rate for girls rise from 46.78% in 2010 to 48.49% in 2013 (Sport Wales, 2014). Five out of the six participants agreed that there are now more opportunities for young girls to play football in an educational setting stating that it is “part of their school curriculum…they take part in after school football they go to football camps…” Even though there seemed to be fewer opportunities for the participants to play football during their time in school, these findings suggest that they still had a positive experience of sport during school which therefore discouraged them from dropping out. So, in order to ensure young girls receive a positive experience of sport through schools it is important that teachers act as positive influences. Teachers must build positive relationships with the pupils and act as role models in regards to participation (Dwyer et al., 2006). This is true of one interviewee in this study who revealed how her teacher was the reason why she got into football. “I remember one of my favourite teachers supported Arsenal so then I started liking Arsenal and then…I decided…to take
up on a team…” This relationship was particularly important for this interviewee as she went on to reveal that her parents “don’t have any sporting background and are not interested in sport.” Therefore, a positive pupil-teacher relationship is key to participation particularly for those young girls who do not have a mother or father figure in their life or have parents who have no interest in sport. According to Allender et al. (2006) and Hylton (2013) lack of time and the cost of taking part can act as barriers to sports participation for students. Two participants echoed these views in regards to playing football in university. “I enjoyed first year…playing within the uni team but then the cost and the lack of time from doing university work stopped me from playing...” This suggests that young women in full time education may feel too pressured to play football in university because of a lack of money due to other financial commitments which may not be necessary for those who are out of education and living with their parents. However, this view was not shared by one participant who had a positive experience and “prefers playing at university level.” The findings from this research show that the experience that an individual female football player has during their educational years has a strong connection with their decision to carry on playing football. Initiatives such as Dragon Sport and 5x60 must continue to provide the option of girls-only sessions to further increase the retention rates of young girls in sport and football. Therefore, Sport Development Workers must work hard to maintain providing these opportunities to reach their own strategic targets but also to encourage positive experiences that will discourage drop-out from sport for girls past the age of 16. Additionally, schools, colleges and universities must establish strong links between each other to ensure smooth transition as girls get older. These links were particularly useful for two interviewees. “[I played for] the school team up until I was 16. When I was 16 I went to College and joined the football academy.” The other interviewee described how getting “the chance to play for Bristol Academy…kept me playing right from…college to uni.” Young women must be reassured that they are able to continue playing football alongside their studies and other commitments through workshops or tutor meetings provided by their school, college or university.
When asked about the opportunities for women and girls in football, half of the participants commented that there are more opportunities for younger girls now than there were when they were younger themselves. “There’s now opportunities for kids three, four and five and I wish I would have been able to have that opportunity at that age.” One example of these increased opportunities have come through the work of WFT who have recently set up ‘Turn Up & Play Centres’ which provide girls under the age of 10 with an opportunity for a free weekly football session (WFT, 2013b). One participant was familiar with this information. “I know a few local programs that coaches do…only female sessions…lots of girls have also been attending which is way more than if it was boys as well.” One participant who lives in a rural area of Wales commented that there was “very limited opportunities…the facilities that we have aren’t that great.” This quote is supported by the work of Frank and Engelke (2002) who similarly found that lack of facilities can act as a barrier to participation for those from rural areas. This is in comparison to one participant who plays football in South Wales. “We now play on…a brand new 3G pitch and it’s like professional training standard.” It is encouraging to see the improvement in facilities and the increase in opportunities for young girls to get involved and sustain their participation in football across Wales. Based on the evidence demonstrated in the review of literature about the increasing numbers of girls getting involved in football, this is clearly a good strategy for increasing participation figures and should be noticed and replicated by other sports. However, these results also suggest that funding may be unfairly distributed across Wales. But, the justification for this may be that over 65% of the adult population in Cardiff participate in regular sport and physical recreation in comparison to just 26% in the more rural area of Rhondda Cynon Taff. Additionally there are more club memberships in the Southern Regions of Wales in comparison to the North (The Sports Council for Wales, 2009b). In order to further increase participation rates and engage new participants, Sport Development Officers and schools should work together to establish links with local clubs and the community. This process has seen success for one newly formed female football team in Barry. ‘Vale Ladies & Girls’ provided free taster sessions at primary schools, secondary schools and local events and as a result the club has seen an increase of more than 50% of registered players (Vale of Glamorgan, 2012). Therefore, it can be suggested that young girls like to ‘have a go’ at a sport before they make a decision about participating properly so school-club links are a perfect way to promote this. It is clear to see that these links with schools and clubs in the community must be maintained so that free taster sessions can increasingly be provided.
4.3 Competitive Sports

An emergent theme from the data collection was the attractiveness of competitive sports. All six participants commented that the competitive side of football is a great motivator for them. “Without the competitive side in football I don’t think I’d want to play as much…” One interviewee was particularly passionate about the competitive side of sport and commented how “sport wouldn’t be sport if it didn’t have the competitive side.” These findings contradict those of authors such as Allender et al. (2006) and Dwyer et al. (2006) who found that the competitive side of sport can act as a barrier to participation for females. Thus it can be suggested that competitiveness in sport is healthy and should be encouraged in order to motivate women to play football. Furthermore, all six participants explained their passion for football. “I like sports in general but football has always been my biggest sporting passion.” It is believed that genuine enjoyment of a sport is a great motivator to participation. This is supported by numerous authors who believe that females who participate in competitive sport continue to do so because they find the activity enjoyable (Shaffer & Wittes, 2006; Brooks & Magnusson 2007; Rintagau & Ngetich, 2012). These findings suggest that competitive sports have and will continue to play a part in motivating a female to play football as it contributes to the enjoyment of the sport. This is supported by one interviewee in this study who discussed how she is “highly competitive so...love[s] team sports.” In order to further increase participation rates of female footballers, methods of engaging groups of individuals who are not so competitively inclined must be understood. Competition in one form or another is human nature so therefore individuals should be educated on how to channel competitiveness that is evident in other aspects of their life, into sport. In order to increase the number of female footballers, Sport Development Workers and community coaches may wish to arrange football tournaments where competitiveness is encouraged but not a necessity as there are no winners or losers and no scores recorded. Sport England (2013b) agrees with this point by suggesting that competition should be provided in different formats as this makes it more attractive and accessible. This has been evidenced through the hugely successful Sainsbury’s School Games which is a national multi-sport event aimed at encouraging more young people to take part in more competitive school sport. Currently over 90,000 young people in England have taken part (Sainsbury’s School Games, 2013; Sport England, 2013b). The DCMS, Sport England and The Department of Health and Education are supportive of the School Games as they are investing £150m until 2015 and it is highlighted in the DCMS strategy ‘Creating a Sporting Habit for Life’ (DCMS, 2012). Based on the clear success of the Sainsbury’s School Games, Sport Wales should look toward
developing a similar competition in order to encourage more competitive school sport and general sport participation in Wales.

One competition that has been a success for women’s football in Wales is the Welsh Premier League. This League was introduced in 2009 and as a result of its continued popularity the number of teams has increased from eight to 12. All six participants echoed the view of the Welsh Premier League being a positive influence on the development of women’s football in Wales. “I think the main growth of women’s football comes from the Women’s Premier League.” However, there was a shared view that there is an “awful lot of travelling” and this can prove difficult for teams. Similarly, Keathley et al. (2013) discovered that some female football players see travel as a barrier to participation with results showing that it can be hard to juggle school work and football when you spend the day travelling to games. One university student participating in this study echoed these views. “It’s difficult to be able to train and get your work done.” The Welsh Premier League consists of the best teams from across Wales and this standard of competition motivates five of the six participants in this study to continue playing football. One interviewee discussed how she is very supportive of the Welsh Premier League because “it just gives a lot more variety and…competition.” This interviewee further elaborated how this appeals to her competitive side by mentioning how you “have to train full well knowing you’ve got a team at the weekend that are gonna kick your arse if you don’t.” However, the competitiveness and high standard of the League has the potential to lead to drop out. Caerphilly Castle Ladies FC dropped out of the Women’s Welsh Premier League due to the high standard and competitiveness which saw them concede 219 goals in 10 games (BBC, 2013b). These findings suggest that the Welsh Premier League has predominantly been a successful tool in motivating women in Wales to continue with their participation in the sport due to its high standard and opportunities it can bring. “The thought of playing against the likes of Cardiff and Swansea sounds pretty cool.” However, the elitist attitude that can be associated with the League can act as a barrier to participation for some women and teams. In order to combat this problem, the FAW have ensured that there are competitive local leagues for each part of Wales (North, South and West) for those teams who do not qualify to play in the Women’s Premier League. Other sports can benefit from the knowledge of the success and popularity of the Welsh Premier League and should introduce similar processes in order to motivate females to sustain their participation. This view is shared by Shaffer and Wittes (2006), as they suggest that an individual who receives recognised competence in their sport increases their motivation to participate and
leads to higher enjoyment levels. Recognised competence can come in different forms such as success in games or competitions or merely just playing at a high level. This feeling was shared by one interviewee who felt a sense of achievement from just having the “opportunity to play... [at] their level and standard” in the League. Thus, it can be seen that those individuals who receive recognised competence in their sport are more likely to participate. This can further be nurtured through the development of clear progression pathways in sport. Female football in Wales has a clear progression pathway from grassroots to elite so this may help more players who are participating to stay involved (see figure 1). Thus, a focus on sport for sport’s sake may actually help to increase participation, allowing participants to accrue the benefits that have been identified as a result of playing sport. Furthermore, the sport itself will benefit from stronger talent development pathways and therefore better performance.

It can be seen that there a number of positive factors to consider in relation to women’s motivation to participate in football in Wales. Women’s football is the fastest growing and most popular team sport in the country (WFT, 2013), despite statistics that show that an alarming number of girls drop out of sport from the age of 16 onwards (Scheerder, 2006; Sports Council Wales, 2009; Youth Sport Trust, 2010; Sport England, 2013; WSFF, 2012a). Information acquired from this post 18 age group can be used to help promote and develop participation and performance in other sports. Additionally, many changes have been highlighted which can be made to try and further increase and sustain participation levels in football itself.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION
5.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to discover what motivates females over the age of 18 to participate in football in Wales. There has been much research into the reasons which motivate and the barriers to women and girls general participation in sport (Mulvihill et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2003; Bois et al., 2005; Allender et al., 2006; Dwyer et al., 2006; Scheerder, 2006; Sirard et al., 2006; Warburton, 2006; The Sports Council for Wales, 2009; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009; Youth Sport Trust, 2010; WSFF, 2012a; Keathley et al., 2013; Sport England, 2013), however there has been very limited research into the reasons which motivate women to continue their participation in football past the age of 18.

Having undertaken the study and analysed the results, some clear conclusions have been identified.

Results from this study highlighted four key themes that were found to motivate women to continue playing football. These included: social factors, psychological factors, environmental factors, and competitive sports. The results identified social factors such as friends, family and coaches to be the main motivators to participation for all participants in this study. The opportunity to socialise and be part of a team was an important factor in relation to friends in addition to the social support that can be obtained from this experience. Additionally, the role of social support from family members was evident in the results of this study as it seemed they had a powerful influence on a female’s decision to play football. Furthermore, positive relationships with both parents and coaches and the presence of both male and female role models were important factors for many of the female participants. All participants discussed how the media has a big role to play in promoting both male and female role models in football to inspire young girls to take up and continue participation in the sport past the typical drop out age of 16.

The results also identified the importance of positively promoting psychological characteristics such as motivation, confidence and self-esteem because negative experiences of these characteristics have the potential to lead to drop out. This was experienced by two of the participants in this study who had stopped playing for a small period of time due to experiencing these negative feelings. Although some literature suggests that women and girls are put off sport for life by their experiences of school sport and P.E (Dwyer et al., 2006; Women’s Sports Foundation, 2011; Faulkner, 2012; WSFF, 2012a), the findings from this study contradicted this theory. The results highlighted how the women had a positive experience of sport during school, college or university so
therefore continued with their participation in football. These experiences were boosted by having positive relationships with their teachers, experiencing girls only sessions, good quality facilities and links between schools, colleges, universities and clubs. The attractiveness of competitive sports was a motivator which all six participants agreed upon. It was found that some sort of competitiveness is essential in football as it contributes to the enjoyment of the sport. The Women’s Welsh Premier League was seen to be an important influence in sustaining participation for the interviewees in this study due to its competitiveness and high standard.

5.1 Limitations to the study
A limitation of this study was the inexperience of the interviewer. This meant that the interviewees may not have been probed as much as they could have if a more experienced interviewer was utilised thus potentially impacting the reliability of the interviews (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Additionally, as the interviews progressed, the interviewer got more confident so therefore the first few interviews may not have been as in depth as the final few. Additionally, the interviewees were residents from all over Wales so therefore it may have been useful to interview a group of participants from one region of Wales such as the North. This would help to gain a more detailed understanding of motivators in a certain region of the country.

5.2 Future Recommendations
Further research needs to be conducted in this area in order to obtain more in-depth information on the reasons which motivate women to continue their participation in football past the age of 18. In order to gain a more detailed understanding of the motivators to women’s football, similar studies need to be carried out in other countries such as England and Scotland, as results can then be compared and analysed for similarity between themes and motivators. Additionally, due to the recognised importance of social support and positive relationships identified in this study, parents and coaches should be interviewed as it would be interesting to understand their opinion on the reasons which motivate women to participate in football.

In regards to Sport Development, some recommendations for future practice were identified from this study. Positive relationships must be promoted through sport. This includes placing an emphasis on the friendship affiliation that can be obtained through sport in schools and clubs as this may help to overcome the problem of peer pressure.
Additionally, coaches must be educated on how best to work with female athletes as this relationship is vital in sustaining participation. Therefore, quality coaches must be produced with high interpersonal skills and knowledge of the game. Based on this study, female coaches are best suited for working with female footballers; however this should not rule out the inclusion of male coaches. Male role models must be utilised in order to promote participation and involvement into football. It is important that family members act as role models in regards to participation. However, for those individuals who may not have positive mother or father figures in relation to sport, people in other settings, such as teachers, must be utilised effectively.
REFERENCES


Department for Culture Media and Sport (2012). Creating a Sporting Habit for Life - A New Youth Sport Strategy. London: DCMS


Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2010). *Young women and girls’ physical activity*. London: WSFF.


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
ETHICS STATUS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Hannah McGoona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Lucy Wheatley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>School of Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>St20004898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>Sport Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Factors that motivate females over the age of 18 to participate in football in Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Start Date:</td>
<td>01/09/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate Duration:</td>
<td>7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>If your collaborators are external to Cardiff Met, include details of the organisation they represent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project**

Using the semi-structured interview process, 6 female participants over the age of 18 will be selected as they have been playing football in Wales for a number of years. Interviews will take place to identify factors that motivate female footballers over the age of 18 to continue participating. The data obtained will be voice recorded and transcribed onto a hard drive. They will be transcribed ad verbatim and the data will be organised thematically. This will help to identify similar trends and themes throughout the interviews.

**Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice based not involving human participants (e.g. curatorial, practice audit)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory projects in professional practice (e.g. Initial Teacher Education)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, no further information regarding your project is required. If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.
DEVELOPMENT:
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

Signature of the applicant: H. McGoona
Date: 26/4/13

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY
Name of supervisor: Lucy Wheatley
Date: 10/11/13

Signature of supervisor:

<table>
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<th>Project approved in principle</th>
<th>Decision deferred</th>
<th>Project not approved</th>
<th>Project rejected</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Project reference number: Click here to enter text.

Name: Click here to enter text. Date: Click here to enter a date.

Signature:

Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant: Click here to enter text.
**PART TWO**

### A RESEARCH DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project              | The research design that will be used for this project is qualitative, semi-structured interviews. The session will take place once and will last approximately 30 minutes. Interviews have the advantage of allowing the participant to talk about and elaborate on their own experiences and may open up the opportunity for some unexpected data to emerge (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Female participants over the age of 18 who play football in Wales will be selected. Some example questions include;  
  - Talk to me about why you play football.  
  - What do you think are the perceived benefits of playing football?  
  - What motivated you to begin playing football? |
| A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?                | No     |
| A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research | Click here to enter text. |

### B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

<table>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?</td>
<td>I have previous experience of research involving human participants in my research module in university where interviews and questionnaires were conducted and practiced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 Student project only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  - What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have? |
  Click here to enter text. |

### C POTENTIAL RISKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?</td>
<td>Do the study in an area where participants are guaranteed. Encourage participants to be as honest as possible by making them feel comfortable and at ease. Ensure that the participants give their own personal answer, rather than be influenced by others. Allow the participants to read over the questions prior to the interview and outline any concerns they may have over any questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title of Project: Factors that motivate females over the age of 18 to participate in football in Wales

Participant Information Sheet

Background
This study is an attempt to understand the factors that motivate participation for female footballers over the age of 18 in Wales.

In brief, females are recognised as a target group that drop out of sport, especially by the age of 16. Football is the fastest growing and most popular team sport for women, however drop out rates in sport are still high for over 16’s. This project attempts to understand the reasons that motivate players to break these barriers and continue to play football past the age of 18. There are two areas that the project will examine:

(i) What are the factors that motivate participants to play football?
(ii) Why are these factors effective?

The results will be presented as a dissertation project and might also be published.

Your participation in the research project

Why you have been asked
You have been invited to take part in this study because it is thought that you can positively contribute to the results. I will be contacting all participants who wish to take part between September and December, 2013.

What would happen if you agree to help with this study?
If you agree to help with this study:

- You will take part in a face to face interview with the researcher which will be recorded with your consent.

Are there any risks?
I do not think there are any significant risks to you from taking part in the study. If you are feeling unwell, I would advise that you don’t take part. If you do not feel comfortable answering anything you have been asked – just say!

Your rights
Joining this study does not mean that you give up any legal rights. Nothing will be done without your consent.

What happens to the results of the study?
The information that is gathered from the interviews will be recorded on a video camera. The tapings will then be re-run and transcribed onto a hard drive device. All material will be made private and confidential and no personal information about you will be made available to third parties. I will present the information as a dissertation, university project.

Are there any benefits from taking part?
Yes, you may think of information and ideas that you have not thought about before in relation to motivators to female football which may be of interest to you or others. You will be contributing to an essential study.

There is no cost to you for taking part.

What happens next?
With this letter you will find an information sheet. There is also one form to complete. This form is a consent form, saying that you are willing to voluntarily taking part in the study. If you are willing to participate, these forms should be handed to the researcher prior to the interview process.

How we protect your privacy:
As you can see, every effort is made to respect your privacy. I have taken very careful steps to make sure that you cannot be identified from any of the information that I have about you.

All the information about you will be stored securely away from the consent and assent forms. At the end of the study I will destroy the information that has been gathered about you. I will only keep the consent and assent forms with your name and address. I keep these for ten years because we are required to do so by UWIC.

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

Hannah McGoona

st20004898@outlook.uwic.ac.uk
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
UWIC PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UREC Reference No:

Title of Project: What are the factors that motivate participation for female footballers aged 18-24?

Name of Researcher: Hannah McGoona

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

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

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

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

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

5. I agree to take part in this study.

Name of participant

Signature of participant  Date

Name of person taking consent

Signature of person taking consent  Date
APPENDIX D
PILOT INTERVIEW GUIDE
Pilot Interview Guide

Hello, my name is Hannah McGoona. I am currently a 3rd year student at Cardiff Metropolitan University where I am studying Sport Development. The study that I am doing for my dissertation is looking at the reasons which motivate women in Wales to play football. You have been selected based on your experience of playing football. Your identity will remain anonymous and you do not need to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with. Are you happy to participate in the interview?

Introductory

- Can you tell me about your involvement in football? – Length, Team(s), Level?
- How much time do you give to playing football? – Training, matches, work, family, education commitments?

1. Talk to me about why you play football. →
   Competitive, performance?

2. Do you know any perceived benefits to playing football? →
   Do you know any more psychological/physiological/social?

3. What were the main factors that influenced you to begin playing football? →
   Parents, peers, family, performance

4. What are the main factors that drive you to continue to play football currently? →

5. Do you have a good relationship with your coach? Help to continue playing?

6. What do you think could be done to help other women continue to play football?

7. What is your experience with your club like? →
   Infrastructure, training, social, funding, people, coaches, facilities, → How does this help you to continue playing.

8. What has helped you to progress over the years? → In terms of standard or ability.

9. Over recent years the number of women playing football in Wales has increased by around 4,000 registered players since the year 2000. →
   Why do you think this is?
   What do you think football is doing that other sports are not?

10. Can you explain to me your feelings about the development of women’s football over the years? →
   Welsh Premier League, more clubs, more pathways, talent pool, talent ID.
**Interview Guide**

Hello, my name is Hannah McGoona. I am currently a 3rd year student at Cardiff Metropolitan University where I am studying Sport Development. The study that I am doing for my dissertation is looking at the reasons which motivate women in Wales to play football. You have been selected based on your experience of playing football. Your identity will remain anonymous and you do not need to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with. Are you happy to participate in the interview?

**Introductory**

- Can you tell me about your involvement in football? – Length, Team(s), Level?
- How much time do you give to playing football? – Training, matches, work, family, education commitments?

1. Talk to me about why you play football. →
   *Competitive, social, health, performance?*

2. What do you think are the perceived benefits of playing football? →
   *Do you know any more psychological/physiological/social?*

3. What were the main factors that influenced you to begin playing football? →
   *Parents, peers, family, funding, club setup, progression, performance.*

4. What are the main factors that drive you to continue to play football currently? →
   *Can you tell me about your relationship with your coach?*
   *Good → How does this help you to continue playing?*
   *Bad → Why do you still play?*

5. What do you think could be done to help other women continue to play football?

6. Can you talk to me about your club set-up and experience? →
   *Infrastructure, training, social, funding, people, coaches, facilities,* → **How does this help you to continue playing.**

7. What has helped you to progress over the years? → In terms of standard or ability.

8. Over recent years the number of women playing football in Wales has increased by around 4,000 registered players since the year 2000. →
   *Why do you think this is?*
   *What do you think football is doing that other sports are not?*

9. Can you explain to me your feelings about the development of women’s football over the years? →
   *Welsh Premier League, more clubs, more pathways, talent pool, talent ID.*